



Forest Service: FY2017 Appropriations and FY2018 Budget Request

The Forest Service (FS) is responsible for managing 193 million acres of land in the National Forest System (NFS); conducting forestry research; and providing assistance to state, local, private, and international forest owners. FS is an agency within the Department of Agriculture, yet it receives discretionary appropriations through the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

For FY2017, total FS discretionary appropriations were \$5.596 billion (P.L. 115-31, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017). This figure includes \$342.0 million designated as emergency funding and outside of discretionary spending limits. In total, FY2017 discretionary appropriations were 12% lower than the FY2016 appropriations of \$6.364 billion. For FY2018, the Administration requested \$4.732 billion, 15% less than FY2017 enacted level.

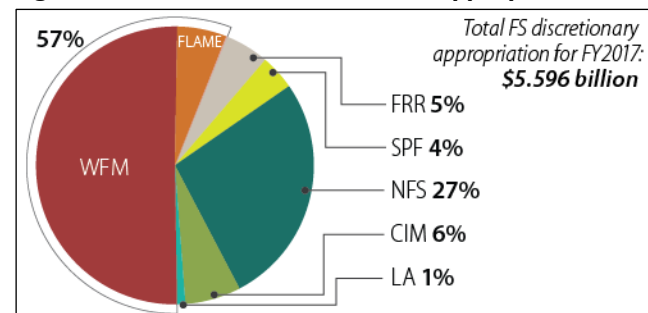
FY2017 Discretionary Appropriations

FS discretionary appropriations for FY2017 were almost entirely in seven main accounts (see **Table 1** and **Figure 1**). The largest share—a combined 57% (\$3.175 billion)—went to two accounts: the Wildland Fire Management (WFM) and FLAME Wildfire Suppression Reserve Fund accounts. The WFM account funds activities related to the management of unplanned and unwanted fires, including suppression of wildfires. The FLAME account funds emergency wildfire suppression activities under certain specified circumstances. The FY2017 WFM and FLAME appropriations are \$733.9 million below the FY2016 levels

(\$3.909 billion combined). Note that the FY2016 combined WFM and FLAME appropriations were substantially higher than the combined FY2015 appropriations (\$2.636 billion) and included \$700.0 million in emergency funding (and designated outside of discretionary spending limits) provided to the WFM account and an increase of nearly \$0.500 billion to the FLAME appropriation.

The next largest amount of FY2017 appropriations—27% of the total (\$1.513 billion)—went to the NFS account, which funds activities related to the management of the national forests and grasslands. The largest program within the NFS account, Forest Products (which funds timber sales planning and implementation), received \$367.8 million in FY2017.

Figure 1. Share of Total FS FY2017 Appropriations



Note: See Table 1 for account abbreviations.

Table 1. Forest Service (FS) Discretionary Appropriations by Account

Account	FY2016 Enacted (\$ in millions)	FY2017 Enacted (\$ in millions)	% Change from FY2016	FY2018 Request (\$ in millions)	% Change from FY2017
Forest and Rangeland Research (FRR)	\$291.0	\$288.5	-1%	\$259.0	-10%
State and Private Forestry (SPF)	237.0	216.9	-8%	118.0	-46%
National Forest System (NFS)	1,509.4	1,513.3	0%	1,747.4	15%
Capital Improvement & Maintenance (CIM)	348.2	348.0	0%	99.7	-71%
Land Acquisition (LA)	64.6	55.6	-14%	8.0	-86%
Wildland Fire Management (WFM)	2,386.3 [3,086.3]	2,833.4	-8%	2,495.0	-12%
FLAME	823.0	0.0 [342.0]	-58%	0	-100%
Other ^a	4.9	4.9	0%	4.3	-12%
Total	5,664.3 [6,364.3]	5,254.3 [5,596.3]	-12%	4,731.6	-15%

Source: P.L. 114-133 Division G; P.L. 115-31 Division G; FS FY2018 budget justification.

Notes: Figures in brackets represent total enacted appropriations, including funds provided outside of discretionary spending limits (\$700.0 million in FY2016 and \$342.0 million in FY2017). Percentage change is calculated using total figures, including funds subject to and outside of discretionary spending limits.

- a. In addition to the larger accounts listed, FS receives appropriations to several relatively small accounts, such as appropriations for the Range Betterment Fund; gifts, donations, and bequests for research; and management of national forest lands for subsistence uses.

