

# FOREST NEWS



The Newsletter of Forest Service Employees For Environmental Ethics

Summer 2016

## Scorched

*Wildland firefighting is taking a growing personal toll. Can the Forest Service change its relationship to fire?*

*Inside*

When The Numbers Don't Add Up / Protecting the Lochsa / FSEEE's 2015 Annual Report



# Up In Flames

*With the start of summer and another fire season upon us, the rhetoric is already heating up. Administration officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service's parent agency, are once again campaigning for special funding from Congress for wildfire suppression efforts.*

*FSEEE doesn't have a problem with an appropriately sized wildfire budget, but we are concerned that the firefighting-industrial complex is being dishonest as it seeks to justify ever-increasing spending. Last year, wildfire suppression by the Forest Service topped \$1.7 billion while the entire bill for the federal government (Forest Service included) exceeded \$2.1 billion.*

*Administration officials have gone to Congress with scary numbers. Press releases from the Department of Agriculture add to the frenzy. They proclaim 2015 the worst wildfire year in history; that money is being diverted from essential projects that will prevent wildfires; that wildfire is devastating our landscapes and must be stopped at all costs. It is this rhetoric that officials believe justifies creating special disaster spending accounts.*

*We explore these claims and more in this issue of Forest News. We take a close look at the personal cost of wildfire, as well as the on-the-ground impact fire spending has on our forests. We also present recent research that sheds new light on the interplay between fire and ecosystems. And we delve into the numbers being thrown around to understand the claims administration officials are making.*

*Our investigation does not conclude in these pages. This winter, we launched Fire Truth, an online feature exploring the rhetoric and running the numbers. You can access more coverage of this season's wildfire accounting at [www.fseee.org/ground-truth/fire-truth](http://www.fseee.org/ground-truth/fire-truth).*

*A series of interagency reports exploring the deaths of firefighters at three wildfires last summer urge us to change the way we fight wildfire. But the question remains: Can we?*

Sincerely,



Andy Stahl  
Executive Director

## Inside

### 3 | Featured Forest

A Midwest forest defined by water and shaped by geologic and human history.

### 4 | In Depth

The Twisp River Fire claimed the lives of three firefighters in 2015. A new interagency report suggests that it's time to change our relationship with fire. But can the Forest Service respond?

### 6 | Fire Stats

A quick look at how wildfire spending is changing the Forest Service and our national forests.

### 7 | Sound Off

Forest Service managers are back begging Congress for special wildfire funding. But the numbers they use to back up their claims don't always add up.

### 8 | Dispatch

A controversial land swap deal in Idaho loses an important proponent; a new study shows that the impact of wildfire is not what we suspected; the Army shelves plans to land helicopters in wilderness.

### 10 | 2015 Annual Report

A review of FSEEE's activities and finances.



© iStock.com/Wildnerdix, 2013

# Featured Forest

## *Superior National Forest, Minnesota*

Water defines the Superior National Forest. During recent ice ages, glaciers scoured depressions in the Canadian Shield bedrock underlying the region. The result was an abundance of lakes—more than 2,000 dot Superior's 3.9 million acres. Some 3,400 miles of rivers and streams wend through its woods.

The Superior harbors one of the crown jewels of the national forest system. The Boundary Waters Canoe Area covers a million acres of the forest, making it the largest wilderness east of the Rockies. It is also one of the most oft-visited wilderness areas in the nation.

A variety of wildlife, including large mammals rare in the eastern U.S., thrive in the wilderness and throughout the Superior National Forest. There are moose and lynx and bear. As many as 400 gray wolves live here, making the Superior one of the most important strongholds for wolves in the Lower 48.

These North Woods, wedged between Lake Superior and the Canadian border, offer rich habitat for birds, as well. A total of 163 species breed on the Superior, according to the American Bird Conservancy, more than on any other national forest.

The human history runs deep, too. This is the homeland of the Ojibwe people, who plied the waters in birch bark canoes. Canoes were also the favored vessels of French Voyageurs two centuries ago.

