



# FORESTED TRUST LANDS

## *In the West*

Of the 21 member states that belong to the Western States Land Commissioners Association (WSLCA), seven states manage a significant portion of forested trust land. The states include Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Utah.

The trust land agencies in these Western states provide a successful model for forest management that:

- ◆ generates income for public schools and other institutions
- ◆ supports jobs in the forest products industry
- ◆ promotes healthy forests
- ◆ keeps lands accessible for all types of recreationists

### **Managing Forests to Support State Institutions**

- ◆ Forest trust lands in the West contribute hundreds of millions of dollars in cash annually to institutions such as public schools, mental health hospitals and programs, public buildings, universities, veterans' homes, counties, and other beneficiaries.
- ◆ About 4 million acres of Western trust lands are forested. Combined, the forested trust lands in our states cover an area larger than the entire State of Connecticut.

- ◆ Nearly 1 billion board feet of timber are harvested off of state trust lands in the West per year. That supplies enough framing lumber to build 62,500 typical single family homes, which was about 10 percent of new home construction starts in the year 2011.
- ◆ Comparatively, the U.S. Forest Service, which manages 193 million acres of public land across the country, harvested about 2.6 billion board feet of timber nationwide in FY12.

### **A Source of Timber Industry Can Rely On**

- ◆ In some of our states, forested trust lands account for only a small percentage of the total forested land base but make up a third of the total timber harvested statewide in one year.
- ◆ Timber harvested from state trust lands supports thousands of jobs in the forest products industry. These are good paying jobs that support American families.
- ◆ Western trust lands have supplied the market with a dependable stream of timber for many years, enabling the West to keep most of its mill infrastructure in place over the past several decades. Domestic needs will always demand local American lumber. The timber harvested from Western trust lands keeps mills and forest products companies in business, ultimately keeping the cost of forest products low for American consumers.

### **Responsible Management for Sustainable Forests**

- ◆ Managing forests for prolonged productivity means using responsible management practices. In any one year, thousands of acres of trust lands in the West are reforested with millions of tree seedlings, and thousands of acres are treated annually to abate noxious and invasive weeds and encourage growth of desired tree species.





## Helping to Prevent Listings of Endangered Species and Protect At-Risk Species

- ◆ As some of the West's largest landowners, WSLCA member states carefully track and weigh in on any proposed federal listing of threatened and endangered species that will affect management of trust lands. Such listings present constraints and uncertainty in land management. They can increase costs of management and fire protection and limit activities on the land, thus decreasing financial returns to public schools and other trust beneficiaries we serve.
- ◆ Successes in our states include working with our federal and State partners on proposed critical habitat for woodland caribou and certain species of prairie dogs, and working to prevent a listing of sage grouse. We enhance forest habitats to provide cool, clean water for salmon and we manage to protect at-risk species such as northern spotted owls and Canada lynx.

## Outdoor Recreational Opportunities Abound

- ◆ Forested trust lands in the West welcome all types of recreational opportunities for our citizens, such as hunting, camping, hiking, shooting, motorized recreation, and many other uses. Recreation on these forested trust lands generates economic activity for communities in the West and cultivates an appreciation for the resources the lands provide.
- ◆ Recreation on state trust lands in the West generally is allowed on a dispersed basis, and where heavy recreation has caused damage to the land or causes safety concerns we use site specific, targeted management to protect the lands' primary purpose—to earn money for the trust beneficiaries.
- ◆ In some of our states, money is spent to build trails and maintain recreational sites on forested trust lands.

# AS STATE TRUST LAND AGENCIES IN THE WEST

- ❖ We actively manage forests so they are more resilient to devastating fires and infestations of insects and disease
- ❖ We promote forests with GROWING trees that store carbon
- ❖ We encourage Congress to provide our federal partners clear land management objectives that truly enable them to effectively manage federal public lands for reduced risk of catastrophic wildfires and enhanced forest health on a landscape level
- ❖ We support the interests of private forest landowners by providing efficient and cost effective wildland fire protection and providing services through various forestry programs
- ❖ We are opening the door to emerging ecosystems markets as long as the markets can compete with other revenue generating uses of the land



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**[www.wslca.org](http://www.wslca.org)**