

1. What types of projects have proven to be successful uses of the authority?

In Colorado, federal and state partners to work across multiple ownerships to increase the effectiveness of fuel reduction efforts have used Good Neighbor Authority (GNA). Projects have occurred on four of the seven national forests in Colorado. These projects focused mostly on fuels reduction in the WUI and treated over 3,800 acres. In Utah, the authority has been successfully used on Timber sale preparation, burning assistance, and extensively in rehabilitation of trails, fences, road drainage, and meadow protection.

The most successful projects are collaboratively developed projects with sufficient lead-time that include a U.S. Forest Service District Ranger and a State District Forester who are supportive of the program and were willing to dedicate the proper staff and funding to make the program a success.

The primary reasons for using the GNA include that access to National Forest System Lands was only available through adjoining private lands: intermixed ownerships with similar projects created implementation efficiencies. The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) entered into reverse Good Neighbor Agreements for us to do work on private and state lands where we had the preponderance of work in the area and it was more efficient for us to complete the work than for CSFS send their crews for small amounts of work. Other reasons include expediting the obligation of money or simplifying acquisition of services.

2. How have the differences in the authority's scope within each state affected project selection?

According to their Good Neighbor authorizing legislation, the U.S. Forest Service and BLM in Colorado may permit CSFS to perform watershed restoration activities on federal lands when the agency is carrying out similar and complementary activities on adjacent state or private lands. This has generally resulted in fuel reduction projects that take place near state or private boundaries, where nonfederal fuel reduction efforts had already occurred or were under way. In Utah, however, the authorization requires neither that the projects be part of a broader effort nor that they be adjacent to nonfederal lands. In practice, this less restrictive standard has led to a wider array of projects in Utah, such as the culvert replacement, barrier rock installation, and trail reconstruction undertaken in the Dixie National Forest.

3. How are project planning and implementation responsibilities being divided among federal and state project partners?

Generally, the federal agency conducts the NEPA compliance. Both Utah and Colorado have developed guides that are helpful, especially if a timber sale is involved (note link to a sample guide here). A Good Neighbor Project Task Order or Project Agreement for the project is prepared and approved by both the Forest Service and the state agency. The Forest Service also provides or approves silviculture prescriptions and marking guides to be applied on the National Forest System lands. Such prescriptions and guides should be compatible and/or compliment treatments being applied on adjoining non- National Forest System lands. The GNA Project Task Order details which agency will be responsible for project design, layout, and administration. State crews or contractors perform the work on U.S. Forest Service or in some cases vice versa.

4. What are the costs and benefits associated with using Good Neighbor authority to conduct projects, including any project efficiencies and cost savings that have resulted from the authority's use

Over 2 million dollars of work has been completed to date. Costs compare very favorably to costs for Forest Service Only treatments. In some cases, additional partners (Denver Water Board) paid for the treatments on National Forest Lands adjacent to their ownership. Non-monetary benefits include:

- a. National Forest, state, and private lands are at less risk from catastrophic wildland fire;
- b. The fuel treatments conducted provide defensible space for firefighters to occupy while combating fire from moving from forests to developed areas, or vice versa;
- c. An impediment to cross-boundary watershed restoration activities (i.e. "Boundary less management") was removed, resulting in greater protective and restoration accomplishments.

Another specific non-tangible benefits is the actual completion of the treatment. As mentioned above one of the primary reasons for using the authority is there is only access to the national forest through the private ownership. Without using the GNA, it is doubtful that the project would have been viable with the Forest Service process for acquiring access.