

News Release

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For Immediate Release

Toni Hardesty Named State Director of Nature Conservancy in Idaho

Boise, Idaho – Toni Hardesty, director of the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, has been named the new director of The Nature Conservancy in Idaho, the non-profit global conservation organization reported today.

Hardesty will oversee The Nature Conservancy's work around the state, focusing on collaborative projects that protect land and water for nature and people.

Hardesty has served as director of Idaho's DEQ since 2004, when she was appointed by Governor Dirk Kempthorne. Since then, she has been reappointed by Governors James Risch and C.L. "Butch" Otter. As director, she was responsible for leading efforts to preserve the quality of Idaho's air, land and water for the use and enjoyment today and in the future.

An Idaho native, Hardesty has also worked in the private sector and for the Environmental Protection Agency.

"The Idaho Board of Trustees is very excited to have Toni join us," says Irv Littman, board chair. "She brings great experience, exciting new perspectives and a proven leadership record to help us continue to protect Idaho's most spectacular places."

The Nature Conservancy has worked in Idaho for more than 35 years, acquiring Silver Creek Preserve in 1976. Since then, it has worked on conservation projects in nearly every part of the state, protecting more than 350,000 acres.

Recent successes of the Conservancy include the protection of more than 14,000 acres of ranchlands in the Pioneer Mountains, innovative water protection agreements in the Salmon River watershed that led to improved conditions for salmon and farmers, forest easements that protect some of the most important grizzly habitat in the state in North Idaho and continued work with private landowners to protect and restore the Silver Creek Valley.

The Conservancy has worked increasingly on collaborative efforts addressing large-scale land conservation, including the Owyhee Initiative in southwest Idaho, the Clearwater Basin Collaborative in central Idaho and the Pioneer Alliance, a coalition of ranchers, conservation groups and recreational interests working to protect the mountains near the Wood River Valley.

"I am very excited to be part of the Conservancy and its unique approach to conservation. I firmly believe that lasting conservation outcomes are grounded in voluntary, pragmatic approaches," says Hardesty. "The Conservancy's successful approach of integrating

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environmental, economic, and community-based solutions matches up well with my philosophy and I look forward to being part of this important Idaho legacy.”

Hardesty lives in Boise with her husband and their two children. She will begin working for the Conservancy on February 27.

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The Nature Conservancy protects the lands and waters upon which all life depends. On the web at nature.org. Follow Idaho conservation, natural history and outdoor recreation news at www.idahonaturenotes.blogspot.com