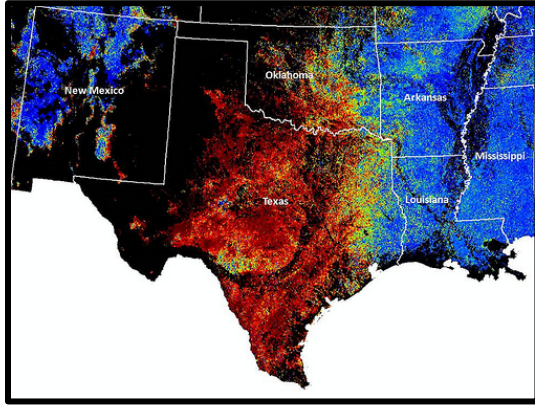# Climate Change Early Warning Systems for Forests

May 16, 2012

Responded from Stephanie Worley Firley, Biological Science Information Specialist, USDA Forest Service)

The Forest Service recently unveiled a product that helps natural resource managers rapidly detect, identify and respond to unexpected changes in the nation's forests by using web-based tools.

The satellite-based monitoring and assessment tool aptly called ForWarn, recognizes and tracks potential forest disturbances caused by insects, diseases, wildfires, extreme weather, and other natural or human-caused events believed by many scientists to be caused in part by climate change.

ForWarn was developed by the USDA Forest Services' Eastern Forest and Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Centers, NASA Stennis Space Center and other federal and university partners. NASA's satellite imagery is the backbone of ForWarn, which provides maps of forest change throughout the lower 48 states every eight days that users can explore and share. Maps archived since 2010 provide deeper insight into disturbance and forest recovery.

"This tool literally puts space-age technology into the hands of forest resource professionals," says Danny C. Lee, Director of the Eastern Threat Center. "The tool helps them to better identify and reacts to environmental disturbances."

Federal and state natural resource managers through the country are currently using ForWarn which compliments efforts of other more specialized forest monitoring programs. The tool is intended to generate time and cost savings, and ultimately a new network of users working together to sustain the health of the nation's forest resources.

Visit http://www.forwarn.forestthreats.org/ to learn more.