



Utah

Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative

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Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Proposal

INTRODUCTION

Utah is a State of great diversity: in landscape, population, and economy. From King’s Peak, Utah’s highest point, to the Wasatch Front range where most of the state’s 3.2 million people live, to the beautiful red rock canyons of southern Utah, to the Colorado River, which supplies agricultural, stock, and drinking water to millions of people in the west. Utah is the heart of the Intermountain West. Sixty-six percent of Utah is federal land. Approximately twelve percent of land in Utah is National Forest System land upon which economies and communities rely for water supply, recreation, vegetation products, livestock grazing, and quality of life. The demand for use of public lands will increase significantly as the population of Utah is expected to double by the year 2050.

The State of Utah and Forest Service are confronting a forest health crisis. Persistent drought and insect and disease epidemics have created longer and more intense fire seasons. Climate prediction models indicated these trends will continue. Additionally, rapid growth in the wildland urban interface has increased the costs of suppression and the risk to fire fighter safety. 2018 was the worst fire season on record in Utah. Devastating wildfires, including the Dollar Ridge, Coal Hollow, Bald Mountain and Pole Creek fires, elevated the concern for more active forest management and the need to cooperate across landownerships and between Federal and State land management agencies. Concerns statewide lead the Utah legislature to make a landmark decision to appropriate funding for the first time in the State’s history specifically to support treatments on National Forest System lands.

Against this backdrop, in May 2019, the State of Utah (State) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) entered into an *Agreement for Shared Stewardship* focused on protecting communities and watersheds from the threat of uncharacteristic wildfire. More detailed information, including the Utah Shared Stewardship Action Plan, can be found at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/r4/home/?cid=fseprd660827&width=full>.

Riding a wave of excitement for the new shared vision, technical experts from the State and the U.S. Forest Service Intermountain Region (USFS) worked together to identify watersheds and communities that are at risk and establish priorities at a statewide scale.

This CFLRP proposal, titled the ***Utah Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative*** (UCLRI) is directly and inextricably linked to Shared Stewardship, which itself is a national, regional, and state priority. The benefits of implementing this proposal are increased ownership, trust, and support by our partners for the management of National Forest System Lands now and in the future. The UCLRI will allow the State and the USFS to make a long-term investment in Shared Stewardship through landscape-scale restoration activities within identified priority watersheds. When achieved, this proposal will attain the goals of (1) providing economic

stability of communities by providing goods and services through use of public lands, (2) providing and protecting water resources for the future, and (3) choosing ecologically appropriate actions to manage landscapes within their capability to sustain human uses. Working in partnership with the State, local communities, and other stakeholders, the USFS can improve forest and watershed conditions to the benefit of the landscape, the economy, and the people of Utah.

UCLRI is a milestone in solidifying the commitments made by the Honorable Gary Herbert, Governor of Utah and USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue on May 22, 2019 when they signed the Agreement for Shared Stewardship. Cooperation between the State of Utah and the Forest Service has never been greater as efforts in jointly coming together to identify priority landscapes and create this collaborative initiative. The 35 Utah Partners for Conservation and Development are now poised to fund, implement, and monitor restoration projects. Partners are also committed to develop the wood industry markets in rural Utah to reduce fuels, improve wildlife habitats, provide clean water and reduce the occurrence of uncharacteristic wildfires.

Proposal Overview

Project Map

The State and the USFS collaboratively identified Shared Stewardship priority watersheds using a science-based integrated assessment. The assessment utilized information on existing watershed conditions, potential for large destructive wildfires, communities at risk due to wildfire, and municipal water supplies at risk. The State and USFS used the assessment to jointly identify and rate 6th level watersheds as to the need and priority for restoration activities. See **Attachment H** for a description of Utah Shared Stewardship Priority Watersheds. The UCLRI boundary encompasses 7.4 million acres of National Forest System Lands in Utah managed by five National Forests: the Ashley, the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache, the Manti-La Sal, the Fishlake, and the Dixie. Within the UCLRI boundary, five restoration areas (focus areas) have been identified that include the majority of the State's Shared Stewardship priority watersheds. Treatments proposed under this CFLRP will be located within these areas. See **Attachment A** and pdf format attached maps showing: 1) Utah Shared Stewardship priority watersheds, which were developed collectively by the State and Forest Service under Shared Stewardship; 2) UCLRI boundary, and 3) the focus areas within the UCLRI boundary.

Landscape Boundaries

While each Forest is ecologically unique, the UCLRI boundary is appropriate because it includes the priority watersheds jointly identified by the State and USFS. The priority watersheds focus on areas where hazardous fuel conditions, invasive species, and epidemics of insect and disease are a social, ecologic and economic concern due to potential loss of goods and services provided by forests and rangelands within National Forests watersheds. Work within the UCLRI boundary will allow the USFS and its collaborative partners to measure outcomes of change to

natural resources. In addition, USFS and State economists will be better able to measure economic and social outcomes.

The UCLRI boundary is also appropriate economically due to the need to increase economic opportunities in the fuels and the wood utilization industry throughout the State to support local communities. According to Headwaters Economics, the timber industry represents only 0.4 percent of total employment in Utah even though resource supply and demand could support additional jobs. Increasing the number jobs in the wood utilization industry will provide new jobs in Utah’s struggling rural economies. Industry also can also assist the State and Forest Service by providing for sustainable use of natural resources.

Broader Perspective

An alignment of shared restoration opportunities and stewardship has resulted from a joint effort built between the State and USFS to identify priority watersheds. These restoration opportunities include: (1) ecological restoration, (2) defending communities and critical infrastructure from uncharacteristic wildfire, (3) providing economic opportunities for local communities, (4) protecting municipal watersheds and water quality, and (5) allowing for social ownership of Forest management. The UCLRI project areas are statewide in scope. Proposed activities within each UCLRI priority area represents treatments having the greatest outcome for improving ecological, social and economic conditions. At a broader scale, the combined UCLRI areas will create a statewide measure of outcomes that will be reached through cooperation across a diversity of ecological, social, and economic conditions. The UCLRI boundary also matches with the existing statewide Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI) funding model for watershed restoration efforts across the state of Utah. The model and outcomes of the statewide WRI program can be found at <https://wri.utah.gov/wri/>. All Utah partners are in agreement that the broader WRI model works well to meet the social and economic needs of local communities and industry in the State of Utah. Please see **Attachment I** for additional information.

Economic, Social, and Ecological Context

National Forest System Lands in Utah are the lifeblood of the many local communities of Utah. The water that flows from National Forest System lands is the reason these communities were settled. Historically, local economies were highly dependent on forest resources for hunting, farming, irrigation, ranching, logging, and hydro-electric production. In recent years, recreation and tourism have become greater mainstays of the economy. Local economies of Utah depend substantially on the resources and the natural and aesthetic qualities afforded by the surrounding USFS and other Federal and State administered lands.

The size and intensity of wildfires that have recently occurred across the State and the effects these fires have had on communities has prompted interest at all levels of government in reducing the threat of catastrophic wildfire to firefighter & public safety, watershed health,

wildlife habitat, and community water supplies. Across the State, Forests have experienced increasing occurrence of uncharacteristic wildfires due to forest density and higher fuel loads. After years of persistent drought, in 2018 Utah experienced a record-setting fire season. In total, nearly 500,000 acres burned. Four of the State's five largest fires (Pole Creek/Bald Mountain-120,810 acres, Bald Mountain-18,620, Dollar Ridge—68,898, Coal Hollow-31,661, and Trail Mountain 18,000 acres) included National Forest System lands. The total costs for fire suppression in 2018 alone was over \$110 million. During the Dollar Ridge fire, approximately 87 homes were destroyed. This fire also caused approximately \$28 million in damage to the Central Utah Water Conservancy District's water delivery systems.

Because large uncharacteristic wildfires have impacted the State ecologically, economically, and socially, Federal, State and Local governments have a heightened interest in examining solutions to protect watersheds and infrastructure from uncharacteristic wildfires.

Over the last two decades, Utah has seen a major decrease in wood dependent industries. Many local sawmills have closed or reduced operations. The remaining active markets and purchasers across the State have the capacity to expand. The USFS and State are working on developing local markets with limited success. As an example, in support of Utah's Shared Stewardship agreement, in 2019 the State legislature appropriated 2 million dollars toward improving forest conditions. Approximately half of this money is being spent on economic development in the wood utilization industry. UCLRI will provide the combined USFS and State financial resources to meet landscape restoration needs. In addition, the landscape-wide approach will provide the catalyst for identifying and improving upon industry outputs State-wide. It is also expected that this project will result in the development of local companies to accomplish non-timber harvest priority vegetation management work such as thinning and mastication.

