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Forest Service Appropriations: Five-Year Trends and FY2016 Budget Request

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Summary

The Forest Service (FS) is responsible for managing 193 million acres of the National Forest System, as well as for conducting forestry research and providing assistance to state, local, private, and international forest owners. Funding to complete such work is provided through both discretionary and mandatory appropriations.

In FY2015, the FS received \$5.53 billion in both discretionary and mandatory appropriations. The FY2015 discretionary appropriation was \$5.06 billion, slightly above the five-year average of \$5.00 billion. FS discretionary appropriations are primarily divided among six main accounts: Forest and Rangeland Research (FRR); State and Private Forestry (S&PF); National Forest System (NFS); Capital Improvement and Maintenance (CI&M); Wildland Fire Management (WFM); and the FLAME Wildfire Suppression Reserve account established under the Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-88). The agency then allocates the appropriations from these accounts among the nine FS regions, five research stations, two service stations and laboratories, and national headquarters. Discretionary appropriations average 88% of the agency's total appropriations over the last five years.

The FS has more than 20 permanent appropriations accounts and 4 trust funds that constitute mandatory spending. Together, they account, on average, for about 13% of total agency appropriations. Budget authority for these accounts is provided for in authorizing statutes, and several are dependent on the level of revenue generated by specific activities on the national forests. The FS estimates that FY2015 mandatory spending will be \$474.6 million, below the five-year average of \$691.1 million. The decrease is largely due to the expiration of certain payments made to the counties containing NFS land.

For FY2016, the Administration is requesting \$5.80 billion in discretionary appropriations for the FS. However, this figure includes a proposal to change wildfire suppression funding by providing access to nearly \$1 billion outside of the statutory discretionary limits for emergency purposes. Funding for wildfire management activities in general and suppression activities specifically accounts for an increasing percentage of agency appropriations. This fact may raise questions about the amount of resources necessary to adequately address wildland fire management issues or about the extent to which wildfire management activities direct agency resources—financial and otherwise—away from other FS statutory obligations.

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Introduction

The Forest Service (FS) is responsible for managing 193 million acres of the National Forest System,¹ as well as for conducting forestry research and providing assistance to state, local, private, and international forest owners. Funding to complete such work is provided through both discretionary and mandatory appropriations (see **Figure 1**).

Although it is an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the FS receives its discretionary appropriations through Title III of the regular Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.² The FS has received additional discretionary monies through supplemental appropriations bills. In addition, continuing appropriations resolutions have been used to maintain funding for the agency when regular appropriations bills have not been enacted before the start of the fiscal year—and in some cases, like the FY2015 appropriations measure, to provide full-year funding.³

The FS also receives annual mandatory appropriations under existing authorizing statutes. Laws authorizing mandatory appropriations allow the FS to spend money without further action by Congress. The budget authority for several of these mandatory spending accounts is dependent on revenue generated by activities on the national forests. Typically, these laws are permanent—such as the Timber Salvage Sale Fund—but sometimes the authorizations have a sunset date.

This report presents and analyzes the discretionary and mandatory appropriations for the FS—including the President’s discretionary budget requests—over the last five years, from FY2011 to FY2015. It also includes a section on the President’s FY2016 budget request.

Forest Service Discretionary Appropriations

FS discretionary appropriations—which account for 88% of total agency appropriations on average—are primarily divided among six main accounts, described below and listed in the same order as they generally appear in appropriations laws. The Wildland Fire Management and National Forest System accounts together receive nearly 80% of total FS discretionary appropriations (see **Figure 2**). FS budget requests and Interior Appropriations Subcommittee documents typically allocate monies at the account and subaccount levels, and in some cases, among specific programs and activities. Allocations below the account level generally are not addressed in this report.

The FS accounts are described briefly below:

- *Forest and Rangeland Research (FRR)*. The FRR account funds research and development efforts to provide scientific information and new technologies to

¹ For more information, see CRS Report R43872, *National Forest System Management: Overview, Appropriations, and Issues for Congress*

² For more information, CRS Report R43617, *Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies: FY2015 Appropriations*.

³ Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235). Additional information on the three types of appropriations measures is contained in CRS Report R42388, *The Congressional Appropriations Process: An Introduction*.

support sustainable forest and rangeland management. Over the last five years, this account has averaged approximately 6% of FS discretionary appropriations.

