



File Code: 1920-1-3

Date: November 8, 2004

re: Modoc National Forest FY 2003 Monitoring and  
Evaluation Report

Dear Interested Party:

I am pleased to announce the availability of the FY 2003 Monitoring and Evaluation Report. The Report may be found on our web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/modoc/publications/index.shtml> or by calling 530-233-5811.

I have evaluated the monitoring results. The report is direct in its discussion of the management situation. The report forms the basis for improvements in setting priorities and clarifying Forest direction.

I find that the Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended, continues to form a sound basis for management and provides the necessary direction for the next few years. Land and Resource Management Plan amendments or revisions will be made using the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act procedures.

My vision of the change on the horizon is positive. The Forest is broadening the base of collaboration on project proposals. I am pleased with ongoing scientific and technical assistance and cooperation with a wide variety of interested publics.

The report shows that:

- Northeast California experienced extreme drought over the last decade. As a result black stain and *annosus* root rot, and the mountain pine beetles are above endemic levels increasing mortality and wild land fire danger.
- Hazardous fuels reduction treatment and timber stand improvement activities continue successfully. Forest fuel treatment activities were highly successful during Fiscal Year 2003. The Forest completed 7,022 acres of hazardous fuels reduction, 131% of the assigned target. Wild land fires burned more than 10,800 acres, nearly twice the annual average of 4,555 acres.
- Rangeland health is improving and the effort to evaluate rangeland health is a continuing priority.
- Timber stand improvement activities (pre-commercial thinning and release) increased dramatically. The Forest planted 3,300 acres, triple the acres of FY02, and more than any year over the period from 1992 to 2003
- Managers succeeded in protecting and managing federally listed species.
- Managers succeeded in providing desirable outdoor recreation. Recreation use continues to grow, and visitor satisfaction is generally high. However the quality of the Forest's Developed Recreation Sites continued to decline as the large backlog of maintenance



dollars (“deferred maintenance”) grew. The decline in value of these sites will ultimately lead to customer disappointment with their Forest visit. Several recreation site improvements took place during FY03 including rest room replacements, construction of boat launches and the Emigrant Trails Scenic Byway was dedicated. Similar to Recreation Facilities, a large backlog of Road Maintenance dollars (deferred) has built up in our Roads System. Road conditions continue to decline.

- The Forest significantly broadened the base of Scientific and Technical Assistance activities. Consultation with Native American Tribes and participation with the Resource Advisory Committee led to programs and grants to fund projects for area communities. The Forest participated in 59 activities improving the knowledge of the area’s ecosystems through participation in scientific studies and educational programs.
- The Forest continues to administer programs effectively and will continue to seek ways to deliver goods and services more efficiently.

Based on my review I’m recommending the following actions be taken as funding allocations become available:

- Continue to promote the Land and Resource Management Plan as a programmatic document, which allows actions to occur in lawfully designated areas following the relevant set of Standards and Guidelines.
- Complete the Noxious Weeds EIS and treat invasive species.
- Fully participate with all cooperating agencies in completing the Sagebrush Ecosystem Management Project.
- Continue to broaden the base of collaboration with the public and participate in activities that promote scientific and technology transfer and economic development through increased use of grants, agreements, and partnerships.
- Complete Allotment Management Plans for allotments as scheduled.
- Allocate 11,764 acres of the 1997 Ash Creek Land Exchange to appropriate Management Areas.
- Revise Management Indicator Species in conjunction with the other Northern Sierra National Forests.

Sincerely,

/s/ Stanley G. Sylva  
STANLEY G. SYLVA  
Forest Supervisor