

Preparing Leaders in Collaborative Forest Management in an Era of Wildfire

Sponsor: USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

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\$178,498

Project Summary/Abstract

1. Proposal title: Preparing Leaders in Collaborative Forest Management in an Era of Wildfire
2. Project director and institution: Troy E. Hall, Oregon State University
3. Primary Targeted Expertise Shortage Area (one): Forest Resources
4. Major academic program or discipline(s) being addressed: C (Conservation & Renewable Natural Resources) and G (Interdisciplinary)
5. Number of Fellows/degree levels: 1 PhD and 2 MS
6. Number and degree level of IRTAs: 1 PhD and 2 MS

This National Needs Fellowship will increase multicultural diversity in the Forest Resources TESA by training a team of 1 PhD and 2 MS students (at least one woman and one underrepresented minority) in collaborative forest and fire management in Oregon. The project aligns with USDA's goal to Facilitate Rural Prosperity and Economic Development; millions of dollars of revenue and wages are lost annually in fire-affected communities in the western US. Such impacts can be reduced through proactive approaches to identify areas at risk and taking appropriate, science-informed management actions. Through cultivating students' abilities to translate and apply science in public deliberations, the proposal aligns with USDA's Education and Science Literacy goals.

The FES degree program trains students in practical applications to problem solving and teamwork through three new interdisciplinary courses; it also provides numerous opportunities for leadership and science communication.

In Year 1, we will engage in extensive recruiting efforts. In Year 2 we will tour eastern Oregon to visit with stakeholders. Through disciplinary training (Fellowship-funded) and joint interdisciplinary activities (IRTA-funded), students will gain skills in making science useful to collaborative organizations, communities, and policy makers. Extension foresters will provide off-campus mentoring, job shadowing, and opportunities to collaborate with specialists and the public sector. In Year 3, students will produce a problem-focused extension product for use in land management, and work towards peer-reviewed publications from their research.

By graduating at least one woman and one student from an underrepresented group, we will have a measurable impact in the Forestry TESA.