

Overview of Programs

National Forests and Grasslands

The National Forest System (NFS) is managed under the principles articulated in the National Forest Management Act. The natural resources contained within the NFS are managed to meet the needs of the Nation in a sustainable manner. NFS encompasses approximately 192 million acres of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, including tropical and boreal forests, grasslands, and important wetlands. Administration of NFS lands uses a multiple-use land management approach that sustains healthy ecosystems, repairs damaged ecosystems, and addresses the need for resources and commodities. NFS provides support to National Fire Plan (NFP) implementation through its burned area emergency rehabilitation (BAER) program, as well as other restoration and rehabilitation programs. NFS operations provide an array of multiple uses, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Administering and managing recreation, wilderness, and heritage areas;
- Restoring, recovering, conserving, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats;
- Managing forest, rangeland, minerals, and water resources in a sustainable manner;
- Conducting resource inventories and assessments of NFS lands; and
- Providing a safe environment for the public and for USDA Forest Service employees.



Forest and Rangeland Research

The Research and Development (R&D) deputy area of the USDA Forest Service is one of the world's leaders in forest conservation research. R&D serves society by developing and communicating the scientific information and innovative technology required to manage, protect, use, and sustain our Nation's forests. Research projects conducted by R&D scientists contribute to the stewardship of land, real property, and society by providing more affordable housing, creating jobs, and improving the health of trees, forests, and forest ecosystems. Innovative research applications permit the USDA Forest Service and other public and private land managers to monitor and manage forest responses to environmental change, contributing immeasurably to the sustainability of the Nation's forests and rangelands and improving human health. The R&D deputy area also provides support for implementing the NFP.

R&D operates six research stations; the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, WI; and the International Institute of Tropical Forestry in Puerto Rico. It employs over 500 scientists and hundreds of technical and support personnel at 65 principal field sites throughout the Nation.

The R&D program focuses on the following seven functional areas to meet the needs of society:

1. Enhancing the productive capacity of forests and rangelands;
2. Improving forest and rangeland health;
3. Preserving forest and rangeland contributions to carbon cycles;
4. Conserving soil, water, and air resources;
5. Enhancing long-term multiple socioeconomic benefits;
6. Protecting biodiversity; and
7. Monitoring forest inventory and health.



State and Private Forestry

State and Private Forestry (S&PF), a deputy area of the USDA Forest Service, is a Federal leader in providing technical and financial assistance to landowners and resource managers to help sustain the Nation's urban and rural forests and protect communities and the environment from wildland fires. S&PF programs help bring forestry to all landowners—woodlot, tribal, State, and Federal—in efficient, nonregulatory ways. Through management, protection, conservation education, and resource use efforts, S&PF helps facilitate sound stewardship across lands of all ownerships on a landscape scale, while maintaining the flexibility for individual forest landowners to pursue their objectives. S&PF plays a key role, along with NFS, R&D, and the U.S. Department of the Interior in implementing the NFP to manage the impacts of wildland fires on communities and the environment. S&PF operations provide for the following activities:

- Maintaining healthy and productive forest ecosystems by preventing, detecting, and suppressing damaging insects and disease;
- Providing technical and financial assistance to States and local fire agencies to promote efficient wildland fire protection on Federal, State, and private lands;
- Maintaining healthy, sustainable rural and urban forests through stewardship planning, active management, and professional technical assistance for States and private landowners;
- Improving the quality of living conditions in urban areas through the management of urban natural resources;
- Protecting forests from fragmentation and conversion to nonforest uses; and
- Improving the economic well-being of natural resource-dependant rural communities.



**Fire and Aviation
Management
Program/The National
Fire Plan**

The Fire and Aviation Management (FAM) Program protects life, property, and natural resources on the 192 million acres of NFS lands. The USDA Forest Service also enters into cooperative fire protection agreements with States and other Federal agencies, such as the Department of the Interior and the Department of Defense. The FAM Program is guided, in part, by the fundamental principles articulated in the NFP as adopted by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior in FY 2000, as well as the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy, signed by the Secretaries in August 2001, and the *10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan*, signed in May 2002. Among many programmatic functions, NFP funds are used to support actions that help prevent, detect, and take initial suppression actions on wildland fires. The program also supports fire operations, including fire suppression efforts and the reduction of hazardous fuels to minimize the potential for large, destructive wildfires. In addition, it funds and supports communities through Economic Action Programs and Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Programs for States and volunteer fire departments. The NFP also encompasses Forest Health Monitoring Programs for Federal and cooperative lands, joint fire sciences, fire facilities, and restoration of burned-over lands. Research efforts include a variety of projects supporting firefighting capacity, rehabilitation and restoration, hazardous fuels reduction, and community assistance.



Working Capital Fund

The Working Capital Fund (WCF) is a revolving fund established in 1956 for furnishing supply and equipment services in support of programs of the USDA Forest Service. Currently, the WCF includes 10 activities approved by the Chief of the USDA Forest Service and the Secretary of Agriculture: fleet services, including rental and maintenance; aircraft services, including operation and maintenance; supply services, including photo reproduction, sign shop, and seed supply; tree nursery services; and computer services, including the replacement of computer hardware and software.

The WCF is credited with advance payments in connection with firm orders and reimbursements from appropriations and funds of the USDA Forest Service, at rates approximately equal to the cost of furnishing the supply and equipment services.