Forest Service Starting Intermountain Region Climate Assessment and Adaptation Partnership

OGDEN, UTAH – May 21, 2015 - The U.S. Forest Service Intermountain Region is beginning a region-wide climate vulnerability assessment and adaptation action partnership. The new Intermountain Adaptation Partnership (IAP) will synthesize the best available scientific information to assess the sensitivity of natural resources to a changing climate and develop adaption options that will reduce potentially adverse effects.

Intermountain Regional Forester Nora Rasure says, “Our goal is to have resilient landscapes and this assessment will help inform how our land managers can accomplish that goal. We want to create partnerships with local stakeholders with similar land management responsibilities. This process will help increase our organizational capacity to respond to the effects of changing climate conditions like drought.”

The IAP is a science-management collaboration that will improve awareness of climate science; assess the vulnerability of natural resources and ecosystem services to changing conditions; and develop science-based adaptation strategies that can be used by national forests to prepare for future changes in resource conditions, both positive and negative.

The Forest Service is working to develop this science-management partnership comprised of key personnel from throughout the region, national forests, Forest Service research stations, and other organizations by early summer of 2015.

Over the next two years, the collaborative will conduct a vulnerability assessment of identified resource areas and develop associated adaptation strategies to enhance resilience and facilitate ecological transitions for the Intermountain Region. The assessment and adaptation strategy will be peer reviewed and published, providing a scientific foundation for planning, ecological restoration, and project management.

Our next step is to extend an invitation to partners to participate as part of the collaborative effort. There will be a one-hour webinar on June 11th at 10 AM Mountain to inform partners about the IAP process. The webinar will explain the purpose of the assessment and the roles and opportunities for partnership participation. Organizations interested in attending the upcoming webinar should email Natalie Little at nlittle@fs.fed.us. A website has been developed to communicate the process and progress to participants, partners, and stakeholders, http://adaptationpartners.org/iap/index.php

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