Today, canoes glide through the same waters, propelled by visitors who come for the timeless vistas of water and woods, for the lonely call of a loon at dawn. **FN**



# In Depth

## Lessons Learned?

It was a scorching summer day in the Methow Valley in northern Washington state. Wildfire season was at its peak and smoke hung heavy in the air. Mountaintops and ridgelines, usually crisp against the flawless sky, were nothing but smudgy silhouette.

Just past lunchtime, on August 19, 2015, word spread that another fire was aight. This time, it was about five miles west of the town of Twisp in an area covered by open, grassy slopes and stands of evergreens. Two dozen or so houses, cabins and outbuildings dotted the rolling terrain in the fire's vicinity.

The area was split by jurisdiction. It included private tracts and land managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Washington Department of Natural Resources. Local, state and federal fire crews were soon on the scene.

A gentle wind out of the southeast pushed the fire up a slope to the northwest; the Forest Service incident commander assessed the situation and set upon a strategy. Crews would douse hotspots near the point where the fire had started and then cautiously attack the fire on its west and eastern flanks. Helicopters and air tankers would drop water and retardant on the flames.

Woods Canyon Road, a steep and winding route, snaked up the hillside near the fire's eastern edge. Initial responders raced up the narrow dirt road and told a handful of residents to evacuate.

The fire was moving quickly on the west side. On the east side, though, it burned low and slow. Someone decided it was safe to send a crew of four up Woods Canyon Road. Other crews followed, hoping to protect five houses up the road.

Fire managers on the scene were aware that the weather forecast called for a shift in the winds later that afternoon. Just

before three p.m., crews working the fire's active west flank noticed a sudden change; smoke was no longer billowing directly overhead. Meanwhile, on the eastern flank, one crew member noticed ash starting to fall. The wind changed direction and grew stronger.

Then hell broke loose. The flames along the western perimeter of the fire, previously only two or three feet tall, grew tenfold and more. The fire sprinted toward them. "I have never seen fire move this fast," one seasoned firefighter reported.

Four Forest Service firefighters with Engine 642 scrambled into their truck and raced up the road, away from the flames. A supervisor, stationed higher up the road, saw them coming. He screamed at them: "RTO!"—"Reverse Tool Order." The crew knew a command of RTO meant they must flee using a previously established escape route.

The established escape route was back the way they had come. Woods Canyon Road is a dead end.

Engine 642 turned around and was the first to head down the road. Quickly the crew was in the middle of the fire. Smoke and flames were everywhere; visibility was zero. The truck hurtled off the road. One man scrambled out and was immediately engulfed in flames. He ran downhill and emerged from the fire screaming "We need help up there! Please, we need help!"

Chaos ensued. The fire raged all around the crews that were trapped upslope, creating a din that one firefighter said sounded "like a giant TV tuned to static and turned up full blast." Another said "the smoke conditions were black as night."

Three state firefighters trapped toward the top of Woods Canyon Road fled their bulldozer and huddled near a garage. The heat pressed in on them and they pried open the garage door. They soon realized the garage was on fire. They radioed for help but could hear nothing but the roar of the inferno. They ran out of the garage and hunched beneath two emergency fire shelters they carried with them. Miraculously, all three survived.

Three of the crew members from Engine 642 died that day. The fourth was airlifted to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, where he spent the next three months.

The account of this tragedy comes from the "Interagency Learning Review Status Report," released last November by the Forest Service and the Washington Department of Natural Resources. The report emphasizes that its intent is not to assign blame. Rather, it is to illuminate the broader context that led firefighters, and their supervisors, to make the decisions they did.

"We are obligated to reflect on the events of the day and begin to ask ourselves questions that

*"We are obligated to reflect on the events of the day and begin to ask ourselves questions that challenge how we organize to meet the complexities of wildland fire operations. The things that we learn from this reflection may indicate the need for a shift in our interagency firefighting culture." -Interagency Learning Review Status Report on the Twisp River Fire*

challenge how we organize to meet the complexities of wildland fire operations," the report says. "The things that we learn from this reflection may indicate the need for a shift in our interagency firefighting culture."

