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*Pacific Southwest Research Station, Albany, CA 94710*

## **Weatherspoon Retires March 1 With 34 Years Service**

After 34 years of Federal service, Charles Phillip Weatherspoon will retire on March 1. Those 34 years include 2 years in the U.S. Army and 3-1/2 years with the Army Engineer Topographic Laboratories in Washington, D.C. His active military service included a year at the Army Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory in Hanover, NH, as an officer-scientist.

Phil began his FS career in 1973 as a forester/silviculturist on the North Kaibab Ranger District, Kaibab National Forest, in Arizona. In 1976 he was reassigned to FS Southwestern Regional Office in Albuquerque, and in 1978 he joined PSW as a research forester at the Silviculture Laboratory in Redding. His research primarily has emphasized fire-silviculture relationships and fire ecology. Phil served as a Project Leader from 1989-95 and a Team Leader from 1995-2001

Phil holds a B.S. degree in forestry and watershed management from the University of Arizona (1964) and a Ph.D. degree in plant physiology/forestry from Duke University (1968).

Now that he has retired, Phil and his wife, Nancy, intend to move from Redding to a yet-to-be-determined location on the coast. He plans on spending more time with his family and pursuing his favorite outdoor activities, including hiking and climbing mountains. Like many retirees, he plans to wrap up some work-related “loose ends,” including analyzing data and writing papers, along the way.

“I’ve been privileged to have worked with some great people and to have done research and related work that I have found personally very rewarding, work that I hope has continuing value, especially for resource managers,” says Phil. ♦

## **New to PSW**

The first person from his research unit to be on the unit’s expanded location at Davis, California—that’s Christopher J. Fettig, who reported to PSW last July. His unit, Chemical Ecology and Management of Forest Insects, is headquartered in Albany. A research entomologist, Chris is conducting studies of semichemical-based bark beetle suppression; prescribed fire and bark beetle interactions; and silvicultural manipulations and bark beetle interactions. He is also active in the National Fire/Fire Surrogate Study.

Born in New York, Chris attended schools in Virginia and Georgia. In 1996 he earned two degrees from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University—his B.S. degree in forest management and an M.S. degree in forest entomology. His doctorate (1999), from the University of Georgia, is in forest entomology. Before accepting his PSW assignment, Chris worked as a postdoctoral research associate in the Department of Entomology at the University of Georgia.

Chris and his wife, Lisa, who is a high-school teacher, live in Woodland, Calif. Chris says he is an “avid outdoorsman” who also enjoys woodworking, carpentry, and reading. ♦

## **Proposed Budget for FY2003 Severely Affects PSW**

The budget for Fiscal Year 2003 proposed by the President would severely affect PSW, according to Station Director Hilda Diaz-Soltero. In a meeting with Station leaders on Feb. 4 in Albany, she described in detail the proposed budget's impact on Station programs and employees.

The proposed budget for PSW is \$18,899,000. This includes a \$3,287,000 reduction in on-going research and programs and a \$2,500,000 addition to fund new programs. It represents a net decrease of \$355,000 from FY2002.

The proposed budget provides expenditures for new programs as follows: \$1,700,000 for forest simulation software; \$300,000 for technologies to convert woody materials into energy; and \$500,000 for support of Sudden Oak Death research. An additional \$432,000 is designed to cover increased costs of operations and other business costs.

"These changes will have significant impacts on Station personnel and budgets due to an inappropriate skills mix and an inability to redirect employees into new programs," said Hilda. "To finance the effects of these changes within PSW would require additional reductions and costs, with a negative cascading effect on Station programs, budgets, and personnel."

She said that the \$3,287,000 reduction would mean:

- Eliminating a minimum of 40 positions in California and Hawaii.
- Closing the Forestry Sciences Laboratory at Fresno, the Silviculture Laboratory at Redding, and the Quarantine Facility at Volcano, Hawaii.
- Terminating two Research Units: Fire Meteorology Research Unit at the Forest Fire Laboratory, Riverside, and the Ecology and Management of Western Forests Unit in Redding.
- Reducing collaborative research by \$420,000.
- Eliminating library services and cutting back on communication, editorial services, and grants and agreements.

