

Healthy Forests and Rangelands

Managing Our Natural Heritage



Healthy Forests Report

June 2008

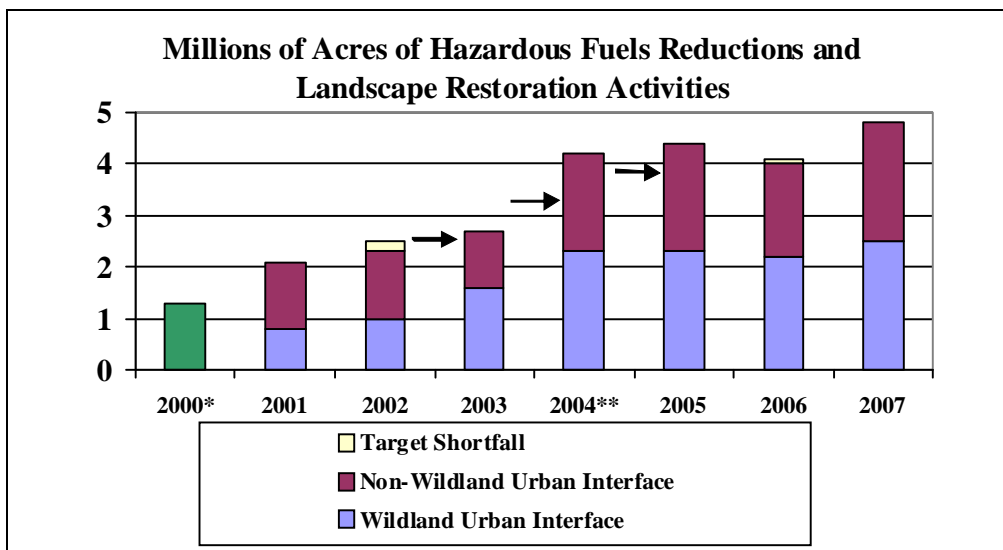
The Department of the Interior (DOI) and the USDA Forest Service implement the National Fire Plan (NFP) and Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI) in order to help save the lives of firefighters and citizens and to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire to our communities, forests, and rangelands.

HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION & LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PROJECTS

An excessive accumulation of hazardous or unusually flammable fuels in our forests, woodlands, and grasslands is the root cause of the unprecedented fire risk facing our public lands. Land managers remove hazardous fuels via programs funded specifically for that purpose and in other programs whose principle goal is the achievement of a variety of resource management objectives that can be broadly labeled landscape restoration. Treatments occur both inside and outside the wildland urban interface (WUI).

1. Inside the WUI, treatments reduce fuels around homes, communities, and resources to slow or stop wildland fires from threatening these high-value areas.
2. Beyond the WUI, treatments not only help protect communities by creating conditions that enable firefighters to more successfully suppress fires before they enter the WUI but also reduce fire severity and its impact on valued landscapes and natural resources.

From 2001 through the end of May 2008, the Federal land management agencies have treated nearly 26 million acres of federal lands under the Healthy Forest Initiative and the National Fire Plan through landscape restoration actions. The effectiveness of these treatments in protecting communities and resources from fire has been demonstrated numerous times.



→ Set at Fiscal Year target to display over-accomplishment

* FY 2000 is used as a baseline for reporting, as the NFP was implemented in FY 2001.

Treatment location was not included in reporting prior to FY 2001.

** Acres treated under landscape restoration activities were not reported prior to FY 2004.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Landscape Restoration Accomplishments
2001-2007
(Acres in millions)

	Wildland Urban Interface				Non- Wildland Urban Interface				Grand Total
	Rx Fire	Mechanical	Other	Total	Rx Fire	Mechanical	Other	Total	
2001									
FS	0.461	0.140	0.011	0.612	0.685	0.064	0.001	0.750	1.362
DOI	0.088	0.075	0.001	0.164	0.419	0.110	0.035	0.564	0.728
Total	0.549	0.215	0.012	0.776	1.104	0.174	0.036	1.314	2.090
2002									
FS	0.711	0.051	0.002	0.764	0.433	0.061	0.000	0.494	1.258
DOI	0.069	0.125	0.015	0.209	0.635	0.149	0.066	0.850	1.059
Total	0.780	0.176	0.017	0.973	1.068	0.210	0.066	1.344	2.317
2003									
FS	0.970	0.143	0.001	1.114	0.281	0.058	0.000	0.339	1.453
DOI	0.218	0.158	0.104	0.480	0.567	0.103	0.109	0.779	1.259
Total	1.188	0.301	0.105	1.594	0.848	0.161	0.109	1.118	2.712
2004									
FS	1.163	0.436	0.101	1.700	0.491	0.357	0.013	0.861	2.561
DOI	0.250	0.294	0.016	0.560	0.572	0.299	0.200	1.071	1.631
Total	1.413	0.730	0.117	2.260	1.063	0.656	0.213	1.932	4.192
2005									
FS	1.044	0.515	0.099	1.658	0.688	0.343	0.033	1.064	2.722
DOI	0.284	0.276	0.049	0.609	0.598	0.233	0.180	1.011	1.620
Total	1.328	0.791	0.148	2.267	1.286	0.576	0.213	2.075	4.342
2006									
FS	0.812	0.683	0.095	1.590	0.580	0.356	0.021	0.957	2.547
DOI	0.243	0.236	0.108	0.587	0.420	0.229	0.220	0.869	1.456
Total	1.055	0.919	0.203	2.177	1.000	0.585	0.241	1.826	4.003
2007									
FS	1.018	0.392	0.244	1.654	0.858	0.504	0.011	1.373	3.027
DOI	0.332	0.244	0.275	0.851	0.663	0.168	0.105	0.936	1.787
Total	1.350	0.636	0.519	2.505	1.521	0.672	0.116	2.309	4.814
FS Total	6.179	2.36	.553	9.062	4.016	1.743	0.079	5.838	14.93
DOI Total	1.484	1.408	0.568	3.460	3.874	1.291	0.915	6.080	9.540
Grand Total	8.426	3.768	1.121	12.552	7.890	3.034	0.994	11.918	24.470

