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News From International Programs of the Forest Service

No. 7, February 2008: Disaster

Disaster Response Team Alleviates Suffering in Darfur, Sudan

by Sureka Khandagle and Gary Barrett

Sureka Khandagle is Team Leader for the Darfur Field Office, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development, Khartoum, Sudan; and Gary Barrett, formerly a Disaster Management Specialist for the Forest Service, International Programs, Disaster Assistance Support Program, Washington, DC, is Head of the United Nations Joint Logistics Center, South Sudan.

The 4-year conflict in Darfur, Sudan, has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and driven more than 2 million people from their homes. Families have been ravaged by the fighting, which has affected more than 60 percent of the population.

That includes Mohammed Salih Haroun, an agricultural engineer who runs a seed store and agricultural consulting business in Nyala, the capital of South Darfur. In July 2006, an Arab militia attacked and burned his family's village of Amoodh Al Akhdar. Many civilians were killed, including Haroun's 29-year-old brother. He and the rest of his family fled to Otash, a camp near Nyala that provides shelter for about 60,000 internally displaced people. By helping farmers improve crop quality and yield, Haroun is supporting the restoration of livelihoods in Darfur. Meanwhile, he is saving money to build a home for his family so that they can leave Otash and begin a new life in Nyala.

Displaced families like Haroun's are assisted by the U.S. Government, the leading international donor in Sudan. Since fiscal year 2004, the United States has contributed more than $2 billion for humanitarian programs in Sudan and eastern Chad. The Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, has been involved through the Disaster Assistance Support Program through an agreement with the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in the U.S. Agency for International Development.

In early 2004, Forest Service experts helped to assess humanitarian needs in Darfur. They served as liaisons between the U.S. Government and nongovernmental organizations, validating the needs of the displaced and helping to direct funding to relief programs in sectors such as health, water and sanitation, food security and agricultureecdcd(o)nn4ueliefift47.25 Td[sn4ue)5(l)5(s

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

DISASTER

- International Perspective: The Local and Global Value of Disaster Management 2
- Tsunami Relief and Preparedness in the Indian Ocean 3
- Dealing With Disasters: The Incident Command System in India 4
- Preparing for an Oilspill in Africa's Gulf of Guinea 5
- News Bits From Around the World 6
- Bulletin Board 8

FOREST SERVICE

The Local and Global Value of Disaster Management

by Bruce Keleman and Hutch Brown

Bruce Keleman is a retired Deputy Fire Management Officer for the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests, Wenatchee, WA; and Hutch Brown is a Policy Analyst for the Forest Service, Washington, DC.

In the summer of 1910, 3 million acres burned across northern Washington, Idaho, and Montana in the largest wildfire complex ever recorded in the United States. Eighty-five people perished, including 78 firefighters. Among those who fought the fires were rangers in the Forest Service, such as Ed Pulaski, whose heroism became legend. That fateful summer marked the beginning of a long history of wildland firefighting, culminating in today's Incident Command System—a comprehensive system for disaster management that is finding worldwide application.

The Incident Command System originated in the 1970s, when a task force led by the Forest Service devised it to manage multijurisdictional wildfire emergencies. Perfected over the years, it was formally adopted by the U.S. Government in 2001. Today, all Federal agencies and cooperators in the United States use the Incident Command System to respond to all types of emergencies.

The system's usefulness is not limited to the United States. In 2003, the International Wildland Fire Summit recommended the Incident Command System as the global standard for responding to wildfires. The Forest Service's International Programs has helped other countries find even broader applications. Working with partners at the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Forest Service's Disaster Assistance Support Program has adapted the Incident Command System in responding to all kinds of international disasters (see text box on this page). The U.S. Government now routinely sends disaster assistance response teams to incidents abroad, including human-caused disasters such as in Darfur (see "Disaster Response Team Alleviates Suffering in Darfur" on page 1). The system has become a benchmark for other Governments, international response agencies, and the United Nations.