Specific economic outcomes within the UCLRI CFLRP include: (1) providing local industry with reliable supply of wood products and determining the capacities, challenges, and opportunities for future growth and sustainable markets; (2) increasing forage for livestock and wildlife by removing encroaching pinyon/juniper in sagebrush steppe ecosystems and encroaching conifers in aspen ecosystems; (3) maintaining watershed health and providing for water quality, quantity, and availability for surrounding communities; (4) reducing risk of catastrophic wildfire to communities (homes, ranches, farms), and infrastructure (power, water, communication sites).

Many locations in the State are currently in a fire regime Condition Class 3 (high departure from natural fire regime) having missed several disturbance cycles. In addition, many landscapes are seeing a shift in dominant vegetation types from those early and mid-seral stages to late seral stage. This shift towards late seral vegetation brings with it a higher probability of larger, higher intensity stand-replacing type fires that have a greater probability of impacting communities and humans through post-fire soil loss and flooding events. Many areas are in desperate need of vegetative treatments to remove encroaching conifers and to reduce decades of fuels buildup to move towards a goal of restoration and building resiliency.

Key ecological outcomes are focused on lowering forest densities to protect timber stands from insect and disease outbreaks, decrease surface and ladder fuels, and re-establish fire and its ecological role in maintaining and sustaining watershed health and vegetative diversity. These treatment activities will reduce the risk of uncharacteristic catastrophic wildfire threats to watershed health and wildlife habitat while restoring natural vegetative conditions and re-establishing disturbance regimes. The proposed treatments will also diversify vegetation age, structure, and composition, resulting in improved terrestrial and aquatic habitat for native species and will assist in preventing the listing of sensitive species while supporting recovery of listed threatened and endangered plant and animal species. The highest ecological outcomes from this proposal include: (1) increased forest health by managing for vegetation structure, composition, age class, and (2) management of fuel loads that builds ecosystem resiliency and resistance. Restoring ecological processes will improve ecological conditions for plant and animal communities and will reduce the threat of uncharacteristic wildfire, disease, invasive species, erosion and flooding following wildfire. In addition, these ecological outcomes will allow fire to play a more natural role within our ecosystems and will allow both state and federal land managers the ability to manage fire at the right time, in the right place and under the right conditions.

The UCLRI's objective is to restore and protect National Forest System lands that nearly all people of the State of Utah depend upon. In conjunction with the State, the USFS has identified priority watersheds needed for restoring landscape resiliency and reducing risk of uncharacteristic wildfire on National Forest System Lands. Communities depend upon these areas for culinary and irrigation water sources, infrastructure (including access and right of ways), economic stability, future economic opportunities, recreation opportunities, and other ecosystem services.

Landscape Strategy and Proposed Treatments:

Desired Conditions

Primary threats affecting vegetation across Utah are insect and disease, conifer encroachment, and fire. These causal agents have disrupted ecosystem function and productivity on NFS lands and have affected thousands of acres across all cover types, elevations and watersheds across the entire State.

All five Utah Forests have been impacted by a devastating insect and disease epidemic. Spruce beetle, mountain pine beetle, balsam woolly adelgid, and Douglas-fir beetle have and still are killing trees across hundreds of thousands of acres in Utah. Most of the impacts have occurred at the higher elevations. Impacts include affects in landscape structure, and species composition. In some cases, increases in fuel loading contribute to larger and more devastating fires.

Current vegetation conditions are the result of past management including fire exclusion, which have led to a wider distribution of mid and late successional vegetation across the UCLRI boundary. Most of the vegetated portion of the priority watersheds for treatment can be described as Fire Regime Condition Classes 2 and 3 due to the expansion of pinyon-juniper woodlands, decreases in aspen, encroachment of alpine meadows by conifer species, decreases in fire frequency, and decreases in late-succession stands from harvest. This altered stand structure and reduced diversity likely limits the resilience of this landscape to future disturbances, such as increases in fire severity, insect and disease outbreaks, and climate change. Additionally, in the absence of fire, fuel loading has increased in portions of the landscape, particularly at low and mid elevations. Increased fuel loading has resulted in fire intensities and magnitudes that differ from historical fire regimes.

Desired conditions within identified insect and disease infestations are: (1) to reduce the amount of dead and dying timber and (2) to reforest the areas with disease resistant trees. These desired conditions will allow for reduced fuel loading and will help minimize the size and severity of wildland fires across the landscape while maintaining a forested landscape.

Desired conditions will be dictated by silvicultural treatments employed but will generally consist of mechanical treatments using feathered density treatments with less residual density around private property and infrastructure to more density farther from those values at risk. Prescribed burning will consist of different burning windows at different times of year and time of day. For example, a patchier burn can be achieved in early spring or late fall and a more complete burn (less patchy) in late June or September.

Strategy to Move Toward Desired Conditions

Planned treatments address this ecological condition and will be undertaken across the UCLRI CFLRP boundary over a 10-year period. One example of treatments planned is the removal of dead and dying spruce fir on the Manti-La Sal National Forest caused by the spruce-fir beetle. Another example is on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, where treatments will address the balsam woolly adelgid outbreak along the Wasatch Front Range.

Conifer encroachment is affecting all Forests within the State. Utah Forests have large areas of grasslands, shrub and sage steppe ecosystems at lower elevations that are being affected by pinyon and juniper encroachment. The encroachment of the two species is causing a loss in capable rangeland acres and a decrease in rangeland species diversity and structure, reducing the productivity of rangeland and affecting livestock and wildlife by reducing grass, forb and shrub quality, quantity and species diversity. For example, in order to better support the Greater Sage Grouse, desired conditions include the reduction of pinyon and juniper across grassland, shrub and sage steppe communities. Pinyon and juniper treatments will occur over the 10-year lifespan of the UCLRI project. Three of the five Utah Forests will target pinyon and juniper encroachment with sufficient analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Conifer encroachment is often seen as a problem in the lower elevations within the pinyon and juniper type, but encroachment is also affecting aspen stands and meadows statewide. Aspen stands are the widest ranging species in Utah; aspen can be at nearly every elevational band. Conifer encroachment in aspen stands affects landscape diversity because with fewer trees comes less forage. Aspen stands diverse in regard to grasses and forbs. Aspen stands are also known to affect fire behavior. For example, crown fires can become surface fires, and often fires can be diverted or stopped, in Aspen stands. Aspen cover types are also an important recreational and visual component of the forests of Utah. Local economies benefit significantly from the social uses of aspen cover types. A key wildlife species in aspen stands is Rocky Mountain Elk. Planned treatments, including both mechanical and prescribed fire, will target conifer encroachment into Aspen stands and meadows over the 10-year CFLRP period. Estimated planned treatment outputs for the UCLRI are shown in Attachment B.

Both insect and disease and conifer encroachment are important to discuss, and they have their ecological impacts, but they also contribute to the occurrence of large catastrophic fires. Dead trees across large areas, conifer encroachment, and a wider range of pinyon and juniper create a more continuous fuel source across elevational bands. Larger fires have a greater impact on watersheds and affect water quantity and quality for local communities across Utah (i.e. Brianhead fire of 2017). High fuel loads also impact fire severity. Higher severity fires affect soil and can increase soil erosion, increase invasive plant species, and reduce soil productivity (i.e. Pole Creek, Bald Mountain, Dollar Ridge fires of 2018). The Forests in Utah have a large amount of private property adjacent to and within their respective forest boundaries. Larger fires put private property at risk and community infrastructure (springs, water facilities, powerlines, etc) associated with that property.

Wildfire Risk Reduction

Over the course of the UCLRI project, the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires will be reduced by removal of dead and downed fuel, reduction of pinyon-juniper densities, removal of encroaching conifers into aspen stands, use of prescribed fire and reduction of standing dead trees as a result of insect and disease infestations. These actions are expected to reduce the Fire Regime Condition Class from a 3 (high) down to either a 2 (moderate) or 1 (low). A variety of treatments will be employed, including mastication, lop and scatter, mechanical and hand cutting, piling, pile burning, chaining, and prescribed burning with a primary focus on the landscape rather than a specific cover type. The initial focus for treatments will be around private property and infrastructure in priority watersheds and then move outward.

