Uncertainty and Accountability

OIG Audit Follow-up

Uncertain Funding

May 14  Bend, OR
Race to the Top

We protected more than 2 million acres....

2,356,554
We had a good time in TN
Forest Legacy Program
Conservation Excellence

2007

2008

2009

2010
FY13 Budget

- Appropriations
  - $50,515,000
    - $6,300,000 administration funds
    - 16 projects 100% following the priorities of the panel. Four projects from President’s Budget unfunded.
  - $1,892,000 to implement the Community Forest Program.
FY2014 Budget

• President’s Budget
  • $84,800,000
    • $6,400,000 administration
  • 28 projects (from 23 States)
  • List will be updated as errata to account for the projects funded in 2013.
  • $4 million to implement the new Community Forest Program, not in FLP budget.

Competition is getting tougher and funding getting tighter
Why is the 2014 list divided between discretionary and mandatory and what does that mean?
Discretionary? Mandatory?

- Apportioned by OMB.
- Authorized by Congress but is not appropriated.
- Does not count against agency cap provided by Appropriations Committee.
- Mandatory funding does not have to be offset by reductions elsewhere in budget.
Recent (ongoing) Developments

- Farmbill still not resolved.
- House interested in instilling caps-House caps lower than Senate.
- Senate Agriculture Committee- in Farm Bill proposing to cap programs that include the following authorizing language:
  
  “Appropriations- There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section”

- At one point Senate proposed annual cap of $200 million and have a 5 year authorization for FLP
- At one point Senate proposed annual cap of $50 million for CFP
Office of Inspector General
Audit

- Audit conducted over 2 year period
- Audit closed March 14, 2013
- 24 recommendations with agreed upon follow-up items
- 21 out of 24 recommendations are completed
March 14, 2013

TO:    Thaddeus Strong  
      Agency Audit Liaison Official  
      Forest Service

FROM:  Ava Lee, Director  
        Planning and Accountability Division

SUBJECT: Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program  
         Report No. 98601-56-S9 (Recommendation 7)

Based on the Forest Service's memorandum dated October 12, 2012, and the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) memorandum dated March 13, 2013, we accept final action on Recommendation 7 in the subject audit. With this action, final action has been achieved on the subject audit in its entirety. No further reporting to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) is necessary on this recommendation. However, OCFO and OIG reserve the right to perform follow-up reviews of the actions taken.

If you have any questions, please have a member of your staff contact Lennette Ellis on (202) 720-5479.

cc: Sandy T. Coleman, FS  
    Janet Roder, FS
1. Conservation Easement Monitoring
   - Conduct annual monitoring for all easements
   - Better tracking by the FS
   - Integrated in FLIS 2.0
2. More accountability for cost share tracts

- Documentation of value and certification that sufficient cost share is provided
- Clarify what info needs to be provided to the FS and retained by the State
- Appendix C- updated
OIG Topics (cont’d)

3. Improve Quality Assurance Inspections (QAI) process
   - On-time completion of QAI by the Forest Service
   - Timely follow-up by the State
   - Better tracking by the FS
   - Appendix O
4. Accuracy of FLIS Data
   - State and FS need to cross check FLIS data with project files
   - FLIS 2.0 will implement some oversight changes
5. Consistent Record Retention
   - Clarify records retention requirements for States and Forest Service
   - Appendix G- updated
6. Conservation Easement Guidance
   - Develop a consistent approach for the FS to review easements, making sure all program requirements are addressed
   - Appendix M
• Other new guidance documents
  – APPENDIX L- Five Year Program Reviews
  • State and Forest Service internal review
  – APPENDIX N- Guide to Evaluating Appraisal Risk Factors
Accountability

• Starting in FY12, States need to satisfy core program requirements
  – Completed baseline reports
  – Completed forest stewardship/management plans
  – Completed annual conservation easement monitoring
  – Addresses known easement violations
  – Implements record keeping protocols
  – Developed a quality assurance inspection (QAI) action plan
  – Limited backlog
  – Up-to-date grant reporting

• States deficient in core program requirements will not be considered by National Panel
What does the Future Look Like?

- Budget looks uncertain
- Farm Bill changes
- More accountability on core program requirements
Community Forest Program

- First project grants issued in 2012.
- 49 applications with total request of $14.53.
- 24 from local governments, 22 from non-profits, 3 from tribes.
- 10 projects received grants in FY 2012.
• Projects funded in FY 2013 are from initial RFA.
• Currently working on updating rule to address several issues. Among them language related to encumbrances and conveyance.
• New RFA planned this year for FY 2014 funds.
Discussion