Many decisions were made in the three hours that separated the first report of the Twisp fire and the deaths of three men. Some combination of those decisions led to several firefighters being positioned upslope from a fire in extreme drought conditions with an abundance of tinder-dry vegetation between them and the flames and no safe escape route, protecting only structures.

The three Forest Service employees who died were among seven who perished last year fighting fires. In the past century, more than 1,000 wildland firefighters have lost their lives in the line of duty.

The pace of those fatalities has quickened in recent years, as the Forest Service spends an ever-increasing percentage of its budget on fighting fires. From 2000 through 2014, 271 wildland firefighters lost their lives, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

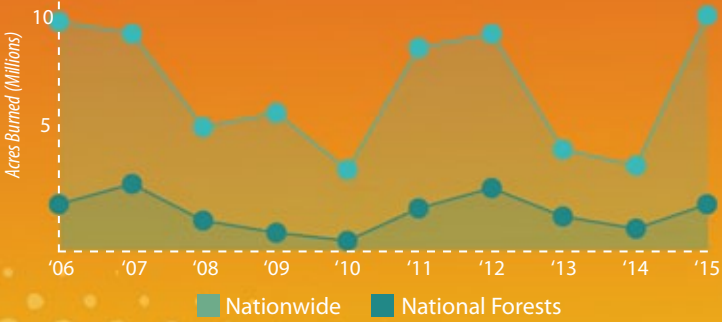
Many of those deaths were from aircraft crashes, which is especially troubling given there is little if any evidence that attacking wildfires with air tankers and helicopters makes any difference at all.



©U.S. Forest Service, 2015

*An aerial photo depicts the aftermath of the Twisp River Fire in 2015. The dirt road is Woods Canyon Road where three firefighters died, one was severely injured and several more were entrapped. They were defending a handful of private structures. The occupants had already been evacuated.*

1. National forests only comprise a portion of the total acres burned nationwide by wildfires each year, a fact Forest Service officials often fail to mention. In 2015, more than 10 million acres burned nationwide, but less than one fifth of those were on national forests.



2. Yet a larger portion of the Forest Service budget is spent on wildfire suppression each year. More than half of the 2015 budget was spent on wildfires, a first for the agency. By 2025, the Forest Service projects that 67% of spending will go toward fighting wildfires.

% of Annual Budget Spent on Wildfire



3. With a greater portion of the budget being spent on wildfire suppression, other critical Forest Service programs have seen their budgets fall while fire staffing has more than doubled. (Graphic represents change between 2001 & 2015.)

References:

1: National Interagency Fire Center  
 2 & 3: US Forest Service (2015). The Rising Cost of Wildfire Operations: Effects of the Forest Service's Non-Fire Work  
 \*Percent change between 1998 and 2015.

# The Fire Service?

A study published earlier this year by Forest Service and University of Montana researchers examined in detail the efficacy of various efforts to fight large wildfires. The study includes this statement: “Air resources (helicopters and air tankers) did not appear to have a significant relationship with controlled fire line.”

In other words, the study found that when fire officials attempt to keep a fire from crossing a cleared line, it doesn't make any difference whether air tankers have dropped fire retardant or helicopters have dropped water. (The literature is clear, however, that aggressive firefighting tactics, such as fire retardant drops, take a serious environmental as well as human toll.)

A growing body of evidence suggests that little if anything can be done to slow the advance of the largest wildfires. When a fire blows up the way the deadly fire in Washington did, little can be done except wait for a change in wind and weather conditions.

Last month, Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell wrote a cover letter for another “Learning Review Status Report.” This one involved an incident in which a 21-year-old Forest Service firefighter was struck and killed by a tree while working to contain a fire in California's Sierra Nevada.

Tidwell's cover letter included the exact same phrasing contained in the Washington report:

“The things that we learn from this reflection may indicate the need for a shift in our interagency fire culture.”

Humanity has a complicated relationship with fire. Control of fire enabled the rise of civilization, yet fire—especially out-of-control fire—elicits primal fears.

That fear factors into the way in which the Forest Service, as an agency, fights fire. But there are many other elements.

Politics play a roll, to be sure. When a large fire breaks out, especially one that threatens homes, members of Congress and other elected officials are quick to call for every available resource to be used.

