

# TURKEY

## U.S. Forest Service International Programs

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Turkey is rapidly emerging as a regional leader in forest conservation, recently hosting the United Nations Forum on Forestry meeting. Turkey also plays a leading role in Mediterranean forest policy conversations, including *Silva Mediterranea*.

The U.S. Forest Service and Turkey signed a letter of intent in 2014 highlighting areas of mutual interest including wildfire management, climate change, and slowing desertification.

The Ministry of Forests and Water hosted a high-level U.S. Forest Service official during the summer of 2015 to explore scientific exchange opportunities in Mediterranean ecosystems.

The U.S. Forest Service hosted a delegation of Turkish foresters in 2017 in Northern California to observe management and restoration strategies in the Mediterranean forests of the U.S.

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### OVERVIEW

Turkey has a long history of forest management dating back to the Ottoman Empire. For over 50 years, the Turkish government has worked on dry land conservation through shrub and tree planting and watershed management. Turkey is one of the few countries in the world to have a positive net growth in forest cover, and timber production remains an important commodity for the government. The Turkish Ministry of Forests and Water is responsible for managing forest and water resources and has a workforce of roughly 30,000 employees; 26% of the land area is forested. Forest products also provide supplemental income and fuel to rural communities.

Turkey's vulnerable ecosystem has been placed under increasing stress by high population growth, rising incomes and energy consumption. Climate change poses a threat to sustainable development objectives. Mediterranean forests are extremely susceptible to fire, and changing climatic conditions cause longer, hotter fire seasons.

#### U.S. FOREST SERVICE ENGAGEMENT IN TURKEY

The U.S. Forest Service maintains a modest level of support to Turkey, primarily through technical exchange opportunities for Turkish professionals and international seminar opportunities. The U.S. Forest Service and Turkish counterparts are participating in meaningful scientific exchange on research and policy collaboration related to Mediterranean ecosystems and forestry. U.S. Forest Service partnerships with Turkey are also of great value to partner countries in the region, including Lebanon, Tunisia and Jordan.

The U.S. Forest Service participates in Mediterranean Forest Week and will continue to engage with Turkey on research and policy cooperation. The U.S. Forest Service also hosts partners from Turkey on its annual international seminars and is exploring technical exchange related to wildfire training and management



Mediterranean forests of Turkey. Photo credit: Natasha Marwah, U.S. Forest Service

