



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

JUN 16 2010

The Honorable James P. Moran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed is the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service report on funding for the Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center in North Carolina and the Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Center in Oregon, as required in Public Law 109-54, House Report 109-80, page 129.

A similar letter is being sent to Congressman Michael K. Simpson and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Lamar Alexander.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Vilsack", written in a cursive style.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

Enclosure



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Washington, D.C. 20250

JUN 16 2010

The Honorable Michael K. Simpson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Simpson:

Enclosed is the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service report on funding for the Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center in North Carolina and the Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Center in Oregon, as required in Public Law 109-54, House Report 109-80, page 129.

A similar letter is being sent to Congressman James P. Moran and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Lamar Alexander.

Sincerely,

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



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JUN 16 2010

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Madam Chairman:

Enclosed is the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service report on funding for the Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center in North Carolina and the Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Center in Oregon, as required in Public Law 109-54, Senate Report 109-80, page 76.

A similar letter is being sent to Senator Lamar Alexander, Congressmen James P. Moran and Michael K. Simpson.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Vilsack", written over a horizontal line.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

Enclosure



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Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

JUN 16 2010

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Alexander:

Enclosed is the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service report on funding for the Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center in North Carolina and the Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Center in Oregon, as required in Public Law 109-54, Senate Report 109-80, page 76.

A similar letter is being sent to Senator Dianne Feinstein, Congressmen James P. Moran and Michael K. Simpson.

Sincerely,

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

Enclosure

Program of Work for Threat Assessment Centers – FY 2010 & 2011

The Eastern Forest and Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Centers (Centers) are national leaders in developing knowledge and tools to protect and sustain the Nation's forests and rangelands. The Centers partner with government agencies, universities, and nongovernmental organizations to improve the collective national capacity to predict, detect, and assess threats to forests and wildlands. The mission of the Centers requires them to be responsive to emerging issues and high-priority policy initiatives such as climate change, carbon sequestration, fuels management, and wildland fire risk. The work of the Centers is essential to ensuring that resource managers and stakeholders are equipped with the latest information and state-of-the-art technology.

The Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Center (WWETAC)

The WWETAC has made significant progress in its mission to provide early detection and prediction of the potential effects of multiple, interacting threats and stresses. It has hosted workshops and conferences to identify and synthesize current knowledge regarding threat assessment and improve predictive modeling. WWETAC initiated collaborative agreements with universities, government (local and Federal) partners, and nongovernmental organizations to advance the application of remote sensing and geospatial technologies, and make assessment tools and data more accessible to analysts and managers.

Planned Expenditures:	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personnel	\$ 653,000	\$ 653,000
Partnerships, Technology Acquisitions, and Grants & Agreements	1,139,000	1,139,000
Equipment & Supplies	20,000	20,000
Communications	124,000	124,000
Travel	38,000	38,000
Rent & Utilities	130,000	130,000
Indirect Costs	<u>296,000</u>	<u>296,000</u>
Total	\$ 2,400,000	\$ 2,400,000

Program of Work Highlights:

Fiscal Year (FY) 2010

- Recruit and fill key positions: Center Director (GS 14/15); Fire Ecologist (GS-11).
- Respond to Center review by developing communications and Social Science assistance, establishing a user committee jointly with the Eastern Center, and focusing on Technology Transfer.
- Develop a synthesis of information on bark beetles and fire interactions under a changing climate in the West.
- Continue to support Special Technology Development Projects.
- Provide Users with map products showing potential interactions among key forest threats and values at regional scales.

Program of Work for Threat Assessment Centers – FY 2010 & 2011

- Develop and deliver webinars for interested users on forest vegetation models and climate change as well as forest pathogens and climate change.
- Continue to develop risk assessment framework to analyze the effects of hazardous fuel treatments on multiple interacting threats.

FY 2011

- Continue to develop products in four primary focus areas: understanding and managing wildland threats, wildland threat interactions, wildfire risk framework, and threat projections and mapping.
- Continue to explore cloud computing as a tool to use in threat projections and mapping.
- Continue to work on maintaining a user friendly Web site for information on threats.
- Develop an integrated threat assessment of future threats to western wildlands.
- Support 15-year evaluation of larch-casebearer biocontrol effectiveness.
- Cosponsor a Practical Resistance Breeding workshop.
- Support work on forest genetic resources and climate change.
- Continue work on carbon offsets and hazardous fuel treatments.
- Continue work on spotted owl risk framework.

The Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center (EFETAC)

The EFETAC is engaged in multiple projects at the forefront of technology development and application in forest threat detection and assessment. Researchers are using new protocols to develop new indicators of landscape change, and providing land managers and policy makers with new tools for strategic planning.

Planned Expenditures: *	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personnel	\$2,652,000	\$2,801,000
Partnerships, Technology Acquisitions, and Grants & Agreements	1,554,000	1,394,000
Equipment & Supplies	85,000	85,000
Communications	56,000	56,000
Travel	142,000	142,000
Rent & Utilities	262,000	266,000
Indirect Costs	419,000	426,000
Other	32,000	32,000
Total Budget	\$5,202,000	\$5,202,000

*Expenditures also reflect a consolidation of a Research Work Unit

Program of Work for Threat Assessment Centers – FY 2010 & 2011

Program of Work Highlights:

FY 2010

- Progress continues on development and application of early warning systems using remotely sensed data. The Eastern and Western Centers have partnered with NASA's Stennis Space Center to produce moderate-resolution phenology (seasonal changes in vegetation) map products that can support regional scale risk assessments and identify areas experiencing unexpected change or disturbance. These map products are being provided to forest health personnel to help guide active monitoring of pest outbreak or other disturbances.
- The Eastern Center continues to offer training workshops promoting the use of the newly launched Comparative Risk Assessment Framework and Tools, a user friendly, web based support system that helps natural resource managers address uncertainties inherent in land management decisions.
- Related to the Fire Program Analysis (FPA), Center researchers continue to address deficiencies and improve the reliability of the FPA modeling tools and are interacting with fire managers across the U.S. to assess the value of FPA products. Recent efforts have focused on the performance of fire behavior models in the East relative to the West and the effectiveness of strategically placed fuel treatments.
- Researchers are using remote sensing to identify and map understory fuel types and quantities in eastern forests to fill important information gaps. These maps and geospatial data tools will be made available in a web based application to aid wildland fire planners in making decisions.
- EFETAC is working on a collaborative project to update the Climate Change Resource Center (CCRC) to better reflect eastern issues. To gain a complete national perspective, the Southern Research Station, Northern Research Station, and EFETAC—with input from Regions 8 and 9 and Northeastern Area—will expand the CCRC scope to include eastern United States climate change research and resources.
- Progress continues in the Region 8 partnership to develop a template to enhance integration of climate change science into forest management and planning. Initial draft tools for a Template for Assessing Climate Change Impacts and Management Options included a web based template delivery and report generation system, literature, and forest plan database. Issue meetings with forest planners and key public stakeholders will also be held.
- Eastern Center researchers continue their research to better understand the dynamics of invasive plant species and the impact they have on native communities. An extensive database on the population traits of individual non-native plants has been compiled, which will improve the predictive power of researchers and managers to anticipate the success and effects of exotic invasions.
- Center researchers are developing an integrated model to estimate ecosystem water and carbon balances and the interactions among ecosystem evapotranspiration, productivity, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity at the continental scale. This integrated, water-centered modeling system is being built upon previous water supply and demand research that resulted in a Water Supply Stress Index (WaSSI) model. Scientists have used the WaSSI model to examine potential

Program of Work for Threat Assessment Centers – FY 2010 & 2011

impacts of climate, land use, and population changes individually or in combination. The model will be developed and applied in the United States and internationally in Asia and South America.

FY 2011

EFETAC plans to expand research in wildland fire modeling, threat interaction mapping, hazardous fuels treatment decision support systems, broad-scale vegetation monitoring, and climate change research, among others. The challenge now facing the Centers is how to increase national recognition through better coordination and integration on nationwide issues, and more effective communication and outreach.

New projects planned for FY 2011, in addition to continuation of work begun in previous years, include:

- Integration of the remote sensing products with ancillary data layers in a comprehensive GIS system that will allow more rapid and intelligent interpretation of observed changes.
- Development of tools for projecting the interactions of climate change and forest insect pests.
- Increased emphasis on technology transfer, including developing and hosting a series of educational workshops that introduce forest managers to advanced technologies developed at the Centers.
- An expanded role for the Centers in developing and implementing an analytical system for comparing wildland fire management alternatives on both public and private lands. This effort will support the Interagency Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy requested by Congress.