There's the excitement factor. Photos and footage of tankers dropping bright-red retardant on a wildfire are media staples.

And there's entrenched organizational culture. Stopping a century-old reflex is no easy task. It's one thing to call for “a shift in our interagency fire culture.” It's quite another to change on-the-ground decision-making in the heat of the moment.

Was the Twisp fire a turning point? Or will it be forgotten in policy discussions, as so many other firefighting tragedies have been over the decades?

FSEEE has learned that a group of Forest Service fire researchers has in recent weeks been briefing members of Congress about their findings. The group's research has highlighted the ineffectiveness of aerial firefighting and the importance of proper building codes and brush clearing around homes, not firefighting, as the keys to protecting structures. We've also heard reports that at least some senior Forest Service officials are acknowledging that more fires need to be left alone. Two valid reasons are cited for letting some fires burn: the health of ecosystems that evolved with fire and the safety of firefighters.

There's another good reason, one that the “interagency fire culture” is reluctant to accept: Fighting some fires, especially big ones, is folly. Some fires can't be stopped. **FN**

## A Whole Lot of Smoke

By Matt Rasmussen, FSEEE Policy Analyst and Forest News Editor

Ready for a big number? Here it comes: 10,125,149. That's how many acres burned in wildfires across the United States in 2015, which is the most on record. And that's the number cited again and again by top administration officials seeking more money to fight fires and make national forests more "resilient" to the threat of fire.

Consider this statement made early this year by Tom Vilsack, head of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service's parent agency:

"While the news that more than 10 million acres burned is terrible, it's not shocking and it is probable that records will continue to be broken."

Let's call that a conflation conflagration. To understand why, here's another number for you. This one's a little less impressive: 1,916,302. You'll never hear Vilsack or any other top official cite that figure, which is the total number of acres that burned last year on land administered by the Forest Service.

In other words, of the 10-plus million acres that burned last year, fewer than one in five were on national forests. More than 40 percent of the total burned acreage was in remote stretches of Alaska administered by the Bureau of Land Management, which is an agency of the Interior Department.

Let's put that smaller number into perspective.

Since 1994, the National Interagency Fire Center has tracked how many acres burn on land managed by various government agencies, including the Forest Service.

Over that 22-year span, the average annual area burned on Forest Service-administered land is a little less than 1.3 million.

That does indeed make 2015 an above-average year for wildfires on national forests. But is it a record? Not even close. That distinction belongs to 2007, when more than 2.8 million acres of national forests and grasslands burned. Last year ranked sixth in terms of acres burned on Forest Service-managed land since 1994.

2015 was indeed a record year based on another metric—the amount of money the Forest Service spent on national forest fire suppression. For the first time ever, the agency spent more than half its budget on wildfires—at least \$2.6 billion.

In an era of climate change and increasing numbers of people living near national forests, there are legitimate questions to be addressed about how to fight—or whether to fight—wildfires. And

legitimate questions can and should be raised about how to fund those efforts.

But something fishy's going on here. Top brass in the Forest Service—and their administrative overseers, and their congressional allies—have launched what amounts to a well-coordinated public-relations campaign.

They've all been remarkably disciplined in staying on their talking points. The argument goes like this:

- 1) Wildfire seasons are growing longer and more intense.
- 2) This is forcing the Forest Service to spend more and more on fighting wildfires—including by shunting money earmarked for other things to the fire-fighting effort, a practice known as "fire-borrowing"
- 3) Fire-borrowing takes money away from many worthwhile projects, including ones that are, ironically, intended to lessen the risk of wildfires.

4) Congress should end fire-borrowing by letting the Forest Service spend emergency funds earmarked for natural disasters on the largest wildfires.

5) The Forest Service should be given additional resources to lessen the risk of catastrophic wildfires by undertaking landscape-scale thinning projects.

There are some serious problems with this line of reasoning. For example, a 2014 Forest Service study listed 317 projects that went unfunded due to fire borrowing in 2012 and 2013. But only about a dozen or so of those involved work that could possibly reduce the risk of major wildfires.

