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Forest Service
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FREMONT - WINEMA NATIONAL FORESTS

Monitoring and Evaluation Report

Fiscal Year 2002



KEY FINDINGS

Ecosystem Restoration: Over the last few years, the Upper Klamath Basin and the Chewaucan Watershed have been the focus of extraordinary ecosystem restoration efforts in agricultural lands, wetlands, forested uplands, and riparian systems. In the Klamath Basin, the endangered species, water quality, and water quantity problems, with their associated agricultural, tribal, and social and economic impacts have demanded Presidential and Congressional attention and attracted millions of dollars for study and active restoration. The Fremont and Winema National Forests have been and are now cooperating and partnering with the Klamath Tribes, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Forestry, US Environmental Protection Agency, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Klamath and Lake Counties, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Hatfield Upper Klamath Basin Working Group, local communities, the Resource Advisory Committee and local watershed councils to restore habitats and improve water quality and quantity across the area. Data collection, large-scale wetland restoration, riparian habitat enhancement, and the addressing of point and non-point source pollution problems are progressing full speed in and around the Winema and Fremont National Forests.

The Forests' efforts to improve ecosystem conditions have expanded well beyond the scope envisioned in the Forest Plans. For example, the Winema's Plan included an estimate of ten acres per year of watershed improvement. In the ten years where figures are available, that average has been nearly 130 acres per year. The level of restoration activities is further revealed in the category of habitat improvement where, for example, the Fremont improved more than 228% of the acres estimated in the Forest Plan during 2002. The Forests completed other related activities that were not discussed in the Forest Monitoring Plan.

The Winema and Fremont Resource Advisory Committee, formed in accordance with the "Secure Rural Schools and Community self-Determination Act of 2000," is supporting restoration activities on both private and federal lands. The Forests have improved road crossings at meadows, constructed permeable road fills to allow water passage and placed gravel on roads to reduce erosion.

Employee Involvement. The Forests' employees have chaired and served on TMDL (total maximum daily load) committees for water quality limited rivers and lakes. Their leadership and expertise has been provided on watershed restoration projects in the Upper Klamath Basin, Chewaucan, Camas and other watersheds. They have worked closely with local watershed councils. The Forests have been actively participating in the Hatfield Upper Klamath Basin Working Group, responsible for many of the significant and effective restoration efforts to date. In addition, Forest employees provide direct technical assistance to Community Action Teams across Klamath and Lake Counties.

Implementation of Standards and Guidelines continues to be a focus of Forest monitoring. Several large wildfires (Grizzly, Toolbox, Silver, Winter and Skunk) and many smaller ones, burned on the Forests in the summer of 2002. These fires left large areas of the Forest far away from the desired conditions specified in the Forest Plan. Critical protection measures were implemented immediately and long-term restoration efforts are currently being developed. The Forest made several changes in allotment management to insure compliance with programmatic biological opinions developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A review of the Oven Timber Sale on the Chemult District revealed that leaving many roads open and retaining high levels of hiding cover for deer is adversely affecting the Forest's ability to provide forage for deer. Management options are being investigated. Monitoring of the Antelope Pilot project revealed advantages of stewardship contracting including lower cost and fewer detrimental environmental impacts than with similar projects managed under standard timber sale and service contracts.

Threatened, endangered and sensitive species are doing well where there is sufficient information to make an informed judgment. Bald eagles continue to do well on both Forests. Thirty-nine active bald eagle nests were identified on the Winema of which twenty-three were productive, producing forty young. Nineteen active nests were found on the Fremont National Forest in 2002. Eleven of those nests were productive, producing fifteen young. Four bald eagle nest sites on the Fremont were burned in wildfires in 2002. A spotted owl demographic study, involving the Klamath Ranger District, continued. Spotted frog monitoring, including egg mass surveys, continued in Jack Creek on the Chemult District. Flights over wilderness did not detect wolverine denning. Yellow rail monitoring continues in marshlands on and adjacent to Upper Klamath Lake. A pumice grape fern sensitive plant study continues. The Fremont National Forest participated with the BLM in a carnivore survey in the Goodlow Mountain area. Seventeen mammals, including the American Marten were detected in the area. Numerous planned forest activities were analyzed for effects to bald eagle, Lost River, shortnose, and Modoc suckers, and bull trout. Recovery projects are being implemented for bull trout. Monitoring of Threemile Creek revealed no brook trout or hybrids. It appears the population is now pure bull trout without the threat of competition/hybridization with brook trout.