The Forest Service has helped other countries build their own disaster response systems and capabilities with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development and others. The Forest Service Disaster Mitigation Program has provided countries like India opportunities to study the Incident Command System and adapt it to their needs (see "Dealing With Disasters: The Incident Command System in India" on page 4). Similar training has been offered in Bulgaria, Indonesia, Mongolia, Taiwan, the Caribbean, member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and elsewhere. The Disaster Mitigation Program is also working with the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to develop emergency early warning procedures for countries in the Indian Ocean (see "Tsunami Relief and Preparedness in the Indian Ocean" on page 3).

The advantages cut both ways. International Programs has given Forest Service professionals opportunities to link their experience and expertise with the needs of disaster response practitioners and natural resource managers around the world. For example, the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster gave the Forest Service a chance to use the Incident Command System on an oilspill, an experience with relevance to oil-rich countries around the world (see "Preparing for an Oilspill in Africa's Gulf of Guinea" on page 5). Forest Service instructors in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere not only teach, but also take home lessons learned and insights gained into many of the problems we encounter as natural resource managers. Capacity building is key, both at home and abroad—helping people and local communities acquire the knowledge, skill, and tools to succeed.

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A Strong Record of Emergency Response

Through firefighting, the Forest Service has long been involved in emergency response. In 1985, the agency created the Disaster Assistance Support Program to help partners in the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development, deliver disaster relief around the world. Today, the program provides emergency support and extensive training, helps partners improve their methodologies for disaster response, and coordinates disaster preparedness for U.S. embassies and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The Disaster Assistance Support Program can mobilize up to 350 disaster management experts from the Forest Service and other agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management. From fiscal year 2002 to 2006, such experts completed 256 short-term assignments ranging from a few days to several months, amounting to more than 23 person-years. Personnel responded to emergencies associated with wildfires (Bulgaria), an earthquake (Pakistan), drought (Ethiopia, Kenya, and southern Africa), tsunamis (India, Indonesia, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Thailand), hurricanes (Grenada and the United States), food security crises (Mali and the west African Sahel), locust infestations (Senegal and West Africa), and complex situations (Central Asia, Iraq, Lebanon, and Sudan).

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Tsunami Relief and Preparedness in the Indian Ocean

by Kary Schlick, S.H.M. Fakhruddin, Laura Chapman, and Liz Skree

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Those who live along the Indian Ocean will never forget the day of the tsunami. On the morning of December 26, 2004, huge waves washed ashore without warning. Many people were caught in bed; those who survived will always remember the horrors that followed.

Hours before, a 9.2-magnitude earthquake—the second largest ever recorded—roiled the waters off Indonesia, pushing hundred-foot waves toward coastal communities in 13 countries as far away as East Africa. There was no early warning system; most victims had no idea of the approaching danger until too late. The tsunami claimed more than 176,000 lives and destroyed the homes of 1.7 million more, making it one of the worst natural disasters in modern history.

Within hours, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in the U.S. Agency for International Development responded, deploying a 40-person disaster assistance response team to the region, including six Forest Service employees who helped to assess and respond to the immediate needs of disaster victims. The team assessed the situation, identified needs, coordinated relief, and monitored assistance. The agency also activated a response management team in Washington, DC, to provide support and coordinate strategy and operations at a broader level.

The disaster response system used by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance is modeled on the Incident Command System, first developed by the Forest Service for wildland firefighting and now used in the United States on all types of incidents. For 17 years, the Forest Service has helped the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance respond to disasters abroad. The Forest Service's Disaster Assistance Support Program helped staff the tsunami response teams with personnel from the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

In 2005, to help prevent future disasters, the U.S. Agency for International Development launched a program to provide technical support for developing the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System. Coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the new system encompasses all aspects of early warning, from detecting a hazard to communicating with coastal communities. It will warn of all coastal hazards, including cyclones, sea

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SHARING LESSONS LEARNED ON DISASTER MITIGATION CAN AVERT THE EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE WROUGHT BY THE 2004 TSUNAMI.