More aggressive treatments that remove a large amount of material near private property and infrastructure will reduce density (trees/stems per acre), reduce surface fuel loading, and improve fire condition class. Treatments listed above will reduce propensity for and occurrence of uncharacteristic crown fires. Less aggressive treatment methods will occur in sagebrush areas and conifer encroached aspen stands. The management objectives in these areas are to reduce conifer encroachment, initiate regeneration with fire and mechanical disturbance, and

increase vegetative species diversity for greater resilience and resistance to climate change. Monitoring of sites will occur after treatment to determine how long treatments will last and when to retreat.

Generally, future climate predictions show a warming and drying trend applying to all elevation bands. Cover types (i.e. spruce-fir) may expand and contract based on climate conditions. Because aspen is currently suitable across many elevational bands, we may see an expansion of aspen with treatment and a contraction of other species (i.e. conifer).

Prescribed fires can be of various types, broadcast or area burning, pile burning, focused “jackpot” burning, or a combination of the types depending on fuel loading and desired objectives. Prescribed burns can be accomplished via aerial ignition (i.e. helitorch or plastic sphere) or ground ignition (drip torch, terra torch, etc.) or a combination. Areas where prescribed burning cannot be used (e.g. around untreated private property) surface and ladder fuels would be treated via, mastication, hand or machine cut and pile, and burning of piles.

Areas identified as beneficial for naturally started wildfire to achieve desired objectives may be used within the UCLRI focus areas when conditions are appropriate. Individual forests have already identified those areas and have plans associated with them.

Treated areas will reduce future wildfire costs because treatments are designed to reduce the likelihood of uncharacteristic wildfires. Uncharacteristic wildfires are typically crown fires that are very costly to control and can significantly damage infrastructure. Following treatments, future wildfires that may occur in a treated area will be less intense surface fires. Surface fires are easier for firefighters to engage and stop than crown fires and therefore lessen costs associated with suppression. Surface fires are also safer for firefighters and reduce the risk of injury or death. There may also be opportunities in the future to reduce costs associated with treatments. Areas in the lower elevations, particularly in pinyon and juniper, are not traditionally salable, outside of firewood. There may be opportunities in the future to sell wood byproducts to markets for use in essential oils or biochar. If those markets materialize then costs for implementation will decrease significantly.

Each project will have a silvicultural prescription and prescribed burn plan to identify capacity needs. Often Forests share resources together and work with other Federal Agencies (BLM), State Forestry, Fire and State lands and local fire departments to accomplish the prescribed burn.

Individual Forests have been working with adjacent Federal Agencies (BLM, NRCS), State and local fire departments to accomplish projects designed to reduce wildfire risk. NRCS has also helped with EQUIP funding for private landowners so they can afford to do work that compliments work on adjacent federal lands. In addition, the NRCS and Forest Service have successfully partnered on Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnerships Projects across Utah, both on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache and Fishlake National Forests. Two new Joint Chiefs Proposals are currently pending approval in the Washington Office.

Utah Forests are already working closely with State and County fire officials and that is expected to continue. The level or amount of work would be increased with UCLRI funding. The Forests have reached out to talk with communities about fire mitigation work they can do and let them know what we are doing to minimize risk to their communities, listen to their concerns, and see how we can help each other out. In the event of a wildfire, Forests have some agreements in place addressing where to get water, how to share costs, and what values at risk are most critical to those communities.

Treatments to reduce wildfire risk are addressing these critical values:

- private homes and NFS administrative sites
- cultural resource values and archeology
- water quality, and quantity of culinary water
- water quantity for irrigation districts and reservoir storage capacity
- aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat
- roads, recreation site infrastructure, and range infrastructure
- communication sites, powerline infrastructure

A priority for treatment will be the Wildland Urban Interface areas in Utah located primarily within the oak and pinyon-juniper cover types. Treatments on NFS lands surrounding these communities are designed to reduce fuel loads, increase fuel spacing, reduce crown density and reduce likelihood of uncharacteristic wildfire. Mechanical, prescribed fire, and/or a combination of these treatments would be used to move landscapes towards more resistant and resilient ecosystems and reduce wildfire risk.

Wildfire risk will be reduced across the UCLRI area through the implementation of a variety of treatment types in coordination with our many partners. Treatments to reduce wildfire risk will focus on protecting critical values both on and off NFS lands. Over the 10 year treatment period our collaborative efforts will significantly reduce future risks of wildfire for a large areas of Utah.

Benefits to Local Communities:

The Utah Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative (UCLRI) will positively affect many local communities and existing industries across the State of Utah by providing local industry with a reliable supply of wood products, increasing forage for livestock by reducing encroaching pinyon and juniper, maintaining watershed health and water availability for surrounding communities, and reducing the risk of uncharacteristic fire to communities.

The UCLRI will demonstrate to the residents of the State of Utah that the USFS is strategic, proactive, and committed to collaborating with the State to improve and restore watersheds and to reduce hazardous fuels by building on the shared funding opportunities of the State of

Utah. A focus on economic development is a key component of the Shared Stewardship Action Plan.

The desired socioeconomic conditions of the UCLRI CFLRP are to (1) provide a steady and predictable supply of wood products such as saw logs, posts and poles, fuelwood, biochar and other products to manage forest vegetation, (2) to improve forest health, and (3) to support local industries in the State of Utah. Projects associated with this initiative will increase jobs in the forest product industry within the State and Region and will provide long-term sustainability of these jobs. Ultimately the UCLRI in collaboration with the State of Utah, will provide the financial stimulus through federal funding from CFLRP and the State of Utah Shared Stewardship contributions to grow and expand the forest product industry within the State and Intermountain Region area.

Additional socioeconomic development will be pursued to encourage local contractors to engage in bidding for contracts involving mastication of trees and the mechanical piling of excessive fuel loads. State and County involvement would assist in enriching this collaboration for this initiative and increase the pace and scale of restored watersheds.

Beneficiaries of this landscape restoration initiative include residents of adjacent communities, forest permittees (livestock, recreation residences, etc.), local and regional companies contracted to do the work, and those that visit and recreate on the National Forests in the State of Utah. In addition, many wildlife and fish species habitats will benefit from landscape scale projects implemented through this initiative.

This initiative will compliment Forest and community wildfire protection plans for responding to and mitigating the effects of wildfire by implementing and providing funding for long-term strategies that will reduce and mitigate the effects of wildfire within the wildland urban interface adjacent to local communities, private property, and infrastructure. Many of the proposed projects are currently planned within the wildland urban interface and will help achieve community protection plans for responding to wildfire.

The UCLRI will benefit local communities and achieve desired socioeconomic conditions as projects provide a reliable supply of wood products, forest health improvements, watershed health and water availability for surrounding communities is protected, and uncharacteristic fire adjacent to local communities is reduced.

Key Metrics

The following list of metrics are to be incorporated in the UCLRI Work Plan

Enhance community sustainability:

- Maintain or increase the number and diversity of wood products that can be processed locally
- Maintain or increase the number and/or size of contracts offered each year to do restoration work

- Maintain or increase the percentage of contracts awarded that go to local contractors
- Maintain or increase number of youth, minority group representatives, or people from low-income communities hired to work on the project and the type of work they are conducting
- Maintain or increase acceptance of frequent, low intensity wildfire or prescribed fire

Improve or maintain quality of life:

- Maintain or increase the number of jobs/shifts/amount paid to workers
- Maintain or increase tourism employment and income related to recreation visits
- Maintain or increase availability and/or access to medicinal, food, heating, or building materials
- Maintain or increase acres protected from fire through creation of defensible space, fuel breaks, and other fuels reduction projects
- Maintain or increase fuels reduction acres in relation to areas considered to be at highest risk from wildfire

Improve capacity for collaboration:

- Maintain or increase extent to which different perspectives are represented
- Maintain or increase extent to which stakeholders previously in conflict are now working together
- Maintain or increase the quality and timeliness of communication among all project partners
- Maintain or increase the partner contributions (in kind time and funding) committed to shared project goals
- Maintain or increase perceived benefits of restoration activities

Utilization of Forest Restoration Byproducts:

Utilization of forest products is paramount to the success of this proposal. Interest has been evolving in Utah to develop a diversity of forest products. For example, a group of eleven Counties has spent the last year looking at potential markets for small diameter material and biomass. Some of the ideas being pursued include: sawmill utilization for low grade timber products (i.e. pallet wood or orchard/vineyard support material), co-gen, biochar, firewood, export potential of 8 to 14 inch Ponderosa Pine, wood chips, and commercial mulching products (i.e. Miracle grow, etc.). This UCLRI would provide the partnership funds to expand and accelerate byproduct restoration initiatives.