Expect more of the same in 2016. In May, Vilsack said in a

news release that the 2016 wildfire season "is off to a worrisome start." The news release noted that "the 2016 fire season has begun with five times more acres already burned than this time last year, following 2015's record-setting fire season."

At the time that news release was issued, according to the National Interagency Fire Center, well over 1 million acres had burned. But most of that was on state and private land; one prairie fire in Oklahoma and Kansas accounted for nearly 400,000 acres of the total. How much had burned on land managed by the Forest Service? About 60,000 acres, meaning the 2016 fire season on national forests was off to a below-average start.

We're all in favor of a robust national debate over how to manage fire on public lands. But that debate should be based on facts, not spin. **FN**

"2015 was indeed a record fire year based on another metric—the amount of money the Forest Service spent forest fire suppression. For the first time ever, the agency spent more than half its budget on wildfires, exceeding \$2 billion."



\*You can read more about this season's wildfire accounting at [www.fseee.org/ground-truth/fire-truth](http://www.fseee.org/ground-truth/fire-truth)



©3.0 Finerooth via Wikimedia Commons, 2008

## Lochsa Land Swap Loses Backing

A controversial land swap proposal appears to be dead, at least for now, after Idaho Sen. Jim Risch withdrew his support for the deal in May.

As originally proposed more than ten years ago, the Upper Lochsa Land Exchange would have traded about 18,000 acres of forested land on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests in exchange for 39,000 heavily cut-over acres owned by Western Pacific Timber. Critics called it a classic stumps-for-trees exchange.

The Forest Service completed an environmental analysis of the exchange in 2010. But local county commissioners objected to the proposal, saying it would result in a net loss of private acres in Idaho County, which would lower the tax base.

Idaho County commissioners offered an alternative plan that would have exchanged the 39,000 acres of national forest land for 39,000 acres of private land in the county. That approach proved problematic, however, because federal law requires that parcels exchanged in land swaps have

equal value.

Two years ago, Western Pacific Timber proposed a bill to the Idaho congressional delegation that would have approved the exchange.

Risch held a community meeting last November in Grangeville, Idaho, to discuss the bill. Dozens of local residents spoke in opposition to the swap.

In a May 12 letter to Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell, Risch cited that meeting in saying he will not back legislation that would approve the exchange. He said that 97 percent of the feedback he received after the Grangeville meeting opposed the scheme.

“A critical mass of consensus is essential to resolving this issue,” Risch wrote. “That does not exist and is not even close at this time. Until substantial consensus can be achieved, a legislated exchange is not an option I can pursue.”

The proposed land exchange is located in the vicinity of Lolo Pass, near the Idaho-Montana border. In the 1800s, Congress gave the Northern Pacific Railroad ownership of every other square mile of land in the area as a way of promoting development. That created a checkerboard pattern of private-public land ownership.

Eventually, the private parcels were sold to Plum Creek Timber Co., which logged the land.

Western Pacific Timber bought 39,000 acres of cut-over land from Plum Creek in 2005 and has pursued the exchange ever since.

Forest Service officials say an exchange would help them consolidate public ownership of land in the vicinity. Critics however, including several retired Forest Service employees, say the swap amounts to a giveaway of healthy forestlands.

In his letter to Tidwell, Risch said he believes some sort of action is needed to end the checkerboard ownership pattern in the region. He said Western Pacific officials are considering “different proposals” for the land they own.

“Although I do not know the details, only generalities, it does not sound as if they would reach the critical mass of support these kinds of proposals need to go forward,” he wrote. “But it does indicate that the matter is not settled.”

The Forest Service’s environmental review of the swap is on hold. Critics of the exchange want the agency to officially reject the proposal.

Conservationists praised Risch’s action. Groups including Friends of the Clearwater say the federal government should purchase the private inholdings using money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which was recently reauthorized by Congress. **FN**



## STUDY REFUTES INSECT-FIRE LINK

A study released this spring pokes another hole in the oft-cited assumption that forests killed by insect outbreaks pose fire hazards. Researchers at the University of Vermont and Oregon State University found just the opposite to be true.

