

FEATURE – USDA OPENS NEW FOREST SCIENCES LABORATORY

INTRO: The U-S Department of Agriculture opened a new forest sciences laboratory in Colorado to study environmental problems affecting the nation's forests The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (1:31)

THE NEW U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOREST SERVICE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RESEARCH STATION IS BEING TOUTED AS A STATE OF THE ART FACILITY TO ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS. U-S-D-A FOREST SERVICE CHIEF TOM TIDWELL SAYS THE NEW FORESTRY SCIENCES LABORATORY HAS THREE RESEARCH PRIORITIES.

Tom Tidwell, Chief, USDA Forest Service: They're focusing on the understanding the effects of climate change and human connections on wildfire, water quality and availability and ecosystems in the interior West.

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK TOURED THE FACILITY AND SAID THE LAB'S RESEARCH IS NEEDED TO DEAL WITH ISSUES AFFECTING THE NATION'S FORESTS.

Tom Vilsack, Agriculture Secretary: Whether it's climate change, whether it's water, whether it's the pine bark beetle or whether it's future opportunities, this is a station that will inspire great work.

Bottom line, we need people thinking about these opportunities and these threats every single day. We need extraordinarily smart people focusing on how we can preserve this enormously important treasure.

COLORADO GOVERNOR BILL RITTER SAID THE STATION'S RESEARCHERS' WORK WOULD ADDRESS THREATS BEING FACED BY FORESTS IN HIS STATE.

Gov. Bill Ritter (D-CO): It's always been an important public service but it's gotten to the point where we view your service as really critical to the survival of forests in the Rocky Mountain West.

THE FIVE POINT THREE MILLION DOLLAR FACILITY'S CONSTRUCTION WAS PARTIALLY FUNDED BY THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT. FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE I'M BOB ELLISON.