



**AGREEMENT FOR SHARED STEWARDSHIP
BETWEEN
STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
AND
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE**

This Agreement for Shared Stewardship (agreement) is hereby made and entered into by and between the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Fire Protection (DFFP) and the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service).

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this agreement is to recognize the longstanding relationship between DFFP and the Forest Service in support of shared goals and to continue this collaboration for mutually-beneficial outcomes across ownerships. Priority outcomes include maintaining the forest products industry, identifying and supporting opportunities for industry growth, managing for forest health and restoration, addressing fuels reduction, supporting local and regional economies, and achieving other mutually identified objectives.

Both agencies acknowledge the critical role a viable forest products industry plays in carrying out public land management objectives, especially in rural and remote Alaska where energy costs are high and transportation infrastructure is limited. Forest treatments cannot be realized without industry infrastructure, workforce, and overall capacity. To support industry viability, both agencies are committed to consistently offering a reliable supply of timber to increase overall industry confidence in a dependable timber supply. Without a consistent and reliable timber supply, on an annual basis, investments in equipment, technology, and workforce development become unfeasible. Offering a reliable and consistent timber supply, across landownerships, requires long-term commitments by both the State of Alaska and Forest Service. Both agencies will seek opportunities to advance young growth forest products while meeting market demand for old growth timber.

II. BACKGROUND

Alaska's forests play a critical role in supporting communities and economies. They provide raw materials for value-added products, supply drinking water, support subsistence resources and indigenous culture, and support a growing visitor industry. This agreement for shared stewardship will

establish a lasting partnership between the State of Alaska and Forest Service to implement shared stewardship across jurisdictional boundaries.

DFFP's mission is to manage forests for multiple uses and sustained yield of renewable resources on 20 million acres of State of Alaska lands, including 3 state forests totaling 2 million acres: Tanana Valley State Forest in interior Alaska, Southeast State Forest in southern and central Southeast Alaska, and Haines State Forest in northern Southeast Alaska. DFFP provides fire protection services and related fire and aviation management activities on 154 million acres of land throughout Alaska and spanning multiple ownerships.

The Forest Service mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Forest Service manages the 5.4 million-acre Chugach National Forest in Southcentral Alaska and the 16.7 million-acre Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska. In total, the Forest Service provides fire protection services on 28 million acres. Alaska Region's mission is to manage the Chugach and Tongass National Forests to meet society's needs for goods, services, and amenities while enhancing forest health and productivity, and to foster similar outcomes for state and private forestland across Alaska.

DFFP and the Forest Service have a long history of cross-boundary collaboration for fire management through all-risk incident management teams, fuels reduction, and forest management, including commercial timber harvest. DFFP and the Forest Service also collaborate statewide on forest resource inventory and through Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act programs. This includes providing forest health surveys and monitoring, support for community forestry management, along with technical and financial assistance to private forest landowners. DFFP has also implemented fuels reduction and young growth timber projects on National Forest System lands using the Good Neighbor Authority.

During August 2018, the Forest Service announced an outcome-based investment framework – *Toward Shared Stewardship Across Landscapes*. The Forest Service framework outlined three core elements including: 1) determining management needs at a state level; 2) doing the right work in the right places at the right scale; and 3) using all available tools for active management. Working with states, tribes, communities, and other partners, the Forest Service can set priorities and plan investments across landscapes in areas where collaborative work will have the greatest beneficial impact. Shared stewardship can bring partners and stakeholders together across shared landscapes, capitalizing on existing tools and authorities, to determine mutual goals and priorities, analyze tradeoffs, and identify where to make the coordinated investments needed to achieve the cross-boundary outcomes desired by all.

On March 1, 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14225, *Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production*, identifying timber production as critical to the nation's well-being. The executive order further directed the secretary of US Department of Agriculture (USDA), through the Forest Service, to issue new or updated guidance to facilitate increased timber production and sound forest management, reduce time to deliver timber, and decrease timber supply uncertainty.

On April 3, 2025, USDA Secretary Rollins issued Secretarial Memorandum 1078-006, *Increasing Timber Production and Designating an Emergency Situation on National Forest System Lands*, directing the Forest Service to take action in response to Executive Order 14225. In the memorandum,

the secretary directed the Forest Service to work with state governments, local partners, and federally-recognized tribes to collaboratively align respective priorities.

