WHAT'S NEW?

THE US FOREST SERVICE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

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HIGHLIGHTS

- **Improving Wood Identification to Increase Legal Forest Products Trade**
- **Making Markets More Transparent Through the International Tropical Timber Organization**
- **Phytosanitary Measures Protect America's Forests From Harm**
- **US Agency for International Development Funds International Programs to Address Illegal Logging and Timber Tracking in Peru**
- **Collaboration on Catastrophic Wildfire in Moscow**
- **USAID Funds US Forest Service to Combat Threat of Wildfires in Mozambique's Gorongosa National Park**

For more information on any of these program areas, please visit www.fs.fed.us/global/

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The Office of International Programs is currently working to improve forest management, to conserve biodiversity and to foster the trade of sustainably harvested forest products around the world.

IMPROVING WOOD IDENTIFICATION TO INCREASE LEGAL FOREST PRODUCTS TRADE

Illegal logging and the trade of illegally logged timber is a major problem for many timber-producing countries around the world. The Lacey Act now requires wood products importers use only legally-sourced materials and officially declare the genus and species of wood contained in their shipments to the United States. The Office of International Programs is working to maintain competitiveness of environmentally-sustainable forest products industries everywhere, particularly small firms, which depend on a steady supply of legally-sourced tropical hardwoods. Funding has been provided by International Programs to the Forest Products Laboratory to develop a prototype for wood identification that would enable wood processors, customs officials and civil society organizations to more easily identify commercial species in the field with minimal training. Technology transfer and state-of-the-art computer technology is welcomed by both domestic producers and manufacturers, who aim to be competitive in global markets.

MAKING MARKETS MORE TRANSPARENT THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANIZATION (ITTO)

The US is a major consumer of tropical timber, where it is used by many small and large businesses involved in the construction, furniture, and flooring industry. The US is a long standing member of ITTO, an intergovernmental organization composed of 60 members representing 80% of the world's tropical forests and 90% of the global tropical timber trade. International Programs works closely with the US Trade Representative's Office, the Departments of State and Commerce, Fish and Wildlife Service, US Agency for International Development, non-governmental organizations and forest industry partners to reflect US interests in this forum.

The ITTO disseminates practical information on the production and trade of tropical timber; and helps countries to sustainably manage and use tropical forests. In addition to being a forum for policy and technical dialogue, ITTO publishes a bi-weekly report on recent developments in timber policies, prices, and trade flows. The ITTO also publishes guidelines to promote sustainable forest management best practices on a range of issues, such as rehabilitating secondary and degraded forests,

managing for biodiversity in tropical production forests, and analyzing the impediments to effective forest governance.

"*The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) benefits U.S. industry greatly. ITTO 'gets it' as they understand that trade in tropical wood brings economic and social development to the world's forests and the rural communities that depend on these forests. Their collaboration with international and national public policy entities brings hands-on forest project experience to the table and helps advance trade in sustainable forest product,*" said Brent McClendon, who is the Executive Vice President of the US-based International Wood Products Association. Mr. McClendon currently serves as Co-Chair of the ITTO Trade Advisory Group, composed of representatives of tropical forest industries, timber exporters and importers, and trade and industry associations.

PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES PROTECT AMERICA'S FORESTS FROM HARM

With the increase of global trade and climate change, new threats to forest health underscore the need to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products, and to promote appropriate measures for their control. Experts estimate that the damage of invasive species cost the American public more than $138 billion each year. Some of the specific efforts of the International Programs office include:

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Working with China to Curb Invasive Species

International Programs facilitates technical cooperation with China to address mutual invasive species problems. From the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid to the Emerald Ash Borer, we are working with the Chinese to better understand and control these threats to US forests. For example, the Forest Service is working with counterparts at the Chinese Academy of Forestry and the USDA Agricultural Research Service to better understand the characteristics of Emerald Ash Borer which make it a successful invasive, in order to better predict and prevent future outbreaks of its relatives. International Programs also collaborates with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences in Beijing to survey for natural enemies of mile-a-minute weed and bio-controls for Kudzu—both of which are very damaging invasive weeds in the southern United States.

