

JFSP Project Progress Report

Date: September 25, 2007

Project Title: Fire Regimes of the Southern Appalachian Mountains: Temporal and Spatial Variability over Multiple Scales and Implications for Ecosystem Management

JFSP Project Number: 06-3-1-05

Principal Investigators: Charles W. Lafon and Henri D. Grissino-Mayer

Federal Cooperator: Rob Klein

Total JFSP project funding: \$299,996

Unspent funds to date: Texas A&M = \$154,290, University of Tennessee = \$97,237; Note: The actual amount for Texas A&M is not this high because the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station (TAES) has been slow to account for and reimburse charges to the account.

Please provide a brief response to each of the following questions:

1. What have you accomplished this fiscal year? (bulleted list format is fine)

- a) With our federal cooperators, we conducted field and map reconnaissance for potential study sites across the southern Appalachian public lands.
- b) We have identified 10 potential sites with high-quality fire-scarred specimens.
- c) We collected fire-scarred samples from four of the sites, and plot data from three sites.
- d) We analyzed GIS data on spatial patterns of fire in Great Smoky Mts. NP (GSMNP)
- e) We identified 8 potential sites for soil charcoal collection in GSMNP
- f) We collected soil samples for charcoal analysis from 5 of the sites.

2. Are you on schedule to complete the project by the JFSP project end date? If not, what steps are you taking to ensure that you can meet the deliverable date?

We have conducted multiple field research expeditions this year and seem to be close, if not on, schedule to complete the project by the delivery date. During the first few months of our project in 2006, we were able to make progress faster than anticipated because readily accessible sites with high-quality fire-scarred pines were quickly found. However, our progress slowed considerably beginning in January 2007 and lasting for the remainder of this year primarily because Dr. Grissino-Mayer developed serious health complications and had to be hospitalized for 3 weeks. Follow-up surgery occurred in July 2007. Dr Grissino-Mayer has been ordered by his physicians not to engage in strenuous fieldwork until December 2007. In addition, we encountered difficulty in locating fire-scarred trees in some of the targeted areas, specifically in the national forests on the eastern side of the southern Appalachians, and also in the northern section of the Cherokee National Forest. The delays have negated our rapid early progress, but we remain roughly on target and hope that with Grissino-Mayer's continuing recovery we will be able to accelerate our work.

3. Do you have any other issues or concerns with your project (e.g., issues with sub-agreements)?

We are a bit frustrated with the delays by TAES in getting the account set up, obtaining travel reimbursements, etc. This is not a problem caused by JFSP or with our lead federal agency (GSMNP), of course, and it appears that we are getting some resolution.

4. Have there been any changes in the status of the PI, Co-PIs, or the Federal Cooperator? If so, please identify those changes here.

No changes.

5. Do you have any comments or concerns that may help JFSP better administer your project?

None