



Western Forestry Leadership Coalition Status Report USFS Threat Assessment Centers

www.WFLCweb.org

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Summary:

This status report provides an introduction to the new USFS Threat Assessment Centers that are now up and running. The Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Center (WWETAC) and the Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center co-sponsored their first conference this past summer (July, 2006). *Advances in Threat Assessment and Their Application to Forest and Rangeland Management* encouraged meaningful exchange among those seeking new knowledge and tools for threat assessment and those responsible for managing forests and rangelands. Scientists, educators, policymakers, property owners, land managers, and students were among the participants. An introduction to the Centers was presented. A summary of that presentation is provided below. The full PowerPoint presentation can be found at http://www.wflcweb.org/infomaterials/brochures_presentations.php.

Background:

The Centers were authorized by Congressional action in 2005 through the HFRA (2003) - Title VI, which stated that the Secretary of Agriculture "shall develop a comprehensive early warning system" that will enable resource managers to better isolate and treat a threat and prevent epidemics that could be devastating to forests. They are jointly funded by three Forest Service branches: Research and Development, National Forest System and State and Private Forestry.

Housed in the Ochoco National Forest headquarters in Prineville, Oregon, the WWETAC monitors the western half of the U.S. Its counterpart, in Asheville, N.C., tracks the eastern half of the U.S. The Prineville center is operated through the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station.

The mission of the Centers is to generate, integrate, and apply knowledge to predict, detect, and assess environmental threats to public and private forests and to deliver this knowledge in ways that are timely, useful, and user-friendly.

The Objectives of the Centers are to:

- Evaluate the effects and consequences of **multiple interacting stresses**;
- Increase knowledge and understanding of the risks, uncertainties, and/or benefits of multiple environmental stresses on **ecological conditions and socioeconomic values**;
- Provide science-based decision support tools for **policy formulation and land management**;
- Provide land managers with **credible predictions of potential severe disturbance** with sufficient warning to take preventative actions.

Issues:

The Top Threats Identified by the Centers are: land-use/ownership changes, insects and pathogens, severe weather or climatic changes, invasive species, wildland fire and other anthropogenic stresses.

What sets the assessment centers apart from other scientific agencies is that they analyze multiple environmental threats - such as climate changes, invasive species and insect infestation - to see how they interact and create potential disturbances.

Next Steps:

For more information please see <http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/WWETAC/> , or contact the WWETAC Director Jerry Beatty, 3160 NE Third St, PO Box 490 , Prineville, OR 97754, Phone: (541) 416-6500, Fax: (541) 416-6695, email: jbeatty@fs.fed.us.

The WFLC will work directly with the WWETAC on mutually beneficial projects (such as the update to the 2002 WFLC bark beetle report). WFLC members are encouraged to engage the WWETAC for their own state/regional needs.

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