



***Ensuring our Forests Meet  
the Needs of  
Today and Tomorrow***

**About the Council of  
Western State Foresters**

Established in 1967, the Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) is a nonpartisan organization of state, territorial, and commonwealth foresters of the Western United States and Pacific Islands. State Foresters are charged with providing forest management assistance to landowners, managing state trust lands and supplying wildfire and forest health protection services.

The CWSF acts in part with the National Association of State Foresters (NASF).

***Council of Western State Foresters  
Priority Programs  
FY 2010***

**The Council of Western State Foresters recommends the following funding levels for our priority programs:**

**State Fire Assistance program at \$115 million  
Forest Stewardship program at \$45 million  
Urban and Community Forestry program at \$36 million  
Cooperative Forest Health program at \$66 million**

*Our nation's forests and the benefits they provide are at risk. These benefits such as: clean and abundant water, wood products, habitat for plants and animals, rural community stability, energy self-sufficiency, and access for recreation and spiritual renewal are essential to the quality of life for all Americans. Our forests and these benefits are diminishing due to: large-scale wildfires, insect and disease outbreaks, outdated tax policies and assistance programs which discourage investment in our forests.*

**The following programs, when adequately funded, will help maintain our forests and the myriad of benefits they provide, as well as protect communities.**

**State Fire Assistance (SFA)** provides crucial financial and technical assistance to states and local fire departments for wildland fire management. SFA helps to ensure preparedness of local resources, which serve as the first line of defense for forests and communities. These fire fighting resources function as both “first responders” for local incidents and as “ready reserves” for large federally-managed catastrophic fires. Improved response efficiency provided through State Fire Assistance funding is critical to reducing fire size and subsequent suppression costs, which have skyrocketed of late, reaching over \$1 billion in four of the last seven years.

SFA is the only federal program tailored to provide funding for fuel reduction work on non-federal lands, regardless of their proximity to federal lands. It is also one of the few programs that help communities develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans, which are an important component of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. SFA also helps prepare states for dealing with non-fire emergencies, such as hurricane recovery and other all-hazard events.

Increased SFA funding is imperative to ensure successful wildland fire preparedness and management across the landscape. Funding for this program would be offset by federal suppression cost savings derived from the efficiency of state and local first responders in initial attack.

SFA funding is used to improve the local capacity to fight fire as these federal funds are matched by states and other sources. The total amount of matching funds often exceed the required match amount.

Working in concert with SFA, Volunteer Fire Assistance and Rural Fire Assistance funds aid in initial attack for a higher fire containment success which reduces overall federal fire costs. The CWSF supports appropriations of \$115 million for the State Fire Assistance program.

**The Forest Stewardship Program** is the primary program for promoting sustainable forest management practices on family-owned forestlands. Since its inception in 1991, over 285,759 Stewardship Plans have been written covering over 32.8 million acres. Private forestlands provide the public with an array of benefits including increased water quality, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, and wood products. The CWSF supports appropriations of \$45 million for this important program.

**The Urban and Community Forestry Program** provides technical and financial assistance to promote the stewardship of urban and community trees and forest resources. The program leverages existing local efforts that help urban areas and rural communities manage, maintain, and improve their tree cover and green spaces. These efforts reduce energy consumption, create healthier human environments, and provide buffers to reduce flooding.

The CWSF supports increased funding of \$36 million to better address the needs of the growing applications for the Urban and Community Forestry programs that include the stewardship of urban natural resources where 80 percent of the nation lives.

**The Cooperative Forest Health Program** provides funding assistance for forest health issues on non-federal forestland. Cooperative Forest Health activities include prevention, detection, and suppression of damaging insects, diseases, and plants. Every year, the American public loses billions of dollars to damage by invasive species through covering the cost of insect and disease detection and control. This program assists in the development and application of new technologies that mitigate these forest health concerns and reduce public expenses. The CWSF supports \$66 million in funding for this program in FY10.

Additionally, the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition produced the 2009 *Western Bark Beetle Assessment: A Framework for Cooperative Forest Stewardship* ([www.wflcweb.org/infomaterials/reports.php](http://www.wflcweb.org/infomaterials/reports.php)). Based on this report, the CWSF believes that at least \$300 million over the next five years is necessary to address the 2.4 million priority acres identified within the Plan.

