

McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program.

The McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program (PL87-788) is funded through the U.S.D.A. National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) as a formula-based and competitive program for forestry research at Land Grant and related universities. These funds, approximately \$500,000 annually over the last several years, are managed by the College of Natural Resources at the University of Idaho. The program provides funding for critical state- and regionally-focused forestry and natural resources research, including graduate student support.

The University of Idaho, College of Natural Resources utilizes McIntire-Stennis funding to develop integrated, diverse research programs that will result in a greater understanding of best forestry and natural resource management practices in the Inland Northwest and their impact on public policy, and economic and social systems. Our results often are directly connected to the health of rural economies and communities and the sustainability of ecosystems. Specifically our goals are to:

- Provide timely, critical scientific knowledge technology and innovative management processes to federal, state and local governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in the management of the forest and range ecosystems and the products and services they produce.
- Increase research infrastructure at Idaho's land-grant university to ensure University of Idaho scientists and students have access to state-of-the-art technology and instrumentation to support the creation of relevant knowledge; store critical data and information; model ecosystem functions and services; develop new products and services; and implement research administration and management processes to increase efficiency.
- Develop the skills and capabilities of the future natural resource workforce by providing today's students with hands-on and field-based education and research networking opportunities with practicing professionals and university scientists.

Present funded projects address Idaho's natural resource issues such as: (1) how to enhance hydrologic yield from snowmelt to decrease wildfire hazards; (2) how to use our understanding of past forest ecosystem disturbances from insect outbreaks to propose mechanisms to reduce new outbreaks and increase tree vigor; (3) how to lessen negative impacts from grazing on insects and birds by using innovative science-based grazing practices; (4) how to remotely and cost effectively monitor climate variation in mountainous forest lands in the Northern Rockies by developing and testing wireless sensor network technologies; and (5) how to facilitate and reduce conflict in the land use decision-making processes used by federal, state and local governments through the assessment of cultural values attached to northern Idaho landscapes.



Accomplishments.

McIntire-Stennis funds aligned with other leveraged state and private research funding produces information that helps landowners better understand how to balance the production of ecosystem products and services with environmental sustainability. For example, the City of Troy, Idaho and Potlatch Corporation as well as the Idaho Panhandle, Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests, are interested in enhancing and sustaining water supplies while reducing wildland fire hazards and increasing the productivity in the products and services that flow from forest and range lands. The College of Natural Resources' McIntire-Stennis research has generated research findings and new approaches to modeling and management that directly address these needs. Research funds also have been used to demonstrate the proactive inclusion of the wildlife habitat management practices into the management of Idaho's Lava Lake Land and Livestock Ranch in southern Idaho. Being able to test strategies to promote conservation of intact ecosystems and create alternatives to federal listing of species with private landowners is a sensible and collaborative way to address Idaho's complex natural resource situations. Additionally, our research is being used in bioregional planning efforts in the greater Spokane and Coeur d'Alene area to enable communities to deal harmoniously with urban sprawl and amenity-driven development that fragments natural landscapes.

Consequences of Reduced Funding.

The most immediate consequence of a reduction in McIntire-Stennis support would be the loss of support for graduate students, who are the future natural resource workforce. There also would be a loss of scientific support staff, which is responsible for the efficient and effective operations of our forestry research infrastructure. Also, the inability to purchase critical technology and scientific instrumentation would limit our ability to provide needed and relevant data and result in natural resource students, who are not exposed to the latest technology and professional practices. Perhaps most importantly, a reduction would directly impact our ability to actively collaborate with Idaho's natural resource managers who interface with the region's public. Idaho's forest products industry depends on our research support to inform managers of important trends and economic impact forecasts. The ultimate consequence is diminished opportunities to provide scientific evidence and innovative management approaches to address critical natural resource issues in Idaho and the West.

For more information, please contact:

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