Table 1: Fiscal Year 2008 HFI Hazardous Fuels Reduction & Landscape Restoration Activities*

Treatment Type	Hazardous Fuels Appropriations (acres accomplished)		Landscape Restoration Appropriations (acres accomplished)		TOTAL
	Prescribed Fire	Mechanical & Other	Prescribed Fire	Mechanical & Other	
Forest Service	867,000	27,000	111,000	37,000	1,042,000
DOI	281,000	131,000	7,000	56,000	475,000
TOTAL	1,149,00	158,000	117,000	93,000	1,517,000

*As of 5/5/2008

Note: Total includes acres treated through State Fire Assistance hazard mitigation grants and Wildland Fire Use.

TREATMENT BY AUTHORITIES

Table 2: Healthy Forests Activities (acres accomplished)

Authority	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008**	TOTAL
HFRA Title I Authorities	33,000	99,000	163,000	83,000	378,000
HFI Authorities	289,000	362,000	417,000	107,000	1,175,000
Other NEPA Decisions #	3,322,000	2,904,000	2,524,000	836,000	9586,000
Other Authorities *	698,000	638,000	1,710,000	491,000	3,490,000
TOTAL	4,342,000	4,003,000	4,814,000	1,517,000	14,676,000

- Typically NEPA tools or decisions predating HFI and HFRA

* - Includes activity on private land and decisions where the NEPA tool is unspecified

** - FY2008 data is from 10/01/07 – 05/05/08 only

STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS AWARDED

Stewardship contracting includes natural resource management activities that improve land conditions. These projects shift the focus of federal forest and rangeland management towards a desired future resource condition. They are also a means for federal agencies to contribute to the development of sustainable rural communities, maintain healthy forest ecosystems, and provide a continuing source of local income and employment.

Table 3: Stewardship Contracts & Agreements

Year	Bureau of Land Management		Forest Service	
2003	2 contracts	300 acres	50 contracts	14,000 acres
2004	22 contracts	6,900 acres	64 contracts	42,000 acres
2005	58 contracts awarded	15,000 acres	45 contracts	35,500 acres
2006	56 contracts awarded	18,500 acres	92 contracts	57,500 acres
2007	71 contracts awarded	33,300 acres	13 contracts	12,000 acres
2008	42 contracts awarded	15,300 acres	13 contracts	12,000 acres
Total	528 contracts / agreements for 262,300 acres*			

*Not all projects in table above were authorized under HFRA.

UTILIZATION OF FOREST BYPRODUCTS

Byproducts removed during hazardous fuels reduction and landscape restoration activities are often utilized in certain forest products (e.g., timber, engineered lumber, paper and pulp, furniture) and bio-energy and bio-based products (e.g., plastics, ethanol, and diesel). Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimbell released the National Woody Biomass Utilization Strategy in February 2008. The strategy provides scope and direction for the agency to better coordinate programs and respond to an increased demand for biomass management and utilization in order to meet forest management and climate change mitigation goals.

In March 2008, Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced the award of \$4.1 million in Forest Service woody biomass utilization grants to help 17 small businesses and community groups find more innovative uses of woody biomass from national forests in new products and renewable energy. The grants will help create markets for small-diameter woody material, damaged and other low-valued trees removed to reduce the risk of fire hazard, insect infestation, or disease.