Concurrent with Secretarial Memorandum 1078-006, Acting Associate Chief Christopher French issued a Forest Service memorandum (dated 4/3/25) to regional foresters and deputy chiefs addressing implementation of Executive Order 14225 and Secretarial Memorandum 1078-006. In the implementation direction, French identified three goals: 1) to support rural economies and forest product industry partners; 2) reduce the risk of destructive wildfire by creating and sustaining healthy forests and watersheds; and 3) build capacity through workforce alignment and partnerships. To achieve the goals, within current capacity constraints, regional foresters were directed to develop five-year strategies tiered to the national strategy to increase timber volume. Furthermore, an expectation was set for Forest Service line officers to work with state governments, tribal governments, and municipalities to establish priorities and identify opportunities to share resources for execution of regional and national active forest management strategies.

On May 30, 2025, the Forest Service issued a *National Active Forest Management Strategy* that identified shared stewardship agreements and related partnerships as a strategic focus area for implementation purposes. Under this national direction, Alaska Region is committed in its five-year strategy to develop a new shared stewardship agreement to collaborate in making strategic investments across land ownerships for mutually desired outcomes and including both the Chugach and Tongass National Forests.

Alaska is remote, geographically distant to markets, has limited infrastructure, and high energy and transportation costs. To support a robust forest products industry, old growth timber will remain important for high-value forest products and existing industry while investments are made and markets are developed for increased utilization of young growth. Implementation of Alaska's five-year active management strategy will include both young- and old-growth timber management, as guided by the forest plan and in alignment with 1990 Tongass Timber Reform Act, to support the forest products industry and community socioeconomic wellbeing.

III. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND BENEFITS

DFFP and the Forest Service have complementary missions concerning forest resources and both entities manage lands that share boundaries across broad geographic areas. DFFP and the Forest Service face landscape-scale biophysical challenges that span ownership boundaries including managing for forest health and restoration, addressing fuels reduction, maintaining the current timber industry, and growing industry by identifying young growth investment opportunities.

DFFP and the Forest Service also have mutual interests in cooperatively meeting these challenges to achieve multiple benefits including supporting local and regional economic opportunity, creating safer communities, building resilient landscapes, and improving forest conditions. This includes providing wood for in-state value-added processing, export markets, energy, personal use, and local construction. DFFP and the Forest Service are committed to working with the timber industry on advancing innovative processes and exploration of new forest product markets. DFFP and the Forest Service will work collaboratively to maintain watershed function for clean drinking water, along with supporting

fish and wildlife habitat through science-based forest management practices for ecological, social, and economic benefits.

DFFP and the Forest Service collectively benefit from increased organizational effectiveness through coordinating funding, resources, and staff capacity to achieve mutually-beneficial outcomes in support of meeting shared goals across Alaska.

DFFP and the Forest Service agree it is in their mutual benefit and best interest to establish an interagency team focused on achieving the goals and objectives of this shared stewardship agreement. This team will consist of key Forest Service and DFFP personnel who share a commitment to increasing active management on the Tongass and Chugach National Forests, and across jurisdictional boundaries. Team members will work together to develop a strategy to meet the objectives in section IV and V of this agreement and exchange data to support timely, well-informed decision-making.

This team will collectively work to:

- A. Develop projects with measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes in priority areas as identified through federal and state planning documents in support of ecological, social, and economic benefits for Alaska communities.
- B. Encourage cross-boundary forestry activities related to forest health and active forest management by private and public forest landowners. Create and share GIS-based mapping assessments to inform management activities, refine forest inventory products, identify infrastructure needs, and support outcomes that benefit all parties. Identify opportunities and share information on other resource development projects that would benefit the region.
- C. Support local and regional economic activity by identifying priority opportunities for the forest products industry in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska.
- D. Use Good Neighbor Authority to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration projects.
- E. Coordinate planning and implementation of landscape restoration and active management across jurisdictional boundaries to address forest health, watershed protection, and wildfire risk at the scale required to address current challenges.
- F. Expand innovative approaches to project implementation on Tongass and Chugach National Forests in alignment with this agreement and using all available instruments including Challenge Cost-Share Agreements, Good Neighbor Agreements, and related instruments.
- G. Both parties will commit to reporting progress to DFFP and the Forest Service annually.

