

Innovative Partnerships For Resilient Forests and Watersheds

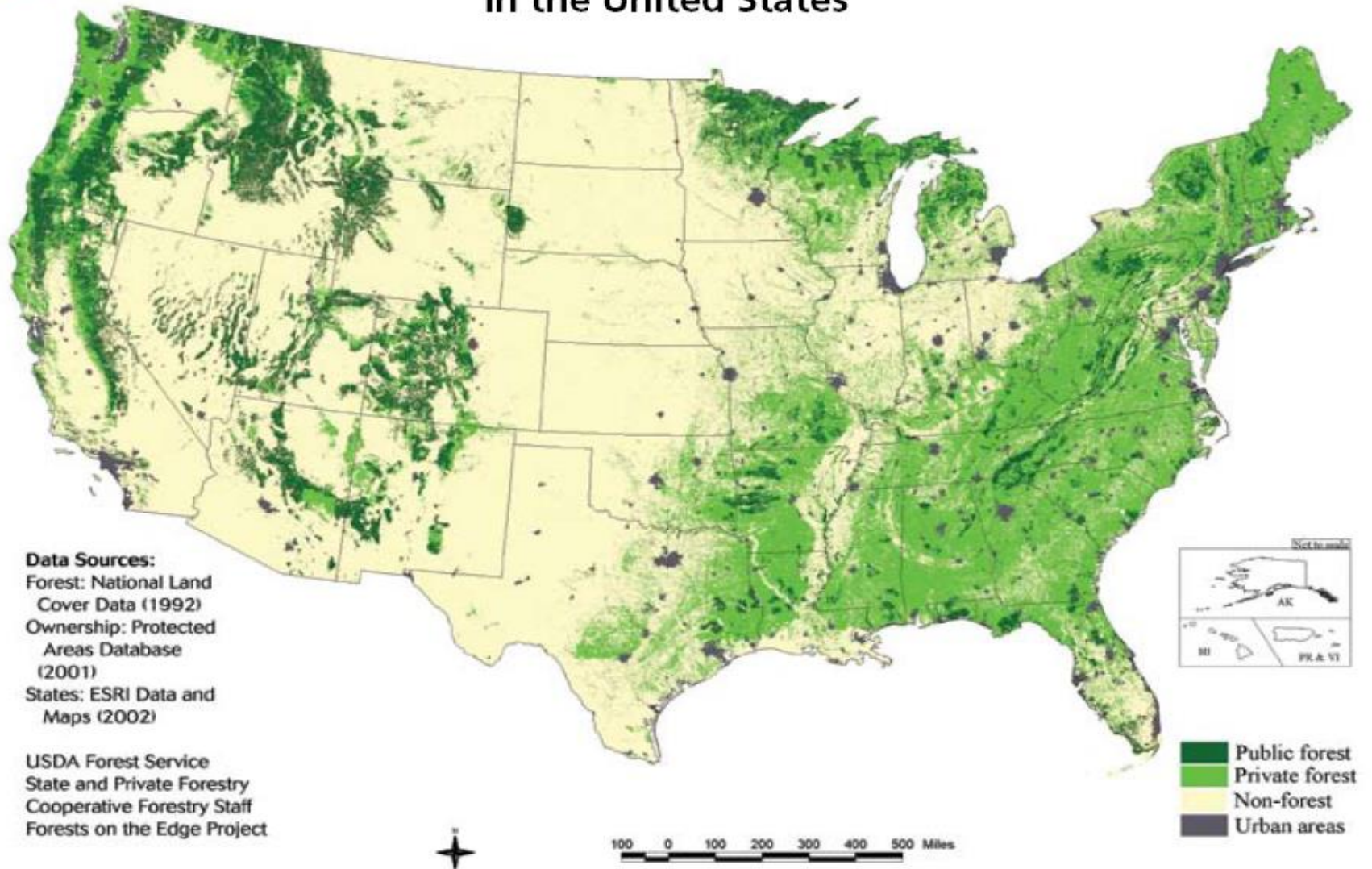