“Our findings clearly show that insect outbreaks can reduce burn severity,” said University of Vermont forest scientist Garrett Meigs, the study’s lead author. “So there is a connection, but just not the way most people thought.”

Meigs and his colleagues analyzed 81 wildfires that burned in the Pacific Northwest over the past 25 years. They found that forests with considerable damage from mountain pine beetle or western spruce budworm burned with significantly less intensity than forests with no insect damage.

The reason? The insects naturally thin the forest, leaving behind less vegetation to burn.

Forest Service managers—and their overseers in Congress—often point to the need to log insect-killed trees to make forests more “resilient” to wildfire.

“There is a huge concern that insect outbreaks and forest fires will continue

to increase with climate change,” said study co-author Bill Keeton of the University of Vermont. “Our study suggest that major insect outbreaks, contrary to current thinking, can dampen future fire impacts—and we can use that knowledge to improve forest management.”

Previous studies have also questioned the link between insect-killed trees and wildfires. The latest study, however, examined more fires over a longer period of time, using recently released satellite data.

The researchers found that stands with more insect damage were less vulnerable to wildfire damage even when accounting for weather conditions, season and the size of the fire.

## LAWSUIT FILED OVER PROPOSED TONGASS ROAD

Conservationists are challenging a road-building project on Alaska’s Tongass National Forest that they say will harm wildlife.

Alaska state officials want to build a 7.3-mile gravel road that would connect Ketchikan, on Revillagigedo Island, with more than 50 miles of existing logging roads in the Saddle Lakes area northeast of the city. To do so, they need Forest Service permission to build about a mile of the road across national forest land.

In a decision issued in March, Tongass supervisor Earl Stewart approved a right of way for the road. He said the road would allow for greater public use of an area currently only accessible by plane or boat.

“Once the road is connected to Ketchikan, older individuals, those with disabilities, and those people without a boat/plane will be able to drive to the area,” Stewart wrote.

That increased ease of access is the primary concern of conservationists. Five groups—the Greater Southeast Alaska Conservation Community, Cascadia Wildlands, Greenpeace, the Center for Biological Diversity and The Boat Company—filed a lawsuit this spring in an attempt to prevent the road from being built.

“Making road connections from communities to areas that have a high road density is known to pose a threat to the sustainability of populations of Alexander Archipelago wolves, marten and other sensitive wildlife species due to increased hunting and trapping pressure, including poaching,” said

Larry Edwards of Greenpeace.

The groups are also suing the Army Corps of Engineers, which plans to issue a wetland fill permit for the project.

Dune Lankard, the Center for Biodiversity’s Alaska representative, said he suspects the Forest Service has ulterior motives for sanctioning the road.

“This project is part of the logging industry’s grand scheme to access old-growth forests that we’re determined to protect,” he said.

Constructing the road is expected to cost about \$20 million.

## ARMY DROPS HELICOPTER PLANS

The Army has retreated from a controversial proposal to land helicopters in remote stretches of Washington’s North Cascades, including inside a designated wilderness area.

In announcing the move, officials with Joint Base Lewis McChord cited more than 2,000 public comments about the training proposal. The Army’s plans generated sharp criticism from conservationists, outdoor enthusiasts and local businesses.

The Army sought permission to fly helicopters in training missions across wide stretches of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. The proposal identified eight areas where helicopter pilots would practice landing maneuvers. One of them was close to the Pacific Crest Trail. Another was just inside the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area, near the town of Leavenworth.

FSEEE, which was among the groups to file comments opposing the plan, learned about the Army’s proposal last summer.

Army officials say helicopter pilots at the base, which is near Tacoma, currently have to travel to Colorado to conduct high-altitude training. They said they will continue to look for locations to practice high-altitude landing maneuvers in Washington, although they have not set a timeline for releasing an alternative plan.

“Military aircrews must attain and maintain strict flight proficiency requirements to ensure their readiness for short-notice, worldwide deployments,” they said in a news release.

