



TECHNICAL NOTES



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EPA AWARDS TO STUDY EFFECTS OF AIR

POLLUTION ON FOREST ECOSYSTEM

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded a \$314,136 contract to the University of California at Riverside to begin one of the Nation's first major field studies on the effects of oxidant air pollution on a major forest ecosystem.

The research will involve primarily the effects of photochemical oxidants (pollutants formed principally by photochemical reactions involving nitrogen dioxide and unsaturated hydrocarbons) on a mixed conifer ecosystem dominated by Jeffrey and Ponderosa Pine.

These trees are extremely susceptible to oxidant air pollution. Smog from the Los Angeles Basin has already killed or defoliated significant numbers of the trees in the San Bernardino National Forest.

The contract was awarded through EPA's National Ecological Research Laboratory (NERL) at Corvallis, Oregon, which will be responsible for administering the contract and monitoring the study through its completion. The contract covers the first year of what is expected to be a five-year project.

Dr. Norman R. Glass, Director of NERL, said the research will be conducted in the San Bernardino National Forest in Southern California, where the infamous Los Angeles smog has been inflicting serious damage to plant life for many years.

Dr. Glass said that "While our study will take place in Southern California where there is already a problem, similar ecological problems could eventually develop in numerous other parts of the United States where emissions of photochemically active substances are increasing and where suitable geographical and meteorological conditions exist.

"These include such places as Oregon's Willamette Valley and the San Joaquin-Sacramento Valley in Central California -- areas which are geographically shaped to retain air masses, and which experience similar inversion patterns that potentially lead to smog formation and build-up of atmospheric pollutants."

Dr. Glass said that in addition to furthering the understanding of the response of ecosystems to pollutants, data obtained from the study will be used in the establishment of secondary air quality standards in the United States.