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Forest Service: FY2019 Appropriations and FY2020 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 FY2019, total FS discretionary appropriations were \$6.087 billion (P.L. 116-6). This FY2019 discretionary appropriation was 3% (\$152.5 million) above the FY2018 regular appropriation of \$5.935 billion (P.L. 115-141). Congress provided an additional \$646.3 million to FS in FY2018 in emergency supplemental appropriations (P.L. 115-72, and P.L. 115-123), bringing the total to \$6.581 billion. Using that figure, the FY2019 appropriations were 8% (\$493.8 million) below the total enacted FY2018 level. For FY2020, the Administration requested \$5.140 billion, 16% less than the FY2019-enacted level.

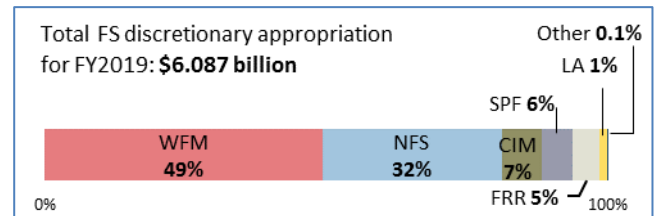
FY2019 Discretionary Appropriations

FS discretionary appropriations for FY2019 were mostly in six accounts (see **Table 1** and **Figure 1**). The largest share—49% (\$3.005 billion)—went to the Wildland Fire Management (WFM) account. WFM funds activities related to the preparation for and suppression of wildfires. The FY2019 WFM appropriations were \$124.6 million (4%) above the regular-enacted FY2018 level (\$2.880 billion), but \$59.9 million (2%) below the total FY2018 enacted figure of \$3.065 billion, which reflects an additional \$184.5

million of emergency supplemental appropriations. Within WFM, the FY2019 appropriations included funding for Suppression Operations at the 10-year suppression obligation average of \$1.165 billion plus an additional \$500.0 million. In FY2018, FS transferred \$720.3 million from other accounts for suppression purposes. The FY2019 appropriations may be used to repay those funds but did not provide additional funding.

The FY2019 appropriations continued a budgetary restructuring from FY2018 that moved some programs previously funded through WFM to other accounts. For example, Hazardous Fuels was funded in the National Forest System (NFS) account, and State Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance were funded in the State and Private Forestry (SPF) account. In addition, the FY2019 appropriations law did not provide any funding for the FS's FLAME wildfire suppression reserve account.

Figure 1. Share of Total FS FY2019 Appropriations



Source: CRS. Data from P.L. 116-6 Division E.

Notes: See **Table 1** for account abbreviations.

Table 1. Forest Service (FS) Discretionary Appropriations, by Account (\$ in millions)

Account	FY2018 Enacted	FY2019 Enacted	% Change from FY2018	FY2020 Requested	% Change from FY2019
Forest and Rangeland Research (FRR)	\$297.0	\$300.0	1%	\$254.5	-15%
State and Private Forestry (SPF)	329.6 [337.1]	335.5	2%	182.3	-46%
National Forest System (NFS)	1,923.8 [1,944.4]	1,938.0	1%	1,912.8	-1%
Capital Improvement & Maintenance (CIM)	434.0 [525.6]	431.0	-1%	434.0	1%
Land Acquisition (LA)	64.3	72.6	13%	0	-100%
Wildland Fire Management (WFM)	2,880.3 [3,064.8]	3,005.0	4%	2,350.6	-22%
FLAME	0 [342.0]	0	—	0	—
Other ^a	5.7	5.1	-10%	6.3	24%
Total	5,934.7 [6,580.9]	6,087.1	3%	5,140.5	-16%

Source: P.L. 115-141 Division G; P.L. 115-72; P.L. 115-123; P.L. 116-6 Division E; FS FY2020 budget justification.

Notes: Figures reflect rescissions from the SPF account and deferrals from the Roads and Trails Fund in CIM. For FY2018, figures in brackets reflect total appropriations including \$646.3 million in supplemental emergency-designated appropriations provided outside of discretionary spending limits (\$7.5 million for SPF, \$20.7 million for NFS, \$91.6 million for CIM, \$184.5 million for WFM, and \$342.0 million for FLAME). The percent change from FY2018 column reflects change from the regular FY2018 appropriations. Column totals may not add due to rounding.

a. This row reflects total FS appropriations to other relatively small accounts, including for specified land acquisition activities; the Range Betterment Fund; gifts, donations, and bequests for research; and management of national forest lands for subsistence uses.