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International Programs Supports New Guidelines on Reducing Invasive Species Introductions

New pests arrive regularly into the US on trade shipments, such as wood and plants for planting, as well as wood packaging materials. 173 member countries, including the US, are party to the International Plant Protection Convention. An important component of the Convention's work is to develop International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures to prevent pest introduction and spread through trade. However, the text is highly technical, making it difficult for importers and business people to understand. International Programs provided support for US Forest Service plant pathology expert, Kerry Britton, to work with the Food and Agriculture Organization to develop a guide which not only overviews forest pest movement in trade but also uses layman's language to improve the implementation of the international phytosanitary regulations. "*We believe an informed forestry community can help the regulatory community develop future standards that are practicable and effective at protecting natural resources*," Britton said. The Food and Agriculture Organization Guide to Phytosanitary Forestry Practices and International Standards is set to be publicly released at the end of March 2011.

US AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS ILLEGAL LOGGING AND TIMBER TRACKING IN PERU

With full funding from the US Agency for International Development, the US Forest Service International Programs

has been working in Peru to strengthen institutions, promote transparency, participation and access to information, and to track and verify the legal origins of timber. Through the Peru Forest Sector Initiative, the Forest Service assists the Government of Peru in complying with the obligations of the US-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement. This has important implications for trade: illegally-traded wood is priced artificially low because the full costs of sustainable production—including tracking—are not reflected. This suppresses the estimated value of US wood exports. The US wood products industry is supportive of efforts like these around the world as they can bolster prices and environmental sustainability.

Specifically, the collaboration in Peru has focused on the development of an information and control system for chain of custody for CITES-listed species, support for population studies for mahogany and cedar, design of forest inventories, specialized expertise in yield determination and methodology, development of skills in forest and wildlife management, organizational design and training to regional governments, anti-corruption plans for the forest sector, and environmental investigation and prosecution training. In particular, the forest information and control system will enable verification of legal origin and compliance with chain of custody standards of CITES. The system, which is being designed with input of more than 80 individuals from 18 agencies, will hinder the falsification of harvest records, help facilitate detection of fraud, and make information available to stakeholders.

COLLABORATION ON CATASTROPHIC WILDFIRE IN MOSCOW

Russia contains the largest contiguous forest on earth, which encompasses nearly a quarter of the world's forest base. Russia's boreal forest species are similar to those of the United States and are therefore a significant common interest for the environmental and US business interests. In the summer of 2010, wildfires ravaged Moscow—resulting in fatalities, lost property, air pollution, forest fires and other tragedies.

With full funding from USAID, the Disaster Assistance Support Program of the US Forest Service worked quickly to contribute personal protective equipment, fire-protective clothing, large water storage tanks, hand tools for firefighters and other fire-fighting tools. Ongoing work, also with support from USAID, focuses on broader issues including regeneration, inventory and monitoring and illegal logging—issues of particular relevance for the US forest products industry. In December 2010, US Forest Service's Deputy Chief Joel Holtrop and others traveled to Moscow to finalize the areas of cooperation for the upcoming year.

USAID FUNDS US FOREST SERVICE TO COMBAT THREAT OF WILDFIRES IN MOZAMBIQUE'S GORONGOSA NATIONAL PARK

Wildfires are a major scourge to the fragile landscapes of southern Africa, including in Mozambique's world-renowned Gorongosa National Park. Historically, the wildlife population of Gorongosa—the large grazers such as elephant, rhinos and cape buffalo—kept most of the Park's vegetation grazed down. If a fire were ignited, the intensity would be low or burn in a mosaic pattern. But years of instability in Mozambique led to the decimation of wildlife, leaving the vegetation to grow uncontrolled and die; increasing the likelihood of large-scale, high intensity wildfires. These fires, combined with slash and burn practices of local communities and the use of fire by poachers to access game, have resulted in fires that are now larger, more severe, and harder to control than fires previously experienced in the Park. Today's fires threaten the Park's wildlife, as well as the larger ecosystems within and around the Park. Between 50-80 percent of Gorongosa National Park burns every year from large, human-caused wildfires.

With full funding from the US Agency for International Development, International Programs has collaborated with counterparts at Goronogosa National Park since December 2009. The collaboration has resulted in fire management assessments, fire management and education training workshops for Park managers, an analysis of the Park's future fire management needs, the planning, implementation and tactics of prescribed burning; and fire fighting safety. It is hoped that improved response and management of wildfires will help to keep the park's wildlife and fragile ecosystem thriving.