**New Mexico Forest and Watershed Health Coordinating Group**

**May 30, 2014**

**USFS Southwestern Region Office Talking Points**

**1. USFS State & Private Forestry - Budget Trends (in million)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | FY11 Enacted | FY12 Enacted | FY13 Enacted | FY14 Enacted | FY15 President's |
| Federal Forest Health | $77,447 | $63,383 | $60,095 | $58,922 | $58,922 |
| Coop Forest Health | $60,226 | $48,352 | $44,825 | $45,655 | $45,655 |
| State Fire Assistance\* | $97,228 | $85,963 | $78,431 | $78,000 | $78,000 |
| Volunteer Fire Assistance\* | $15,662 | $13,025 | $12,355 | $13,025 | $13,000 |
| Forest Stewardship | $32,548 | $28,814 | $30,441 | $22,398 | $23,036 |
| Urban and Community | $32,040 | $31,327 | $30,701 | $28,040 | $23,676 |

\* Coop Fire = State Fire Assistance + Volunteer Fire Assistance

* As of FY14, a new BLI called the *Landscape Scale Restoration* (LSR BLI) was approved to fund “Redesign” (as known as Western Competitive Resources Allocation Grants in the West). Rather than deriving a “Redesign” total from other BLI’s (Coop Forest Health, Coop Fire, Forest Stewardship, Urban and Community Forestry), the amount available for competitive allocation will be funded by the new LSR BLI. A total of $14M is available in FY14 nation-wide, with $4.5M of that available for the West. This is a decrease from the $6-7M which has been available in the past. As a consequence, this will mean fewer grants will be funded.  Overall, the funding for “Redesign” has decreased over the past couple years.  The FY15 President’s request is $23M.
* Recent projects funded in New Mexico through “Redesign” include *Canadian River Riparian Restoration* and *Upper Patterson Canyon Watershed Restoration*.
* Forest Stewardship funding has seen a steady decline over the past few years with a big decrease this year (27% decrease from FY13 to FY14). However, program funds stabilize with the FY15 budget request.
* Urban and Community Forestry funding has been rather stable for the past couple years but takes a hit (16% decrease) in the FY15 President’s Budget.

**2. Good Neighbor Policy**

* Expanded by FY14 Farm Bill. No guidance from Washington Office at this time.

**3. USDA Strike Force**

* James Melonas, who has some knowledge of the Strike Force, had this to share: NRCS and FSA have the lead for the Strike Force. There is an opportunity to work with the CG to identify potential synergies with USFS, especially in association with range improvements (building on an agreement in-place with the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts (NMACD)).
* Twenty States identified with severe poverty in rural communities. USDA to provide services to underserved areas. This is an outreach Initiative. No new monies or programs. Promise Zones, a new concept that allows cookie-cutting of counties to identify impoverished communities that span adjacent counties. USFS can offer support using Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP).