



County Supervisors Association of Arizona

November 14, 2022

Dear Board Chairs and Supervisors,

The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the Western Interstate Region Board of Directors (WIR) are working to establish a National Center for Public Lands Counties (The Center). The attached letter from NACo outlines the vision and value proposition. It also requests CSA meet with our membership to determine a voluntary pledge amount from Arizona counties.

Capitalizing The Center creates a unique opportunity to empower information and resources in support of public lands counties, and I would be grateful if you would explore the value proposition and consider participating. We hope to identify interested counties by the end of the year, if at all possible.

Background

County governments are a leading voice in the intergovernmental partnership with federal lands management agencies. We work with officials from all levels of government, private stakeholders and other interested parties to reduce fuel loads on federal lands, prudently develop our natural resources to meet the nation's economic needs, improve local economies, enhance recreational access to public lands, and conserve our lands and waters for future generations.

Understanding our unique role, Congress has invested record sums in programs to support public lands counties—including Payments In-Lieu of Taxes (PILT), Secure Rural Schools (SRS), and other revenue sharing programs—in recent years, while also granting new authorities to federal lands agencies to broaden the scope, pace and scale of their on-the-ground resource management work with local governments.

To truly benefit from these unique opportunities and investments, counties must share lessons learned to educate government officials and the public about the critical county contribution to sustainable resource management and best practices for developing and enhancing collaborative partnerships. Therefore, the NACo and the WIR Boards of Directors both moved at the 2022 NACo Annual Conference to proceed with developing a National Center for Public Lands Counties.

The Center will be governed by a body consisting of the WIR Executive Committee, the NACo Public Lands Policy Steering Committee Chair and Vice Chairs, the state association executive from the WIR Immediate Past President's home state, and the NACo CEO/Executive Director. The governing body will meet on a regular basis to provide updates to county officials on the Center's progress and discuss the Center's financial health, research priorities and media efforts.

The Center will weave together the narrative around public lands counties and the national interest in our prosperity by showing how public lands are interconnected with the country's needs: for example, a wildfire on federal land near a major water source can jeopardize water quality in our nation's large urban communities. The Center will give public lands counties their best opportunity to share these stories with their peers, the media, think tanks and other key players to demonstrate how prosperous public lands counties create a prosperous America.

The Center will also utilize digital media, such as podcasts and video interviews, and develop written county profiles focused on:

- County partnerships with federal agencies, states, tribes and other counties to reduce wildfire risk, responsibly develop energy and minerals, improve public access to federal lands, protect watersheds, conserve species and their habitat, and protect our national parks and other natural treasures
- County investments of PILT, SRS and other natural resource revenue payments to benefit their citizens and surrounding public lands
- The different economic drivers in rural vs. urban public lands counties
- Development and implementation of county natural resource management plans and baseline socioeconomic data for environmental analyses
- Resource values of federal lands compared to nearby privately owned lands
- Meeting the unique challenges facing public lands counties, such as affordable housing for residents and federal employees, ensuring a stable tax base to deliver critical services and managing infrastructure on federal lands

Request for Participation

As a state with substantial federal public lands holdings and a significant stake in improving information and awareness associated with public lands in our communities, Arizona counties have a unique opportunity to invest in and benefit from The Center.

NACo and WIR set a fundraising goal of \$15 million over the next two years to capitalize the project. The activities of The Center will be funded by interest earned on the fund, leveraging a one-time investment to empower the public lands conversation for generations to come.

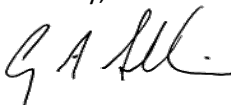
Once capitalized, NACo would be able to hire the necessary talent to conduct important public lands-related research and create associated content. It will also place The Center on a sustainable financial course. Importantly, The Center's resources will not be used for partisan political purposes.

The requested contribution from each public lands county is the general fund equivalent of 1% of each county's allocation from the Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund, payable over the next two years. *Please see attachment for Arizona specific details.* CSA would invoice participating counties and submit the state's contribution to the Center's account within NACo's 501(c) (3) research foundation.

Please note that NACo and WIR are requesting state associations report the state's contribution by January 31, 2023. If there is anything we can do or provide to assist in your county's consideration of this opportunity, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or Arizona's WIR representatives: Supervisors Richard Lunt and Supervisor Patrice Horstman.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Craig A. Sullivan
Executive Director

Enclosures



County LATCF Allocations

Counties are requested to pledge a general fund equivalent of 1% of its total LATCF allocation, distributed to the Center in 2 payments.

County	Total LATCF Allocation	Year 1 Contribution	Year 2 Contribution	Total Contribution
Apache County	5,537,990	27,690	27,690	55,380
Cochise County	5,798,697	28,993	28,993	57,987
Coconino County	12,000,000	60,000	60,000	120,000
Gila County	12,000,000	60,000	60,000	120,000
Graham County	7,032,662	35,163	35,163	70,327
Greenlee County	2,896,245	14,481	14,481	28,962
La Paz County	9,844,800	49,224	49,224	98,448
Maricopa County	7,775,912	38,880	38,880	77,759
Mohave County	12,000,000	60,000	60,000	120,000
Navajo County	4,785,316	23,927	23,927	47,853
Pima County	7,924,031	39,620	39,620	79,240
Pinal County	2,933,969	14,670	14,670	29,340
Santa Cruz County	3,460,376	17,302	17,302	34,604
Yavapai County	12,000,000	60,000	60,000	120,000
Yuma County	12,000,000	60,000	60,000	120,000
Arizona Total	117,989,999	589,950	589,950	1,179,900



October 14, 2022

Dear state association executive,

County governments are a leading voice in the intergovernmental partnership with federal lands management agencies. We work with officials from all levels of government, private stakeholders and other interested parties to reduce fuel loads on federal lands, prudently develop our natural resources to meet the nation's economic needs, improve local economies, enhance recreational access to public lands, and conserve our lands and waters for future generations.

Understanding our unique role, Congress has invested record sums in programs to support public lands counties—including Payments In-Lieu of Taxes (PILT), Secure Rural Schools (SRS), and other revenue sharing programs—in recent years, while also granting new authorities to federal lands agencies to broaden the scope, pace and scale of their on-the-ground resource management work with local governments.

To truly benefit from these unique opportunities and investments, counties must accelerate our evidence-based research, peer information exchanges, and overall understanding of our lessons learned, emerging trends analysis, and priority public policy issues. Therefore, the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the Western Interstate Region (WIR) Boards of Directors both moved at the 2022 NACo Annual Conference in July 2022 to proceed with developing a National Center for Public Lands Counties (The Center).

The Center will weave together the narrative around public lands counties and the national interest in our prosperity by showing how public lands are interconnected with the country's needs. As just one example, a wildfire on federal land near a major water source could jeopardize water quality in a large metropolitan region. The Center will give public lands counties an enhanced opportunity to share these stories with their peers, policymakers, the media, think tanks and other key influencers to demonstrate how prosperous public lands counties create a prosperous America. The Center will also utilize digital media, such as podcasts and video interviews, and develop written county profiles focused on:

- County partnerships with federal agencies, states, tribes and other counties to reduce wildfire risk, responsibly develop energy and minerals, improve public access to federal lands, protect watersheds, conserve species and their habitat, and protect our national parks and other natural treasures
- County investments of PILT, SRS and other natural resource revenue payments to benefit our citizens and surrounding public lands
- The different economic drivers in rural vs. urban public lands counties
- Development and implementation of county natural resource management plans and baseline socioeconomic data for environmental analyses
- Resource values of federal lands compared to nearby privately owned lands

- Meeting the unique challenges facing public lands counties, such as housing affordability for residents and federal employees, ensuring a stable tax base to deliver critical services, and managing infrastructure on federal lands

For the Center to meet its mission and serve as a long-term tool for public lands counties, a voluntary investment from state associations representing public lands counties is needed. NACo staff, state associations of counties executives and county officials set a fundraising goal of \$15 million over the next two years to hire the necessary staff to conduct this critical research and keep the Center on a sustainable financial course. Initially, the Center will need 1-2 hard-working, passionate and talented writers who can help us tell the county story. We will then build staffing capacity as appropriate.

We ask that you meet with your members and determine what your state association can pledge as a voluntary contribution to the Center. NACo staff will reach out early next year to collect contributions. These funds will be managed under NACo's 501(c)(3) research foundation and will not be used for partisan political purposes.

The Center will be governed by a body consisting of the WIR Executive Committee, the NACo Public Lands Policy Steering Committee Chair and Vice Chairs, the state association executive from the WIR Immediate Past President's home state, and the NACo CEO/ Executive Director. The governing body will meet on a regular basis to provide updates to county officials, the WIR Board of Directors and the NACo Board of Directors on the Center's financial health, research priorities and media efforts. The Center will also issue an annual report on the previous year's work and vision for the future at the annual WIR Conference.

Should you have any questions, we encourage you to reach out to Jonathan Shuffield, NACo Legislative Director for Public Lands, at 512.965.7268 or jshuffield@naco.org.