Tsunami Eyewitnesses See Parallels With Katrina

In August 2006, the Forest Service hosted a study tour on disaster management for 10 Sri Lankan officials. Participants saw the Incident Command System in action on the Trailhead Fire in Stanley, ID. The group also toured emergency operations centers and met with practitioners at the local, State, and national level.

In visiting the Gulf Coast region, the Sri Lankans heard firsthand accounts of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. They were struck by parallels with their own experiences during the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004. The shared experiences connected the Sri Lankan visitors to Katrina survivors, who invited them to a gumbo lunch. Participants returned to Sri Lanka with touching memories and tools to better prepare for future disasters.

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Natural disasters have long-term consequences for daily lives; finding safe drinking water, for example, can mean walking increasingly longer distances.

FOREST SERVICE

Dealing With Disasters: The Incident Command System in India

by Nina Minka and Deanne Shulman

Nina Minka is a Senior Disaster Management Advisor for the U.S. Agency for International Development in India; and Deanne Shulman is a Disaster Mitigation Specialist for the Forest Service, International Programs, Washington, DC.

Disasters bring loss of life and loved ones, destroyed homes and businesses, shortages of food and safe water, and emotional stress and trauma. One of the greatest challenges of the 21st century is protecting people, especially the world's poor, from the devastating impacts of disasters. Along with the challenge has come new thinking on how to deal with disasters.

In India, floods, drought, landslides, and cyclones are common. The 1999 Orissa cyclone, the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami each killed more than 10,000 people and left millions homeless. The 2005 earthquake in Jammu and Kashmir was a grim reminder of the extremely high earthquake risk throughout much of South Asia.

The Government of India has taken steps to improve its disaster management system. Since 2002, a partnership between India and the United States has brought the best U.S. disaster management expertise to India. With funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Forest Service has partnered with the Indian Government to integrate the Incident Command System into India's disaster response system. A flexible system adaptable to incidents of any scale, the Incident Command System is used in the United States for all types of disaster response.

Though skeptical at first, Indian officials came to appreciate the Incident Command System. Faculty at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, the premier training institute for Indian civil servants, embraced the system and became its biggest champions. The academy now routinely offers courses in the Incident Command System, as do regional and state training institutions. Hundreds of Indian disaster managers have been trained, and the Incident Command System has been used experimentally for flood response, event planning, and disaster simulation exercises. The groundswell of support indicates the system's potential viability in India, and the Forest Service has used Indian trainers elsewhere in Asia to introduce the system and explain how India has adapted it to its particular needs.

Since 2006, the Indian National Institute of Disaster Management has been key to capacity building in the Incident Command System. According to its executive director, P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti, the system has been proven effective but needs to be further adapted to Indian concepts of disaster management. The Institute has conducted courses and helped design a pilot program to further test the Incident Command System under Indian conditions.

The pilot program began in February 2007 in the western state of Gujarat. Three districts in Gujarat now have trained teams that work closely with Forest Service experts to ensure high levels of skill. Soon after their certification, one team was used in response to monsoon flooding in the district of Vadodara. Based on the team's favorable experience, authorities in Gujarat plan to institutionalize the Incident Command System throughout the state. The U.S. Agency for International Development, with Forest Service support, is planning more two more pilot programs, as well as capacity building, for institutions offering training in the Incident Command System.

The program in India could serve as a model for introducing the Incident Command System elsewhere in Asia. In November 2007, the Government of India hosted an Asia ministerial conference on disaster risk reduction, with several Asian countries sharing their experiences with the Incident Command System. If the

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Hurricane Katrina: Managing an Outpouring of International Aid

After Hurricane Katrina ravaged the U.S. Gulf Coast in 2005, 151 nations and international organizations offered assistance. The U.S. Government had never before accepted international aid on such a large scale, so there were no procedures governing the process. The U.S. Agency for International Development was asked to develop a system for processing offers of foreign assistance and for receiving and transmitting the donated goods.

