

McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program

The McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program (PL87-788) is funded through the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture as a formula-based and competitive program for forestry and natural resources research at land-grant and related universities.

These funds, approximately \$500,000 annually over the past 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.

Current Research

The University of Idaho, College of Natural Resources, uses McIntire-Stennis funds to develop research programs that result in a greater understanding of best forestry and natural resource management practices in the Inland Northwest and their effect on public policy and economic and social systems.

The projects address vital natural resource issues in Idaho, including decreasing wildfire hazards, reducing forest ecosystem disturbances, improving grazing practices, monitoring climate variation, and facilitating and reducing conflict in land-use decision making.

Results are often directly connected to ecosystem sustainability and the health of rural economies and communities. 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 forest and range ecosystems and the products and services they produce.
- Increase research infrastructure at Idaho's land-grant university to ensure the University of Idaho's 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.



Accomplishments

McIntire-Stennis funds, aligned with other leveraged state and private research funding, produce information that helps landowners better understand how to balance the production of ecosystem products and services with environmental sustainability. For example:

- Idaho forests are an ideal place to monitor weather-change influence on conifer stands. But the complex terrain is difficult to access. It is possible sensor networks can transmit data on climate and tree growth without constant attention. The UI has invested \$415,000 through McIntire-Stennis funding, with matching funds from NSF, to place sensors to collect data in remote locations without human intervention. The advanced sensor networks will be used to evaluate the impact of higher temperatures and redistributed precipitation in the northern Rockies on tree physiology and growth.
- Alternative energy through biomass is causing a surge in research as effectiveness, availability, economic impact and environmental impact are studied. On the UI's 10,000-acre Experimental Forest, \$199,300 in McIntire-Stennis funding is being used to study the economic viability of using wood biomass for biofuel. This is being done while also studying the impacts on regeneration when biomass is removed from the forest floor as compared to using fire or doing nothing.
- The face of forest management has changed, and the most economic and environmentally efficient ways of harvesting timber are being improved. With the aid of \$163,000 in McIntire-Stennis funding, our forest operations faculty and graduate students are studying how to make timber harvest the most cost effective through changes in seasons and weather. The results will influence the future of harvest management and the sustainability of commercial forests.

Consequences of Reduced Funding

Relevant forest research is necessary to influence decision making and create an environmentally vibrant economic future for forest management. Without proper funding for this research, not only is new technology left out of reach, but our students, our future natural resource professionals, are not exposed to the science that will lead them into successful careers and well-managed resources.

Working collaboratively within the College of Natural Resources as well as across universities, private enterprise, and agencies is vital to providing the best science. The University of Idaho's research efforts prove this and would be drastically impacted without adequate funding.



Request: is to fund the program at the FY 2014 level of \$33.9 million.

Account: Agriculture Appropriations, NIFA, Research and Education Activities, McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act

For more information, please contact:

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