Since the mid-1980s, large stand-replacing spruce beetle epidemics have occurred in Utah resulting in hundreds of thousands of acres of dead Engelmann spruce. In order to maximize the potential value of the product and to reduce the potential of uncharacteristic wildfire, forests have focused on large landscape decisions by vegetation type to promote ecological restoration and to allow industry infrastructure to grow based upon volume available over the next decade. Forests have engaged industry in vegetation management planning efforts for salvage of primarily Engelmann spruce. However, use of other species for wood products are

being pursued. These partnerships have highlighted the industry's capacity, challenges, and opportunities for growth. Annual volume demand by local mills is approximately 55,000 ccf/yr. Products produced by local mills include: firewood, kindling, livestock bedding, wood chips, shreds and sawdust, dimensional lumber, house logs, and smooth & draw knife round stock.

The USFS and industry have experienced challenges while attempting to increase the pace and scale of restoration. One of the greatest challenges for the USFS is personnel capacity. Few skilled workers are making it difficult to accomplish sale preparation, contract administration, and timber stand improvement. The challenges for industry include inconsistency in availability of sales. This limits the ability to sustain personnel and to invest in modern equipment in order to increase utilization and harvest capabilities. The UCLRI would allow the USFS and industry to build capacity, consistency and stability with forest projects for several decades throughout Utah.

The following strategies, programs and tools will be used by Forests to increase pace and scale of restoration activities:

- Delegation of additional timber sale authority approved by the Washington Office for the Intermountain Region, Regional Forester and contracting officer up to 160,000 ccf. This has given industry the ability to secure a long-term supply of forest product and thus the ability to make long term investments in both equipment and personnel.
- Shared Stewardship Agreement entered into by the State and the USFS where the parties agreed to share investment in fixed costs related to timber sales such as road reconstruction, maintenance, cultural resource surveys, and reforestation.
- Adjustment of the appraised stumpage rates to the minimum rate allowable (\$0.25) in order to allow for salvage sales to be economically feasible for industry. This also will attract interest from new purchasers.
- Modernization of the USFS timber program by transitioning from "diameter by designation" using tree measurement to "designation by prescription" using weight-scaled sales. In addition, the USFS has utilized outcome based fundamental sale boundaries to decrease the time and cost of sale preparation.
- Identifying and implementing exceptions identified by 36 CFR 294.13 to harvest forest products in inventoried roadless areas which meet forest land management plan objectives. Example is the removal of beetle killed Engelmann spruce where the cutting, sale, or removal of timber in these areas is expected to be infrequent.
- Industry investment in tethered logging systems that utilize cable winch systems on harvesters, feller-bunchers, forwarders, loaders, and skidders to stabilize and assist equipment operations on steep slopes. The cable systems allow equipment to operate on slopes that would normally be considered unsafe for equipment or damaging to soils.

The UCLRI will increase the opportunities for providing forest restoration byproducts in many areas within the state of Utah. **Attachment C** shows the estimated acres restored under the UCLRI that generate forest byproducts and volume of material that will be available for forest byproducts.

Collaboration

This proposal provides an opportunity to bring together several ongoing collaborative efforts including: (1) the State’s Watershed Restoration Initiative, (2) County-based forest improvement proposals, and (3) Shared Stewardship to expand available resources toward a goal of treatment implementation. Though these efforts represent many different interests, a major social outcome would be to build upon ongoing efforts toward a shared goal of maintaining and improving the economic and ecological conditions across key National Forest Lands within the State. The State is committed to the UCLRI and providing support over the entire project. A letter of commitment from the State is provided as **Attachment E**.

On May 22, 2019, Utah Governor Gary Herbert and USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue signed the *Agreement for Shared Stewardship*. The agreement focuses on improving forest conditions in order to protect at-risk communities and watersheds from the threat of unwanted fire. Restoring and maintaining healthy and resilient forests requires substantial inter-governmental planning and collaboration. The USFS, the State’s Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office, and the Utah Department of Natural Resources are committed to using existing partnerships, programs, and initiatives that had previous success in Utah.

The model for collaboration in the West is Utah’s Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI). WRI is a partnership-based program designed to improve high priority watersheds throughout the State. State and Federal partners working together with non-government organizations, sportsman’s groups, industry, elected officials and private landowners make WRI a diverse partnership. Nearly 500 agencies, organizations and individuals participate in WRI by providing funding or in-kind assistance. These hundreds of organizations and individuals of WRI are the foundational collaborative component of the proposed UCLRI.

WRI’s work in restoring watersheds reduces uncharacteristic wildfire risks in treated areas; increases water quality and quantity; protects and rehabilitates vital habitat for wildlife; increases forage for sustainable agriculture and provides economic benefits for local communities. Since its inception in 2005, WRI partners have completed 2,120 projects, treating 1,824,842 acres statewide. Since 2005, the USFS has invested \$22,519,060, treated 237,285 acres and received \$27,643,197 in partner funds.

WRI is a bottom-up initiative where project planning, review, and ranking occur at a local level. Five regional teams elect their own leaders, establish focus areas, review, score and rank project proposals using a comprehensive project prioritization score sheet, and assist their members in implementing projects.

Through Shared Stewardship, the State and the USFS have committed to collaborate with a broad spectrum of partners to support priority projects and increase project funding opportunities. WRI provides an existing framework for accomplishing this objective and will be the basis of partner collaboration for the UCLRI. Additionally, the State and USFS are actively engaged in bringing new partners to the table. **Attachment D** includes a list of the primary

collaborative members and their agencies.

Multi-party Monitoring

The stated goals of the UCLRI CFLRP include monitoring progress towards the protection of water resources and implementation of ecologically appropriate vegetation management projects that will maintain or improve ecosystem resilience and long-term resource sustainability. Utah Forests currently have monitoring in place for fuels reduction projects and all projects funded under Utah's WRI require a monitoring component. The State of Utah and the USFS have collaborated through the WRI for over a decade to fund vegetation management projects that improve watershed health and provide opportunities for the sustainable use of natural resources. These projects have been developed, reviewed, monitored, and funded at the local level by stakeholders from both federal and state agencies. This process has ensured trust and reduced bias amongst the stakeholders. These successes will be enhanced as the UCLRI implements a multiparty monitoring process and develops a specific monitoring plan.

The UCLRI will develop a multiparty monitoring plan that will identify key stakeholders and structure for their involvement. Currently, key stakeholders include the State of Utah and five National Forests in the State of Utah. The potential to involve other stakeholders such as non-profit conservation organizations is possible due to their current involvement in the State of Utah's WRI.

The UCLRI will also develop key monitoring questions that will track the outcomes of the management projects proposed in the UCLRI. These key monitoring questions are as follows:

- Is the project meeting objectives (e.g., reduced stand density, reduction of hazardous fuels, or improved wildlife habitat)?
- Was the funding adequate to complete the project and meet objectives?
- Is planning on track to meet the stated goals of the UCLRI?
- Are projects planned and implemented in the right areas (i.e., 80% of projects within the 20% high priority areas identified in the Utah Shared Stewardship Strategy)?
- Are economic benefits to local communities being realized (i.e., is there measurable economic growth in business and employment due to the collaborative CFLRP work)?
- Is there evidence of social acceptance of treatments? Feedback from our partners and constituents will be collected throughout the 10 year project period.

The key roles for multiparty monitoring include:

- State of Utah – Provide opportunities for funding and collaboration through Shared Stewardship and the WRI.
- National Forests in Utah – Develop ecological-based restoration projects within the UCLRI priority areas that promote watershed resiliency and reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire on the landscape with input from the State of Utah.
- Line Officers (Forest Supervisors) – Initiate and monitor planning and implementation to complete vegetation management projects that achieve the goals of the CFLRP. Collaborate

with local governments to promote and accomplish UCLRI projects.

