



USDA Forest Service PNW Research Station



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Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Center, Prineville, Oregon

Issue

Wildlands (forests and rangelands) of the Western United States are vulnerable to environmental stresses and disturbances such as fire, insect infestation, disease, invasive species, drought, and development. These stresses, alone or in combination, can have significant and long-lasting effects on ecological and socioeconomic values. Wildland managers need state-of-the-art information and tools that help them anticipate and solve problems.

Response

A new unit of the Pacific Northwest Research Station has been created to predict, detect, and assess existing and potential environmental threats to Western wildlands. Information will be developed and shared about forest threats such as invasive plants, potential insect outbreaks, the appearance of invasive insect threats, the appearance of new pathogens (such as sudden oak death), and other threats. The Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Center (WWETAC) is in Prineville, OR, colocated with the Ochoco National Forest headquarters. A similar center in Asheville, NC, will address environmental threats in the Eastern United States.



Mission and objectives

The mission of the center is to generate and integrate knowledge and information to provide credible prediction, early detection, and quantitative assessment of environmental threats in the Western United States. The goal of WWETAC is to inform policy and support the management of environmental threats to Western wildlands.

The objectives of WWETAC are to:

- Evaluate the effects and consequences of multiple, interacting stresses on Western wildland health.
- Increase knowledge of the risks, uncertainties, and benefits of multiple environmental stresses on Western ecological conditions and socioeconomic values.
- Provide science-based decision-support tools for policy formulation and land management in the Western United States.
- Provide land managers with credible predictions of potential severe disturbances in the West with sufficient warning for managers to take preventive actions.

Partners

The WWETAC is jointly funded and run by three branches of the Forest Service: the National Forest System, State and Private Forestry, and the Pacific Northwest Research Station.

Who benefits

- Federal, state, tribal, and private land managers
- Policymakers
- Landowners
- Communities
- Watershed and urban planning

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