Robert L. Bendick, Director, Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy
Jay Farrell, Executive Director, National Association of State Foresters
Marcia Galvin, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of Campground Owners
Richard Hawley, Executive Director, Greenspace-the Cambria Land Trust
Paul R. Howe, Executive Director, Virginia Forestry Association
Tom Martin, President and CEO, American Forest Foundation
Joseph McCarthy, Senior City Forester, City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation, Bureau of Forestry
Leland Milstein, Program Director, Alliance for Community Trees
Anand B. Persad, Regional Technical Advisor, The Davey Institute
Dr. Cliff Sadof, Professor, Department of Entomology, Purdue University
Carl P. Schulze Jr., President, National Plant Board

Monday, March 28, 2011

Written Testimony Regarding Fiscal Year 2012 Appropriation for the USDA Forest Service

Submitted to the House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

We urge the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies to appropriate adequate funding for the USDA Forest Service to manage non-native insects and plant diseases that threaten America's forests. We recommend an FY2012 appropriation of $138 million for the USDA Forest Service Forest Health Management Program. This level is the same as the current level of funding. In addition, we ask that you provide the President's request of $295,773,000 for the Forest Service Research program.

We recognize the importance of reducing government spending and taking other steps to reduce the deficit. However, forests and urban trees are a treasured and integral part of American life. Forested landscapes cover 1.15 million square miles in the United States. Every American derives some type of value from forested land, whether in the form of wood products for construction or paper, neighborhood amenities, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, or spiritual inspiration -- or the jobs associated with these values. The U.S. lumber and paper industries employ 1.3 million people. In Vermont alone, the maple sugar industry provides 4,000 seasonal jobs. Tourism based on fall foliage displays attracts one million tourists who annually generate $1 billion in revenue in New England.

American forest ecosystems are under siege by a growing number of exotic forest pests. Close to 500 species of invertebrates and pathogens from other countries have become established in the country, and a new damaging pest is introduced, on average, every 2 to 3 years.

The USDA Forest Service' Forest Health program is the lead agency assisting other federal agencies, state agencies, and private landowners in their struggle to respond to this growing threat. USFS expertise is essential to the success of pest eradication and containment programs

implemented by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – including those targeting the Asian longhorned beetle, emerald ash borer, and sudden oak death. The USFS contribution becomes increasingly important when forest pests have become more widespread. Thus, USDA Forest Service Forest Health Protection provides the greatest proportion of the federal government's efforts to mitigate the impacts of gypsy moth, hemlock woolly adelgid, white pine blister rust, Port-Orford-cedar root disease, ohia rust, oak wilt, and Erythrina gall wasp – among others.

The President's requested funding level of $120 million would necessitate cuts of forty to sixty percent in programs addressing highly damaging introduced pests that are already eliminating certain tree species from the forest, or threaten to do so.

- Emerald ash borer occupies more than 100,000 square miles in 15 states. More than 200 million ash trees in the Plains States and additional trees in the South are at risk to this pest. Homeowners and municipalities collectively will pay $10 billion or more to remove dead ash trees that would otherwise fall and cause property damage or even loss of life. USDA Forest Service Forest Health Protection has helped states and municipalities prepare by conducting inventories of their ash resources and planning coordinated management steps.
- Hemlock woolly adelgid has killed up to 90% of hemlock trees in the Appalachians from Georgia to Massachusetts. Loss of hemlock groves threatens unique ecosystems and watersheds. USDA Forest Service Forest Health Protection has helped try to reduce the overall damage by supporting development and testing of biological and chemical control methods and supporting control efforts on remote infestations resulting from artificial movement.
- Thousand cankers disease of walnut threatens to eliminate black walnut trees from the forest. Black walnut's greatest economic value comes from the wood. Top grade walnut is used for millwork and veneer; it is also exported. Medium grade wood is used in furniture, cabinetry, flooring, and other manufactured item. Lower grade walnut is used as sleepers (railroad ties), mine timbers, pallet parts and flooring. USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service estimates the timber value of black walnut throughout its range at $500 billion. In addition, although most walnuts sold in the U.S. for human consumption are from orchards of English or Persian walnuts, a thriving niche market for native black walnuts - centered on Missouri - harvests 25-30 million pounds every year. USDA Forest Service Forest Health Protection has helped try to reduce the overall damage by analyzing the risk to forests in the East and supporting states' efforts to determine whether they already harbor outbreaks of this recently discovered pest.
- Goldspotted oak borer has killed between 20,000 and 50,000 California live oak and black oak trees in San Diego County in less than 15 years. The insect threatens oaks throughout California, including close to 300,000 oak trees growing in greater Los Angeles and trees in Yosemite Valley. USDA Forest Service Forest Health Protection has helped try to limit the spread of this insect by supporting delimitation of the outbreak, analysis of the risk to trees in California, and efforts to develop better detection tools.

USDA Forest Service Research and Development Program provides the science to help manage forest invasive species. While we accept the proposed four percent reduction in Research overall, we consider it vitally important to maintain—at approximately current levels—research aimed at improving detection and control methods for the emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly

adelgid, sudden oak death, thousand cankers disease, and other non-native forest pests and diseases. In addition, we strongly believe funds should be allocated toward research issues associated with the goldspotted oak borer.

- Emerald ash borer: USFS research continues on such crucial fronts as developing control methods (biological, chemical, and microbial); detection technologies (improved traps and lures); testing host resistance; silvicultural treatments; and integrated management of EAB via the SLAM pilot project (Slowing Ash Mortality).
- Hemlock woolly adelgid: USFS research continues on such crucial fronts as developing control methods (biological and chemical); testing host resistance and hybridization for incorporating resistance; analysis of spread and impacts of HWA; population dynamics of HWA including climatic drivers; and silvicultural treatments for coping with HWA.
- Thousand cankers disease: USFS research has sufficient funding to monitor for the walnut twig beetle (vector of thousand cankers disease) in only two states - Indiana and Missouri. The study will analyze all bark and ambrosia beetles trapped at selected sites as well as any fungi the beetles might be transporting, so as to better understand this growing risk.
- Pathways of introduction and spread: USFS research will continue evaluation of the efficacy of quarantine programs aimed at preventing transport of pests in various pathways, including wood packaging and firewood. These studies provided the scientific foundation for managing these pathways in the past.

Thank you for considering our views. We would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.