- *State and Private Forestry (S&PF)*. The S&PF account funds programs to provide financial and technical assistance to nonfederal forest owners and managers, and to protect communities and the environment from insects, diseases, and invasive plants. S&PF averages approximately 5% of FS discretionary appropriations.⁴
- *National Forest System (NFS)*. NFS appropriations fund management of the 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands. This account includes several subaccounts, the largest of which is the Forest Products subaccount, which generally receives about 20% of the NFS appropriation, and funds the Timber Sale program. The NFS account averaged approximately 30% of the FS discretionary appropriations over the last five years.⁵
- *Capital Improvement and Maintenance (CI&M)*. CI&M activities help the FS provide and maintain facilities, roads, trails, and other infrastructure needs. Over the last five years, the CI&M account received approximately 8% of FS discretionary appropriations.
- *Land Acquisition (LA)*. LA activities allow the FS to acquire lands for conservation or ownership consolidation purposes. LA activities are funded primarily through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In total, LA received approximately 1% of FS discretionary appropriations on average over the last five years.
- *Wildland Fire Management (WFM) and FLAME Wildfire Suppression Reserve Fund (FLAME)*. The WFM account funds activities related to the management of unplanned and unwanted fires, including planning for and suppression of wildfires. The FLAME account was established under the Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act of 2009 for emergency wildfire suppression activities.⁶ While FLAME is a separate account from WFM, for purposes of this report, the two accounts are combined. Funding for wildland fire management activities is sometimes provided outside of the regular Interior appropriations bills when there is a need (e.g., a severe fire season). In this report, these emergency or supplemental appropriations will be reflected in the WFM account. Together, WFM and FLAME appropriations, along with supplemental appropriations, averaged 50% of the FS discretionary appropriation over the last five years.⁷
- *Other*. In addition to the larger accounts listed above, there are several relatively small accounts. They provide appropriations for the acquisition of land for

⁴ For more information, see CRS Report RL31065, *Forestry Assistance Programs*.

⁵ For more information on the National Forest System, see CRS Report R43872, *National Forest System Management: Overview, Appropriations, and Issues for Congress*.

⁶ P.L. 111-88. The Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act (FLAME) also established a separate account for the Department of the Interior (DOI) to fund wildfire management activities on DOI-managed federal lands.

⁷ For information on Wildland Fire Management (WFM) and FLAME funding for the Forest Service (FS) and the DOI, see CRS Report R43077, *Wildfire Management: Federal Funding and Related Statistics*.

national forest special acts; the acquisition of lands to complete land exchanges; the range betterment fund; the agency to give or receive gifts, donations, and bequests for research; and management of national forest lands for subsistence uses. Together, these “other” accounts received less than 1% of FS discretionary appropriations over the last five years.

The FS allocates the appropriations from these accounts among the nine FS regions, five research stations, two service centers and laboratories, and the national headquarters office in Washington, DC. For most accounts, once the funds have been allocated to the regions, the money is then further allocated to each national forest. Some accounts, however, are managed at a national level. For example, the wildfire suppression account is allocated based on need throughout the wildfire season. This can make analyzing appropriations by region or by forest challenging. Further, FS regions do not follow state boundaries, and many national forests cross state boundaries, which can make analyzing FS appropriations by state challenging. This level of detail is beyond the scope of this report.

Forest Service Mandatory Appropriations

The FS has over 20 permanent appropriations accounts and four trust funds that constitute mandatory spending. Together, they account on average for about 13% of total agency appropriations. Budget authority for these accounts is provided in authorizing laws.⁸ For several of these accounts, the budget authority is dependent on the level of receipts received for specific National Forest System activities, and some may even have geographic or programmatic expenditure restrictions. For example, the Timber Sales Pipeline Restoration Fund⁹ authorizes the FS to collect a portion of the revenue from a specific set of national forest timber sales. The revenue is available in the FS region where it was generated for preparing future timber sales or conducting recreation projects.

Another example of a permanent appropriation is the Payments to States fund, which consists of several programs that are partially dependent on receipts. More specifically, the Payments to States Act of 1908 authorizes the FS to make payments to states—to be distributed to counties—based on a percentage of the revenue generated by activities in the national forests within those counties. The Payments to States fund also consisted of payments authorized under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000,¹⁰ which were based on a formula dependent in part on historical receipts. The authorization for the Secure Rural Schools Act expired at the end of FY2013, and the last payments were issued in 2014.

⁸ Forest Service, *FY2014 Budget Justification*, April 2013, p. 15-1, <http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/budget/2014/FY2014ForestServiceBudgetJustificationFinal041613.pdf>.

⁹ The Timber Sales Pipeline Restoration Fund was established by the Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-134 Title III §327, 110 Stat. 1321-206 and 207).

¹⁰ P.L. 106-393, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 7101 et seq. For more information, see CRS Report R41303, *Reauthorizing the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000*.

Appropriations Data and Analysis

Forest Service requested and enacted discretionary appropriations and mandatory appropriations for the previous five years (FY2011-FY2015) are provided in several figures and tables. Specifically,

- **Figure 1** and **Table 1** provide Forest Service total discretionary and mandatory appropriations in current and constant dollars;
- **Figure 2** shows enacted discretionary appropriations by WFM, NFS, and all other FS accounts in current and constant dollars;
- **Figure 3** and **Table 5** (at the end of the report) provide side-by-side comparisons of Forest Service discretionary budget requests and discretionary appropriations;
- **Figure 4** shows the difference between requested and enacted discretionary appropriations by WFM, NFS, and all other FS accounts;
- **Table 2** contains Forest Service discretionary budget requests, listed by account, with five-year change in current and constant dollars; and
- **Table 3** contains enacted Forest Service discretionary appropriations, listed by account, with five-year change in current and constant dollars.

