

# Understanding Shared Stewardship Approaches for US Forest Management

## Project Overview

### BACKGROUND

The U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) Shared Stewardship Strategy emphasizes partnership with the states, Tribes, and other collaborators to identify priority areas for management, coordinate work across jurisdictions, and leverage diverse capacities. The USFS and states are in the early stages of translating these principles into action, building upon existing state and regional efforts and partnerships. Given the diversity of interests from state and other partners, Shared Stewardship efforts will take on different forms and activities across the country, including habitat restoration, wildfire mitigation, and watershed protection. It will be important to evaluate and track the effort across multiple states nationwide over the next few years to understand how the Strategy develops in different places over time.

### PROJECT DETAILS

Researchers at Colorado State University, University of Georgia, and University of Oregon are jointly conducting a five-year study to understand Shared Stewardship perspectives from agency leadership, state officials, land managers, and other stakeholders in different states where Shared Stewardship partnerships exist. In-depth interviews and case studies throughout the project will be used to record initial expectations about the Strategy. Then, we will track implementation efforts and perspectives from those engaged in efforts related to the Strategy or who are impacted by the efforts.

Information collected during our research will help identify the factors driving state and federal choices about strategic partnerships and directions from local to federal scales across different regions and contexts in the United States. We will be able to describe the opportunities, challenges, and adjustments needed at local, state, and federal levels to successfully accomplishing cross-jurisdictional work under the new Strategy. Understanding how different people and groups define Shared Stewardship as a new or expanding approach to land management and the tools they use to implement the Strategy will provide insights into how the Strategy aligns with existing approaches and how to enhance strategic partnerships and engagements across diverse contexts and issues.

### TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES

We began collecting data in 2019 by interviewing people with national-level perspectives about the Strategy and in Western states that have Shared Stewardship agreements. In 2021, we are interviewing participants in Eastern states and conducting in-depth case studies to highlight Shared Stewardship efforts. Over the next few years, we will continue to engage additional states that sign on to the Strategy and follow up with previous participants to document their experiences. We plan to produce working papers, policy briefs, and academic publications, and share findings through presentations and webinars. Products from this research, and more information, are [available on our project website](#).

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### RESEARCHER CONTACT INFORMATION

#### Colorado State University

Primary point of contact: Courtney Schultz  
[courtney.schultz@colostate.edu](mailto:courtney.schultz@colostate.edu); 970-491-6556  
Chad Kooistra: [chadk@colostate.edu](mailto:chadk@colostate.edu)

#### University of Georgia

Jesse Abrams: [jesse.abrams@uga.edu](mailto:jesse.abrams@uga.edu)

#### University of Oregon

Heidi Huber-Stearns: [hhuber@uoregon.edu](mailto:hhuber@uoregon.edu)



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