

Interim Report to the Secretary of Agriculture
USDA Forestry Research Advisory Council
February 27, 2015

During the recent Forestry Research Advisory Council (FRAC) meeting, the council learned that the President's fiscal year (FY) 2016 budget cuts U.S. Forest Service Research and Development's (R&D) non-FIA funding by approximately 5.8% -- a cut that R&D can ill afford given a multi-decadal downward trend in the R&D budget. Although outside of the normal FRAC process, the council unanimously agreed to submit this interim report to express our concerns now, while Congress develops the FY 2016 budget and the Forest Service begins the FY 2017 budget proposal. In order to advance science-based best management practices across all lands along a complex rural to urban gradient, the FRAC believes that this budget decline should be reversed and that Forest Service R&D should be no less than 10% of the agency's budget.

Forests cover two thirds of the United States, providing millions of jobs and billions of dollars in economic impact annually. They help clean the air and water, prevent flooding, support biodiversity, provide recreation and respite, and improve the quality of human lives. Research is required for the Forest Service to meet its mission and is critical for our Nation's future to:

- Address destructive forest agents such as wildfire, invasive pests, and diseases
- Foster green building and architecture using advanced wood products technology
- Identify innovations to support new markets and jobs
- Respond to a changing climate through assessment and innovation
- Enhance green infrastructure in urban areas, where 80% of the US population resides

The FRAC is deeply concerned about the continued decline in investment in Forest Service R&D, especially in conjunction with reductions in university and private industry research funding and expanding research by competing countries.

Management of the nation's forests requires sound science, a critical need fulfilled by the Forest Service R&D enterprise. With adequate resources, the US Forest Service can continue to lead the Nation with internal research and its proven ability to leverage resources through partnerships with universities and the private sector. The FRAC respectfully requests increasing support for this vital research and development capacity in the Forest Service.

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