

Ethiopia

U.S. FOREST SERVICE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The U.S. Forest Service Remote Sensing Application Center (RSAC) developed a series of maps of key pastoral areas in Ethiopia to show changes in land use and land cover over 30 years. These maps are used by Ethiopian land managers to influence policy makers to provide land rights to pastoral communities.

The U.S. Forest Service implemented the first 'Range School' course in Ethiopia in 2014, a platform that brings together land users and land managers to discuss range science and management planning.

PRIME and the U.S. Forest Service are working with applied economists from Mexico to study economic incentives and benefits for communities who engage in sustainable rangeland management. This payment for ecosystem services scheme could be the first of its kind in Ethiopia.

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, BACKGROUND, ACTIVITIES, ETC

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is one of the world's oldest continuous civilizations, viewed by many as the cradle of humanity. The landscape and topography that has nurtured this civilization are incredibly diverse—from high Afro-alpine vegetation to desert and semi-desert scrublands to four large river systems. The Great Rift Valley bisects the country and provides habitat to hundreds of endemic plant and animal species. Some of the rarest fauna in the world can be found in its Afro-alpine forests, including the Ethiopian wolf, the planet's rarest canid.

Eighty-five percent of the country's population resides in rural areas and depends on lowland vegetation to sustain itself. Pastoralism is deeply rooted in cultural identity. Drought, soil erosion, deforestation, overgrazing, poor land management practices, climate change, and population pressures are all threats to Ethiopia's natural resources. U.S. Forest Service teams have assisted with rangeland planning, GIS mapping, monitoring, fire ecology, and invasive species management in important pastoral areas in the Afar, Oromiya, and Somali regions of Ethiopia since 2005. Most recently, the U.S. Forest Service is collaborating with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry on climate change policy actions. With the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Forest Service has applied its expertise and experience managing rangelands, grasslands, and dry land ecosystems to Ethiopia.

2015 Programs in Ethiopia

In 2015, the U.S. Forest Service is providing technical assistance to USAID's Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement and Market Expansion (PRIME) project to enhance resiliency of pastoral communities across the country. Technical program areas include rangeland management planning, remote sensing analysis for land use/land cover, payment for ecosystem services feasibility studies, and long-term vegetation monitoring to assess rangeland health. The U.S. Forest Service also has a long-term advisor in Ethiopia supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts for the national climate resilient green economy strategy.



U.S. Forest Service and PRIME field teams conducting a vegetation and soil inventory to assess baseline rangeland condition. Photo credit: Tom DeMeo, U.S. Forest Service



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