The next-largest amount of FY2019 appropriations—32% of the total (\$1.938 billion)—went to the NFS account. The NFS account funds activities related to the management of the national forests and grasslands, including planning, recreation, grazing, timber production, watershed, wildlife, and law enforcement, among other activities. The FY2019 funding was \$14.3 million (1%) above the regular-enacted FY2018 level, but \$6.4 million (0.3%) below the total FY2018 appropriations of \$1.944 billion, which reflects an additional \$20.7 million in emergency-designated supplemental funding. The Hazardous Fuels program received \$435.0 million and was the largest program within the NFS account. Funding for most of the other NFS programs increased slightly relative to the regular FY2018 appropriations.

The remaining accounts each received 7% or less of the total appropriations for FY2019:

- The Capital Improvement and Maintenance (CIM) account funds FS efforts to provide and maintain facilities, roads, trails, and other infrastructure needs across the national forest system. CIM received \$431.0 million in FY2019. This amount was \$3.0 million (1%) below the FY2018 regular-enacted total of \$434.0 million, and \$94.6 million (18%) below the total FY2018 funding level, which reflects an additional \$91.6 million in emergency-designated supplemental funding. Funding for most programs remained constant relative to FY2018 regular appropriations, although funding for the Facilities program decreased slightly.
- The State and Private Forestry (SPF) account funds programs to provide assistance to nonfederal forest owners to protect forests from wildfires, insects, diseases, and invasive plants. SPF received \$335.5 million in FY2019. This amount was \$5.9 million (2%) above the regular-enacted FY2018 levels, but \$1.6 million (0.5%) below the total FY2018 level, which included \$7.5 million in emergency-designated supplemental funding. SPF also includes the Forest Legacy Program (\$62.5 million), a cost-share grant program that has received appropriations from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF; 54 U.S.C. §§200301 et seq.) Funding for most SPF programs increased modestly relative to FY2018 regular appropriations.
- The Forest and Rangeland Research (FRR) account funds research and development efforts to provide scientific information and new technologies to support sustainable forest and rangeland management. FRR received \$300.0 million in FY2019, \$3.0 million (1%) more than it received in FY2018.
- The Land Acquisition (LA) account includes funds derived from the LWCF for FS to acquire lands for conservation or ownership consolidation, among other purposes. LA received \$72.6 million in FY2019, \$8.2 million (13%) above FY2018 levels.

P.L. 116-6 specified that appropriations to most FS accounts are to remain available through FY2022.

FY2020 Budget Request

The Trump Administration requested \$5.140 billion in discretionary appropriations for FS in FY2020. This request is \$481.7 million (10%) above the FY2019 request (\$4.658 billion) and \$946.6 million (16%) below FY2019 enacted discretionary appropriations (\$6.087 billion). The FY2020 request proposed cuts to most FS accounts compared to FY2019 enacted levels (see **Table 1**) and did not include funding for the FLAME reserve account.

Wildland Fire Management

The FY2020 request includes \$2,350.6 million for WFM, a decrease of \$654.4 million (22%) from FY2019 enacted levels for WFM. The budget would fund suppression operations at 100% of the rolling 10-year suppression-obligation average as calculated in FY2015 (\$1.011 billion). Congress could appropriate an additional \$1.950 billion for suppression purposes outside of the discretionary spending limits pursuant to the *wildfire funding fix* enacted as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141, Division O). This would bring the total suppression funding to \$2.961 billion.

National Forest System

The request proposes \$1,912.8 million for the NFS account, a \$25.3 million (1%) decrease from FY2019 enacted levels. The request includes funding similar to the FY2019 enacted levels for some programs. Exceptions include increased funding for the Hazardous Fuels program (\$450.0 million) and Forest Products program (\$375.0 million), and elimination of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program.

Capital Improvement and Maintenance

The request includes \$434.0 million for CIM, an increase of \$3.0 million (1%) from FY2019 enacted levels.

State and Private Forestry

The request includes \$182.3 million for SPF, a decrease of \$153.2 million (46%) from FY2019 enacted levels. The request would fund, at reduced levels, the Forest Stewardship Program, the Forest Health Management Programs for both federal and cooperative lands, and the State Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance programs (and included proposals to rename several of those programs). The proposal would eliminate funding for Landscape Scale Restoration, Forest Legacy, Community Forest and Open Space Conservation, International Forestry, and Urban and Community Forestry programs.

Forest and Rangeland Research

The request included \$254.5 million for FRR, a decrease of \$45.5 million (15%) from FY2019 enacted levels.

Land Acquisition

The request would eliminate funding for most land acquisition programs.

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