Three types of helicopters—Black Hawk, Apache and Chinook—would have participated in the training, which would have been allowed year-round except for federally designated holidays. **FN**



©U.S. Forest Service

# 2015 Annual Report

Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics



## Safeguarding Our Forests

Our 2015 program highlights included:

- **Blowing the whistle on faux restoration.** FSEEE helped derail two logging projects disguised as restoration initiatives.
- **Saving the taxpayers \$10 million dollars.** We squelched a plan to spend millions re-branding the Forest Service by bringing it to the attention of rank-and-file employees and the national media.
- **Defeating dangerous legislation.** The “Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2015” would have caused immeasurable harm to our public lands.
- **Introducing the Oregon Wildlands Act,** which would designate 30,000 acres around the Devil’s Staircase as a wilderness.



## Educating the Public

Our staff responded to public inquiries from around the nation providing guidance and advice on **whistleblowing, citizen activism and on-the-ground public lands management.** Beginning in 2015, FSEEE’s educational newsletter, *Forest News*, doubled in size, allowing us to feature original investigations as well as timely news about our national forests. We published three editions, which were distributed through both print and electronic means to over 25,000 recipients. FSEEE staff also participated in a variety of public education events like the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference and **forest education days** for youth. And staff engaged with the public on hikes and at Forest Service events.



## Advocating Ethics

FSEEE’s membership in 2015 included more than 6,000 active members. We issued several **action alerts** asking our members and the public to combat proposals that would have harmed our forests. Our emails of Forest Service news along with periodic FSEEE updates and newsletters kept our members and the public informed about our work and pressing public lands issues. We sent informative email updates to more than 15,000 Forest Service employees. Staff also attended a number of Forest Service events where they provided advice and public testimony regarding specific projects. Our **documentary film *Seeing the Forest*** premiered in March and toured throughout the West and Midwest.

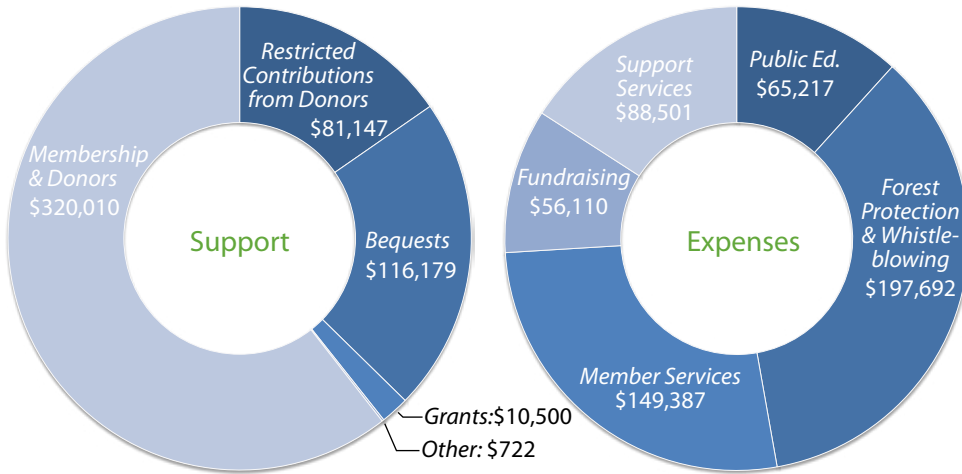
Much of the daily work we do at FSEEE involves communicating with folks around the nation by email, phone and mail. But the days we get to spend meeting with our conservation colleagues, engaging with community members at events, hiking through our spectacular forests with Forest Service employees and celebrating successes with our members are the days we cherish most.

2015 provided us a year full of these interactions. Our newest documentary film, *Seeing the Forest*, premiered to a standing-room-only crowd at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference. It then went on tour throughout the West and Midwest. In June, we journeyed with our conservation and Forest Service partners to the remote Devil’s Staircase waterfall, an area we are all working to protect as wilderness. Forest education days for youth reminded us how important our mission is to protect our forests for the future. And, of course, we were once again amazed by our membership, many of whom answered our call to action and took a successful stand against legislation that would have gutted our environmental laws and harmed our forests.

