



CWSF
COUNCIL OF WESTERN
STATE FORESTERS

Legislative & Policy Update – March 2019

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The [Council of Western State Foresters \(CWSF\) Legislative & Policy Update](#) provides information on issues of importance to the CWSF. Policy and Legislative Updates are found on the CWSF webpage [here](#). Please note that the items highlighted in these updates are only a selection of the issues the CWSF and Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) are monitoring. Keep an eye out for our monthly newsletter that will provide summaries on other key legislative and programmatic issues. If you have not yet subscribed, you can do so [here](#). For more information, please contact Danielle Okst, Associate Policy and Grants Director, dokst@westernforesters.org.

This past month, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies (Interior) held a public witness hearing and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources hosted a roundtable on public lands. On March 11, the President's fiscal year (FY) 2020 budget proposal was released, kicking off the annual federal appropriations process. For this month's newsletter, we will detail the House hearing, the Senate roundtable, and the contents of the President's FY 2020 budget request along with the USDA Forest Service's (Forest Service) budget justification, including the proposed reforms to the budget structure.

House Appropriations Subcommittee Public Witness Hearing

The House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee held a [public witness hearing](#) regarding FY 2020 appropriations. Terry T. Baker of the Society of American Foresters, Bill Imbergamo of the Federal Forest Resource Coalition, Alexandra Murdoch of American Forests, and Kameran Onley of The Nature Conservancy provided some of the forest sector testimonies. Support was expressed for increases in Forest and Rangeland Research, the pace and scale of forest management, Capital Improvement and Maintenance, Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, and State and Private Forestry. Many speakers emphasized the importance of a consistent and timely appropriations process for not only stability in federal agencies, but for other agencies and partners working on these programs. The federal fire funding fix and the Land and Water Conservation Fund were also lauded throughout the testimonies given.

Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Public Lands Roundtable

A roundtable was held on Thursday, March 7 on ["Issues Related to Public Lands in the Western United States."](#) Several individuals testified during this roundtable in the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, including representatives from Western Governors' Association (WGA) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

[Jim Ogsbury, Executive Director of WGA, testified](#) on the importance of WGA's Policy Resolutions as a bipartisan resource for the Committee regarding land issues in the West. He emphasized the need for promotion of state authority and improvements to state and federal relationships to build authentic

partnerships for effective policy implementation. He outlined WGA's work in advancing the [USDA Forest Service Shared Stewardship strategy](#) and stressed the value of coordination and collaboration as key to successful management of western lands.

[TNC Senior Policy Advisor, Brent Keith, provided testimony](#) commending passing of the public lands package and the federal fire borrowing fix (set to begin in FY 2020). He also highlighted the significant forest restoration needs remaining, necessitating an increase in the pace and scale of work to reach management goals.

Administration's FY 2020 Budget Request

["A Budget for a Better America: Promises Kept. Taxpayers First."](#) represents the Administration's key funding priorities and is an initial high-level overview. The [Forest Service budget justification](#), which contains greater detail on specific budget line items, was released on March 18. Similar to previous appropriations cycles, the President's budget request proposes significant decreases in State and Private Forestry. It calls for a reduction ["in state and family forests to just 2.5 percent of the overall Forest Service budget,"](#) compared to nearly 5.5 percent in the Forest Service's FY 2019 enacted levels. Ultimately, Congress determines the final funding levels during development of the 12 appropriations bills that comprise the yearly spending package for the federal government.

The budget requests a name change for Volunteer Fire Assistance to Rural Fire Capacity, State Fire Assistance to National Fire Capacity, and Forest Stewardship to Working Forest Lands. Most programs outlined in the table posted below (also available on the [WFLC Resources page](#)) saw reductions or stayed static from FY 2019 enacted levels, with the exception of hazardous fuels (\$15 million increase to \$450 million), facilities (\$3 million increase to \$151 million), and forest products (\$7 million increase to \$375 million). The Forest Service's discretionary appropriations is \$5.14 billion, a decrease of \$815 million from FY 2019. The requested funding level for State and Private Forestry is \$182.30 million (\$335.40 million in FY 2019), Forest and Rangeland Research is \$254.50 million (\$300 million in FY 2019), National Forest System (NFS) is \$1.91 billion (\$1.94 billion in FY 2019), Wildland Fire Management is \$2.35 billion (\$3.00 billion in FY 2019), and Capital Improvement and Maintenance is \$434 million (\$446 million in FY 2019). The budget zeroes out Landscape Scale Restoration, Forest Legacy Program, Urban and Community Forestry, and Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration, reflecting the requests made in FY 2019.

