



**NEWS
RELEASE**



United States
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service
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Upper North Fork Project identified as one of 15 projects funded by the Chiefs' Joint Landscape Restoration Partnership in 2015

Salmon, Idaho – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced Thursday nearly \$37 million in investments to mitigate wildfire threats to landowners and communities. This is the second year of a partnership between the U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to help improve the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems where public and private lands meet.

“By leveraging the technical and financial resources of both agencies, this coordinated effort is helping to restore lands across large landscapes regardless of whether they are on public or private lands,” USDA Undersecretary Robert Bonnie said. “Our successes from the 2014 projects demonstrate that these partnerships make a difference on the ground and we are grateful for the cooperation of several partners.”

Bonnie noted that in some cases [these new projects](#) build on last year’s efforts. The partnership [made investments in 2014](#) that will result in conservation improvements to over 266,000 acres. NRCS and Forest Service will provide an additional \$27 million to continue work on 2014 projects.

In addition to NRCS and Forest Service investments, partners are contributing more than \$5 million in the 2015 projects over three years in financial, technical and in-kind services. These 15 new projects, coupled with the 13 announced last year, will help mitigate wildfire threats to communities and landowners, protect water quality and supply, and improve wildlife habitat for at-risk species in high priority landscapes across the US.

“Strategic investments across landscapes help create resilient forests, grasslands and watersheds while sustaining communities,” said Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. “Treating lands to reduce wildfire threats is a smart investment that will protect vast areas of land and potentially save of millions of taxpayer dollars.”

A Salmon-Challis National Forest Project was selected for the state of Idaho:

Idaho – Upper North Fork Project: Idaho’s Upper North Fork is a great example of a project that provides a big benefit for a small investment. Fires often spread from private property onto public lands where they are difficult to control and become wildfires.

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The fix is to stop fires at the point where they start, before they have a chance to spread. However, many private landowners do not have the technical knowledge or funds to treat hazardous fuels on their property. This project targets private lands where fires have a high probability of starting and adjacent National Forest lands where they will initially spread. Treating fuels in these areas is relatively inexpensive and protects a vast area of public land. Implementing this simple solution would be unlikely without coordination among the partners. Partners for this project include: Lemhi Forest Restoration Group; The North Fork Rural Fire Dept.; Lemhi County WUI, Idaho Fish & Game; and Idaho Department of Highways.

The Chiefs' Joint Landscape Restoration Partnership was made possible by the 2014 Farm Bill.

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