

**WIR Board Meeting Minutes
2018 NACo Legislative Conference
Washington, DC**

A Conversation with the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service

Tony Tooke was sworn in as the 18th Chief of the U.S. Forest Service on September 1st. Chief Tooke spoke to the WIR Board of Directors about ways his agency would like to engage with county governments to achieve mutual goals of good stewardship of our natural resources, ensuring access to public lands and the creation of good-paying jobs. He also highlighted the U.S. Forest Services top-5 priorities:

- 1. Having a safe, respectful work environment that is resilient for employees.*
- 2. Being a good neighbor and excelling at customer service.*
- 3. Building a solid foundation of trust with our partners and volunteers, and streamlining environmental reviews.*
- 4. Improving forest health—80 million of 193 million acres at high risk of wildfire/insect/disease.*
- 5. Enhancing recreation/improving access/maintaining infrastructure.*

Mr. Tony Tooke, Chief, U.S. Forest Service-- *Mr. Tooke resigned as Chief on March 7th*

U.S. Department of the Interior

In January, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) announced its intention to completely reorganize by shifting staff from Washington to western states, and establishing 13 departmental regions. A map of the reorganization's proposed boundaries is attached.

Ms. Cynthia Moses-Nedd, U.S. Department of the Interior

Mr. Tim Williams, U.S. Department of the Interior

How Can Rural Counties Strengthen Local Economies?

How can rural counties strengthen local economies and revitalize communities? Jack Morgan from NACo discussed community best practices, as well as tools, assistance and events available to counties from NACo's Community Resilience & Economic Development programs, specifically including programming and assistance targeted to coal-reliant communities of the West.

Mr. Jack Morgan, Program Manager for Community and Economic Development, NACo

The Impact of the Tourism Economy in the West

The tourism economy creates thousands of jobs, and generates billions of dollars in economic activity in Western states. Each state represented within WIR is also a member of the Western States Tourism Policy Council, which seeks to support policies that promote greater tourism in the West. Mr. David Wetmore spoke about the WSTPC's latest activities and discuss how we can work together to grow the tourism economy.

Mr. David Wetmore, Carpi and Clay (dwetmore@carpiclay.com)

Update from the National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition

WIR's Public Lands Trust contributes to the National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition (NESARC). NESARC is a broad group focused on improving and modernizing the Endangered Species Act (ESA). NESARC Executive Director Jordan Smith discussed recent regulatory, legislative and judicial actions related to the ESA.

Mr. Jordan Smith, Executive Director, NESARC (JAS@vnf.com)

Wildfire Preparedness

WIR's Public Lands Trust contributes to the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) so that counties are represented. The WIR Board of Directors also adopted wildfire as its most important policy priority for 2018. WFLC Executive Manager Mike Zupko updated the WIR Board on recent activities and opportunities for future engagement on issues surrounding wildland fire and public lands management. National Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy Western Region Coordinator Katie Lighthall discussed the Community Wildfire Playbook.

Mr. Mike Zupko, Executive Manager, Wildland Fire Leadership Council

Ms. Katie Lighthall, Western Region Coordinator, National Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy

Legislative and WIR Finance Update

An update on the legislative priorities and finances of the Western Interstate Region. Presentation attached.

Mr. Jonathan Shuffield, NACo Associate Legislative Director for Public Lands and WIR Liaison

BOARD ACTION: Review, Discussion and Approval of the 2018 WIR Budget Amendment

The WIR Board of Directors voted unanimously to approve the amended budget for WIR.

Update on WIR Conference

The WIR Conference will be held May 23-25 in Sun Valley, Blaine County, Idaho. Commissioner Larry Schoen from our host county gave a brief update on conference planning and what to expect at this year's WIR Conference.

Hon. Larry Schoen, Commissioner, Blaine County, Idaho