The information acquired through multiparty monitoring will be applied by comparing the results of the projects to the project objectives and specifications provided to contractors. These monitoring results will be used to modify planned work when completed projects demonstrate that projects are not meeting the project objectives, specifications, or science-based recommendations (e.g., silviculture prescriptions or burn plans). Long term monitoring will determine if completed projects established conditions that will help the landscape trend towards desired conditions, such as those described in Forest Plans, NEPA analyses or State Assessments.

Readiness to Implement Strategy

Utah forests have NEPA completed projects ready for implementation that cover the first 3-5 years of the proposed UCLRI. Some of these acres fall within the UCLRI focus areas and some do not. However, all acres fall within the larger UCLRI boundary. Additional NEPA for out years (FY2024-29) will be completed annually by individual Forests to support treatments in the UCLRI focus area. Forests will use their allocated budget outside of CFLRP program to complete these NEPA requirements using EADM principles and the new NEPA CE categories developed by the agency.

The Uinta-Wasatch-Cache, Ashley, Manti LaSal, Dixie and Fishlake National Forests have completed large landscape NEPA restoration, resulting in over 500,000 acres ready for restoration treatment for the next 3-5 years. For example, the Manti-LaSal National Forest recently completed NEPA on large salvage operations, thus increasing project capacity for several years. A total of 30,000 acres recently became available on the Manti-LaSal for project implementation. Other projects across the UCLRI focus areas such as the Fishlake/Boulder Mountain, Dark Blue and Upper Provo Projects, have signed decisions resulting in 150,000 acres available for immediate treatment. Other areas that are NEPA ready can begin implementation in the next 1-4 years. All NEPA decisions are Forest Plan-compliant as required by NEPA regulations. The five-forest supervisor's letter of commitment for the UCLRI is provided as **Attachment G**.

Implementation will occur with partner involvement, using the existing authorities available to the agency, including Good Neighbor Agreements with the State and Stewardship (non-timber) Agreements with partners such as the National Wild Turkey Federation. These agreements will tier off Master Agreements already in place with these long-term partners.

Unit Capacity and Project Funding:

The five National Forests in Utah are prepared to implement the UCLRI starting in fiscal year 2020 and ending in fiscal year 2029. The UCLRI CFLRP funding plan is included as **Attachment F**.

Analysis under the NEPA for the first 3-5 years of the CFLRP is complete and ready for implementation. All projects will leverage a portion of the funding required for implementation through the State Shared Stewardship and Utah's WRI. Funding through the UCLRI would allow implementation of these NEPA ready projects and additional projects at scales of restoration where the project could measure outcomes of success. The five Utah Forests have been extremely successful in obtaining matching funding from these programs and CFLRP funding would be matched with partner funds. In addition, the State has been critical in moving these projects through the contracting process via Good Neighbor Agreements. This has increased the pace and scale of restoration on National Forests in Utah and has alleviated pressure on the USFS contracting organization.

CFLRP program funding will be critical to the five Utah Forests in two ways. First, funding will allow Utah Forests to bring hard dollars to the partnership table and to provide dollar-for-dollar match with our partners. This is important not only to accomplishing the work, but to the relationship with our partners. Second, CFLRP funding will help build capacity within the workforce to accomplish implementation tasks, assignments, contracts and agreements for project implementation. Examples include pre-treatment cultural resource surveys, silviculture prescriptions, layout and design, and agreement preparation. Building capacity within the Forests workforce will increase efficiency and effectiveness, which will lead to an increase in the pace and scale of landscape restoration. This increased efficiency will have a direct positive impact on the relationship with partners.

If funding lapses in FY23 or in FY29 (full ten years), the five Utah Forests will transition back to existing partnership programs with the State and its WRI. However, the ability to partner with the State will be reduced without the CFLRP funding. The five Utah Forests will revert back to matching partners funds with any limited discretionary funding and in-kind contributions from fixed costs. Though Forests have achieved limited success with this approach to-date, the contributions from partners along with the scale of restoration outcomes will be significantly less if the CFLRP funding is not available.

This Utah Collaborative Restoration Initiative combines several existing partnerships and programs into a statewide focus of landscape restoration. Not only would the UCLRI proposal allow Forests to be able to effectively treat large landscape areas, provide the ability to invest in high priority watersheds, and generate large commercially available forest byproducts, it would also strengthen relationships with the State of Utah, partners and stakeholders that are implementing the Utah Shared Stewardship Agreement. Through the collaborative efforts represented by this proposal we believe the agency will achieve increased ownership, trust, and support by our partners for the management of National Forest System Lands now and in the future.

ATTACHMENTS

R4 UCLRI ATTACHMENT A: Project maps

R4 UCLRI ATTACHMENT B: Planned Treatments

R4 UCLRI ATTACHMENT C: Utilization of Forest Restoration Byproducts

R4 UCLRI ATTACHMENT D: Collaborative membership

R4 UCLRI ATTACHMENT E: Letter of commitment from partners

R4 UCLRI ATTACHMENT F: Project funding plan

R4 UCLRI ATTACHMENT G: Forest Supervisors letter of commitment

R4 UCLRI ATTACHMENT H: Utah Shared Stewardship Priority Watersheds

R4 UCLRI ATTACHMENT I: Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative Program

UCLRI Attachment B Planned Treatments

CFLRP proposals are **not** expected to include ALL of the core treatment types below in their strategy - highlight those treatments that are core to your stated treatment objectives. Note that there are options to use "other" in this table.

Estimated treatments should include **all** planned treatments in the proposed CFLR landscape, regardless of landownership type.

Provide an estimate of the % you expect to occur on NFS lands in column J, and list the other landownership types where you expect

Core Restoration Treatment Types (UWC + Fish+ Dixie+Ashley+MLS)	Please briefly fill in additional background information for the prompts below	Year 1*	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Years 5-10	TOTAL	Key treatment objectives	Estimated % accomplished on NFS lands (across all ten years)	Other landownership types (other federal, tribal, state, private, etc.) where treatments will occur
Hazardous Fuels Reduction (acres)	Fuels reduction in Top Priority Shared Stewardshp Areas	15,891	15,513	17,863	19,830	65,822	134,919	Mitigate wildfire risk to communities, infrastructure and watershed, Break-up Landscape to miminize fire size and allow fire to play it natural role	98%	State, private
Mechanical Thinning (acres)	Mastiction, Cut/Pile/Burn, Lop & Scatter	9,139	10,863	17,113	18,080	50,105	105,300		98%	State
Prescribed Fire (acres)	Rx Fire, Natural Ignitions	6752	4,650	750	1,750	15,717	29,619		98%	State, private, BLM
Other (acres)							0			
Wildfire Risk Mitigation Outcomes - Acres treated to mitigate wildfire risk	Fuels reduction in Top Priority Shared Stewardshp Areas	12,763	12,138	6,970	7,150	50,983	90,004	Mitigate wildfire risk to communities, infrastructure and watershed	98%	State, private, BLM
Wildfire Risk Mitigation Outcomes - WUI acres	Forests WUI layers- Local Assessment	8786	6565	2960	4,075	28,907	51,293	balsam woolly adelgid	100%	
Invasive Species Management (acres)							0			
Native Pest Management (acres)					1,000	6,000	7,000	balsam woolly adelgid	100%	
Road Decommissioning (miles)							0			
Road Maintenance and Improvement (miles)	Road Maintenance in support of treatments for inflow and outflow of machinery and equipment. Partial match to in-kind Rd Mtnce, Recondition of road beds	10	17	20	28	92	167	Facilitate access for contractors and force account crews	100%	
Road Reconstruction (miles)	Making roads usable for vegetation treatments	24	0	19	19	40	102		100%	
Trail Reconstruction (miles)							0			
Wildlife Habitat Restoration (acres)		12755	12543	15567	14530	38906	94301	Assumes 80% of Fuels meet Wildlife Hab Obj	100%	
Crossing Improvements (number)		0	2	0	0	0	2		100%	
In-Stream Fisheries Improvement (miles)		3.5	4	3.75	3.5	13	27.75		100%	
Lake Habitat Improvement (acres)							0			
Riparian Area Improvements (acres)		0	50	50	75	0	175		100%	
Soil and Watershed resources enhanced or maintained (acres)		1237	3618	599	1175	6255	12884		100%	
Priority watersheds moved to improved condition class (number)		0	0	0	2	0	2		100%	
Stand Improvement (acres)		1936	1308	2702	4289	22216	32451		100%	
Reforestation and revegetation (acres)		0	0	0	500	2200	2700		100%	
Timber Harvest (acres)**		1475	640	3949	2363	14253	22680	Remove dead material and capture economic value. Reduce density to enhance tree growth and vigor and reduce suceptability to to insect and disease.	100%	0
Rangeland Vegetation Improvement (acres)		1700	2950	10288	9948	8000	32886	Assumes 50% of Fuels meets Range Imp outside of Balsam Woolly Adelgid	100%	
Abandoned Mine Reclamation/Remediation							0			