In FY2015, total FS enacted appropriations (discretionary and mandatory) were \$5.53 billion, 1% higher than the FY2011 total appropriation of \$5.45 billion (see **Table 1** and **Figure 1**). This level was, however, below the five-year average total appropriation of \$5.69 billion. Over the five-year period, total appropriations ranged from a low of \$5.45 billion in FY2011 to a high of \$6.23 billion in FY2014. After FY2011, total FS appropriations increased annually for three years until decreasing in FY2015.¹¹ When adjusted for inflation, total FS appropriations have decreased by 3% since FY2011. On average over the five-year period, FS mandatory spending constituted about 13% of total FS appropriations, or about \$691.1 million (see **Table 1**). In FY2015, FS estimates its mandatory spending will be approximately \$474.6 million, well below the average.¹² The decrease is largely due to the expiration of the Secure Rural Schools payments.¹³

From FY2011 to FY2015, FS discretionary appropriations increased 7%, from \$4.69 billion in FY2011 to \$5.06 billion in FY2015 (in current dollars; see **Table 1**, **Table 3**, and **Figure 2**). Within the five-year period, however, appropriations have been variable. Appropriations increased after FY2011 for three consecutive years until decreasing in FY2015. Over the five years, FS discretionary appropriations have averaged \$5.00 billion in current dollars, ranging from a low of \$4.69 billion in FY2011 to a peak of \$5.48 billion in FY2014. All but two of the accounts decreased over this period, although not equally. For example, CI&M appropriations had the largest decline—25% since FY2011—whereas NFS appropriations decreased at a slower

¹¹ Total agency spending increased in FY2013 over FY2012, despite the sequestration of budget authority as specified by Section 302 of the Budget Control Act (P.L. 112-25, as amended by P.L. 112-240). See CRS Report R42972, *Sequestration as a Budget Enforcement Process: Frequently Asked Questions*. FS sequestered budget authority was offset by emergency supplemental funds for wildland fire management, although individual accounts were reduced as specified.

¹² Forest Service, *FY2016 Budget Overview*, <http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/budget/>.

¹³ For more information, see CRS Report R41303, *Reauthorizing the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000*.

rate of 3% over that same time period. In contrast, WFM appropriations have increased by 28%.¹⁴ When adjusted for inflation to 2011 dollars, FS total discretionary appropriations have increased by 3% since FY2011 (see **Table 1**, **Table 3**, and **Figure 2**).

In FY2015, the FS requested \$5.71 billion in discretionary appropriations (see **Table 2**), 6% more than the FY2011 request in current dollars. When adjusted to constant dollars, however, the overall FS budget request was 1% more than the FY2011 request. Although total budget requests appear to have kept pace with inflation, there are some variances at the account level.¹⁵ (See “FY2016 Budget Request.”)

The distribution of FS discretionary appropriations among the WFM account, the NFS account, and the total of the remaining accounts is provided in **Figure 2**. The WFM appropriation has a five-year average of \$2.52 billion in current dollars, ranging from a low of \$2.06 billion in FY2011 to a peak of \$3.08 billion in FY2014. On average, the WFM account received 50% of the total FS discretionary appropriation and accounted for 52% of FS discretionary appropriations in FY2015. The next-largest account, NFS, received on average \$1.51 billion, or 30% of the total FS discretionary appropriation. The FY2013 NFS appropriation of \$1.45 billion included post-sequester reductions. The FY2015 appropriation of \$1.49 billion (30% of FS discretionary appropriations) is a slight decrease from the FY2014 appropriation of \$1.50 billion.

Table 1. Forest Service Total Appropriations, FY2011-FY2015

(dollars in millions)

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	5-year Average Current Dollars	5-year Change Current Dollars (% Change)	5-year Change Constant 2011 Dollars (% Change)
Discretionary	4,685.0	4,834.3	4,924.7	5,479.6	5,056.2	4,996.0	371.2 (7%)	124.8 (3%)
Mandatory ^a	761.9	820.7	762.5	635.7	474.6	691.1	-287.3 (-38%)	-310.4 (-41%)
TOTAL	5,446.9	5,654.9	5,687.2	6,115.4	5,530.8	5,687.0	83.9 (1%)	-185.6 (-3%)

Source: Discretionary figures in this table were derived from detailed funding tables prepared by the House Committee on Appropriations. Mandatory figures were derived from the annual Forest Service Budget Justifications. Current dollars were adjusted to constant 2011 dollars using the gross domestic product (GDP) price deflator published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in National Income and Product Accounts Table 1.1.9. An index for 2013 also was used for the FY2014 and FY2015 constant dollar computations, as neither a 2014 or 2015 index was available.

