

Governor Gregoire, Commissioner Goldmark Applaud USDA Forest Action

Local News

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - Governor Chris Gregoire and Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark today expressed strong support of a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announcement to accelerate forest restoration. As part of USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack's restoration strategy, \$40 million has been allocated for 20 projects nationwide that will enhance forest health and restore watersheds, including two in national forests in eastern Washington. This investment is good for our forests, and it's good for our economic recovery, this funding will help develop new models of sustainable management while creating jobs in rural parts of our state. I commend those involved in developing this proposal. Their collaboration has paid off. - Gov. Christine Gregoire

In December, Gregoire and Goldmark joined the state's Congressional Delegation in writing Vilsack to urge that he select the Colville National Forest to receive funding under the U.S. Forest Service's Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) program competition. In January, 33 members of the Washington State Legislature wrote the Secretary, pledging their support.

I have been greatly concerned with the health of eastern Washington's forests and rural communities, Secretary Vilsack today provided just what the doctor ordered. - Commissioner Peter Goldmark
The CFLR program provides a stable funding source to national forests in which management has successfully reduced conflicts over forest management decisions and made a commitment to forest restoration.

"Without the support of Senators Murray and Cantwell, and Representatives Dicks and McMorris Rodgers, this would not have been possible," said Goldmark. Considered a high priority project, the Colville National Forest will receive funding for the first time, in the amount of \$968,000 according to USDA. The Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest was selected for funding in 2011, and today, Vilsack announced the project's continued funding for another year. The environmental community and the forest industry, once adversaries, came together eight years ago on the Colville National Forest to resolve their differences. The group, called the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition, has advanced a shared goal of environmental protection alongside economic prosperity and sustainable forestry. The Coalition is comprised of member groups such as Conservation Northwest, The Lands Council, Vaagen Brothers Lumber, and Avista Utilities, among many others. Webpage with [letters of support for proposal](#) from: Governor Gregoire/ Goldmark; State of Washington Congressional Delegation; State of Washington Representatives.