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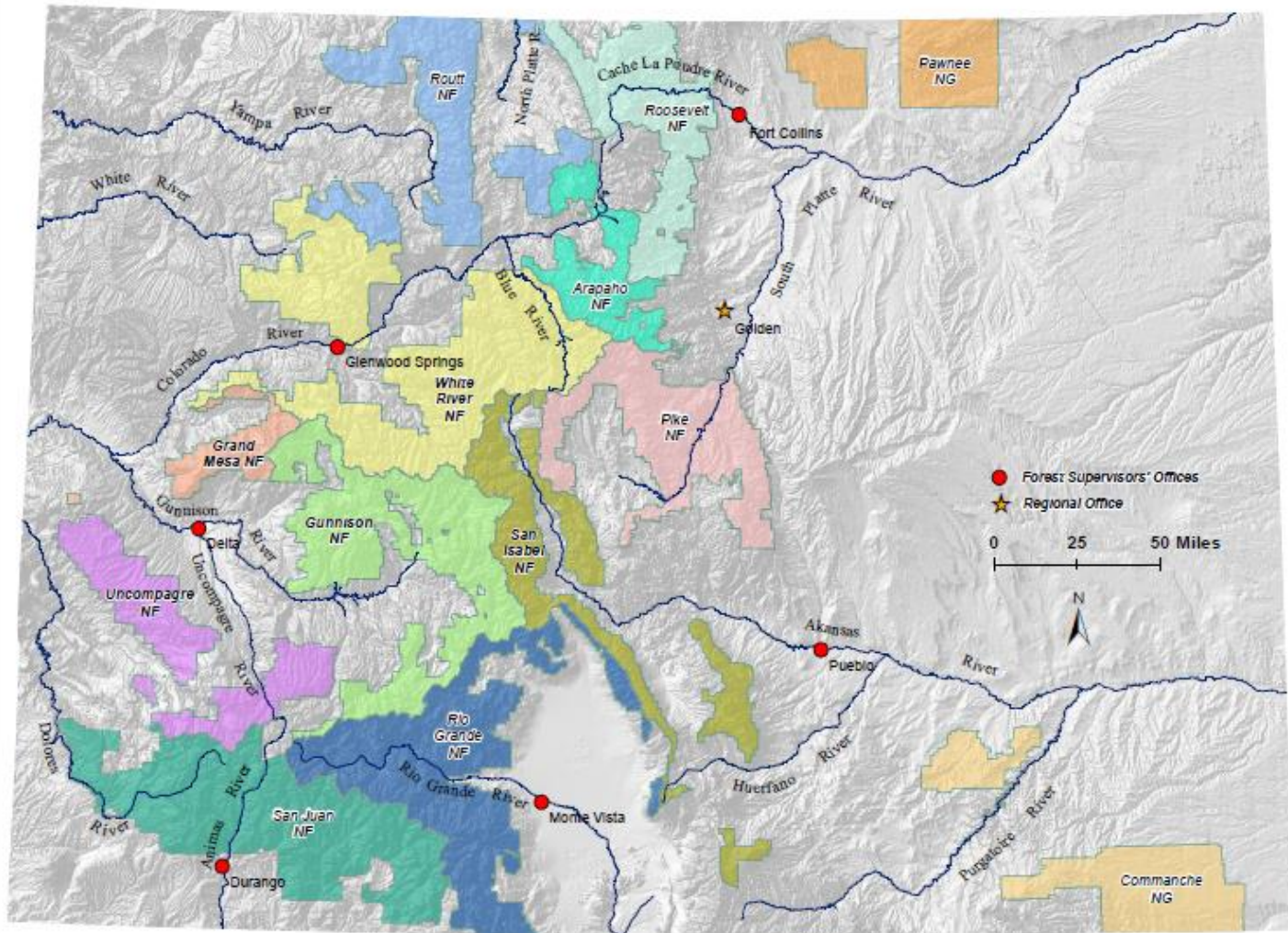


