PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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 and 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 and Jordan.

2015 PROGRAMS IN TURKEY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

The U.S. Forest Service recently became an observer to Silva Mediterranea, and will engage with Turkey on research and policy cooperation. The U.S. Forest Service is also hosting partners from Turkey on its annual climate change and forest landscape restoration seminars.

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