Sincerely,



Matthew D. Chase
CEO/Executive Director
National Association of Counties

National Center for Public Lands Counties

Advancing the policy and practice study of America's public lands counties

**Powered by the Western Interstate Region
and the NACo Research Foundation**

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BETTER UNDERSTANDING THE COUNTY ROLE IN RESPONSIBLE LAND, WATER AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- **County governments are leaders in the intergovernmental partnership** with federal lands management agencies
- **We work with officials from all levels of government, private stakeholders and other interested parties** to reduce fuel loads on federal lands, prudently develop our natural resources to meet the nation's economic needs, improve local economies, enhance recreational access to public lands, and conserve our lands and waters for future generations
- With improved understanding of our unique role, **Congress has invested record sums recently to support public lands counties**, including Payments In-Lieu of Taxes (PILT), Secure Rural Schools (SRS), and other revenue sharing programs
- **Congress also granted new authorities to federal lands agencies** to broaden the scope, pace and scale of their on-the-ground resource management work with local governments
- **HOWEVER, we must continue to tell the county story**, research innovation practices, nurture and build new relationships and networks, and address the mounting challenges and opportunities facing public lands counties

NATIONAL CENTER FOR PUBLIC LANDS COUNTIES

- **Counties must research, evaluate and share lessons learned about the critical county contribution to sustainable resource management and evidenced-based practices** for developing and enhancing collaborative partnerships, including public-private-community collaborations and intergovernmental coordination
- Therefore, the NACo and WIR Boards of Directors both moved at the 2022 NACo Annual Conference in July 2022 to proceed with developing the **National Center for Public Lands Counties**
- **The Center will weave together the narrative around public lands counties and the national interest** in our prosperity by showing how public lands are interconnected with the country's needs. For example, a wildfire on federal land near a major water source could jeopardize water quality in a large urban region
- **The National Center for Public Lands Counties will be an essential resource for public lands counties** by sharing these stories with county officials, intergovernmental partners, the media, think tanks and other key influencers to demonstrate how prosperous public lands counties create a prosperous America

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

- **MISSION:** Advance the policy and practice study, research, and learning networks for America's public lands counties
- **IMPERATIVE:** Enhance the long-term policy and practice research, capacity and information exchange of elected and appointed leaders from America's public lands counties, including with federal and state policymakers, key stakeholders and influencers, the media, and the general public
- **OBJECTIVES:**
 - Enhance the understanding of national, state and county policymakers and influencers of the unique policy and practice issues facing America's county officials in areas with federal public lands
 - Develop the policy and practice research, case studies, public forums, and learning networks necessary to advance and inform our nation's policies and practices (including at the federal, state and local levels) impacting public lands counties
 - Foster intergovernmental relationships and dialogue on the intersection of federal, state and local policymaking and practices across the broad range of issues facing public lands counties, such as: landscape health, wildfire risk mitigation, watershed protection, economic competitiveness and job creation, enhanced public access to federal lands and waters, species management, and biodiversity health
- **FUNDRAISING GOAL:** \$15 million over two years to establish a new research fund, known as the National Center for Public Lands Counties, within the NACo Research Foundation and co-governed with NACo's Western Interstate Region (WIR) leadership

National Center for Public Lands Counties

Powered by NACo's Western Interstate Region and the NACo Research Foundation

FUNDRAISING GOAL

- For the National Center for Public Lands Counties to meet its mission and serve as a long-term tool for public lands counties, a **voluntary investment** from state associations representing public lands counties is needed
- NACo staff, state associations of counties executives and county officials set a **fundraising goal of \$15 million over the next two years** to build the staff capacity and partnerships to conduct this critical research and keep the Center on a sustainable financial course
- **State association executives are asked to meet with their members and determine by January 31, 2023** what their state association can pledge as a voluntary contribution to the Center
- These funds will be **managed under a 501(c)(3) within the NACo Research Foundation to support WIR's collaboration** with the National Center for Public Lands Counties. *These funds will not be used for any partisan political purposes*
- **Initially, the Center will need 1-2 hard-working, passionate and talented writers** who can help us tell the county story and conduct and develop key research to meet the National Center's goals. We will then build staffing capacity, unique programming and impactful resources as appropriate

GOVERNANCE

- **Advisory Council will consist of:**
 - WIR Executive Committee (President, First Vice President, Second Vice President & Immediate Past President)
 - NACo Public Lands Policy Steering Committee Chairman and Vice Chairs
 - State Association Executive from the WIR Immediate Past President's Home State
 - NACo CEO/Executive Director
 - NACo Legislative Director for Public Lands will serve as staff liaison to the Governing Board
- **Governing Board will meet on a regular basis** and provide updates to the WIR Board of Directors and NACo Board of Directors on the National Center's financial health, research priorities and media efforts
- **The Center will also issue an annual report** on the previous year's work and vision for the future at the annual WIR Conference



STRONGER COUNTIES. STRONGER AMERICA.

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