Other Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative planned treatments (acres restored) within the CFLRP Boundary	WRI Projects on other non NFS lands, these include fuels reduction, wildlife habitat, listed species restoration, invasive species management, range restoration	25000	25000	25000	25000	125000	225000	Restoration of watersheds and ecosystems including fuels reduction across other federal, state and private lands within the CFLRP boundary	0%	BLM, State, Private
Other							0			

*Assume funding requested for Year 1 will be allocated in February 2020 at the earliest

**Note that timber volume produced from the treatment is estimated in a separate attachment - Attachment C.

UT UCLRI CFRLP Proposal Attachment C: Utilization of Forest Restoration Byproducts

Fiscal Year	Manti-La Sal			Dixie			Fishlake			Ashley		
	Estimate of acres treated annually that will generate restoration byproducts	Total projected annual harvested volume (ccf)	Expected percentage commercially utilized*	Estimate of acres treated annually that will generate restoration byproducts	Total projected annual harvested volume (ccf)	Expected percentage commercially utilized*	Estimate of acres treated annually that will generate restoration byproducts	Total projected annual harvested volume (ccf)	Expected percentage commercially utilized*	Estimate of acres treated annually that will generate restoration byproducts	Total projected annual harvested volume (ccf)	Expected percentage commercially utilized*
2020	1,936	40,000	100%	0	0	0%	273	4,091	100%	354	5,307	100%
2021	818	15,000	100%	0	0	0%	173	2,600	100%	63	942	100%
2022	2,500	45,000	100%	0	0	0%	133	2,000	100%	250	3,746	100%
2023	2,500	45,000	100%	0	0	0%	333	5,000	100%	348	5,227	100%
2024	2,000	34,000	100%	0	0	0%	133	2,000	100%	100	1,500	100%
2025	2,000	34,000	100%	0	0	0%	133	2,000	100%	100	1,500	100%
2026	2,000	34,000	100%	0	0	0%	133	2,000	100%	100	1,500	100%
2027	2,000	34,000	100%	0	0	0%	133	2,000	100%	100	1,500	100%
2028	2,000	34,000	100%	0	0	0%	133	2,000	100%	100	1,500	100%
2029	2,000	34,000	100%	0	0	0%	133	2,000	100%	100	1,500	100%
	19,754	349,000		0	0		1,713	25,691		1,615	24,222	

*Commercially utilized refers to the volume you expect to sell across all product classes (sawtimber, biomass, firewood, etc.)

Uinta-Wasatch-Cache			TOTAL		
Estimate of acres treated annually that will generate restoration byproducts	Total projected annual harvested volume (ccf)	Expected percentage commercially utilized*	Estimate of acres treated annually that will generate restoration byproducts	Total projected annual harvested volume (ccf)	Expected percentage commercially utilized*
500	7,500	100%	3,063	56,898	100%
500	7,500	100%	1,554	26,042	100%
167	2,500	100%	3,050	53,246	100%
500	7,500	100%	3,682	62,727	100%
200	3,000	100%	2,433	40,500	100%
200	3,000	100%	2,433	40,500	100%
200	3,000	100%	2,433	40,500	100%
200	3,000	100%	2,433	40,500	100%
200	3,000	100%	2,433	40,500	100%
200	3,000	100%	2,433	40,500	100%
2,867	43,000		25,948	441,913	

Attachment D: UCLRI Collaborative Membership

Forest Service staff representative(s) working with collaborative: (Please provide list of key staff):

Jeff Bruggink RO, Tyler Ashcroft RO, M'Leah Woodward RO, Terry Holsclaw Fishlake, George Garcia UWC, Dustin Bambrough Ashley, Rich Jaros Dixie, Mat Meccariello Manti LaSal, Kevin Greenhalgh Ashley, Amie Anderton Payette, Steve Beverlin RO

Collaborative Member/Partner Name	Organizational Affiliation (if applicable)	Was this person involved in proposal development?	Primary Issue Category	Second Issue Category	Third Issue Category	If "other," briefly describe
Laura Ault, Utah Shared Stewardship Coordinator	State of Utah -Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands	Yes	State	Watershed	Community Development	Shared Stewardship
Tyler Thompson, Director	State of Utah - Watershed Restoration Initiative	No	State	Watershed	Wildlife	
Miles Moretti, President	Mule Deer Foundation (non-profit 401c)	No	Wildlife	Watershed	Other	Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UPCD)
Jamie Nogle, Regional NWTB Biologist	National Wild Turkey Federation (non-profit 401C)	No	Wildlife	Watershed	Other	Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UPCD)
Brian Cottam, Director & State Forester	State of Utah - Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands	No	State	Other		Shared Stewardship
Bruce Richeson, Utah State Director	USDA Farm Service Agency	No	Federal	Community Development	Other	Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UPCD)
Brian Steed, Director	State of Utah - Department of Natural Resources	No	State	Other		Shared Stewardship
Troy Justensen, President	Sportsmen for Fish & Wildlife (non-profit 410c)	No	Wildlife	Watershed	Other	Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UPCD)
Brent Roth, President	Safari Club International (non-profit 401c)	No	Wildlife	Watershed	Other	Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UPCD)
Emily Fife, Utah State Conservationist	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	No	Federal	Watershed	Other	Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UPCD)
Ron Camp, Regional Director	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (non-profit 401c)	No	Wildlife	Watershed	Other	Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UPCD)
Andy Rasmussen, Utah Field Coordinator	Trout Unlimited (non-profit 401c)	No	Watershed	Environmental	Other	Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UPCD)
Kelly Devenish, President	Utah Bowman's Association (non-profit 401c)	No	Wildlife	Watershed	Other	Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UPCD)
Anita Bilbao, Acting State Director	USDI Bureau of Land Management	No	Federal	Watershed	Wildlife	Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UPCD)
Travis Jenson, President	Utah Wild Sheep Foundation (non-profit 410c)	No	Wildlife	Watershed	Other	Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UPCD)

Allen Henrie, President	Utah Association of Conservation Districts	No	Other	Watershed	Forest Products	Agriculture Interest, Livestock Grazing; Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development
Kerry Gibson, Director	Utah Department of Agriculture and Food	No	State	Other		Member - Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UPCD)
Utah State University	Extension Service and Research	No	College/University	Research		Member WRI, Partner for Monitoring Effectiveness of
Utah Wildlife Resources Habitat Council	State of Utah - Department of Natural Resources	No	State	Wildlife		



State of Utah

GARY R. HERBERT
Governor

Spencer J. Cox
Lieutenant Governor

Office of the Governor

PUBLIC LANDS POLICY COORDINATING OFFICE

KATHLEEN CLARKE
Director

January 21, 2020

Re: Utah Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative

Dear FACA Advisory Panel,

Please accept this letter of support for the Utah Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative on behalf of Utah's Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office (PLPCO). The primary objectives of PLPCO are to advocate for the balanced and sustainable stewardship of Utah's public lands, to educate the public and elected officials regarding public lands issues, and to facilitate the exchange of information and recommendations among agencies, and act as the unified voice of the State for public lands policy. As such, we work closely with State agencies, the Forest Service, and county governments and see daily, the importance of forging relationships and generating projects that have buy-in from stakeholders.

The Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative has the potential to provide invaluable support to the recent Shared Stewardship partnership between the State of Utah and Intermountain Region Forest Service. Shared Stewardship is recognition that land managers cannot confront the complex and urgent challenges we face alone and that improving forest conditions and addressing threat of catastrophic wildfire will require stakeholders to work together. Making joint investments in the collaboratively identified priority watersheds and using innovative approaches to forest restoration will reduce the risk to communities and water from the threat of catastrophic wildfire. An effort such as this innovative not only in Utah, but nationwide. The success of Shared Stewardship in Utah will pave the way for collaborative forest management across the country.