ACCOMPLISHMENT OF OUTPUTS AND SERVICES

Monitoring Item	Winema NF		Fremont NF		Comments
	Plan	2002	Plan	2002	
Allowable Sale Quantity MMCF/Year	19.4	2.1	24.7	0.0	Both Forests continue to sell less timber volume than anticipated in the Forest Plans. A Regional amendment to the Forest Plans, Eastside screens, eliminated harvest of trees over 21 inches in diameter but did not change the planned harvest levels, thus current volumes are less than planned.
Timber Sale Program Quantity MMCF/Year	34.7	2.7	28.0	1.2	
MMBF/Year	166.8	13.6	154.8	6.6	
Dead Lodgepole Sold MMCF/Year	11.5	0.1	-	0.1	Mortality in lodgepole pine on the Winema has returned to near normal levels. Dead LPP was harvested earlier in the planning period, thus harvest volumes now are significantly less than planned.
MMBF/Year	40.2	0.9	-	0.7	
Ponderosa Pine Sold MMCF/Year	8.8	0.7	-	0.0	A Regional amendment to the Forest Plans, Eastside screens, eliminated harvest of trees over 21 inch diameter but did not change the planned harvest levels, thus current volumes are less than planned..
MMBF/Year	53.9	3.2	-	0.0	
Silvicultural Treatments (Ac/Year)					The focus of harvest has changed to thinning, selection and salvage harvests, with no regeneration harvests occurring. The factors affecting the harvest volume also have affected the number of acres harvested.
Commercial Thinning	2,700	2,742	7,500	0	
Overstory Removal	1,600	0	0	0	
Regeneration Harvest	500	0	8,900	0	
Selection Harvest	8,400	0	12,500	300	
Salvage Cut	13,700	5	-	1,407	
Reforestation (Ac/Year)	6,400	631	4,000	1,612	With no regeneration harvests, there is little or no planting needed for harvested areas. Most reforestation is for wildfire restoration.
Timber Stand Improvement (Ac/Yr)	14,400	3,092	8,000	2,984	Appropriated funds limit the amount of TSI. Alternative funds like the Payments to Counties funds and appropriated wildlife funds are providing most of the funding for TSI.
Fuel Treatment (Ac/Year)	27,600	5,969	20,000	18,752	
Road Construct/Reconstr (Miles)					
Forest Road Program	22	0.6	-	0.4	
Timber Purchaser Roads	31	0.0	156	0.5	
Total Road System (Miles)	5,517	6,091	-	6,775	
Road Access Mgmt (Miles)					
Open for Use	-	4,591	-	4,907	
Closed to Use	-	1,500	-	1,868	
Road Access Type (Miles)					
Passenger Car	510	482	-	954	
High Clearance Vehicle	2,120	2,379	-	3,953	
Intermittant Access	2,887	3,230	-	1,868	
Developed Rec Construction (PAOT)	695	0	-	0	
Trail Construct/Reconst (Miles)	124	0	-	0	
Permitted Livestock (AUM)	13,000	10,739	70,100	75,352	
Range Improvement					
Structures	-	0	-	0	
Acres	-	0	-	0	
Habitat Improvements					
<u>T&E Species</u>					
Structures	-	0	-	0	
Acres	-	3	-	2	
<u>Other Species</u>					
Structures	-	0	1,450	0	
Acres	-	708	1,100	2,515	
Watershed Improvements					A total of 262 acres were improved across both Forests. The split for each forest is not available.
Structures	-	0	-	0	
Acres	10	NA	250	NA	

Other wildlife populations continue to be affected by habitat changes. Lack of timber harvest activity, fire, blow-down or other natural disturbance continues to allow canopy cover to increase thus continuing the reduction of forage for mule deer and possibly adversely affecting mule deer populations. Deer cover surveys and habitat suitability model use continues for planned activity areas. Neotropical migratory bird monitoring continues. Surveys in planned activity areas continue for goshawk, great gray owl and aspen habitat. A study of white-headed woodpecker continued on the Chemult Ranger District. The Fremont National Forest participated in a herpetological survey of the Goodlow Mountain and Gerber area. The survey found no threatened, endangered or sensitive species.