Hilda said that if Congress approves the President's proposed budget, the eliminated positions would include 11 scientists, 20 technical support staff, and 8 administrative support staff. Because the Station could not absorb such a reduction through normal attrition (retirements, resignations, or reassignments), PSW would seek RIF, or reduction-in-force, authority.

Another effect of the budget reduction is the cost of moving 22 employees from Fresno to Davis and Redding to Davis. The estimated cost of such moves, along with the RIF, is \$6.32 million. Hilda said that to be able to finance these costs within PSW would require closure of additional locations and units, with additional costs for RIF and moves from those locations producing "a cascading effect." For this to be funded within PSW, "we would have to close the entire PSW Station for FY 2003," she added.

Because of these severe impacts, Robert Lewis, Jr., FS Deputy Chief—Research and Development, has decided to make the matter of budget reduction a corporate issue so that the effects will be shared by all FS Research Stations.

Because the appropriations process is long and complex, agreement between the Congress and the President on the final FY2003 budget is not expected until early fall, at the very earliest. "We hope that Congress will see fit to restore these budget cuts," says Hilda. In the meantime, she and the Assistant Station Directors are making the rounds of Congressional staffs, academic institutions, State foresters, and in the private sector to inform them about the budget reductions and what they mean to research programs and employees. ◆

### **Nominations Open for Distinguished Publications**

The Station is seeking nominations for its Distinguished and Milestone Publication Awards. Sponsored by the Station Director and the Committee of Scientists, both awards honor publications of exceptional merit. In addition, nominations for the Milestone Award must have gained wide recognition in the scientific or managerial community for their effect on theory, practice, or methodology; therefore, they must be at least 3 years old.

Assistant Directors and Project Leaders are urged to get actively involved in the nomination process so that at least one publication is submitted from each Research Unit. Further information about the nomination process, including eligibility requirements, is available from Jim Simpson in Davis (tel: 530-752-9534 or email: jsimpson@ucdavis.edu). ◆

### **OPM to Offer Long-Term Care Insurance Program**

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management will be offering Long-Term-Care Insurance (LTC) to more than 20 million Federal employees and retirees, uniformed services members, and eligible family members. The insurance program is intended to help with costs associated with chronic, long-term care that may develop due to an illness, accident, or normal aging. Early enrollment in the program will start on March 25.

All employees who apply for Long-Term-Care Insurance will not be eligible for the standard insurance under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan. But all who apply will be offered some type of LTC coverage, which may include non-standard insurance or a non-insurance product. The Long-Term Insurance Program differs from FEHB in that not everyone who applies for a given policy will receive the same coverage and pay the same premium.

Coverage under the program will be provided by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and the John Hancock Life Insurance Company. They will be forming a partnership called LTC Partners. The OPM and LTC Partners plan an extensive educational and marketing program to introduce the new insurance program and will hold Open Season July 1-December 31. Early enrollment (March 25-May 15) is intended for those already familiar with the program. Further information is available on the OPM website: [www.opm.gov/insure/ltc/](http://www.opm.gov/insure/ltc/). Or check with Karen Diaz, PSW Human Resources Group, Albany (510-559-8358). ◆

### **PSW Issues "Overview of Mission and Programs" Brochure**

The Station has just published a color brochure that provides an "Overview of Mission and Programs." Assistant Station Directors prepared the text, and Martha Shibata, visual information specialist, Albany, handled design and layout. The brochure shows the locations of the Station's laboratories and lists the work of PSW scientists in developing new knowledge and technologies and providing science-based information.

A page listing the Station's field organization shows the contact person and research emphasis at each site. A time line summarizes major accomplishments of PSW since its founding in 1926. Copies of the brochure are available from Joan Cravens, Research Information Services, Albany (510-559-6326). ◆

### **Peper is New Chair of PSW Employee Council**

Paula Peper has been elected by the PSW Employee Council as its chairperson, effective Jan. 1. She succeeds Teri Conway. Paula is an ecologist with the Center for Urban Forest Research at Davis.

A task group of the Partnership Council, the Employee Council represents all employees and serves as a forum for employees to voice concerns and resolve issues. Current Council members, by location, are: Albany: Diane Delany; Arcata: Kay Kahl; Davis: Paula Peper; Fresno: Teri Conway; Honolulu/Hilo: Donovan Goo; Placerville: Cindy Collins; Redding: Gary Fiddler; and Riverside: Evelyn McCaffery. ◆

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