



WHY THE FOREST SERVICE?

LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT

U.S. FOREST SERVICE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

HIGHLIGHTS

The U.S. Forest Service has been working internationally for over 100 years. Its first international foray was Gifford Pinchot’s visit to the Philippines in 1902 to offer technical assistance.

Many of our staff were Peace Corps volunteers in the countries or regions where they continue to work today; other staff have graduate degrees and research experience in their countries of focus.

Our staff are trained in local languages, allowing them to interact directly with in-country partners. Every member of our Latin America and Caribbean team speaks Spanish or Portuguese, our West Africa program managers speak French, and our Russia, Europe, and Eurasia team speak either Russian or Ukrainian.

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OVERVIEW

As the U.S. Forest Service motto (“caring for the land and serving people”) suggests, International Programs applies the vast expertise of the U.S. Forest Service and our partners overseas to ensure we are working together to balance our stewardship of the land and opportunities it brings for those who live on it.

We manage 193 million acres (78 million hectares) of forests, grasslands, watersheds, deserts, wilderness, and recreation areas. The Agency manages these public lands for multiple uses, including water quality, recreation, timber production, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity protection.

Extensive Global Experience and Strong Partnerships

The U.S. Forest Service Office of International Programs works in over 90 countries, with expertise focused on natural resource management in international development contexts. We rely on mutually beneficial partnerships with local and international nongovernmental organizations, universities, and host country governments. We also collaborate with other U.S. government agencies, including the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of State.

Robust Institutional Relationships

We strive for ongoing and continuous engagement in the countries where we work. We focus on building institutional relationships between our agency and our partners, enabling continuous collaboration regardless of changing funding sources, personnel turn over, or shifting priorities. Our partnerships span all phases of a project—from conceptual design to implementation all the way through monitoring and evaluation.

Knowledgeable Staff with On-The-Ground Experience.

Our program specialists have extensive experience in the countries and regions where they work.

A prime example of our staff’s deep roots in the countries they work in: Michelle Zweede spent a significant portion of her childhood living in Brazil speaking Portuguese, and then pursued a degree in International Affairs and Latin American Studies with a focus on Brazil. After college, she joined the Peace Corps and worked in Africa, gaining experience in international development. She then returned to Brazil to expand her background in natural resource management, and has been involved in work there for the past 20 years, with over ten years managing the U.S. Forest Service portfolio in Brazil and other countries in the Amazon Basin.



Photo taken by Michelle Zweede in the Tapajos National Forest in the Brazilian Amazon while visiting a community cooperative.





Global examples of long-term engagement

Mexico:

The United States and Mexico, as neighbors, share many natural resources challenges, such as the threat of invasive species and uncontrolled wildland fires. As a result, the U.S. Forest Service collaborates with Mexican counterparts to manage natural resources in North America effectively. Through the North American Forest Commission, the U.S., Mexico, and Canada have been collaborating for more than 50 years on topics related to forest management. For more than 25 years, the U.S. Agency for International Development has supported the U.S. Forest Service and Mexican partners' efforts to improve natural resources management and conserve biodiversity by supporting activities in community forestry, conserving migratory species, forest monitoring, protected area management, and wildland fire management. The Migratory Species program has been working in Mexico since its inception in the 1990s.

Russia:

The U.S. Forest Service has over 50 years of collaboration with partners in the Soviet Union and Russia. The first significant collaboration was in 1959 when George Jemison, the U.S. Forest Service's Deputy Chief for Research, led a delegation of U.S. forestry leaders to the Soviet Union to observe forest conditions and practices. Throughout the 1970s, there were numerous exchanges of smokejumpers; fire management continues to be an important component in U.S. – Russian forestry collaboration. Over the past 25 years, our Agency has maintained strong partnerships with the Russian Federal Forestry Agency, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and a variety of non-governmental organizations focused on conservation issues.

Jordan:

Since 2002, the U.S. Forest Service has worked with diverse partners including the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, the Hashemite Fund, the Princess Basma Youth Resource Center, the Ministry of Agriculture-Forestry Department, the Environment Rangers, and the Al-Shejarah Society. Activities have focused on a wide range of issues, such as watershed management, forest conservation, institutional strengthening, law enforcement, conservation education and protected area management. This work has been made possible over the years through

support from the U.S. Agency for International Development in Jordan and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science.

Africa—CARPE program:

Since 1997, the U.S. Forest Service has been a primary partner in the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), a program funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. CARPE is a long-term initiative designed to address issues of deforestation, sustainable forest management, biodiversity loss, and climate change in the Congo Basin. The CARPE program works to improve management of forested lands in the basin and to strengthen the capacities of governments and people of the region to manage these resources at the local, national, and regional levels. Under the umbrella of CARPE, the U.S. Forest Service also implements complementary technical assistance programs funded by the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development that focus on capacity building in the areas of climate change, reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and forest carbon measurement and monitoring.

Indonesia:

For more than 25 years the U.S. Forest Service has worked in Indonesia to address critical matters of forest management, biodiversity conservation, and climate change. With support from the U.S. Department of State and the U. S. Agency for International Development, the U. S. Forest Service has established significant, productive partnerships with the Government of Indonesia and civil society stakeholders on a variety of natural resource topics. One notable long-term program in Indonesia has been the One Map Initiative, through which the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Department of State have established a unique partnership with the Government of Indonesia to promote reform within its land use sector by working to establish a unified national mapping system. We have worked with several Indonesian government agencies to develop, organize, and distribute geospatial data products. This collaboration has resulted in the production of new high-resolution national base maps and a web application to allow citizens to contribute map data. These technical endeavors improve Indonesia's capacity for evidence-based decision-making and robust public engagement on the country's most vital issues.