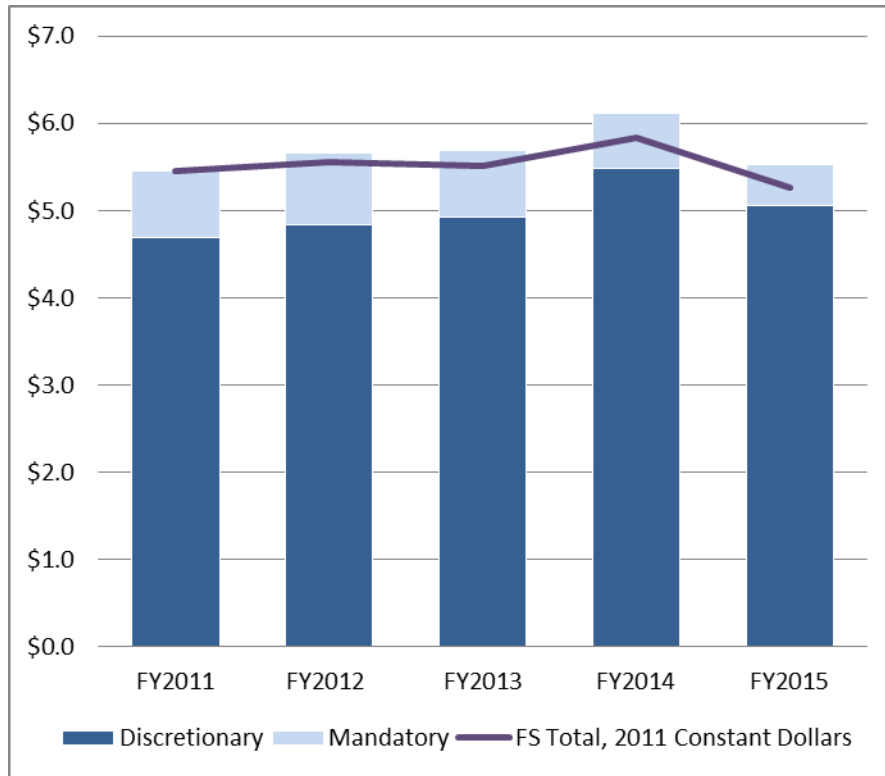
a. FY2015 mandatory appropriations are estimates and will be updated when final figures become available. Forest Service, *FY2016 Budget Overview*, at <http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/budget/>.

¹⁴ Appropriations for land acquisition also increased from FY2011 to FY2015 by 44%. However, this trend appears because the FY2011 appropriation for land acquisition (\$32.9 million) was a significant decrease from the FY2010 appropriation (\$63.5 million). The appropriation increased in subsequent years.

¹⁵ Current dollars were adjusted to constant 2013 dollars using the gross domestic product price deflator published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in National Income and Product Accounts Table 1.1.9, at <http://www.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=9&step=1#reqid=9&step=3&isuri=1&903=13>.

Figure I. Forest Service Discretionary and Mandatory Appropriations, FY2011-FY2015

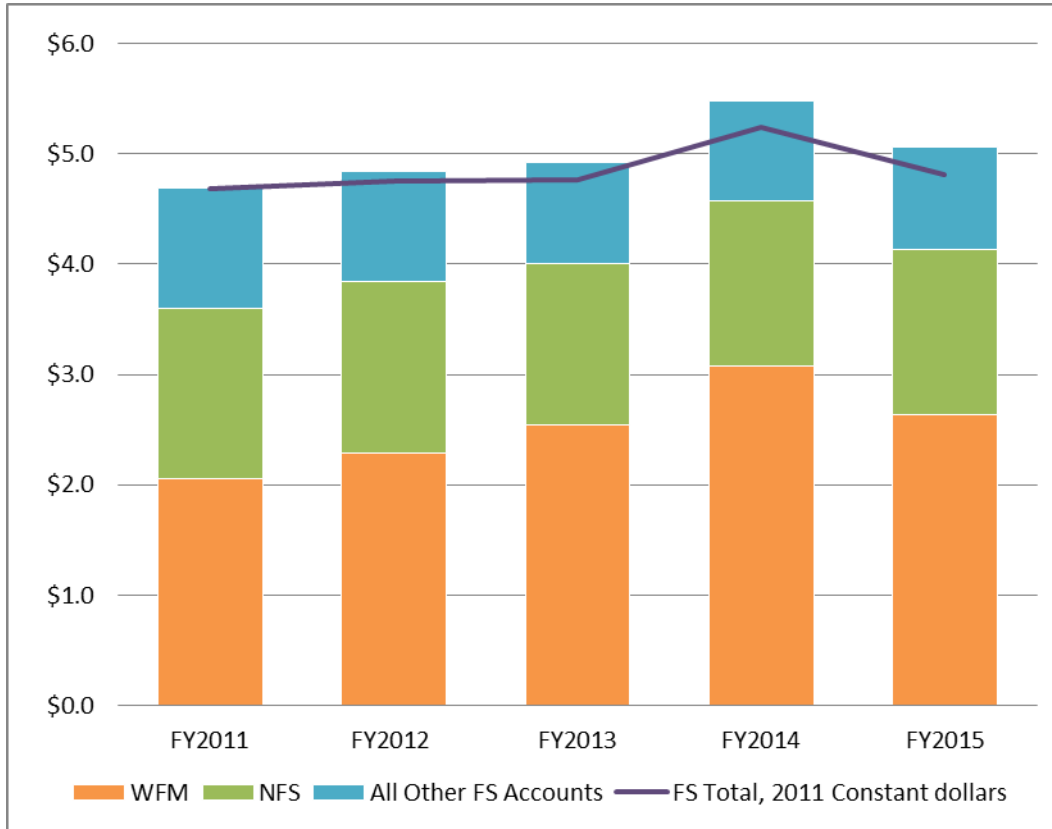
(current and 2011 constant dollars, in billions)



Source: CRS. Data compiled from detailed funding tables prepared by the House Committee on Appropriations.