The agency called on the Forest Service's Disaster Assistance Support Program for help. Forest Service personnel served as liaisons among Federal agencies and as field logistics officers in Louisiana and Texas. They developed a database to track and report on the 580 offers of foreign assistance, including cash, commodities, and personnel. With their help, U.S. officials were able to deliver much-needed supplies to hard-hit communities, including tents from Denmark and Russia, bedding from Slovakia and Tunisia, medical supplies from Chile and Spain, and baby goods from China and Israel.

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long Africa's Gulf of Guinea, the mangroves are key to life. Their leaves provide nutrients to all manner of aquatic species, and their thick root networks are vital nurseries for fish and shellfish, supporting coastal fisheries. Mangrove roots also prevent erosion by trapping sediments, and mangrove thickets shelter inland areas from storm surges, including hurricanes. Without mangroves, many of the resources that Africans take for granted would be gone.

Now Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea are reaping the benefits of an oil boom in the Gulf of Guinea, raising concerns about coastal ecosystems. Mangroves are vulnerable to offshore oilspills, which can drastically deplete their fish and wildlife resources. Contaminants can quickly spread into the dense vegetation, rendering oil collection, dispersion, and cleanup difficult if not impossible. Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea both lack sufficient capacity to adequately monitor and mitigate such a disaster.

In June 2006, an interagency team from the U.S. Coast Guard, Forest Service, and State Department traveled to Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea to assess what would happen in the event of a major oilspill. Forest Service experience with oilspills dates to the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster in Prince William Sound, AK, when the disaster response team used the Incident Command System, a flexible system adaptable to any type of incident at any scale. The interagency team thought that the Incident Command System might be useful on an oilspill in Africa, as well.

The team determined that neither Cameroon nor Equatorial Guinea has a national response system in place, although the oil industry is relatively well equipped for certain types of operations. Stakeholders in Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea indicated a genuine interest in a collaborative workshop or training series on the Incident Command System. In partnership with the Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Forest Service specialists began preparing a basic/intermediate multihazard training class. The U.S. Coast Guard serves as the lead agency for responding to spills in U.S. waters; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration brings to the team its many years of experience with mapping environmentally sensitive areas and oilspill trajectory analysis.

In September 2007 in Douala, Cameroon, a training was presented to Government and oil industry representatives from Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. With modules on organization and staffing, resources, facilities, and planning and managing disaster response, the course culminated in an oilspill scenario simulation that requires students to complete an incident action plan and present an operational briefing. Emphasis was placed on protecting the most fragile marine habitats. Goals included increasing regional capacity to deal with an oilspill disaster, promoting cooperation among stakeholders, and reducing Government reliance on oil industry capabilities.

In the Gulf of Guinea, an oilspill disaster could threaten regional stability, but the Incident Command System affords a way to bring a crisis under control. Bplaarging , the Forest Service and

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News Bits From Around The World

Bringing Ecotourism to Egypt

Protected areas thrive when visitors discover their value and when local communities benefit from tourist spending. Since 1983, Egypt has designated 27 protected areas covering more than 15 percent of its land area. They include the Wadi El Rayan Protected Area, located some hundred miles from Cairo, a favorite destination for visitors for its lakes and rich stores of whale fossils.

A Forest Service landscape architect traveled to Wadi El Rayan to help improve the main visitor area and develop a site plan that is needed to balance people with place while giving visitors a sense of arrival and belonging. The architect examined how the design can help promote economic investment and encourage local support for protecting natural resources.

