

Sustainable Resources Institute, Inc.



February 9, 2015

Jake Donnay
Legislative Affairs
USDA Forest Service
jacobsdonnay@fs.fed.us

1353 W. Highway
US2, Suite 2
Crystal Falls, MI
49920

RE: Good Neighbor Agreements with State Cooperators

Phone:
877-284-3882

Dear Mr. Donnay,

Fax:
906-875-3724

The Sustainable Resources Institute, Inc. (SRI) is fully supportive of any effort to improve management of national forests, in particular the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) which is located in Wisconsin. SRI has a Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) with Region 9 of the USFS and is currently implementing a Supplemental Project Agreement (SPA) on the Chequamegon – Nicolet National Forest (CNNF). We are very encouraged by the intent of the Good Neighbor Authority, and in concept, it appears to offer more latitude for increasing management activities than the MSA does, but as the quote goes, "the devil is in the details." Our concern is that although the concept is good, implementation at the individual national forest level by USFS staff is the key to making GNA effective. In its 10 years of existence, SRI has partnered with the Wisconsin DNR (WDNR) on both short and long term projects with tremendous success. The WDNR is also part of SRI's Steering Committee for the SPA on the CNNF. Allowing state partners with proven track records in forest management, such as the WDNR, to implement the GNA with as much flexibility as possible will be a prescription for a successful partnership.

The ability to utilize program revenue to fund projects under the GNA is a critical part of this program and is necessary to being able to optimize management of all natural resource values on the CNNF. Being this is a new concept for the WDNR and the CNNF, the need to adapt and continually improve the process as it goes forward is crucial to the success of GNA in Wisconsin. In general, we found the document to be confusing and complicated.

SRI is ready and willing to partner with the WDNR, if needed, to accomplish any of the GNA service work, much of which may be similar to service activities that SRI is currently conducting under the SPA on the CNNF. As previously mentioned, SRI has been a partner with the WDNR in several forest management projects and looks forward to being an active participant in a GNA with the CNNF.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Wendy Gehlhoff", written over a horizontal line.

Wendy Gehlhoff
President