

## U.S. Forest Service Assessment of Research & Development Function

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### BACKGROUND

The Research and Development (R&D) Washington Office provides national oversight and overall strategic direction for United States Forest Service (USFS) R&D programs. The Washington Office oversees fifty research programs spread over seven regional research stations, one national laboratory, four research centers and various national cross-station research program areas, administered through the Washington Office. This presents challenges for both research coordination and communication.

Congress and others have asked R&D to minimize redundancy and maximize cost effectiveness while doing a better job of communicating the importance of its research to both internal and external customers. An internal review by R&D in response to a USFS Executive Leadership Team request in 2015 found that improved coordination between the regional research stations and Washington Office R&D was needed to better align research activities with the management needs of internal customers, National Forest Systems and State and Private Forestry. R&D is developing a National Research Plan that aims to articulate how the research stations and the Washington Office strategically align with agency priorities and management needs.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

USFS contracted with the Academy to undertake an eight-month independent assessment of the USFS R&D function. The Academy's assessment of USFS's R&D function has three main scope elements.

1. Identify opportunities to improve USFS' ability to coordinate its research, with a focus on coordination between Washington Office R&D and USFS regional research stations as it relates to aligning research with the Agency priorities and the management needs of internal Agency customers;
2. Identify opportunities to improve how USFS communicates with internal customers (i.e., Forest Systems and State and Private Forestry) and external stakeholders, especially Congress, about its research activities, their alignment with Agency priorities and management needs, and their impact, with an emphasis on communicating with non-technical audiences; and
3. Develop actionable recommendations that can inform an implementation strategy for the USFS National Research Plan, including possible changes in the organization of the R&D function and a communications strategy.

The Academy has assembled a Panel of Fellows to oversee and guide this study. Information on the Panel and study team is provided on the next page.

## **PANEL**

**Michael Dominguez (Chair)\***, Director, Strategy, Forces and Resources Division, Institute for Defense Analyses. Former positions with the U.S. Department of Defense: Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, including service as Acting Secretary of the Air Force; Assistant Director for Space, Information Warfare, and Command and Control, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. Former Research Project Director, Center for Naval Analyses; General Manager, Tech 2000 Inc.; Associate Director for Programming, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations; Director for Planning and Analytical Support, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Program Analysis and Evaluation; Executive Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Program Analysis and Evaluation; Program Analyst, Office of the Secretary of Defense for Program Analysis and Evaluation; Military service in various assignments with the U.S. Army's Southern European Task Force.

**David Birdsell\***, Dean, School of Public Affairs, Baruch College, City University of New York; Board Chair, Governance Matters; Board Member, New York Council of Nonprofits; Vice President, NASPAA. Former positions with Baruch College: Special Assistant to the President for Institutional Effectiveness; Professor of Public Affairs; Interim Dean, School of Public Affairs; Executive Director of Academic Programs; Associate Professor of Public Affairs; Associate Professor of Speech; Assistant Professor of Speech; Lecturer in Speech & Director of Forensics. Former consultant, Communication, New York City Fire Department; Consultant, Institutional Research and Communication Technology, New York Public Library; Consultant, Communication Strategy, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest; Consultant, Capitol Hill Communication, Congressional Management Foundation; Consultant, Improving Nonprofit Consulting, Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management Foundation; Consultant, Patron and Staff Education for Online Research, Brooklyn Public Library; Consultant, Political Debating, U.S. Information Agency; Lecturer in Speech & Director of Forensics, University of Virginia.

**Thomas Kane\***, Former Acting Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Department of Justice; Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons. Former positions with Federal Bureau of Prisons: Deputy Assistant Director for Information Technology; Chief of Staff, Executive Office of the Director; Chief, Office of Research and Evaluation; Senior Research Analyst. Former Instructor, New York State Police Academy.

**Michael Lipsky\***, Distinguished Senior Fellow, Demos: A Network for Ideas and Action. Former Senior Program Director, Demos: A Network for Ideas and Action; Visiting Professor, Public Policy Institute, Georgetown University. Former Senior Program Officer, Peace and Social Justice Program, The Ford Foundation; Professor, Department of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin at Madison.

**Kay Goss\***, President, World Disaster Management, LLC; Chief Executive Officer, GC Barnes Group; President, The International Emergency Management Society; Senior Principal and Senior Advisor for Emergency Management and Continuity Programs, SRA International. Former Senior Advisor for Emergency Management, Homeland Security, and Business Security, EDS; Associate Director, National Preparedness, Training, and Exercises, FEMA; Senior Assistant to the Governor, Intergovernmental Relations, Little Rock, AR; Project Director, Association of Arkansas Counties; Project Director, Educational Finance Study Commission, Arkansas Legislature. Former positions with State Capitol, Little Rock, AR: Chief Deputy State Auditor; Research Director, Arkansas State Constitutional Convention, State Capitol.

**Steve Redburn\***, Professorial Lecturer in Public Policy and Public Administration, The Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration, The George Washington University. Former Study Director, National Academy of Sciences; H. John Heinz III College of Public Policy & Management, Carnegie Mellon University Australia; Project Director and Consultant, National Academy of Public Administration; Chief, Housing Branch, U.S. Office of Management and Budget; Economist, Special Studies, U.S. Office of Management and Budget; Program Analyst, Office of Policy Development and Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; Director, Center for Urban Studies, Youngstown State University.

## **PROJECT STAFF**

**Brenna Isman**, *Director of Academy Studies*

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