Students and Shorebirds Converge on Alaska

In May 2007, students in grades 5-8 from throughout the Western Hemisphere took a virtual field trip to the Copper River Delta in Alaska to learn about shorebird migration, capping a 6-month program in conservation education. Through satellite and Internet technology, the students traveled more than 6,500 miles, from the birds' wintering grounds in Panama to their breeding grounds in Alaska. Along the way, they stopped at seven critical wetland habitats.

Provided free to classrooms everywhere, the program—called "Migration Science and Mystery: A Distance Learning Adventure"—reached about half a million children in both English and Spanish. Leadership came from the Prince William Network, with support from the Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative, an effort by the Forest Service and its partners.

The Elusive Empress of Brazil

In the mountains north of Rio de Janeiro, an ecologist from the Tongass National Forest in Alaska went in search of the Empress of Brazil, an extravagant blue flower on a stem that can be several feet long. Found only on remote mountainsides, the plant is critically endangered due to agricultural development and the spread of wildfires. For years, the Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden has studied the Empress to conserve and restore its vanishing habitat.

In November 2006, a garden biologist teamed up with an ecologist from the Forest Service to seek out the elusive Empress. Using satellite imagery, aerial photography, and a geographic information system, the team mapped remaining Empress populations and modeled the flower's habitat. The project was funded by the Forest Service's International Programs and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Combating Illegal Logging in the Balkans

Illegal logging accounts for more than half of the timber produced in some countries, and it is a serious problem in the Balkans. With logs traded globally, international interest in curtailing the problem is strong. In May 2007, the Forest Service, working with partners, brought representatives from several Balkan countries together to share strategies, approaches, and tools for reducing illegal logging. The partners hosted a 4-day regional workshop in Budapest, Hungary. Participants included forestry officials, law enforcement officers, and prosecutors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia.

The workshop conveyed best practices and methods used in the United States. Perhaps more importantly, it provided a neutral forum for officials from Balkan countries to discuss issues of mutual interest and to establish relationships with counterparts. The workshop was funded by the U.S. Department of State, with in-kind contributions from the Forest Service, World Bank, U.S. Department of Justice, and U.S. Agency for International Development.

The Forest Service is lending its expertise in ecotourism to Egypt's Wadi El Rayan Protected Area, famous for its lakes and whale fossils.

Visit these Web sites for more information related to articles in this issue:

Forest Service International Programs' Disaster Assistance Support Program — http://www.fs.fed.us/global/aboutus/dasp/welcome.htm

Forest Service International Programs' Disaster Mitigation Program — http://www.fs.fed.us/global/aboutus/dmp/welcome.htm

Incident Command System — http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/fire/management/ics/index.php

U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance — http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/

Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System — http://www.iotws.org/

Bureau of Land Management — http://www.blm.gov

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration — http://www.noaa.gov/

U.S. Coast Guard — http://www.uscg.mil/

Monarch Butterfly Gateway — http://www.fs.fed.us/monarchbutterfly/index.shtml

Migration Science and Mystery: A Distance Learning Adventure — http://migration.pwnet.org

Wings Across the Americas — http://www.fs.fed.us/global/wings

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operations in Darfur, helping to implement and monitor more than $100 million in relief programs. Ravaged villages still dot many landscapes, along with huge camps like Otash. But relief efforts by the U.S. Agency for International Development, in cooperation with partners like the Forest Service, are giving Mohammed Salih Haroun and his family new grounds for hope.

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As we approach the centennial of the 1910 fires, we can look back across a century of enormous change in our collective ability to prepare for and respond to disasters. What we have learned is relevant to managing both natural and human-caused disasters around the world, and international cooperation allows us to share our experience while we learn from others (see the text boxes on pages 3 and 4). As Forest Service employees, we can gain much from international cooperation; it places our own day-to-day challenges in a new light, leading us to consider new ways of understanding and overcoming obstacles. We are better able to adapt to the complex world of emergency management for the benefit of the people we serve. In both the short and the long run, the instructor becomes the student.

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swells, floods, and earthquakes.