The Forest's timber program includes vegetation management projects designed to restore sustainable forest conditions and watershed health in landscapes where risk of catastrophic fire or insect loss is high. Some of these projects use timber sales and provide commercial products that will help sustain local communities economically, though this is not their primary purpose. These projects are designed to sustain old growth conditions; protect spotted owl habitat connectivity between Late Successional Reserves and Crater Lake National Park; rehabilitate meadows, hardwoods, and riparian habitats; reduce the risks of fire, tussock moth, budworm, and root rots; and allow the reintroduction of fire's function in the system. These projects also include road closures, obliteration, and relocation. After 11 years, a small fraction of planned timber harvest has occurred. Regional Foresters' Amendment 2 (screens) limited the types of trees that can be harvested, but did not adjust the allowable sale quantity for the Forests accordingly. Timber harvest within the range of the northern spotted owl has been very limited due to the cost and difficulty in developing adequate compliance with legal requirements. This situation continues to depress economic activity in the area and compounds problems with other sectors in the economy. The Fremont and Winema National Forests are scheduled to begin development of a Forest Plan revision in 2005. The revision process will re-address the relationships between timber management, wildlife habitat, and socio-economics, as recommended over the last several years by the Forest's interdisciplinary team.

Forest health concerns are related primarily to the effects of too many trees on the landscape caused by decades of fire suppression and limited stocking control. This overcrowding results in too little water and too few nutrients getting to each tree to maintain good tree health. With the trees stressed, they are more susceptible to attacks by mountain pine beetle on the pine trees, and fir engraver on the white fir trees. The drought in 2001 and 2002 added additional stress, and we expect to see increased mortality particularly in the pines. Past mortality in the white fir will continue to be a problem due to the increased fire danger those dead trees present. Management of the stocking levels in the forest is ongoing, but we will continue to have overstocked stands due to the financial and procedural limitations on the amount of work we can accomplish in a year. The Winema and adjacent private lands experienced an outbreak of the Pandora Moth larvae this year. The Pandora moth has a two-year life cycle, with the larva (caterpillars) defoliating pine trees one year, and the moths emerging to lay eggs the following year. Because of this two-year life cycle, we expect to see large numbers of moths in 2003, and experience further defoliation in 2004. The defoliation reduces growth, but seldom results in mortality.

Outputs of goods and services shows, numerically, what the Forest has produced in comparison to what was planned. Since implementation of the Forest Plans, the Forests have produced well below planned levels in all categories that involve ground-disturbing work, except reforestation and watershed improvements. This highlights the major emphasis on ecosystem restoration. The timber related outputs are low for the reasons discussed above. The recreation related outputs are generally low due to insufficient funding to do the planned work. Permitted livestock use is low due to low demand from potential permittees.

From the social and economic aspect, Forest Service activities have been well below planned levels, thus the associated activity in the local economy has been much less than originally anticipated. The Klamath County agricultural sector was recovering from curtailment of water deliveries that occurred in 2001. This translates to unemployment rates still well above the national and state averages (8.4% in Klamath County and 6.9% in Lake County in August of 2002). The "Secure Rural Schools and Community self-Determination Act of 2000" has now eliminated the linkage between National Forest receipts and payments to the states. Thus, National Forest activities no longer directly affect county budgets. During 2002 some funds provided under that Act were used for ecosystem restoration activities on the Forests and contributed to increased economic activity. Sectors of the economy other than agriculture and those directly affected by Forest Service programs have displayed mixed performance.

For more information about forest monitoring see: www.fs.fed.us/r6/winema/management/monitoring.shtml

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