Notes: Data shown in columns are presented in current dollars, whereas the line reflects total Forest Service appropriations adjusted to 2011 constant dollars. Current dollars were adjusted to constant 2011 dollars using the GDP price deflator published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in National Income and Product Accounts Table I.1.9, available at <http://www.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=9&step=1#reqid=9&step=3&isuri=1&903=13>. An index for 2013 also was used for FY2014 and FY2015 constant dollar computations, as neither a 2014 or 2015 index was available.

Figure 2. Enacted Discretionary Forest Service Appropriations, FY2011-FY2015
(current and constant dollars, in billions)

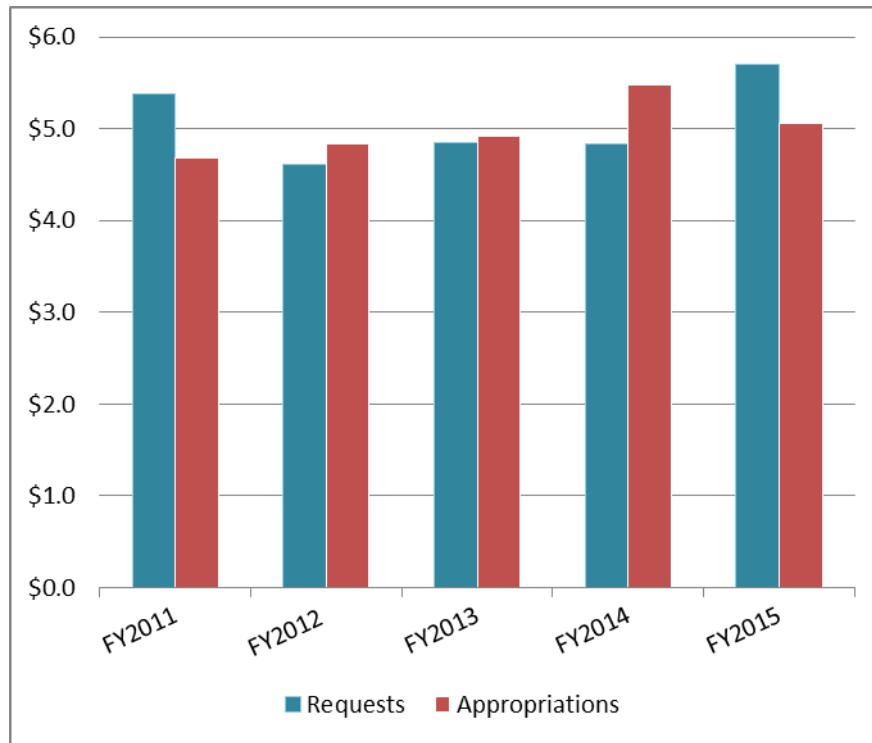


Source: CRS. Data compiled from detailed funding tables prepared by the House Committee on Appropriations.

Notes: Data shown in columns are presented in current dollars, while the line reflects total Forest Service discretionary appropriations adjusted to 2013 constant dollars. Current dollars were adjusted to constant 2011 dollars using the GDP price deflator published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in National Income and Product Accounts Table I.1.9. An index for 2013 also was used for the FY2014 and FY2015 constant dollar computations, as neither a 2014 nor 2015 index was available. WFM data include regular and supplemental appropriations to the WFM account as well as appropriations to the FLAME reserve account.

Figure 3. Forest Service Requested and Enacted Discretionary Appropriations, FY2011-FY2015

(current dollars in billions)