IV. DFFP AND THE FOREST SERVICE MUTUALLY AGREE TO:

1. The DFFP and Forest Service will work together to develop a timber action plan identifying priority projects that are in alignment with the Tongass Forest plan and the 1990 Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA). This plan will be developed by the end of calendar year 2026.
 - a. The parties will identify timber sales on the Tongass National Forest that seek to meet existing market demand for timber from the forest, consistent with multiple use and sustained yield of forest resources.
 - b. With the intent of improving utilization and inviting new investment in local manufacturing of forest products in Southeast Alaska, the parties will:

- i. Identify timber sales where longer-term contracts or agreements, such as 10 or 20 years with potential 10-yr extension options, may be appropriate and beneficial. All contracts would be in alignment with the forest plan, the 1990 Tongass Timber Reform Act, and other applicable authorities.
 - ii. Develop a proposal for a sustained yield unit, consistent with the Act of March 29, 1944 (Sustained Yield Forest Management), the National Forest Management Act and other applicable law, for consideration by the Chief of the Forest Service.
 - c. Marketing materials including a prospectus for potential purchasers will be developed to help attract investment, meet market demand for Alaska forest products, and encourage investment in young growth harvesting and processing technology. Identification of these timber sale opportunities will serve as a foundation for industry investment to bring modern milling and harvesting technology to Southeast Alaska. The *Tongass Young Growth Analysis* serves as an essential tool in developing this plan.
2. Jointly identify landscape scale areas on the Tongass National Forest in which the State of Alaska can enter into agreements for state implementation of authorized restoration and active management projects on up to 300,000 acres in alignment with forest plans and Forest Service strategic direction. The parties anticipate Good Neighbor Authority will be used as a tool to conduct authorized forest management activities and EXPLORE Act authority will be used as a tool to carry out authorized recreation infrastructure improvements within these areas.
 3. Jointly work on planning and environmental review processes to ensure use of best available information and streamline analysis. Continue to develop spatial data on forest and resource inventory and infrastructure needs. Ensure sharing of data and information, including that related to forest health issues, employment and economic drivers within the region, forest and resource inventory, infrastructure and opportunities for reduction of wildfire risk to communities. Ensure lessons learned from past collaborative projects, including after action reviews of Good Neighbor Authority projects, are built into future work plans.
 4. Develop a strategy to maintain sawmill and forest operations, workforce capacity, encourage forest products industry innovation and investment, and support a transition to young growth harvest.
 5. Develop a strategy for timber market development in southeast Alaska and innovative technology for in-state processing of forest products.
 6. Prioritize implementation of pre-commercial thinning projects that are beneficial to all landowners.
 7. Develop a road use agreement in Southeast Alaska that makes economic sense for all landowners to meet young growth management objectives.
 8. Work to facilitate access to State of Alaska administered lands that require access across federal lands.
 9. Continue to work with collaborative groups such as the All-Lands Group, The Tongass Collaborative, and additional local and regional organizations to encourage active forest management. Increase collaboration with additional entities including: 1) state, local, and tribal governments; 2) community and regional development organizations; 3) educational

- institutions to help prioritize desired outcomes using all available authorities and active management tools.
10. Continue monitoring forest health conditions and impacts from insects, disease, invasive species, and abiotic stressors by aerial and ground detection surveys on all lands across the state in all forest types.
 11. Jointly identify a list of potential initial projects that address forest health challenges and meet the needs of communities and forest products industry. Continue to refine that list through the life of this agreement.
 12. Cooperate to provide forest management expertise to non-federal public and private landowners, supporting cross-boundary objectives such as timber production, wildfire risk mitigation, and forest health and resilience. Work collaboratively to provide technical and other assistance to all landowners impacted by forest insect and disease to include investigations, diagnostics, mitigation, and outreach and education. Explore innovative approaches to identify, prevent, and suppress forest health outbreaks and conduct restoration.
 13. Cooperate to address needs for management of community forests to improve public safety and maximize ecosystem services provided by community trees and green spaces.
 14. Assist in developing an in-state forest technician occupational endorsement or other training opportunities.