Your Forests, Your Water

MAP 1

Public and Private Forest Ownership in the United States





National Legislation

- Organic Administration Act of 1897:
 - “No national forest shall be established, except to improve and protect the forest within the boundaries, or for the purpose of **securing favorable conditions of water flows**, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of citizens of the United States...”
- Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960:
 - “...it is the policy of the Congress that the national forests are established and shall be administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, **watershed**, and wildlife and fish purposes.”



Current Challenges

- Our mission of balancing multiple uses and benefits is inherently challenging
 - competing demands for limited budgets and capacity
- Planning for a “hot, dry & crowded” world:
 - Uncharacteristic, large wildfires exacerbated by drought
 - Insect & disease epidemics impacting forest conditions
 - Continued population growth in the region increasing demands from our public lands for recreational visitation, water supplies, energy, etc.





Buffalo Creek Fire Area. Source: USGS



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Hayman Burn Area. Source: USFS photo by C. Rhoades



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Mountain Pine Beetle Impacted Trees. Source: USFS



Importance of Partnerships

- Partnerships of all forms help the USFS accomplish its mission.
- Added capacity to increase pace & scale of restoration.
- Multi-jurisdictional/landscape-scale approach.
- Opportunities for learning and coordination.



Current USFS Priorities: Shared Stewardship

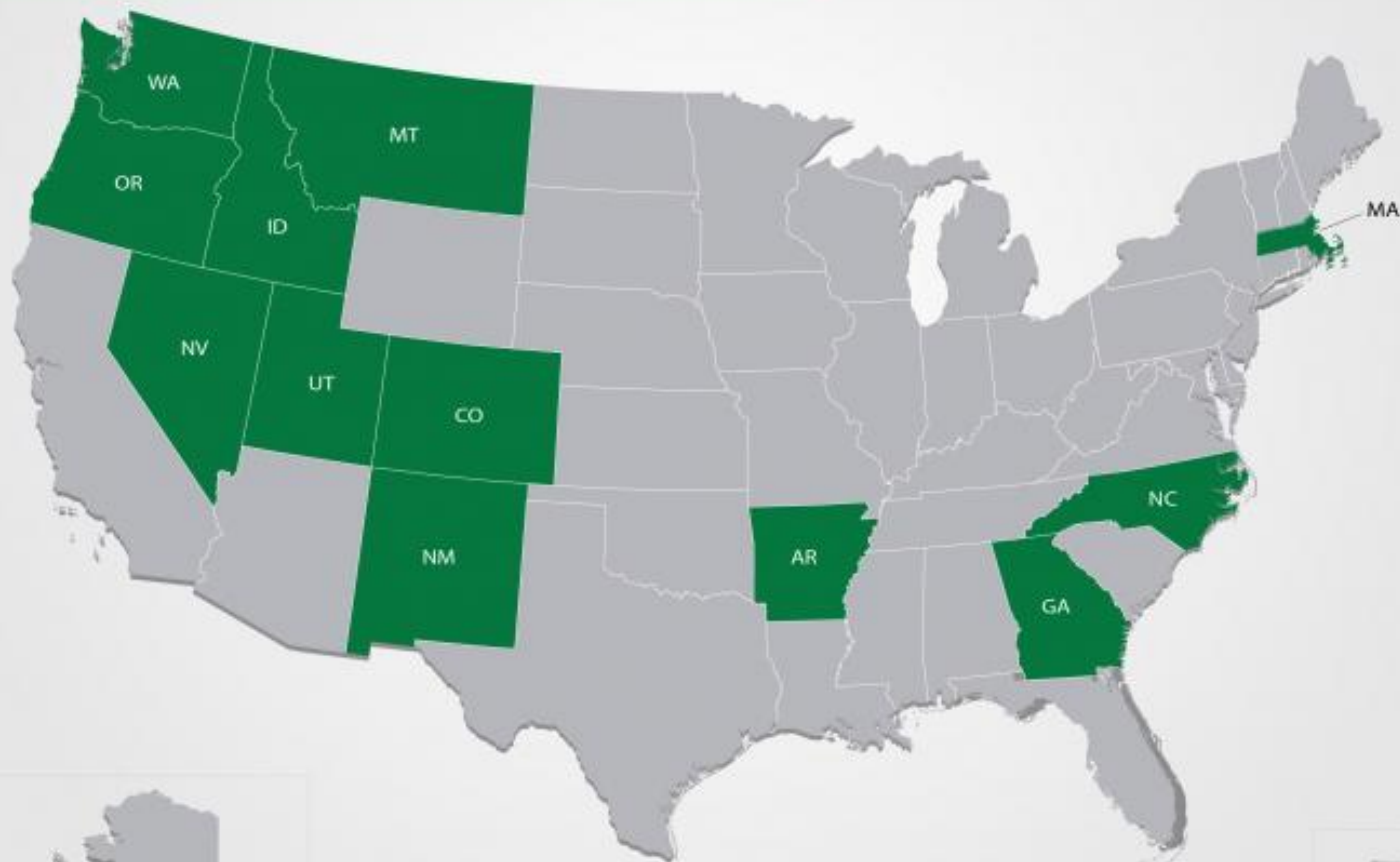
- Strategy to work with states (and others) to set priorities and co-manage risk at the landscape scale.
 - Science-based tools inform prioritization of places for action.
- Recognition of relationships between national forests and communities.
- Process: states work with the USFS on memoranda of understanding (MOUs).





SHARED STEWARDSHIP

DOING THE RIGHT WORK, IN THE RIGHT PLACES, AT THE RIGHT TIME.