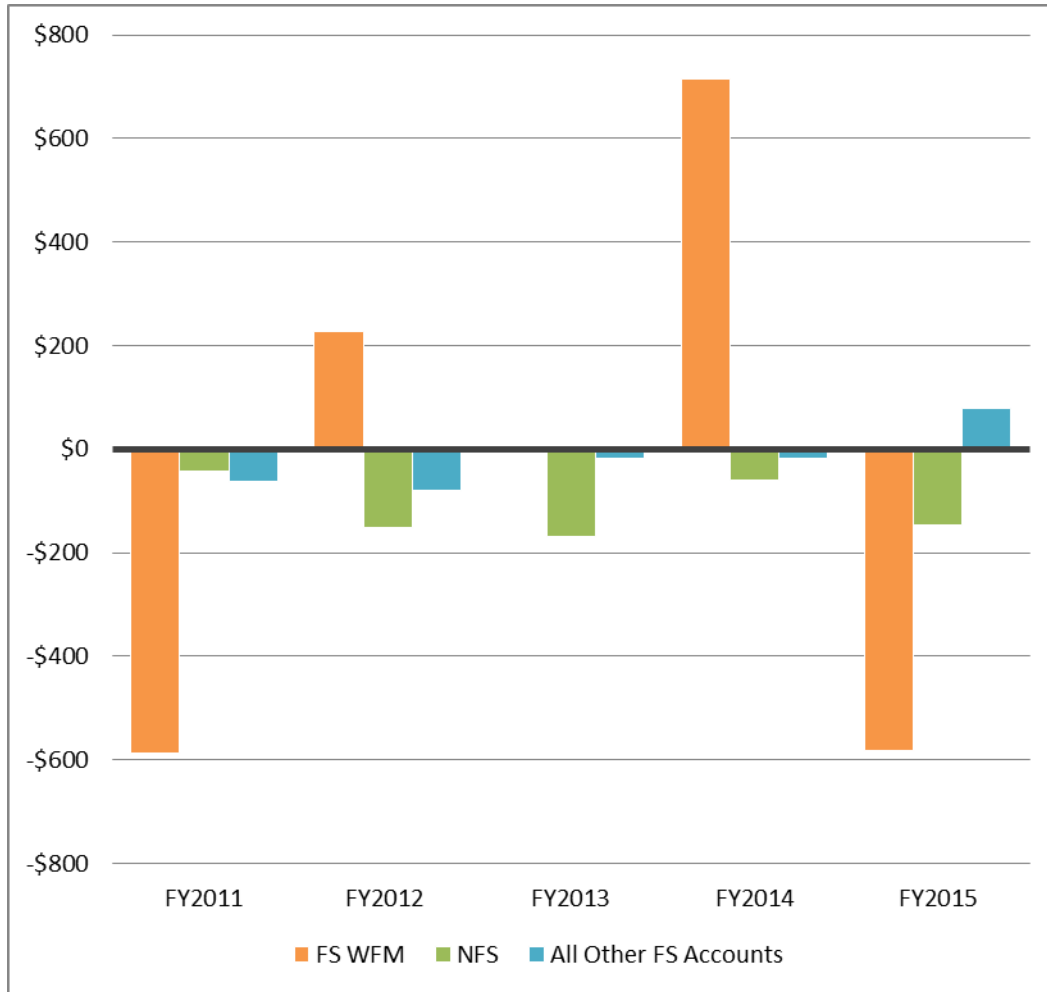
Source: CRS. Data compiled from detailed funding tables prepared by the House Committee on Appropriations and annual Forest Service budget justifications.

Requested and Enacted Appropriations Comparisons

The difference between the Administration’s requested appropriations and the enacted appropriations for a fiscal year likely reflects many factors, including differing Administration and congressional priorities and budgetary directives. Differences also may be due to supplemental appropriations enacted to address emergency wildfire suppression needs or to account restructuring. Total enacted appropriations for the FS exceeded the amount requested in FY2012, FY2013, and FY2014. However, in FY2011 and FY2015, enacted appropriations were less than the amount the FS requested (see **Table 5** and **Figure 3**). At the account level, however, the trend was more variable (**Figure 4**). For example, the enacted appropriation was less than the amount requested for the NFS account for all five years, and for all other FS accounts for four out of the five years, but that trend was not observed for WFM. The varied differences between the enacted and requested appropriations for WFM may be attributable to the enactment of supplemental appropriations (e.g., \$600 million in FY2014) or to account restructuring proposals (e.g., in FY2015).

Figure 4. Difference Between Forest Service Requested and Enacted Discretionary Appropriation, by Major Accounts, FY2011-FY2015

(dollars in millions)



Source: CRS.

Notes: When the column extends above the \$0 horizontal axis, the enacted appropriation was greater than the requested amount. When the column extends below the \$0 horizontal axis, the enacted appropriation was less than the requested amount. WFM data include regular and any type of supplemental appropriation to the WFM account as well as appropriations to the FLAME reserve account.

Table 2. Forest Service Requested Discretionary Appropriations, FY2011-FY2015, by Account

(dollars in millions)

Accounts	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	5-year Average	5-year Change	5-year Change
						Current Dollars	Current Dollars (% Change)	Constant 2011 Dollars ^a (% Change)
FRR	304.4	295.8	292.8	310.2	275.3	295.7	-29.0 (-10%)	-41.4 (-13%)
S&PF	321.6	341.6	250.7	240.0	229.5	576.7	-92.1 (-29%)	-88.0 (-27%)
NFS	1,585.7	1,704.5	1,623.6	1,556.7	1,640.5	1,662.2	54.8 (3%)	52.3 (3%)
CI&M	438.4	337.9	334.4	310.8	288.3	342.0	-150.1 (-34%)	-143.4 (-24%)
LA	73.7	90.0	57.9	58.0	51.0	66.1	-22.7 (-31%)	-21.6 (-72%)
WFM ^b	2,645.4	1,830.9	2,286.4	2,361.7	3,219.1	2,468.7	1,146.8 (55%)	548.0 (20%)
Other	7.6	4.5	3.6	4.2	3.5	4.7	-4.0 (-53%)	-4.3 (-55%)
Total	5,376.6	4,605.2^c	4,849.4	4,841.5	5,707.2	5,076.0	-385.2 (-7%)	52.5 (1%)
% Wildfire	49.2%	37.1%	47.1%	48.8%	56.4%	48.6%	na	na
% Non-Wildfire	50.8%	56.2%	52.9%	51.2%	43.6%	51.4%	na	na

Source: Information in this table is derived from detailed funding tables prepared by the House Committee on Appropriations.

