

# Forest Service at a Glance

## Mission

*The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.*

## Organization

The Forest Service organization includes six forest and range experimental stations, the Forest Products Lab, the State and Private Forestry Northeastern Area, the International Institute of Tropical Forestry, nine National Forest System regions that include the 155 national forests and 20 national grasslands, and the national headquarters office in Washington, DC. Please see the organizational chart on page 6 for a description of national offices and programs.

## Annual Highlights

There are 155 national forests and 20 grasslands on the more than 192 million acres that make up the National Forest System, an area the size of America's original 13 colonies.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service manages 35 million acres of designated wilderness and more than 50 million acres of wild backcountry, including vast tracts of old-growth forest.

In 43 States, 3,400 communities with a total population of more than 60 million people obtain at least a portion of their drinking water from watersheds located on national forests and grasslands.

More than 1.3 million cattle and approximately 1 million sheep and goats are permitted to graze over 4.8 million tons of forage (grass, forbs, and shrubs) on National Forest System lands.

More than 9,800 Forest Service land managers work together to reduce erosion, restore stability, and improve productivity of the soils, resulting in cleaner water, improved fish and wildlife habitat, and enhanced recreational opportunities.

Nearly 4 million Americans participate in conservation education programs and activities. This includes 1.5 million students, 90,000 educators, more than 500,000 visitors to national forests and grasslands, and 1.5 million members of the general public.

The Forest Service sells about 240,000 Christmas trees, valued at about \$1.4 million.

More than 46 million anglers fish in national forest waters, making an economic contribution of \$8.5 billion to the economy. Some 28 million people hunt on national forest lands, making an economic contribution of \$6.1 billion to the economy.

On National Forest System lands, 99 percent of unplanned and unwanted wildland fires are controlled during initial attack.

On Federal and non-Federal lands, 1.8 million acres of forest and rangeland affected by insects, diseases, and invasive plants are treated.

Permits are issued to remove about 400,000 cords of firewood, enabling people to supplement their heating throughout the winter months.

Approximately 1.7 billion board feet of timber are harvested, at a value of \$165 million.

About 75,000 special use permits (lands and recreation use) generate about \$46 million to the U.S. Treasury.

More than 250,000 acres of habitat are treated or improved for wildlife species annually.

More than 912,500 ounces of gold, platinum, and palladium are extracted from national forests and grasslands and used for commercial and hobbyist purposes.

On national forests and grasslands, 81.5 million people hike or walk, 46 million fish, 150.7 million view natural features and/or wildlife, 23.4 million camp in developed campgrounds, 28 million hunt, 42.5 million pursue winter sports (downhill, cross-country, or snowmobiling), and 95 million spend time relaxing.

## Founding Legislation and History of the Forest Service's Traditional Role

A century ago, the idea of conservation of Federal forests culminated with Congress' passing the **Forest Reserve Act of 1891**, creating *forest reserves* from public domain land. Six years later, Congress passed the **1897 Organic Act (part of the Sundry Civil Appropriations Act)**, giving the U.S. Department of the Interior General Land Office and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) three management goals for those forest reserves: (1) improve and protect the public forests;

(2) secure favorable water flows; and (3) provide a continuous supply of timber, under regulation. In 1905, these responsibilities were transferred to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to a newly created bureau, the Forest Service, and in 1907 the forest reserves were renamed as national forests.

In those early days, the Forest Service was responsible for the *conservation and the protection of the forests*.

**The Weeks Law of 1911** enabled the Federal Government to purchase forest lands in the East that had been previously harvested. Those purchased lands were then transferred to the Forest Service. Throughout the agency's early history, the Forest Service's primary activities, in addition to conservation and protection, included developing trails, ranger stations, and a pool of expert natural resource managers.

The Great Depression was incentive for a massive youth employment program—the *Civilian Conservation Corps* (CCC)—with some 3 million enrollees over a 9-year period. The CCC's focus was in developing *recreation and fire protection* on the national forests, as well as on other Federal and State lands.

After World War II, the Forest Service worked with Congress to provide lumber for the rapidly growing home market. During the 1950s, *timber management* became an area of emphasis for the agency. Timber production increased through the 1960s and 1970s. In 1960, Congress passed the **Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act**. This act gave *recreation, fish, wildlife, water, wilderness, and grazing priority*, along with timber management, conservation and protection, and Forest Service resource planning.

The passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964 provided additional protection for a *national system of wildernesses* in the national forests and applied to the missions of the other Federal land management agencies as well. Additional legislation throughout the 1970s addressed the *management of roadless areas* on national forests.

The **National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976** brought 10-year forest management plans to the Forest Service. From this period throughout the 1990s, the Forest Service saw increased public debate and public involvement in the management of natural resources, especially from environmental, timber industry, and other interest groups and stakeholders. This keen and proactive public involvement resulted in many of the Forest Service's large-scale assessments: the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project in the Pacific Northwest; the Southern Forest Resource Assessment for the southeastern portion of the country; and the Sierra Nevada Framework for Conservation and Collaboration covering the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California.

## Roadmap to the FY 2003 Performance and Accountability Report

### Government Performance and Results Act of 1993

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 requires each Federal agency to report, no later than 180 days following the close of the year, to the President and the Congress on its performance for the previous fiscal year.

### Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A-11 Part 2, Section 231

According to the OMB Circular No. A-11 Part 2, Section 231, dated June 27, 2002 (with July 2003 Section 230 revisions), each report must include the following elements:

- A comparison of actual performance with the projected (target) levels of performance as set out in the performance goals in the annual performance plan. The target levels are shown in their most current form, and the agency's annual report must state actual performance for every performance goal in the annual performance plan. For some programs, the performance reported may reflect previous year's monies during that fiscal year. Where tangible results are produced, examples may be noted. (Section 231.2)

If actual performance information is unavailable at the time an annual report is prepared, the performance information, comparison to performance goal target levels, and explanations for such will be included (when available) in a subsequent year's annual report. If the actual performance information is characterized as preliminary, the comparison between actual and target performance is deferred until a future year's report. (Section 231.3)

- For a performance goal not achieved, an explanation for why the goal was not met. The depth of explanation may vary but an explanation is encouraged if a target level was exceeded by a significant extent. This information can explain the usefulness and lend management understanding of that particular program. A general explanation must be provided even if the difference between the target and actual performance is miniscule. Effect on overall program or activity performance must also be noted. If deferring an explanation, this must be noted in the annual report. (Section 231.4)
- A description of the plans and schedules to meet an unmet goal in the future, or alternatively, the recommended action regarding an unmet goal that the agency has concluded it as impractical or infeasible (current or future attainment). This may include discontinuing or adjusting a goal, and should also be reflected in the agency's strategic goals. (Section 231.5)

- An evaluation of the performance goal levels for the current fiscal year (taking into account the actual performance achieved during the past fiscal year). An assessment of the program's initiatives and effectiveness, in keeping aligned with the President's Management Agenda, should also be included. (Section 231.6)
- Abiding by the **Reports Consolidation Act of 2000**, an assessment of the reliability and completeness of the performance data. This act provides permanent authority to combine performance information with financial information, beginning in 2000. Agencies are required to note any material inadequacies, as well as the actions being taken to correct for these weaknesses. Performance data is considered complete if the actual performance is described for every performance goal and indicator, and if the agency describes any performance goals and indicators for which actual data are not available at the time of reporting. (Section 231.7)
- Trend data, including actual performance information for at least 4 fiscal years. Agencies may choose to stop reporting actual performance data for goals that have been terminated. Agencies should not change actual performance information for goals in prior years, however, that may reflect what was originally reported in an annual report. (Section 231.8)

Section 231.9 of the OMB Circular also provides that the performance report may summarize findings of program evaluations, budget information, classified appendices, and descriptions of information quality.

According to Section 231.10, there is no prescribed structure for the report. The agency is encouraged to include a mission statement, however, with general objectives and goals for how to fulfill this mission.

### ***Forest Service Business Model***

The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and rangelands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Forest Service supports two cornerstone elements via this mission statement—"To care for the land and serve people."

In support of its mission, the Forest Service business model has been developed over time by way of strategic planning to provide better public service and sustainable land stewardship practices. As a key element of the *Forest Service Performance and Accountability Report—Fiscal Year 2003*, the Management Discussion and Analysis section presents financial statements and narrative descriptions to illustrate a cohesive and comprehensive picture of program discussion and financial performance, with greater understanding of the goal. This includes who we are, what we do, and how well we met the performance goals set for fiscal year 2003.

The *Forest Service Performance and Accountability Report—Fiscal Year 2003* satisfies requirements for accountability reporting and includes the agency Chief and Chief Financial Officer's statements and U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Inspector General assessment of financial reporting.