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Dear Valued Partners of the Pacific Northwest Region:

We realize that the COVID-19 National Emergency has presented our staff, partners, and communities with unprecedented challenges. More than ever, we recognize how critical partnership is to our mission. As we adjust agency operations in response to guidance from USDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we have heard from many of you about your own struggles, concerns, and strategies. We recognize the interdependence of our work with communities, volunteers, and partners as we navigate these uncertain times together, safely.

The Pacific Northwest Region is collaborating with federal agencies, states, and municipalities to implement travel restrictions, self-quarantine, and social distancing while addressing our capacity for emergency response. In support of this shift, most of our employees have been directed to telework, where they will remain available to you virtually. We have established teams to assess risk and manage continuity of operations to serve our core mission and Regional priorities. Our need to protect the health and safety of our staff and the public has impacted all of our programs, including partnerships.

Partnership and collaboration are critical to our success and we greatly value your contributions. I am hopeful that we will be able to resume our full range of operations this year, however, in the event that the pandemic will not allow certain activities to continue safely, I encourage you to reach out to your points of contact in the agency to discuss options to adjust or postpone our mutually beneficial work. Now is an opportunity for us to explore new ways of collaborating as we care for the land and serve people while prioritizing our collective safety. Our goal is to maintain timely, transparent, and open lines of communication as conditions and guidance evolve.

As always, thank you for your understanding and support of the USDA Forest Service.

Sincerely,

GLENN P. CASAMASSA
Regional Forester