Through programs such as Utah's Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy, the Watershed Restoration Initiative, and now Shared Stewardship, the State and Forest Service are increasing the amount funding dedicated to improving forest conditions; however, given the scale of the problem, a long-term investment strategy and additional resources are necessary. Confronting the challenges we face will require sustained commitment and support from federal, state, and local governments, industry, and other stakeholders. Maintaining support from these entities will require that the State and the Forest Service demonstrate their ongoing commitment and resources, which can be achieved, in part, through the support of the Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative.

PLPCO is committed to being a partner in the above mentioned programs, and continuing to work to educate and facilitate stakeholders on the importance of Shared Stewardship and the necessity of working together to tackle landscape-scale problems. With the support of the Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative, we are confident the State and Forest Service will accomplish great things for our forests, watersheds, and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kathleen Clarke".

Kathleen Clarke
Director



UTAH'S
WATERSHED
RESTORATION
INITIATIVE



January 13, 2020

Re: Utah Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative Dear FACA

Advisory Panel,

Please accept this letter of commitment for the Utah Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative on behalf of the Utah Department of Natural Resources, the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, and the Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI). We unanimously support the proposal and look forward to improving forest conditions in Utah through this collaborative approach.

The Utah Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative proposal is significant in that it supports the newly formed Shared Stewardship partnership between the State of Utah and USFS. Through the Utah Shared Stewardship agreement, the State of Utah and Intermountain Region FS have worked together to identify priority watersheds for restoration across the state that include portions of all five Utah National Forests and adjacent lands of other ownership. The focus now is on conducting treatments in the identified priority watersheds that will improve forest conditions and protect at-risk communities and watersheds from the threat of catastrophic wildfire.

Working within the existing framework of the State's collaborative WRI program we are opening our conversations to include not only the State and the Forest Service, but communities, industry, organizations and users of our national forests. We look forward to working with our partners to implement a landscape-level approach in restoring our forests to a more resilient condition.

Brian Steed Executive Director
Utah Department of Natural Resources

Brian Cottam Director/State Forester
Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands

Tyler Thompson Director
Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative

For additional information please contact: Laura Ault-Utah Shared Stewardship Coordinator, Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, 801.550.7754 cell, lauraault@utah.gov

Attachment F: UCLRI Funding		
Fiscal Year 1*	Funding Planned/Requested	
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$2,740,000	Includes WRI, State of UT shared Stewardship
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands		
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$53,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$1,475,000	\$1 million from WO Shared Stewardship and \$125K WRI FS allocations in priority areas
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$4,268,000	
CFLRP Funding Request	\$4,000,000	
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$4,000,000	
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$100,000	WRI, NRCS and other projects on non FS lands
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands	\$100,000	WRI, NRCS and other projects on non FS lands
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands		
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$200,000	
*Assume funding requested for Year 1 will be allocated in February 2020 at the earliest		
Fiscal Year 2	Funding Planned/Requested	
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$2,740,000	Includes WRI, State of UT shared Stewardship
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands		
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$22,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$1,460,000	\$1 million from WO Shared Stewardship and \$125K WRI FS allocations in priority areas
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$4,222,000	
CFLRP Funding Request	\$4,000,000	
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$4,000,000	
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$100,000	WRI, NRCS and other projects on non FS lands
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands	\$100,000	WRI, NRCS and other projects on non FS lands
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands		
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$200,000	
Fiscal Year 3	Funding Planned/Requested	
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$2,350,000	Includes WRI, State of UT shared Stewardship
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands		
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$75,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$1,530,000	\$1 million from WO Shared Stewardship and \$125K WRI FS allocations in priority areas
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$3,955,000	
CFLRP Funding Request	\$3,925,000	
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$3,925,000	
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$100,000	WRI, NRCS and other projects on non FS lands

Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands	\$100,000	WRI, NRCS and other projects on non FS lands
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands		
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$200,000	
Fiscal Year 4	Funding Planned/Requested	
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$3,340,000	Includes WRI and possible \$1.5 million continuation of state shared stewardship funding
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands		
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$75,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$755,000	Includes \$125K WRI
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$4,170,000	
CFLRP Funding Request	\$4,000,000	
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$4,000,000	
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$100,000	WRI, NRCS and other projects on non FS lands
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands	\$100,000	WRI, NRCS and other projects on non FS lands
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands		
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$200,000	
Fiscal Years 5-10	Funding Planned/Requested	
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$14,670,000	
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands		
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$420,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$9,100,000	Includes \$800K WRI
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$24,190,000	
CFLRP Funding Request	\$24,000,000	
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$24,000,000	
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$400,000	WRI, NRCS and other projects on non FS lands
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands	\$400,000	WRI, NRCS and other projects on non FS lands
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands		
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$800,000	
Estimate of funding needed for NEPA and environmental compliance in support of the CFLRP Project.	\$500,00 per year provided by agency	NFS appropriated and Shared Stewardship Partnership funding will be used in years 1-3 to assist with planning and NEPA support for projects that are to be implemented in years 5-10. This support is estimated at \$500,000 per year for years 1-3. Support beyond that will come from agency appropriated funds at a similar rate of \$500,000 for years 4-7.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Intermountain Region

324 25th Street
Ogden, UT 84401

File Code: 2400; 2500; 2600; 5100

Date: January 22, 2020

Chris French Deputy Chief, National Forest System

Dear FACA Committee,

The attached CFLRP proposal titled the Utah Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative (UCLRI) is a significant milestone in our Shared Stewardship partnership between the State of Utah and Region 4 of the Forest Service. This proposal builds upon the Utah Shared Stewardship Agreement signed by USDA Secretary Sonny Purdue and Governor Gary Herbert on May 22, 2019.

This CFLRP proposal will strengthen our relationship with the State of Utah, our partners and stakeholders over the next 10 years and provide the ability to invest in the highest priority watersheds that have been identified by the State and Forest Service since the signing of our Shared Stewardship Agreement.

Our ability to effectively and efficiently treat landscapes in State of Utah is tied to multiple unique partnership programs sponsored by the Utah Department of Natural Resources including Utah's Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI) and Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy. The WRI is a collaboration of over 35 organizations known collectively as Utah Partners for Conservation and Development, who combine funding to enhance Utah's Watersheds through habitat improvement, fuel reduction, and riparian, aquatic and wetland enhancement projects. Five Utah Forests have been invested in this initiative since its beginning 12 years ago. Forest Service employees have served as regional working group chairs, co-chairs, and members working hand in hand with other partners developing proposals and implementing projects across Utah. Over the last 10 years, these five Utah Forests have completed 140 projects improving over 235,000 acres of National Forest System lands with a partner contribution from WRI of over \$25 million. If funded through this proposal, the state of Utah and Forest Service will increase the scale and pace of restoration across priority watersheds while reducing unit costs, providing benefits to local economies, and increasing efficiency of partnership contributions to landscape restoration. Our planned accomplishments with CFLRP and partner matching funding under this proposal would include over 470,000 additional acres restored or improved in the state of Utah. The project would also generate over 430,000 CCF of commercially available forest byproducts.

Lastly, this proposal is fully backed by the five Forest Supervisors and twenty District Rangers in the State of Utah. These line officers are committed to maintaining and building upon their relationships with the State of Utah, our traditional non-profit partners (RMEF, MDF, NWTF), and our local County and municipal stakeholders. Acres accomplished under this CFLRP effort will significantly support the Intermountain Region objectives for acres restored through fuels and timber management activities.



This CFLRP proposal is a state wide collaborative effort and I hope that the Committee will give this proposal serious consideration for selection. Should you have any questions regarding the proposal, please contact Regional CFLRP Coordinator Jeff Bruggink (jeff.bruggink@usda.gov 801-625-5357).

Sincerely,

NORA B. RASURE Regional Forester

/s/David Whittekiend

DAVID WHITTEKIEND

Forest Supervisor

Uinta-Wasatch-Cache NF

/s/Dixie Porter

DIXIE PORTER

Forest Supervisor

Ashley NF

/s/Ryan Nehl

RYAN NEHL

Forest Supervisor

Manti LaSal NF

/s/Angelita Bullets

ANGELITA BULLETS

Forest Supervisor

Dixie NF

/s/Mike Elson

MIKE ELSON

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Attachment H- Utah Shared Stewardship Priority Watersheds

On May 22, 2019, Utah Governor Gary Herbert and USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue signed the *Agreement for Shared Stewardship* <https://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/utah-shared-stewardship-agreement.pdf> between the State of Utah (State) and the USDA Forest Service Intermountain Region (USFS). This agreement established mutual commitments for the State and the USFS to cooperate on forest management and conservation issues.