Thank you all for making 2015 a year to remember. —Andy Stahl, Executive Director



## 2015 FINANCIAL REPORT



**Financial Highlights:** Net Assets Beginning: \$594,819 Net Assets Ending: \$566,470

FSEEE continues to be funded by the generous contributions from our members, whether it be through general membership dues and donations or contributions restricted to specific program work.

We would like to recognize the generous bequests received in 2015 from Robin Lode-wick, Jane Fessenden and Helen C. Wilson.

### 2015 FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Cameron Foundation  
Dancing Tides Foundation  
Dun Foundation  
Elkind Family Foundation  
FJC, A Foundation of Philanthropic Funds  
Florsheim Family Foundation  
Leatherback Foundation  
Mills Family Foundation  
Money / Arenz Foundation  
The Mountaineers  
Patagonia  
The Price Foundation  
Temper Of The Times  
The Ungar Family Foundation

Winky Foundation  
Zadek Family Foundation

### MATCHING GIFTS

Amgen, Bank of America, BNY Mellon, Boeing, Costco, FM Global Foundation, GlaxoSmithKline, International Monetary Fund, Microsoft, Northwest Area Founda-tion, Oracle Corporation, Pfizer Founda-tion, The Prudential Foundation, Reynolds American, Shell Oil Company, Verizon

*Many employers offer matching gifts when you donate to FSEEE. To find out if this is an option for you, please contact your human resources representative.*



FSEEE is a member of EarthShare Oregon and National. At both levels, EarthShare is a diverse federation of conservation groups that represents us in workplace donation campaigns. EarthShare promotes FSEEE and manages the administration of payroll contributions that allow individuals to have money deducted from their paycheck to support FSEEE's work. We use this money to safeguard our national forests in the most effective and efficient way possible. Federal employees giving through the Combined Federal Campaign can also designate their donations directly to FSEEE.



## Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics

PO Box 11615 • Eugene, OR 97440  
(541) 484-2692 • Fax (541) 484-3004  
fseee@fseee.org • www.fseee.org

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Dave Iverson, President**  
Social Scientist, Ogden, Utah
- Jackie Canterbury, Vice President**  
Wildlife Biologist, Bighorn, Wyoming
- Stephen Horne, Secretary/Treasurer**  
Archaeologist, Bend, Oregon
- Kevin Hood, At Large**  
Wilderness Specialist, Juneau, Alaska

FSEEE board members are current or former U.S. Forest Service employees. See board biographies at [www.fseee.org](http://www.fseee.org).

### STAFF

- Stephanie Boytz-Detwiler,**  
Administration and Finance Director
- Jennifer Fairbrother,**  
Development Director and Public Lands Advocate
- Matt Rasmussen,** Policy Analyst and Newsletter Editor
- Chuck Roth,** Office Manager
- Andy Stahl,** Executive Director

*Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our mission is to protect National Forests and to reform the U.S. Forest Service by advocating environmental ethics, educating citizens and defending whistleblowers.*

This newsletter is printed on paper made with recycled content using vegetable-based inks.

*Photo Credits Opposite Page*

Top: Iron Mountain Lookout, Willamette National Forest; ©Jennifer Fairbrother, 2015; Lower photos (Right to Left): ©Jennifer Fairbrother, 2015; ©Jennifer Fairbrother, 2015; ©Morgan Curtis, 2015

## Take Action Now!

Dangerous legislation is making its way through Congress that would turn our National Forests into free-fire zones. Language attached to the Energy Bill would make it virtually impossible to protect public lands from anything-goes target shooting.

Out-of-control shooting takes a severe toll on our forests and waterways and poses a serious public safety threat. As passed by the Senate, an amendment to the Energy Bill would require federal land managers to give advanced notice to the National Rifle Association before they could close an area to harmful or dangerous shooting. Many other onerous steps would be required as well.

This is unacceptable. Please call President Obama's Council on Environmental Quality at:

**202-456-6224**

Tell the administration:

**"I don't want out-of-control target shooting on public lands. Please oppose the NRA-backed "Sportsmen's Access" amendment to the Energy Bill (S. 2012). It has nothing to do with our nation's energy future. Don't turn our National Forests into free-fire zones!"**