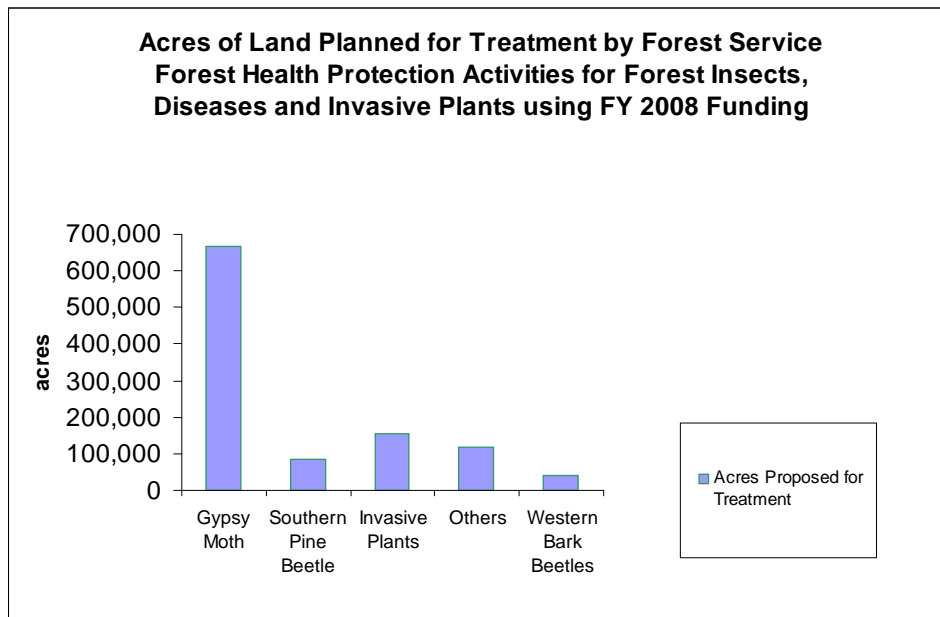
HFRA TITLE IV: APPLIED RESEARCH

The Forest Service’s applied research projects, in partnership with several universities and state forestry agencies, aim to conduct and evaluate different land management practices that reduce problems associated with the current outbreaks of insects and diseases and to translate that information for practicing professionals, landowners, and the public.

There are currently six Silvicultural Assessment and six Accelerated Information Gathering projects planned or underway. For detailed information of the Forest Service’s Applied Research Projects under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, please visit: http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/Healthy_Forests/research.shtml

INVASIVE SPECIES AND FOREST HEALTH

In FY 2008, Forest Service Forest Health Protection planned activities include both prevention and suppression efforts and resources to restore lands impacted by native and nonnative forest pests on federal, state and private lands. Some of the nonnative pests targeted for treatment include hemlock woolly adelgid, white pine blister rust, gypsy moth, sudden oak death, emerald ash borer, Asian long horned beetle, Sirex wood wasp, cycad scale, wili gall wasp, and invasive plants. Over one million acres are planned for treatment through Forest Health Protection efforts and funding in FY 2008.



FOREST SERVICE USE OF COUNTERPART REGULATIONS

Since the training module on Counterpart Regulation procedures, Section 7 consultation standards of review, and monitoring was prepared in March, 2004, 336 Forest Service line officers and 588 biologists have taken the training and been certified to use the regulations. As of March 2008, 190 NFP projects utilized the process. The review of Year 1 Counterpart Regulation use was completed in January 2008, and can be viewed at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/laws/fireplanreview.pdf>. The results are being used to make improvements for the use of this important tool.

HEALTHY FORESTS AND COMMUNITIES

The Forest Service continues to provide assistance and funding for hazard assessments and Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) for Communities at Risk (CAR). CWPPs address wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, and structure protection; CWPPs provide communities a tremendous opportunity to influence where and how Federal agencies implement fuels reduction plans on Federal and non-federal lands.

State Foresters evaluate the progress made toward reducing the threat of wildfire in communities at risk. The State Forester may consider a CAR at reduced risk if the community has treated high priority fuels according to its CWPP, achieved Firewise or equivalent recognition or has enacted mitigation or fire prevention ordinances. The progress made in achieving these goals are reported at the end of each fiscal year, and the following chart illustrates the status of CWPP development, Communities At Risk, and Communities At Risk identified as being at a reduced risk as of the end of FY07. Since that time, many new CWPPs are under development, which will cover hundreds of additional Communities at Risk. Updated numbers will be available at the end of the fiscal year.

NASF Region	States With CAR List/Map	Total CAR	Communities Covered By CWPPs	CAR at Reduced Risk
West	17	6,169	3,145	1,412
South	13	40,984	1,160	888
NE	19	4,459	457	1,514
TOTAL	49	51,612	4,762	3,814

The Forest Service provides grant opportunities that benefit communities, such as the State Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance grant programs, but also supports other initiatives that will benefit communities at risk from wildfire. For example, a Community Wildfire Protection Collaboration Workshop for community, local, state, and federal partners, partly sponsored by the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior, was held in Reno, NV in March. The workshop sought to improve collaborative efforts to address wildfire preparedness and protection for communities. The FS and DOI are also supporting the development of a "Community Guide to Preparing and Implementing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan." This Guide is intended to supplement the CWPP Handbook originally released in 2004 and provide many more resources, tools, references and tools that will assist communities to develop, implement, monitor, and revise a CWPP.