Following the signing of the *Agreement for Shared Stewardship*, a team of analysts from the State and USFS collectively worked on the identification of priority landscapes/watersheds, with the goal of mapping areas where the threat of fire presents the greatest risk to Utah's communities and water resources.

<https://utahdnr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=c28e4ada7c9443a3b3545b9a436f2435>

Included below is an explanation of the individual models that were used in the identification of Utah's priority landscapes.

Drinking Water Classification

The Drinking Water Classification layer uses data from Utah Department of Environment Quality – Division of Drinking Water to create a ranking system of watersheds based on two criteria: the surface area covered by a water protection zone, and the total population served by a given water source. These data were classified and combined to give a total score that reflects the relative importance of each watershed to the production of drinking water across the state of Utah.

Hazardous Fuels Classification

Hazardous Fuels Classifications were developed through spatial fire modeling. Seven geospatial layers were utilized. These layers look at specific factors impacting fire severity including anticipated flame length, fire type, spotting distance, PM10 emissions, PM2.5 emissions, fuel consumption, and canopy fuel loading. Each layer was classified into five different classes (Very Low-Very High) and merged to display the alignment of these values.

Strategic Protection Areas

Strategic protection areas were delineated through use of a wind and weather analysis and fire behavior modeling at moderate to high fire danger weather conditions. These inputs, coupled with advanced geospatial fire modeling software, were utilized to determine fire arrival time probabilities that could negatively affect values at risk.

Composite Ranking

The drinking water, hazardous fuels, and strategic protection classifications were weighted equally and combined. Through this process, the State and USFS were able to identify Utah's most at risk watersheds.

Attachment I

Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative

The Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI) is a partnership based program in Utah to improve high priority watersheds throughout the state. WRI is sponsored by the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development and is in its 13th year. The Watershed Program focuses on improving three ecosystem values: 1) watershed health and biological diversity, 2) water quality and yield, and 3) opportunities for sustainable uses of natural resources. WRI is a bottom-up initiative where project planning, review, and ranking occur at a local level. Five regional teams elect their own leaders, establish focus areas, review, score and rank project proposals using a comprehensive project prioritization score sheet, and assist their members in implementing projects.

Improving Utah's Watersheds through Collaboration (Video)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXy-qcoHu5w&feature=emb_logo

WRI operates as a diverse partnership of state and federal governmental agencies working together with non-governmental organizations, industry, elected officials and private landowners, and is coordinated by Utah's Department of Natural Resources. Funding for WRI comes from federal agencies like the BLM, NRCS, U.S. Forest Service, as well as from Utah's Legislature. Through strategic rehabilitation processes such as - the reduction of invasive and over abundant plant species, fire prevention and reseedling, restoring degraded stream and riparian systems and reversing aspen forest decline - WRI restores and prevents the destruction of our vital watersheds by promoting positive changes to reduce future problems.

Additionally, state agencies like the Division of Wildlife Resources, Forestry Fire & State Lands, Agriculture and Food, SITLA, and DEQ also provide funding. Many private landowners and public land grazers participate too, along with non-governmental organizations, including the Mule Deer Foundation, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, National Wild Turkey Foundation, Utah Wild Sheep Foundation, Utah Archery Association and Safari Club International.

Since 2006, WRI partners have completed over 2,000 projects, improving over 1.6 million acres and nearly 1,200 miles of streams. Over 500 agencies, organizations and individuals have contributed to WRI projects by providing funding and in-kind assistance.

WRI Fact Sheet

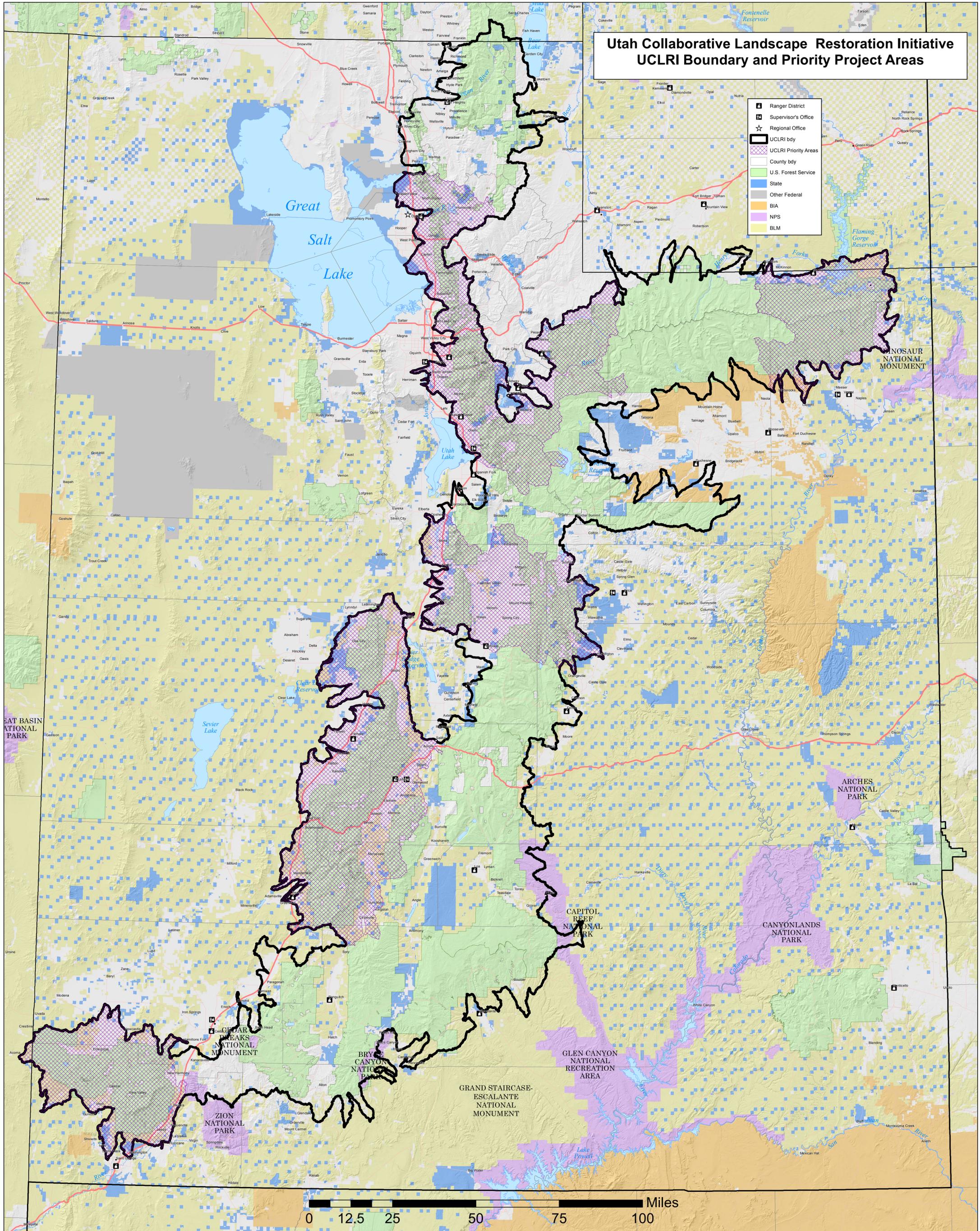
<https://watershed.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019-WRI-Fact-Sheet-Page-1-4.pdf>

WRI Outputs and Funding

<https://watershed.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/WRI-by-the-numbers-Infographic-Final-med-res.pdf>

Utah Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative UCLRI Boundary and Priority Project Areas

- Ranger District
- Supervisor's Office
- Regional Office
- UCLRI bdy
- UCLRI Priority Areas
- County bdy
- U.S. Forest Service
- State
- Other Federal
- BIA
- NPS
- BLM



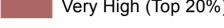
0 12.5 25 50 75 100 Miles

Utah Collaborative Landscape Restoration Initiative UCLRI Boundary and Priority Project Areas Shared Stewardship Priority Watersheds

 UCLRI Priority Areas

 UCLRI bdy

**Shared Stewardship Watersheds
Restoration Priority**

-  Very Low
-  Low
-  Moderate
-  High
-  Very High (Top 20%)

