



WESTERN
FORESTRY
LEADERSHIP
COALITION

www.wflccenter.org

WESTERN FORESTRY LEADERSHIP COALITION FISCAL YEAR 2011 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

Caitlyn Pollihan, Executive Director: 303-445-4363: C.Pollihan@colostate.edu

This *Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) Fiscal Year 2011 President's Budget Highlights* provides information to the WFLC on the recently-released Presidential budget proposal. This document is posted at www.wflcweb.org/infomaterials/issue_briefs.php. For more information on these budget and forestry issues, please contact Caitlyn Pollihan. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of programs that the WFLC is tracking relative to the federal budgeting process.

On February 2, 2010 President Obama released the expanded budget for the federal fiscal year 2011 (<http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/budget-2011/fy-2011-usfs-budget-justification.pdf>). The FY 2011 President's request is 0.05% below the FY 2010 enacted levels. Along with static or declining budget numbers for much of the USDA Forest Service (USFS), the President has proposed a federal budget freeze through 2013.

State & Private Forestry

State & Private Forestry programs (S&PF) received a 4% increase, mainly due to the \$100 million proposed investment in Forest Legacy and relatively flat budgets for the other S&PF programs.

Notable changes to the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and the Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) priority programs from the FY 2010 levels include a:

- o \$2 million increase to Urban and Community Forestry for a competitive cost-share grant program aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in urban areas
- o \$7 million decrease (12%) to Cooperative Forest Health (includes S&PF and Wildland Fire programs) based on a proposed reduction of USFS monitoring and treatment of gypsy moth and hemlock woolly adelgid
- o \$25 million decrease (23%) in State Fire Assistance (includes S&PF and Wildland Fire programs)
- o \$5 million decrease in Forest Inventory & Analysis (USFS Research & Development) resulting in the discontinuation of funding support to the Nevada, Wyoming, Hawaii and interior Alaska FIA programs

National Forest System

The National Forest System (NFS) budget request is roughly equal to the FY 2010 levels (\$1,551,339M in FY10 to \$1,585,719M). Of note, the NFS request includes a new budget line item for Integrated Resource Restoration. This program is the consolidation of several existing Forest Service programs including Forest Products, Vegetation and Watershed Management, and Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management. The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration program will also be funded out of this new Integrated Resource Restoration budget line item.

This new Integrated Resource Restoration budget line item includes \$604 million for restoration and management of ecosystems, \$40 million for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Fund, and

\$50 million for priority watersheds and job stabilization. The USFS budget justification document notes that this “represents a change in the management perspective of the national forests...”

The \$50 million for priority watersheds and job stabilization, a new initiative for the USFS, will be handled through a national prioritization process to identify a minimum of three key watersheds that: need improvement, have national significance, provide landscape scale restoration, and that lead to increased employment and outputs of forest products and biomass. The projects will be identified using the Statewide Forest Resource Assessments, watershed condition and input from local communities.

Capital Improvement & Maintenance

The Capital Improvement & Maintenance budget request proposes a 22% reduction from the FY10 enacted level of \$556,053 million to \$438,393million for FY11. A significant portion of this reduction is due to the zeroing out of the road improvement portion of this budget line item. Under this proposal, there will be no construction of new roads or upgrading existing roads and the USFS will emphasize the maintenance of the existing transportation system.

Wildland Fire Management

The Wildland Fire Management request is down from the FY 2010 levels to \$2.07 billion, a roughly 2% decrease. Some activities previously covered by the suppression account, such as aviation assets and cost pools will now be funded through the USFS Preparedness program, resulting in a 48% increase in funding for preparedness activities. This shift was made in order to more accurately reflect USFS suppression costs, resulting in a comparable reduction in the suppression budget line item.

Suppression funding is organized in the following ‘three-tier’ approach in order to form a “comprehensive framework that aligns funding, operations, performance, and accountability within a well-defined budget structure and clear chain of command.” One of the stated goals of including the Presidential Wildfire Contingency Reserve Account in the budget proposal is to limit the need for transferring non-fire money to pay for suppression activities. (*pg. 11-7 of the USFS Budget Justification*)

- \$595 million in regular suppression
 - \$291 million for FLAME Wildfire Suppression Reserve Fund
 - \$282 million for Presidential Wildfire Contingency Reserve Account
-
- \$1.168 billion for suppression activities

The budget request outlines steps to develop more accurate means of calculating the 10-yr suppression average and what appears to be steps that would achieve developing the Cohesive Wildfire Strategy (passed within the FLAME Act with the FY10 Interior Appropriations Bill), or something similar, even though the strategy is not specifically referenced.

For more information, please contact Caitlyn Pollihan (c.pollihan@colostate.edu / 303-445-4363).