Notes: Figures in columns may not result in totals indicated due to rounding. Figures generally reflect the Administration’s initial budget submissions to Congress and do not include any subsequent adjustments to the request. The account abbreviations are: FRR=Forest and Rangeland Research; S&PF=State and Private Forestry; NFS=National Forest System; CI&M=Capital Improvement and Maintenance; LA=Land Acquisition, WFM=Wildland Fire Management and FLAME; Other = appropriations for the acquisition of land for national forest special acts, appropriations for the acquisition of lands to complete land exchanges, appropriations to the range betterment fund, appropriations for gifts, donations and bequests for research, and appropriations for the management of national forest lands for subsistence uses.

- a. Current dollars were adjusted to constant 2011 dollars using the GDP price deflator published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in National Income and Product Accounts Table I.1.9, available at <http://www.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=9&step=1#reqid=9&step=3&isuri=1&903=13>. An index for 2013 was also used for FY2014 and FY2015 constant dollar computations, as an index for either year was not yet available.
- b. For FY2011-FY2014, this figure includes the requested appropriations for the FS WFM account and FS FLAME wildfire suppression reserve account. In FY2015, FS proposed a new funding mechanism for wildfire suppression activities, which included eliminating the FLAME reserve account. Therefore, FS did not request an appropriation to the FLAME reserve account in FY2015. However, FS requested up to \$954.0 million to be available in FY2015 upon request for emergency suppression operations, which is included here in addition to the \$2.27 billion requested for the WFM account. This is discussed in more detail in the “FY2016 Budget Request” section. For total WFM and FLAME appropriations, including DOI appropriations, see CRS Report R43077, *Wildfire Management: Federal Funding and Related Statistics* <http://www.crs.gov/pages/Reports.aspx?PRODCODE=R43077>.
- c. This total does not include \$328.0 million requested for the Payments to Communities program as a new proposed discretionary account, which was reauthorized as mandatory spending. Including the \$328.0 million, the total requested amount was \$4,933.2 million. For more information on the program, see CRS Report R41303, *Reauthorizing the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000*.

Table 3. Forest Service Enacted Discretionary Appropriations, by Account, FY2011-FY2015

(dollars in millions)

Accounts	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013 ^a	FY2014	FY2015	5-year Average	5-year Change	5-year Change
						Current Dollars	Current Dollars (% Change)	Constant 2011 Dollars ^b (% Change)
FRR	306.6	295.3	279.9	292.8	296.0	294.1	-10.6 (-3%)	-25.1 (-8%)
S&PF	277.6	252.9	239.7	230.0	232.7	246.6	-44.9 (-16%)	-56.3 (-20%)
NFS	1,542.2	1,554.1	1,455.3	1,496.3	1,494.3	1,508.5	-47.9 (-3%)	-120.7 (-8%)
CI&M	459.6	382.1	346.5 ^c	333.0	343.4	372.9	-116.3 (-25%)	-133.0 (-29%)
LA	32.9	52.5	49.8	43.5	47.5	45.3	14.6 (44%)	12.3 (37%)
WFM ^d	2,058.5	2,290.2	2,547.8	3,077.3	2,636.4	2,522.0	577.9 (28%)	449.4 (22%)
Other	7.5	7.1	5.8	6.7	6.0	6.6	-1.5 (-20%)	-1.8 (-24%)
Total	4,685.0	4,834.3	4,924.7	5,479.6	5,056.2	4,996.0	371.2 (7%)	124.8 (3%)
% Wildfire	44%	45%	52%	56%	52%	50%	na	na
% Non-Wildfire	56%	55%	48%	44%	48%	50%	na	na

Source: Information in this table is derived from detailed funding tables prepared by the House Committee on Appropriations.

Notes: Figures in columns may not result in totals indicated due to rounding. Figures generally reflect supplemental appropriations and rescissions, but do not reflect scorekeeping adjustments. The account abbreviations are: FRR=Forest and Rangeland Research; S&PF=State and Private Forestry; NFS=National Forest System; CI&M=Capital Improvement and Maintenance; LA=Land Acquisition, WFM=Wildland Fire Management; Other = appropriations for the acquisition of land for national forest special acts, appropriations for the acquisition of lands to complete land exchanges, appropriations to the range betterment fund, appropriations for gifts, donations and bequests for research, and appropriations for the management of national forest lands for subsistence uses.

- a. FY2013 enacted figures reflect post-sequester appropriations.
- b. Current dollars were adjusted to constant 2011 dollars using the GDP price deflator published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in National Income and Product Accounts Table 1.1.9, available at <http://www.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=9&step=1#reqid=9&step=3&isuri=1&903=13>. An index for 2013 was also used for FY2014 and FY2015 constant dollar computations, as an index for either year was not yet available.
- c. This figure includes \$4.2 million for CI&M enacted by P.L. 113-2, Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013, which was not reflected in the detailed funding tables.
- d. This includes FS WFM appropriations and FS FLAME wildfire suppression reserve fund account. For total WFM appropriations, including DOI, see CRS Report R43077, *Wildfire Management: Federal Funding and Related Statistics*.

FY2016 Budget Request

For FY2016, the Administration is requesting \$5.80 billion in discretionary appropriations for the FS (see **Table 4**). The FY2016 request is \$90.2 million above the FY2015 request and \$741.1 million above the FY2015 enacted discretionary appropriation.

