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WESTERN FORESTRY LEADERSHIP COALITION FISCAL YEAR 2012 USFS PRESIDENT'S BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

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This document provides information to WFLC members on the recently-released USDA Forest Service (USFS) FY 2012 President's Budget proposal, and will be posted on the WFLC website at http://wflccenter.org/infomaterials/issue_briefs.php. For more information on these budget and forestry issues, please contact Brent Keith, Governmental Affairs Director. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of programs that the WFLC is tracking relative to the federal budgeting process and we will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available.

Budget Summary

On February 14, 2011 President Obama released the expanded budget for federal FY 2012, including a proposed budget for the USFS of **\$5.14 billion, 3.3%, below FY 2010 enacted** levels, which is used for comparison given that the federal government is operating under a continuing resolution for FY 2011. The USFS budget justification is posted at <http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/budget/2012/justification/FY2012-USDA-Forest-Service-budget-justification.pdf>. The USFS priority, highlighted within the budget document, is to focus on protecting clean water and jobs; connecting Americans to the outdoors; and making smart investments in land, water and wildlife to maintain the country's economic strength.

State & Private Forestry

State & Private Forestry programs (S&PF) budget request is up \$33.4 million from the FY 2010 enacted level, from \$308 million to \$342 million. A large increase in the Forest Legacy program is partially offset by targeted decreases across a range of other programs.

Notable changes to the Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) priority programs from the FY 2010 enacted levels include the following:

- An increase of \$59 million to Forest Legacy and \$4.5 million to Community Forest and Open Space to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and to support the America's Great Outdoors initiative.
- A \$2 million increase to Urban and Community Forestry, continuing strategic tree planting initiatives for carbon sequestration and energy conservation.
- A \$9.7 million decrease (16%) to Cooperative Forest Health programs (includes S&PF and Wildland Fire Management (WFM) programs), with a program focus on prevention and suppression.
- A \$32 million decrease (29%) in State Fire Assistance (includes S&PF and WFM programs).
- A \$10 million decrease (14%) in Forest Inventory and Analysis programs (FIA), which includes a reduction in Forest & Rangeland Research and the elimination of Forest Resources Information & Analysis in S&PF programs, resulting in the discontinuation of funding support to the Nevada and Wyoming FIA programs.

National Forest System

The National Forest System (NFS) budget request is up \$153 million from the FY 2010 enacted level, from \$1.55 billion to \$1.70 billion. This increase is largely a result of moving funds from other appropriations into NFS, while also making targeted reductions across programs. Highlights include:

- The budget continues the administration's proposal for the Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR) line item proposed in FY 2011. In addition to the line-items combined in the FY 2011 President's Budget (Forest Products, Vegetation and Watershed Management, and Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management) and the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP), the FY 2012 budget proposes moving Legacy Roads and Trails and Road Decommissioning from the Capital Improvement and Maintenance appropriation, and the non-WUI portion of Hazardous Fuels Management from the Wildland Fire Management appropriation into IRR.

The proposal subdivides IRR into 4 accounts:

- Restoration and Management of Ecosystems (\$659 M)
 - Priority Watershed Rehabilitation and Job Stabilization (\$75 M)
 - Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Fund (\$40 M)
 - Legacy Roads and Trails (\$75 M)
- The Land Management Planning and Inventory & Monitoring line items are combined to form Land Management Planning, Assessment and Monitoring, designed to support the requirements of the proposed new planning rule, and funded at \$205 million (\$10 million reduction from the combined FY 2010 total for the two line items).
 - A \$5 million increase for Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness in support of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Wildland Fire Management

The Wildland Fire Management (WFM) budget request is down \$397 million (19%) from the FY 2010 enacted level to \$1.71 billion. This decrease includes the shift of the CFLRP and non-WUI portion of Hazardous Fuels to the NFS appropriation, and a proposed rescission of \$192 million in unobligated prior year carryover WFM funds. Highlights include:

- Suppression funding is organized in a 'two-tier' approach (as opposed to the 3-tier approach proposed in FY 2011 which included a Presidential Wildland Fire Contingency Reserve), with \$539 million in Suppression, and \$315 million in the FLAME Wildfire Suppression Reserve Fund. These amounts, when combined with Suppression funds "re-baselined" into Preparedness, still fund the 10-year average.
- The "re-baselining" of Preparedness and Suppression proposed in the FY 2011 budget is carried forward into this year's proposal, resulting in a \$331 million increase in the Preparedness account.
- An \$86 million decrease in Hazardous Fuels, as a result of the non-WUI hazardous fuels work being moved into the National Forest System Integrated Resources Restoration line item.

Other Budget highlights

- A \$16 million decrease in the Research and Development account, including the decrease outlined above to the Forest Inventory & Analysis program.
- Five-year reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools Act, and shifting funding for the Act from mandatory to discretionary appropriations. The proposed funding level is \$328 million to cover both USFS and BLM program payments. The Forest Service Payments to Communities budget proposal and accompanying legislative proposal (still being developed) would increase funding to Title II (forest restoration/protection) and decrease funding to Title I (schools and roads) and Title III (fire assistance).
- Elimination of the International Forestry program, although this work will continue to be funded by the USFS at \$6 million through other line items.