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Pacific Southwest Research Station, Albany, CA 94710

Chief Urges Restoration of Land Health Legacy

Following is the third in a series of excerpts from FS Chief Mike Dombeck's speech on "Protecting and Health Legacy," which he delivered on Feb. 3, in Missoula, Mont.

The emphasis of our forest management continues to shift from commodity timber sales to management activities to meet stewardship objectives. For example, in FY 1989 "green" timber sales made up primarily of saw log dimension wood, comprised 80 pct of our timber program. Today, such sales represent just over half of our program. Additionally, the amount of wood fiber harvested from national forests has fallen by 70 pct in less than a decade.

These changes demonstrate our responsiveness to shifting social values, public demand, and our evolving understanding of how to best manage for ecological sustainability. As we strive to manage healthier, diverse, and more productive forests, the focus on our forest management program—as measured in short term financial losses or profits—becomes less meaningful as a measure of agency performance. Providing a steady supply of wood fiber remains an important multiple-use goal of the Forest Service. Some would ignore increasing rates of national wood consumption and argue for a "zero-cut" approach to managing forests. Until we stop importing wood to meet the nation's demands from countries with more lax environmental restrictions than ours, I think this position both irresponsible and misguided. Forest Service research will expand efforts to improve wood recycling, conservation, and increased wood utilization. National Forests themselves should be a model for ecologically sustainable forest management. The more timber harvest contributes to ecological sustainability, the more predictable timber outputs will be.

Our understanding of sustainability and sustained yield have changed over time. Today, we recognize that if we do not harvest trees in an ecologically sustainable manner we may not have forests in the future. For example, thinning of the understory to reduce fuels, restore forest function, and improve forest ecosystem health is often a far more effective way to maintain stability for local communities dependent on timber harvest than are controversial harvests of old growth in areas where such stands are scarce. In the future, research and monitoring information will be essential to validating our assumptions about how ecological systems respond to management activities.

* We are requesting funding to increase by 75 million the number of acres of forestland nationwide covered by forest health
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PSW Offers Proposals for FY 2001 Budget

Early next month, the Station will be submitting to the FS Washington Office its budget proposals for fiscal year 2001. Those proposals will be unique in that for the first time, a "bottom up" approach will have been used along with the more typical WO approach of informing Stations about the topics of research to be done, categories, and dollar limits for each in their formulating budget proposals. This time, the WO first notified Stations that it wanted to hear about their issues, future research needs, and priorities, and the funding they would need to meet their demands.

And so, on March 3-4, Station Director Hal Salwasser met in Sacramento with other Executive Team members and a representative group of 14 scientists to "brainstorm" on the future of natural resources at PSW, and the research program needed to meet future demands. The scientists selected to attend represented a variety of geographic locations, disciplines, backgrounds, and interests.

By the end of the day's meeting, ideas has been discussed, deliberated, and decided, to be packaged for presentation to the WO for consideration. These ideas, meshed in with the budget directions provided by the WO will then go forward to FS Chief Mike Dombeck.

In the meantime, the Station's more immediate attention is focused on the President's Fiscal Year 2000 budget, which includes a \$37.2 million in FS Research funding over the FY 1999 enacted level. An additional \$5 million is earmarked for reallocation to the Administration's priority research areas. The programs targeted for an increase include threatened and endangered species—\$10 million; global change—\$6 million; climate change technology—\$6 million; National Forest System planning—\$5 million; nonnative invasive species—\$5 million; forest inventory and analysis—\$2 million; forest health monitoring—\$2 million; fire sciences—\$1.8 million; watershed research—\$1.8 million; recreation research—\$1.4 million; and ecosystem management—\$1.2 million. These budget proposals are now before the Congress for consideration.

North Central Station Has New Area Code

The North Central Research Station, headquartered at St. Paul, Minn., has had its telephone area code changed from 612 to 651. And recently it changed its name from North Central Forest Experiment Station to North Central Research Station. All FS Stations are now designated as "Research Stations" in conformance with statutes.

