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*Pacific Southwest Research Station, Albany, CA 94710*

## **PSW Extends Air Pollution Studies in Europe**

Photochemical smog and industrial pollutants occur at severe levels in most forests of the Carpathian Mountains in eastern Europe, according to a recently completed study in which PSW collaborated. And two new studies, in which the Station is participating, have been launched with the goal of identifying the long-term effects of air pollution on forest ecosystems.

The just-completed study was coordinated by Krystyna Grodzinska of the Academy of Sciences in Krakow, Poland, and by Andrzej Bytnerowicz of the Station's Air Pollution Research Unit at the Forest Fire Laboratory, Riverside. The USDA Foreign Agricultural Service funded the 3-year study, which was titled "Evaluation of Ozone Air Pollution and Its Phytotoxic Potential in the Carpathian Mountains."

This study has shown that photochemical smog, namely ozone, and industrial pollutants, such as sulfur and nitrogen, occur at elevated, potentially phytotoxic levels in most of the forests of the Carpathian Mountains in Central Europe. Results of this study will be reported in 2001 in the journal *Environmental Pollution*, with Andrzej and Krystyna as guest editors. Results of a companion study "Effects of Forest Health on Biodiversity with Emphasis on Air Pollution in the Carpathian Mountains," will be presented at an international workshop in Stara Lesna, Slovakia in May 2001.

PSW will continue to be involved in two new studies started last year. One deals with the long-term effects of air pollution on selected forest ecosystems in the Tatra Mountains, the western Carpathian range between Poland and Slovakia. Krystyna Grodzinska and Barbara Godzik of the Institute of Botany in Cracow and Andrzej are principal investigators of that study.

The second study addresses the long-term effects of air pollution on forest health and biodiversity in the Retezat Mountains, southern Carpathian Mountains, Romania. Ovidiu Badea of the Forest Research and Management Institute in Bucharest and Andrzej coordinate the study.

These two new studies have been included in a network of the International Long-Term Ecological Research (ILTER) coordinated by James Gosz, University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, N.M. These ILTER studies bring together various scientists and managers from Slovakia, Poland, Romania, and the United States, representing research institutes, national parks, state forests and universities. The USDA Forest Service International programs and the USDA Foreign Agricultural Services provide financial support for these two studies.

## **PSW Receives Funding under National Fire Plan**

The Station will be receiving \$5.54 million in new funding under the FS National Fire Plan that was adopted by the agency after devastating forest fires ravaged nearly 7 million acres in the West last summer.

"This is the largest single increase in research funding that the Station has ever had," says Enoch Bell, Assistant Station Director—Research/Southern California. "And the level of funding for forest fire research is expected to grow in the future."

Last fall, the President accepted the FS-USDI Bureau of Land Management report on "Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment." To implement the report, Congress appropriated \$1.1 billion in additional funds. And FS Research and Development received \$26 million of that amount.

Field units were asked to submit proposals for building fire research and development capacity in the FS, in four broad areas: enhancing firefighting capacity, restoring landscapes and rebuilding communities, reducing fuel hazard, and working with communities.

The Station submitted 45 proposals for funding, and 12 were accepted. The accepted proposals were from the following PSW research units: Riverside—Fire Management, Forest Meteorology, Prescribed Fire/Fire Effects, Recreation/Urban Cultures; Arcata—Timber Management/Wildlife; Redding—Soil Productivity; Fresno—Montane Ecosystems; Davis: Urban Forestry; Sacramento: Sierra Nevada Framework.

The Rocky Mountain Research Station, at Fort Collins, also received a major increase in fire research funding: \$8.3 million. Staffs from that Station and PSW met recently in Fort Collins, to discuss how the two units can collaborate in and coordinate their research efforts.

At PSW, research will be funded in fuel reduction, fuel treatments, fire risk reduction, post-fire rehabilitation, weather modeling, recreation and fire, remote sensing, fire management planning, erosive processes, and fire behavior.

To staff these augmented efforts in fire and related research, the Station anticipates hiring a dozen new employees, including research ecologists, research hydrologists, research meteorologist, physical scientist, research forester, operations research analyst, soil scientist, research wildlife biologist, research social scientist, as well as technicians in scientific support positions.

The National Fire Plan also recommended more funding for firefighting in the National Forest System.

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## **New to PSW**

Andrew T. Groover joined the Station's Institute of Forest Genetics unit at Davis, Calif., last October as a physiological geneticist. His job is basic science: studying the function of vascular genes in poplars, to gain an understanding of wood formation so as to aid in future tree selection.

Andy was born and reared in Atlanta. He earned a B.S. degree in forest science in 1988 and an M.S. degree in forest genetics in 1991, at the University of Georgia, in Athens. He then took a temporary position with the Station, working at the Institute of Forest Genetics, at Placerville, mapping quantitative trait loci in loblolly pine.

At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he received his Ph.D. degree in biology in 1997. He then became a researcher at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, on Long Island, N.Y. where he used gene and enhancer traps to clone genes involved in vascular development of Arabidopsis, a plant serving as a model for the study of other species.

As to other interests, Andy enjoys outdoor activities, including skiing and rock climbing, and playing jazz on his saxophone. He currently lives in Davis.

## **Thrift Savings Season Closes on January 31**

The current open season for the Thrift Savings Program, which started last November 15, closes on January 31. Thrift Savings is a retirement savings plan for employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System or the Civil Service Retirement System. Contributions and earnings are not taxed until they are withdrawn by the employee. Application forms for enrollment in the Program are available from your local personnel office.

## **Meetings/Conferences/Seminars**

- Meeting of the Association of Fire Ecologists, held Nov. 27 to Dec. 1, in San Diego, was attended by the following Station scientists: from Redding—Bill Oliver, Phil Weatherspoon, Carl Skinner, Celeste Abbott, Western Forest Management Program; from Fresno—Bill Laudenslayer, Montane Ecosystems Research Unit; from Riverside—David Weise, Jan Beyers, Tim Paysen, Prescribed Fire/Fire Effects Research Unit.

Pacific Southwest Research Station  
Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
P.O. Box 245  
Berkeley, CA 94701-0245

*(PSW Funding—continued)*

The Pacific Southwest Region (R-5), headquartered in Vallejo, Calif., is hiring 1,500 new workers under a \$65 million addition to the Region's budget for firefighting. The 1,500 is more than 40 percent of the 3,500 new firefighters to be hired nationwide. Information about hiring is available from the FS web site: [www.fs.fed.us/fsjobs](http://www.fs.fed.us/fsjobs), or by calling (877) 813-3476.

## **Personnelly Speaking**

### *Cash Awards*

To the following members of the Budget/Financial Management Group, Albany:

- Conchita Bura: "for exceptional performance in processing obligations, payments, and accounting adjustments."
- Jean DeHoyos: "for contributing to the Station's effort in implementing the Foundation Financial Information System."
- Anne Ellison: "for outstanding contribution in carrying out your responsibilities in budget and accounting."
- Bernadette Jaquint: "for outstanding contributions in carrying out your responsibilities in grants and agreements."
- Chelle Mullins: "for exceptional performance in processing obligations, payments, and accounting adjustments."
- Sandra Nedley: "for outstanding performance in processing travel authorizations and vouchers."
- Anna Wong: "for outstanding performance in setting up the billing and collection in the Station's accounting system."

### *Appointments*

- Chris Risbrudt: FS Washington Office: from Director of Ecosystems Management; to Director of Strategic Planning and Resource Assessment.