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## News Channel 13

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### New Findings on Climate Change

Annamarie lannetta (1/5/10)

A Nobel-Prize winning scientist in Missoula has announced he's surprised by the extent of climate change hitting Montana. But not everyone thinks Steve Running's study is on the mark.

Ten years ago Running says he would have never thought that climate change would have increased so quickly. In a new study, Running focused on the impacts to Montana, Wyoming and Idaho forests. "Going to be progressively stressed by these shorter snow packed, shorter winter and longer summers," said Running.

Running says future forests won't be able to adapt to the changing climate and will ultimately die out. Running and his partner, Thomas Power, a U.M. Economist are also concerned about the economic impact of a catastrophic wildfire in the region.

That could effect more than 360-thousand people who live in or near the forests, and costs as much as 21 billion dollars. "The dollar value represents the value of those homes in 2000. Now in 2010, 2020 or 2030 or 2050 it's going to be even more hundreds of thousands of if not millions of people and homes that are going to be at risk," said Power.

Running believes these findings are especially important to future montanans. "This is the Montana that their children and grandchildren will live in," said Running.

Patrick Michaels, a Senior Fellow of Environmental Studies at the Cato Institute, questions some of the data. "Western drought status is quite variable from year to year and decade to decade, and yes indeed as things warm up you will get more frequent droughts. However the observed rate of warming in global temperature is at or around the lower limit for rates of global warming that are given by the models from the United Nations Inter-Governmental Panel on climate change. That means that these model projections for the year 2010 are likely to be over estimations rather than under-estimations," said Michaels.

Running's study was funded by a grant from the Bi-Partisan Policy Center and The National Commission on Energy Policy.

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