In FY2015 and again in FY2016, FS proposed a new funding mechanism for wildfire suppression activities, which included eliminating the FLAME reserve account. Therefore, FS did not request an appropriation to the FLAME reserve account either year. For FY2016, FS is requesting \$2.35 billion for WFM. In addition, it is requesting up to \$854.6 million to be available in FY2016 upon request for emergency suppression operations (for a total of \$3.21 billion). As part of the proposal, any funds for emergency suppression operations up to the maximum \$854.6 million would be provided as an adjustment to the statutory discretionary limits established in the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.¹⁶ Similar legislative proposals have been introduced in the 114th Congress (H.R. 167 and S. 235).

Table 4. FY2016 Budget Request

(dollars in millions)

Accounts	FY2016
FRR	292.0
S&PF	236.6
NFS	1,648.3
CI&M	341.9
LA	65.2
WFM ^a	3,208.6
Other	4.8
Total	5,797.4
% Wildfire	55%
% Non-Wildfire	44%

Source: Forest Service, *FY2016 Budget Justification*, <http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/budget/>.

- a. The figure in the table reflects the WFM request plus the requested adjustment. For information on the proposal, see Forest Service, *FY2016 Budget Justification*, p. 251, <http://www.fs.fed.us/about-agency/budget-performance>.

Conclusion

In terms of overall agency funding, FS appropriations decreased in FY2015 after increasing three years in a row. However, emergency or supplemental funds provided for wildfire management (e.g., suppression) are responsible for much of the observed differences, particularly in FY2014, when the FS received an additional \$600 million appropriation for wildland fire management.¹⁷ Funding for many of the other FS accounts has decreased. Further, funding for wildfire management activities is accounting for an increasing percentage of agency appropriations. This may raise questions about the amount of resources necessary to adequately address wildland fire management issues or about the extent to which wildfire management activities direct agency resources—financial and otherwise—away from other FS statutory obligations.

¹⁶ P.L. 99-177, Title II, 2 U.S.C. 900-922, as amended by the Budget Control Act of 2011. More information on the proposal is available as a CRS congressional distribution memorandum upon request.

¹⁷ Continuing Appropriations Act, 2014 (P.L. 113-46).

Table 5. Forest Service Requested and Enacted Discretionary Appropriations, FY2011-2015, by Account

(dollars in millions)

Accounts	FY2011		FY2012		FY2013 ^a		FY2014		FY2015	
	Requested	Enacted	Requested	Enacted	Requested	Enacted	Requested	Enacted	Requested	Enacted
FRR	304.4	306.6	295.8	295.3	292.8	279.9	310.2	292.8	275.3	296.0
S&PF	321.6	277.6	341.6	252.9	250.7	239.7	240.0	230.0	229.5	232.7
NFS	1,585.7	1,542.2	1,704.5	1,554.1	1,623.6	1,455.3	1,556.7	1,496.3	1,640.5	1,494.3
CI&M	438.4	459.6	337.9	382.1	334.4	346.5 ^b	310.8	333.0	288.3	343.4
LA	73.7	32.9	90.0	52.5	57.9	49.8	58.0	43.5	51.0	47.5
WFM ^c	2,645.4	2,058.5	1,830.9	2,050.2	2,286.4	2,547.7	2,361.7	3,077.3	3,219.1	2,636.4
Other	7.6	7.5	4.5	7.1	3.6	5.8	4.2	6.7	3.5	6.0
Total	5,376.6	4,685.0	4,605.2^d	4,594.3	4,849.4	4,924.7	4,841.5	5,479.6	5,707.2	5,056.2
Difference		-691.6		-11.0				75.3		-651.0

Source: Information in this table is derived from detailed funding tables prepared by the House Committee on Appropriations.

Notes: The difference was calculated by subtracting the requested from the enacted appropriation. Figures in columns may not result in totals indicated due to rounding. Figures generally reflect supplemental appropriations and rescissions, but do not reflect scorekeeping adjustments. The account abbreviations are: FRR=Forest and Rangeland Research; S&PF=State and Private Forestry; NFS=National Forest System; CI&M=Capital Improvement and Maintenance; LA=Land Acquisition, WFM=Wildland Fire Management; Other = appropriations for the acquisition of land for National Forest Special Acts, appropriations for the acquisition of lands to complete land exchanges, appropriations to the range betterment fund, appropriations for gifts, donations and bequests for research, and appropriations for the management of national forest lands for subsistence uses.

- a. FY2013 enacted figures reflect post-sequester appropriations.
- b. This figure includes \$4.2 million for CI&M enacted by P.L. 113-2, Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013, which was not reflected in the detailed funding tables.
- c. This includes FS WFM appropriations; emergency, supplemental, or additional appropriations enacted for wildland fire management purposes; and appropriations for the FS FLAME wildfire suppression reserve fund account. For total WFM appropriations, including DOI, see CRS Report R43077, *Wildfire Management: Federal Funding and Related Statistics*.
- d. This total does not include \$328.0 million requested for the Payments to Communities program as a new proposed discretionary account, which was reauthorized as mandatory spending. Including the \$328.0 million, the total requested amount was \$4,933.2 million, and the difference between the enacted and requested appropriation was \$339.0 million.

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