

# Climate change could burn a hole in USFS budget

By Anshu Siripurapu, McClatchy

Climate change appears to be fueling more wildfires as U.S. Forest Service officials are increasingly concerned they don't have the funds to effectively handle another devastating season.

While Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell told senators last week he's got enough budget funds to deal with most of the 7,000 fires that occur annually in national forests, "it's that 1 to 2 percent of our fires, that when we have a very active fire season, that goes way beyond our capability to handle within our appropriations."

In 1995, 16 percent of the Forest Service was dedicated to fire, according to a 2015 agency report. Now, it's more than half. Tidwell said the Forest Service predicts that fire programs will be 67 percent of the budget by 2025. In an op-ed in July of last year, Tom Vilsack, former secretary of Agriculture, the agency that runs the Forest Service, lamented that the agency was becoming "the Fire Service."

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