The [federal wildfire funding fix](#) that passed in the FY 2018 omnibus appropriations measure goes into effect in the FY 2020 appropriations cycle. An additional \$1.95 billion is available through a budget cap adjustment to the Forest Service if suppression funding (frozen at the 2015 rolling 10-year average determined to be \$1.01 billion) is exhausted. This budget authority starts at \$2.25 billion in FY 2020 and increases by \$100 million each year through FY 2027. The FY 2020 budget requests the full suppression base amount (\$1.01 billion) and the full \$2.25 billion authorized, with \$1.95 billion for the Forest Service and \$300 million for the Department of the Interior. The enactment of the wildfire funding fix in FY 2020 is intended to put an end to the long-term erosion of the agency's non-fire programs to pay for the increasing cost of fire and allows the Forest Service to carry out its mission. For more information on the enactment of the federal wildfire funding fix, please see our March 2018 [policy update](#).

Forest Service Budget Reform Proposal

[Page 177 of the Forest Service's budget justification](#) details the Agency's reform proposal in response to Congressional and Office of Management and Budget's direction to increase financial accountability and programmatic transparency. The budget restructure aims to improve strategic prioritization of resources and reduce budget complexity by clearly detailing fixed indirect support and other common costs across program areas, while also consolidating individual program line items to take a landscape-scale outcome focused approach.

The Forest Service does not receive specific appropriations for general management or use an administrative account to cover indirect costs, including salaries, leadership expenses, and multi-program/agency serving offices such as the USDA Office of General Counsel Services. These costs are funded through the use of Cost Pools funded by program area allocations that do not specify amounts for indirect costs and make it unclear what money is available for direct costs. The budget reform proposal ends Cost Pools and replaces this system with direct appropriations for indirect costs. Specifically appropriating these fixed costs, according to the proposal, would clarify what actual resources are available, simplify the budget process, and enable an assessment of the effectiveness of direct resource expenditures on program outcomes.

The proposal consolidates nine NFS line items (Hazardous Fuels, Land Management Planning Assessment and Monitoring, Minerals and Geology Management, Grazing Management, Forest Products, Vegetation and Watershed Management, Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management, Forest Health Federal Lands, and Forest and Rangeland Research) into a new budget line named Vegetation, Fuels, and Landscape Management. This budget line item would be contained within the newly created Landscape Management appropriations account. This new account will also contain Forest Inventory and Analysis (shifting it from Forest and Rangeland Research), Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (shifting it from NFS), Law Enforcement Operations (shifting it from NFS), and the new budget line item Recreation and Public Access.

The Agency is also proposing consolidation of Forest Health on Cooperative Lands, Forest Stewardship, and Landscape Scale Restoration into a single line item referred to as State and Private Assistance. This line item would be within the restructured State and Private Forestry Treasury Account. This account would also include State Fire Assistance, Volunteer Fire Assistance, International Forestry, Community Forest and Open Space Conservation, Urban and Community Forestry, and Forest Legacy. Additionally, the Capital Improvement and Maintenance account would undergo a name change to Capital Improvement and Road Maintenance.

USDA Forest Service Budget Summary
Compiled by the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition 3/22/2019

Please note - this is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all the USDA Forest Service programs and budget line items.