V. OTHER SHARED STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Through existing authorities, the State of Alaska and the Forest Service will identify opportunities to collaborate in managing other resources across jurisdictional boundaries, including but not limited to:

1. Enhancing and providing sustainable fish and wildlife habitat,
2. Establishing fuels and fire mitigation project goals in appropriate forest types to protect communities and values on the landscape.
3. Exploring new opportunities to collaborate on hydroelectric licensed or authorized projects. This includes coordination for special use permits, rights-of-way, easements, licenses, and other applicable approvals.
4. Exploring new opportunities to work together on the planning, development, operation, and stewardship of areas, facilities, and activities associated with mineral exploration and development projects. This includes coordination for special use permits, rights-of-way, easements, licenses, and other applicable approvals.

VI. IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED AND UNDERSTOOD BY THE PARTIES THAT:

- A. The intended result of this agreement is to focus agency work to increase active management of the Tongass and Chugach National Forests to explicitly provide for economic opportunities, public safety, forest health, community resiliency, and rural prosperity. This will be accomplished by managing for resilient ecosystems, reducing forest fuels, increasing the

efficiency of planning efforts, providing opportunities for the wood products industry, and leveraging resources and funding opportunities through cross-boundary coordination and interagency planning.

- B. Cooperators will evaluate use of separate instruments to implement management activities associated with forest lands. Specific projects or activities that involve a transfer of services and/or anything of value require the execution of separate instruments. Such instruments may include but are not limited to: Good Neighbor Authority Agreements, Collection Agreements, Challenge Cost-Share Agreements, Participating Agreements, Volunteer Agreements, Domestic Grants, or through procurement actions.
- C. This agreement is executed as of the date of the last signature. Any of the parties may, in writing, terminate this agreement as a whole or in part at any time before the expiration date.
- D. This agreement in no way restricts the parties from participating in similar activities with other entities.
- E. This is a nonbinding agreement and creates no right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity. The parties shall manage their respective resources and activities in a separate, coordinated, and mutually beneficial manner to meet the purposes of this agreement. Nothing in this agreement authorizes any of the parties to obligate or transfer anything of value.
- F. Specific, prospective projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, property, and/or anything of value to a party requires the execution of separate agreements and are contingent upon numerous factors, including, as applicable, but not limited to: agency availability of appropriated funds and other resources; cooperator availability of funds and other resources; agency and cooperator administrative and legal requirements (including agency authorization by statute). This agreement neither provides, nor meets these criteria. If the parties elect to enter into an obligation agreement that involves the transfer of funds, services, property, and/or anything of value to a party, then the applicable criteria must be met. Additionally, under a prospective agreement, each party operates under its own laws, regulations, and/or policies, and any Forest Service obligation is subject to the availability of appropriated funds and other resources. The negotiation, execution, and administration of these prospective agreements must comply with all applicable authorities. Nothing in this agreement is intended to alter, limit, or expand the agencies' statutory and regulatory authority.
- G. Individuals listed below are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters related to this agreement and/or designate others to act on their behalf.
- H. This Agreement shall become effective on the date of the final signature by the parties (the "Effective Date") and shall remain in effect for twenty (20) years. The parties agree to meet annually to review and assess progress and whether this Shared Stewardship Agreement is serving its purpose and to adjust as appropriate.

VII. TRIBAL INTERESTS

The Forest Service may consult Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations if it determines that policy formulation or implementation under this agreement, or related contracts/agreements, have Tribal implications. Nothing in this agreement or related contracts/agreements alters the federal

government's government-to-government and trust relationship with Tribes or limits the Forest Service's authority under or compliance with federal law.

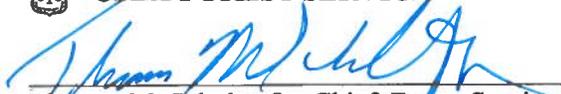
VIII. AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES

By signature below, each party certifies that the individuals listed in this agreement as representatives of the individual parties are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters related to this agreement for shared stewardship.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this agreement as of the last date written below.



USDA FOREST SERVICE


Thomas M. Schultz, Jr., Chief, Forest Service

2/24/2026
Date



STATE OF ALASKA


Mike Dunleavy, Governor

2-24-26
Date



USDA FOREST SERVICE, ALASKA REGION

JEREMIAH INGERSOLL

Digitally signed by JEREMIAH INGERSOLL
Date: 2026.02.23 07:39:47 -09'00'

Jerry Ingersoll, Acting Regional Forester, Alaska Region

Date



STATE OF ALASKA, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES


John Crowther, Commissioner Designee

02/21/2026
Date



STATE OF ALASKA, DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION


Jeremy Douse, State Forester

2/20/2026
Date