The remaining accounts each received 6% or less of the total appropriations for FY2017:

- The Capital Improvement and Maintenance (CIM) account received 6% of the total appropriations. It funds FS efforts to provide and maintain facilities, roads, trails, and other infrastructure needs, including addressing the agency's estimated \$5.5 billion in deferred maintenance.
- The Forest and Rangeland Research (FRR) account received 5% of the total appropriations. It funds research and development efforts to provide scientific information and new technologies to support sustainable forest and rangeland management.
- The State and Private Forestry (SPF) account received 4% of the total appropriations. It funds programs to provide assistance to nonfederal forest owners and to protect forests from insects, diseases, and invasive plants. Included in this account is the Forest Legacy Program, a cost-share grant program that receives appropriations from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF; 54 U.S.C. §§200301 et seq.).
- The Land Acquisition (LA) account received 1% of the total, which includes funds derived from the LWCF as well as from two smaller appropriations accounts. These funds allow FS to acquire lands for conservation or ownership consolidation purposes.

P.L. 115-31 specified that appropriations to most FS accounts are to remain available through the end of FY2020. Previous appropriations laws generally provided that FS appropriations could remain available until expended.

FY2018 Budget Request

The Trump Administration requested \$4.732 billion in discretionary appropriations for FS in FY2018. This request is \$1.026 billion below the FY2017 request and \$0.865 billion below FY2017 enacted discretionary appropriations. The FY2018 request proposed cuts to all but one FS account, compared to FY2017 enacted levels.

Wildland Fire Management and FLAME

The Administration's request includes \$2,495.0 million for WFM for FY2018, a decrease of \$338.4 million (12%) from FY2017 enacted levels (\$2,833.4 million). Part of this decrease in WFM is due to a proposed move of the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program to the NFS account. The budget would fund the Suppression Operations Program at 100% of the rolling 10-year suppression-obligation average. The FS changed the methodology used to calculate the rolling average and shifted some funds to the Preparedness Program. The request proposed to eliminate funding for the FLAME reserve account instead of splitting the funds for suppression activities between that account and the Suppression Operations Program. In total, the FY2018 request of \$2,495.0 million for all wildland fire management activities is \$680.4 million (20%) below

FY2017 enacted levels (\$3,175.4 million, WFM and FLAME combined). For more information, see CRS Report R45005, *Wildfire Management Funding: Background, Issues, and FY2018 Appropriations*.

National Forest System

The request proposed \$1,747.4 million for the NFS account in FY2018, a \$234.1 million (15%) increase over FY2017 enacted levels (\$1,513.3 million). The increase is due to a proposed account restructuring that would shift \$354.3 million from the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program in the WFM account to the NFS account. Without the addition of the proposed Hazardous Fuels Reduction funds, the NFS request is \$120.2 million less than FY2017 enacted levels. Within the NFS account, the Administration requested level or increased funding for the Forest Products and Law Enforcement Operations Programs. Among the cuts, the request proposed to eliminate funding for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program.

Forest and Rangeland Research

The request included \$259.0 million for FRR, a decrease of \$29.5 million (10%) from FY2017 enacted levels (\$288.5 million). Funding for the Inventory and Monitoring research focus area would remain relatively level under the proposal, but funding for the other research focus areas would be reduced.

State and Private Forestry

The Trump Administration requested \$118.0 million for SPF for FY2018, a decrease of \$98.9 million (46%) from FY2017 enacted levels (\$216.9 million). The request would fund the Forest Stewardship program and the Forest Health Management Programs for both Federal and Cooperative Lands at reduced levels. The proposal would eliminate funding for the Landscape Scale Restoration, Forest Legacy, Community Forest and Open Space Conservation, and Urban and Community Forestry Programs.

Capital Improvement and Maintenance

The Administration's request included \$99.7 million for CIM, a decrease of \$248.3 million (71%) from FY2017 enacted levels (\$348.0 million). The request would fund the Facilities, Roads, and Trails Programs at reduced levels, including a nearly \$100 million reduction for the Roads Program. The proposal would eliminate funding for Deferred Maintenance and for the Legacy Roads and Trails Program, which funds infrastructure repair in areas where degradation could impair water supplies or protected species habitat.

Land Acquisition

The request included \$8.0 million for LA, a decrease of \$47.5 million (86%) from FY2017 enacted levels (\$55.6 million). The proposal would maintain existing staffing levels but would not propose any new land acquisition.

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IF10670

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