News Release

USDA Forest Service
Rocky Mountain Region
740 Simms Street, Golden, CO 80401
Contact: Lawrence Lujan, 303-275-5356

Colorado State Forest Service
3843 LaPorte Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80523
Contact: Ryan Lockwood, 970-491-8970

Agreement to Help Forestry Agencies Improve Forest Health Across Boundary Lines

GOLDEN, Colo., Nov. 4, 2015 – The USDA Forest Service (USFS) and Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) – a service and outreach agency of Colorado State University – have finalized an expanded federal-state partnership that will indefinitely enable and increase management efforts on federal lands. The Master Good Neighbor Agreement, signed this week, fosters a collaborative approach and leverages state resources to accomplish work across land ownership boundaries onto National Forest System lands. Eligible projects include those that protect water supplies, manage bark beetles, reduce wildfire risk and meet other forest management objectives.

Under the agreement, the CSFS will have the authority to conduct forest treatments on the 11 National Forests in Colorado, complementing work on state and private lands. The CSFS is working on a similar agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Specific benefits of the Good Neighbor Authority include greater efficiencies and less need for creating and maintaining roads to address project work.

Colorado is now only the fourth state to finalize the forest management agreement between state and federal forestry agencies; the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources signed the first of such agreements with the USFS in August, and in the past two weeks similar agreements were signed in Michigan and Texas.

"The Good Neighbor Authority allows effective sharing of limited resources to achieve landscape-scale impacts that mitigate fire risk, improve forest health and reduce risk to life and property," said Mike Lester, State Forester and Director of the Colorado State Forest Service.

The Good Neighbor program was expanded nationally in the 2014 Farm Bill and allows the USFS and BLM to enter into cooperative agreements with states to perform forest, rangeland and watershed restoration projects on federal lands. Although the Good Neighbor Authority now applies nationally, Colorado and Utah were first to test-pilot the policy starting in the year 2000.

"This Good Neighbor Agreement with the State of Colorado provides a strong foundation to accomplish important watershed and forest health restoration work," said Dan Jirón, Regional Forester for the Rocky Mountain Region of the USDA Forest Service. "Working across boundaries further enhances our ability to reduce wildfire risk, improve local economies and protect water supplies."

While the USDA Forest Service takes action on National Forest lands, the CSFS works with private landowners to help them meet their management objectives to achieve healthy forests.

For further information on the Good Neighbor Authority, visit http://www.fs.fed.us/farmbill/gna.shtml. For information directed at private landowners seeking to achieve healthier forests and reduced wildfire risks, visit www.csfs.colostate.edu.

###

The mission of the U.S. Forest Service 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 agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Public lands the Forest Service manages contribute more than $13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20 percent of the nation's clean water supply, a value estimated at $27 billion per year. The agency has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 80 percent of the 850 million forested acres within the U.S., of which 100 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live.

The Colorado State Forest Service is the lead state agency for providing forest stewardship and management, fuels reduction and wildfire mitigation assistance to private landowners in Colorado. Every year, the CSFS helps treat 20,000 acres of forestland, and assists approximately 6,400 landowners and hundreds of communities to help improve forest health. The CSFS is a service and outreach agency of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University.