As part of the new system, the Forest Service is conducting "train-the-trainer" courses in Sri Lanka to instruct Government disaster managers in the Incident Command System. Training includes hosted study tours (see the text box on page 3).

In Indonesia, the Forest Service is helping the Government integrate the Incident Command System into its disaster response system and enhance its local tsunami warning system. Indonesian officials have taken a foundational course in the Incident Command System.

In Thailand, the Forest Service is helping the Government develop a tsunami early warning system tailored to local conditions. Workshops and tabletop exercises have focused on system design, protocols and procedures, hardware technology, media notification, and equipment testing. In July 2007, with help from the Forest Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Thailand conducted the largest tsunami warning drill ever in Southeast Asia, activating all 79 newly installed warning towers along its Indian Ocean coast.

International collaboration is paying off. Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand will present their accomplishments in regional workshops and can help neighboring countries strengthen their own disaster management systems. The best way to mitigate the impact of future disasters in the region is to coordinate and prepare across borders and boundaries.

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Incident Command System can be adapted to conditions in India, with its enormous size and cultural diversity, then it might well be applicable anywhere in the world.

Bulletin Board

24th International Seminar on Forest and Natural Resources Administration and Management

Dates: October 6–21, 2008

Arizona, Colorado, North Carolina, and the District of Columbia, USA

Jointly offered by Forest Service International Programs and Northern Arizona University, this seminar presents a broad spectrum of natural resource management techniques and institutional arrangements so that participants may selectively gather ideas that can assist in the management of their lands. It focuses on strategies and methods to develop, manage, and conserve natural resources for the sustained delivery of goods and services to meet the full range of human needs. For application details, visit http://www.fs.fed.us/global/is/isfam/welcome.htm or write to Dr. Michael Wagner, P.O. Box 15018, 82 Huffer Lane, Flagstaff, AZ 86011, USA, or e-mail at ISFAM@nau.edu.

2008 International Seminar on Protected Area Management

Dates: August 4–22, 2008

Missoula, Montana, USA

This seminar—jointly offered by the University of Montana, University of Idaho, Colorado State University, and Forest Service International Programs—is geared for senior-level managers and policymakers working in protected areas. The program examines and stimulates debate on management strategies, policies, and innovative institutional arrangements to address the conservation and use of the world's most special places. For application details, visit http://www.fs.fed.us/global/is/ispam/welcome.htm or write to Wayne Freimund, School of Forestry, The University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812, USA, or e-mail at wayne@forestry.umt.edu.

2008 International Field Course on Wildlands and Protected Area Management

Dates: July 8–August 10, 2008

Fort Collins, Colorado, USA

Co-hosted by the Center for Protected Area Management and Training at Colorado State University and Forest Service International Programs, this course, held in Spanish, presents key concepts and methods of protected area management while emphasizing field-based practical exercises. For application details, visit http://www.fs.fed.us/global/is/field_course/welcome.htm or write to Ryan Finchum, Colorado State University, Center for Protected Area Management and Training, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1480, USA, or e-mail at finchum@cnr.colostate.edu.

The Global Leaflet presents highlights of policy, research, technical cooperation, development, and conservation activities in which the Forest Service is involved worldwide. Its purpose is to demonstrate the breadth and importance of international collaboration on natural resource management issues and to share information within the Forest Service and with our partners in the United States and around the world.

International Programs is dedicated to applying the wealth of skills within the Forest Service to foster sustainable forest management globally. We encourage linking the agency's researchers, foresters, wildlife biologists, hydrologists, policymakers, and disaster specialists with partners overseas to work on assignments in the areas of technical cooperation, policy assistance, and disaster coordination. Our focus is on key natural resource problems and issues in countries with significant forest resources and important forest-related trade with the United States. International cooperation results in improved sustainable natural resource practices in partner countries, develops the skills of Forest Service personnel, and brings back knowledge and innovative technologies to the United States.

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