		[In Millions]						
	Program	FY15 Enacted	FY16 Enacted	FY17 Enacted	FY18 Enacted	FY19 USFS Budget Request	FY19 Consolidated Appropriations Act	FY20 USFS Budget Request
Forest and Rangeland Research		\$296.00	\$291.00	\$288.51	\$297.00	\$260.80	\$300.00	\$254.50
	Forest Inventory and Analysis	\$70.00	\$75.00	\$77.00	\$77.00	\$75.00	\$77.00	\$77.00
State and Private Forestry		\$232.65	\$237.02	\$216.92	\$329.59	\$182.30	\$335.49	\$182.30
	Landscape Scale Restoration	\$14.00	\$14.00	\$14.00	\$14.00	\$0	\$14.00	\$0
	Forest Health Management - Federal Lands	\$58.92	\$58.92	\$55.50	\$55.50	\$51.50	\$56.00	\$51.50
	Forest Health Management - Cooperative Lands	\$45.66	\$40.68	\$39.00	\$41.00	\$34.38	\$42.00	\$34.38
	Forest Stewardship ¹	\$23.04	\$23.04	\$20.04	\$20.50	\$19.48	\$20.50	\$19.48
	Forest Legacy Program	\$53.00	\$62.35	\$62.35	\$67.03	\$0	\$63.99	\$0
	Urban and Community Forestry	\$28.04	\$28.04	\$28.04	\$28.50	\$0	\$29.50	\$0
	State Fire Assistance ²	-	-	-	\$80.00	\$65.93	\$81.00	\$65.93
	Volunteer Fire Assistance	-	-	-	\$16.00	\$11.02	\$17.00	\$11.02
<p>¹ The FY 2020 Budget Request contains a name change request for Forest Stewardship to Working Forest Lands. ² The FY 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act shifted the State Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance programs from Wildland Fire Management to State and Private Forestry. FY 2019 and 2020 Budget Requests contain proposed name changes for State Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance to National Fire Capacity and Rural Fire Capacity respectively.</p>								
National Forest System		\$1,494.33	\$1,509.36	\$1,513.32	\$1,923.75	\$1,719.95	\$1,938.00	\$1,912.75
	Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$0	\$40.00	\$0
	Forest Products	\$339.13	\$359.81	\$367.81	\$366.00	\$341.17	\$368.00	\$375.00
	Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management	\$140.47	\$140.47	\$140.47	\$136.43	\$118.75	\$137.00	\$136.43
	Vegetation and Watershed Management	\$184.72	\$184.72	\$184.72	\$180.00	\$165.68	\$180.00	\$180.00
	Land Management Planning, Assessment, and Monitoring ³	-	-	\$182.93	\$179.26	\$156.75	\$180.00	\$179.26
	Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness	\$261.72	\$261.72	\$264.60	\$257.85	\$240.24	\$280.00	\$257.85
	Hazardous Fuels ⁴	-	-	-	\$430.00	\$390.00	\$435.00	\$450.00
<p>³ This line item was established in 2017 by combining the Land Management Planning and Inventory and Monitoring line items. ⁴ The FY 2018 Omnibus shifted the Hazardous Fuels program from Wildland Fire Management to National Forest System.</p>								

USDA Forest Service Budget Summary
Compiled by the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition 3/22/2019

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		[In Millions]						
	Program	FY15 Enacted	FY 16 Enacted	FY17 Enacted	FY18 Enacted	FY19 USFS Budget Request	FY19 Consolidated Appropriations Act	FY20 USFS Budget Request
Capital Improvement and Maintenance		\$360.37	\$364.16	\$364.01	\$449.00	\$94.71	\$446.00	\$434.00
	Facilities	\$71.60	\$71.39	\$71.39	\$151.00	\$11.16	\$148.00	\$151.00
	Roads	\$168.09	\$172.09	\$175.09	\$218.00	\$71.48	\$218.00	\$218.00
	Trails	\$77.53	\$77.53	\$77.53	\$80.00	\$12.07	\$80.00	\$65.00
	Legacy Roads and Trails	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	-	-	-	-
Wildland Fire Management		\$2,333.30	\$2,386.33	\$2,833.42	\$2,880.34	\$2,504.99	\$3,004.99	\$2,350.62
	Preparedness	\$1,145.84	\$1,082.62	\$1,082.62	\$1,323.52	\$1,339.62	\$1,339.82	\$1,339.62
	Suppression	\$708.00	\$811.00	\$1,248.00	\$1,056.82	\$1,165.37	\$1,165.37	\$1,011.00 5
	Additional Suppression Funding				\$500.00		\$500.00	-
	Hazardous Fuels	\$361.75	\$375.00	\$390.00	-	-	-	-
	Fire Plan Research & Development	\$19.80	\$19.80	\$19.80	-	-	-	-
	State Fire Assistance	\$78.00	\$78.00	\$78.00	-	-	-	-
	Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$15.00	-	-	-	-
FLAME Wildfire Suppression Reserve Fund		\$303.06	\$823.00	\$342.00 6	-	-	-	-
Cap Adjustment for Wildfire Suppression 7		-	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,950.00

5 The wildfire funding fix (enacted in FY 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act to go into effect in FY 2020) freezes the Forest Service's suppression budget line item at the FY 2015 10-year average (calculated to be \$1,011 million). It also provides a budget cap adjustment to access additional funds needed for suppression in excess of this line item if that amount is exhausted.

6 The FY 2017 Consolidated Appropriations Act supplied \$342 million for the FLAME Wildfire Suppression Reserve Fund as emergency spending.

7 Beginning in FY 2020 through FY 2027, the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior will have new budget authority available when suppression funding has been exhausted (enacted in FY 2018). This budget authority starts at \$2.25 billion in FY 2020 and increases by \$100 million each year through FY 2027. The FY 2020 budget requests the full \$2.25 billion adjustment with \$1,950 million for Forest Service and \$300 million for the Department of the Interior.

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