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Millar Earns Deputy Chief's Distinguished Science Award

ALBANY, Calif. January 27, 2010—Research paleoecologist Connie Millar is well-respected within the scientific community for her leadership in interdisciplinary research, including climate change research. She is also admired for her aptitude and eagerness to clearly communicate complex scientific findings to land managers. For these reasons and more, Millar will be presented the 2009 Research and Development Deputy Chief's Distinguished Science award during ceremonies January 27, 2010 in Washington, D.C. Read the USDA Forest Service national press release [here](#).

Millar, who is based at the USDA Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Research Station, played founding roles in the Consortium for Integrated Climate Research in Western Mountains and the Westwide Climate Change Initiative. She established the North American Chapter of the Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments, whose purpose is to establish and maintain a long-term observation network in alpine environments around the world.

Ann Bartuska, Deputy Chief for Research and Development, USDA Forest Service, commended Dr. Millar as "a proven leader in developing resource management strategies for a climate-change context in western North America."

Millar's research explores the response of forest ecosystems to climate change, both past and present. Her work has demonstrated, for example, that historic changes in forest composition, structure and distribution in response to climate variability have been far more extreme than is often recognized. These findings may help predict how forest ecosystems will be altered as the climate changes and will help managers plan for these future conditions.



Scientific leadership and relevancy earn Millar a Deputy Chief's Distinguished Science Award.

Millar has worked on-the-ground with managers to incorporate climate change science into land management planning and to develop tools and programs for managers. In the 1990's, Millar served as co-team leader for the Congressionally mandated Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project, a comprehensive, range-wide assessment that set the basis for conservation and management throughout the region ever since. Her conservation efforts were recognized when she was elected a "Pew Scholar in Conservation and the Environment" in the first class of scholars in 1992. Millar's genetic research led to rewriting the theory on the origin and early evolution of pines, which contributed to her receiving in 1995 the International Scientific Achievement Award from the International Union of Forest Research Organizations.

Recently, Millar was instrumental in developing a new climate change short course available as a DVD and online at the Climate Change Resource Center <http://www.fs.fed.us/ccrc/>. "Adapting to Climate Change: A Short Course for Land Managers" provides land managers with information and support for decisions about climate change adaptation.

In the future, Millar plans to continue work to better understand historic and future responses of mountain ecosystems to climate variability. Connie has found that spending as

much time as possible in the mountains with her eyes open and her head "theory-free" is a critical part of her research process. It is in the field that she generates questions and makes observations that guide her current and evolving work.

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