 SIGNED SHARED STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENTS  OTHER

Shared Stewardship Here in Colorado

- MOU signed in October 2019.
- Seven Themes:
 1. Ecological restoration
 2. Sustainable recreation opportunities
 3. Sustainable recreation amenities
 4. Protection of water resources and critical infrastructure
 5. Conserve fish and wildlife
 6. Diversity
 7. Healthy communities



Examples of Watershed Partnerships

- Regional/large-scale
 - CO Front Range Watershed Investment Providers
 - Infrastructure and collection areas that span several national forests.
- Local/community-based
 - Buffalo, WY
 - Steamboat Springs, CO
 - Infrastructure and collection areas location on a single national forest.



Front Range Water Partnerships

- Water providers who serve Denver, Aurora, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Ft Collins, etc.
 - 3.2 million customers
- Over 100,000 acres of treatments completed in the past decade.
- \$40 million in external funds; similar amount invested by USFS.
- Thinning, prescribed fire, and watershed improvements.

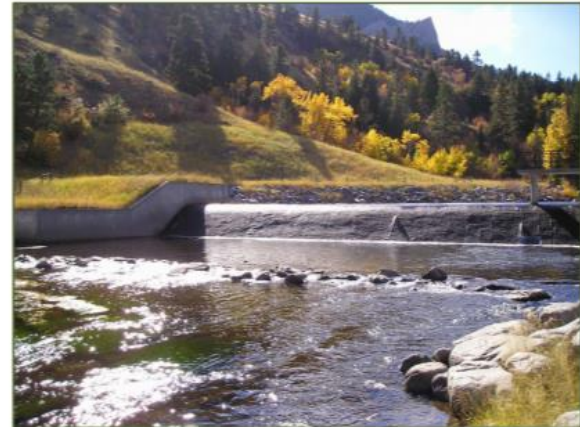


Buffalo Municipal Watershed Project

- Buffalo, Wyoming.
- Funds from the state of Wyoming for a wildfire watershed analysis.
- Analysis informed the design of an interdisciplinary management project to protect the city's watershed.
- Funds for project implementation from Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Program.



Buffalo Municipal Watershed Environmental Assessment



Forest Service Bighorn National Forest Powder River Ranger District July 2018



Fish Creek Critical Community Wildfire Watershed Protection Plan [(CWP)²]

- Steamboat Springs, Colorado.
- Single watershed located on national forest land.
- Grant from Colorado Water Conservation Board.
- Watershed wildfire analysis.
- Key result: improved coordination between different stakeholders.



Source: City of Steamboat Springs



Beyond Colorado and Wyoming

- Several examples in the Southwest
 - Northern Arizona Forest Fund
 - Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project
 - Rio Grande Water Fund and Albuquerque
 - Santa Fe Municipal Watershed Project
 - Rio Grande Water Fund



Resources and opportunities

- Engage with local National Forests, state foresters, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service
 - Planning coordination
 - Technical & financial assistance available
- Get involved with local, collaborative watershed & forest restoration groups
- Assess watershed risks and priorities
- Track Shared Stewardship efforts in your state.



QUESTIONS?

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Northern Arizona Forest Fund

- Focused on Verde and Salt Rivers' watersheds that supply Phoenix and other cities in the state.
- Forest thinning, meadow and riparian restoration, trail rehabilitation.
- Administered by the National Forest Foundation.
- Businesses and cities invest in the fund.



National Forest Foundation



Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project

- 2010: Schultz Fire burned ~15,000 acres above Flagstaff, including large amount of high-severity fire.
- 2012: Flagstaff voters approved a \$10 million bond to support forest restoration on the Coconino National Forest.
- Reduce risks of post-fire flooding and erosion and associated impacts on water supply, infrastructure, and houses.



NASA

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Santa Fe Municipal Watershed Project

- 2000: Cerro Grande Fire and post-fire impacts.
- Initial forest restoration efforts beginning in 2002.
- Funds from Congressional earmark provided start-up funds.
- Now city bond funds and a water rate increase support this project.
- Initial success: foundation for ongoing collaborative forest restoration – Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition.



**The Greater Santa Fe
Fireshed Coalition**



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Rio Grande Water Fund

- Las Conchas Fire in 2011; monsoon rains following the fire caused substantial flooding and erosion.
- Water fund launched in 2014 to invest in forest restoration.
- The Nature Conservancy – leader.
- Protect water for Albuquerque, other communities, and agricultural users.
- \$5 million in private funding; \$48 million in public funding leveraged.



Your Forests, Your Water

Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program

- Organized by California state agency, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and USFS.
- Supports forest restoration, protection of water quality and quantity, and improvements to socio-economic conditions.
- In 2019, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy authorized \$26 million for forest health projects.
 - Two bonds approved by state voters in 2014 and 2018.
 - California Climate Investments.