(Chief's address, continued)

detection monitoring by the year 2000. This will keep us on a pace to complete national inventory of all forest types by the year 2003.

* Increases proposed to our research budget will result in the agency producing a comprehensive peer-reviewed report by the year 2000 on how forest management activities can restore watersheds and fish and wildlife habitat, re-establish forest stand structure, reduce the risk of unnaturally occurring catastrophic fires, and otherwise restore ecological integrity.

We will protect the basic soil, water, and biotic resources of our forests and accelerate the restoration of forest and rangeland ecosystem integrity. To help accomplish these objectives, our proposed 2000 budget requests funding to:

* Improve an additional 38,000 acres of terrestrial habitat, 7,000 acres of lake and approximately 1,100 miles of stream habitat.

* Restore over 100,000 acres of aspen stands resulting in better habitat for big game species, upland game birds, and resident and migratory birds.

* Work with State fish and wildlife agencies and others to complete an additional 31 conservation strategies for sensitive fish, plants, and wildlife such as the Canada lynx and the Westslope Cutthroat trout. We will also assist federal regulatory agencies to complete at least seven additional recovery plans for threatened and endangered species.

* Slow the spread of invasive non-native species of fish, plants, and wildlife while increasing prevention efforts.

* Continue to employ fire as a tool to meet integrated resource and societal objectives across landscapes. Since 1995, we have more than doubled fuel treatment acres - from 541,000 to 1.4 million.

(To be continued in the next issue of FYI)

Oops Department

The job vacancy for a Chemist, GS-1311-09 was erroneously announced in the March 1 issue of *FYI*.

Meetings/Conferences/Seminars

* Station Director Hal Salwasser and Neil Berg, research hydrologist, Albany, served as panelists at the Winter Meeting, Northern California Section, Society of American Foresters, on Jan. 16, in Vallejo. Hal spoke on 'Research and Adaptive Management,' and Neil, on "Assessment of Cumulative

Watershed Effects."

* Kim, Marshall, biologist, Institute of Forest Genetics Research Unit, Albany, attended the International Plant and Animal Genome VII Conference, Jan. 17-21, in San Diego.

* Kathleen Matthews and Hart Welsh were invited to attend the interagency Task Force on Amphibian Declines and Deformities, held Feb, 24 in Washington, D.C. Kathleen, a research fish biologist with the Sierra Nevada Montane Ecosystems Research Unit, Berkeley, spoke on "The Role of Introduced Trout in the Decline of the Mountain Yellow-Legged Frog in Sierra Nevada High-Elevation Lakes: Is the Decline Reversible?" Hart, a research wildlife ecologist with the, Timber/Wildlife Research Unit, Arcata, spoke on "An Overview of Research in Herpetology at PSW—Arcata: Themes, Trends, and Future Directions." The following day, the two repeated their presentations at a Research Seminar, in the FS Washington Office.

Personnelly Speaking

Extra-Effort Cash Award

* Carl Dammann, technology transfer specialist, Boise, Idaho: "for procuring, modifying, and effectuating utilization of software technology automating the development of wildland fire situation analyses."

* Rochelle Selvin, personnel assistant, Albany: "for accomplishments in the Senior Community Service Employment Program."

* Jennifer Jones, personnel assistant Albany: "for providing guidance and advice to new members of the Personnel Management Group."

Spot Cash Award

* Theresa Conway, computer programmer, Fresno" "for extra effort in keeping the IBM system operating for working to correct electrical problems during the February power outage in Fresno."

* Gary Eberlein, statistical assistant, Fresno: "for correcting mechanical and electrical problems at the Fresno laboratory, insulating electronic hardware to prevent damage from power surges, helping to restore the heating system during the February power outage in Fresno."

* Rochelle Mullins, clerk-typist, Albany: "for providing data entry in the Station infrastructure database and consolidating inventory forms and records from field units."

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