



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Pacific
Southwest
Region

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Business Plan for the Mendocino National Forest



A Window of Opportunity

Welcome to the Mendocino National Forest

The Mendocino National Forest is one of the nation's least visited forests despite its proximity to the Bay Area. It is the only national forest in California that is not crossed by a paved road or a highway, offering visitors an experience of tranquility and solitude.



The cover photo was taken at the Balm of Gilead in the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness.



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Introduction

The USDA Forest Service Business Plan Initiative (BPI) is designed to promote the long-term health of our national forests through the development of improved financial planning and management tools. The BPI is a business processes consulting project, managed jointly by the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) and the Forest Service. The initiative is an innovative approach for applying traditional private sector strategy consulting methods to public entities involved in natural resource management.

The purpose of business planning in the Forest Service is to improve the abilities of national forests to clearly communicate their financial status to key stakeholders. This plan demonstrates the functional responsibilities, operational standards, and financial position of the Mendocino National Forest.

A business plan answers such questions as:

- What is the forest's business?
- What critical functions do not occur due to lack of funding?
- How much money is needed to operate at appropriate standards?

Five National Forests from the Pacific Southwest Region – the Mendocino, Six Rivers, Shasta-Trinity, Klamath, and Stanislaus – have applied a common methodology to develop their business plans. Forest activities are organized into six functional areas, which describe all areas of business for which a national forest is responsible. The functional areas are then broken down into 35 programs. This approach allows the forests to move beyond traditional Forest Service methods of reporting expenditures in terms of fund sources; instead, the forests report expenditures in terms of activities.

The first half of the business plan provides a synopsis of the Forest's funding history and presents a clear, detailed picture of the state of current operations and funding. The Mendocino's available funding (based on fiscal year 2004) is compared to each program's goals and associated standards to identify funding and service gaps. The second half of the plan details investment priorities, partnerships, and strategies targeted at alleviating problems identified as critical and underfunded.

This business plan uses both qualitative information, gathered primarily through interviews, and quantitative data. It describes the Mendocino's strategies for promoting financially and ecologically sustainable forest management. We hope that the strategies presented in this plan will allow the Mendocino National Forest to meet its long-term critical funding requirements. In addition, the business plan will enhance the Forest's credibility and provide a key internal and external communication tool to implement the strategies detailed within.

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Forest Supervisor's Foreword



Jim Fenwood

Where is the Mendocino National Forest? What is the Mendocino National Forest? Why care about it? The answer to these questions will not come readily while speeding through Northern California's Central Valley on Interstate 5. From there it is possible to see the Forest's outline, but not to know its essence. That will require a bit more work. Understanding the Mendocino will require leaving the arrow-straight interstate for the dusty switchbacks of Forest Highway 7. Don't forget to stop for gas and groceries in Willows. These won't be available where you're going.

Leave the rice fields and almond orchards below, and ascend into the Forest. Take time to look out across the hills and valleys of oaks and chaparral. As you climb, notice how this brushy world gives way to ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. Stop and listen for the croak of the raven. When you have driven 90 minutes or so you will be in the heart of the Mendocino. From where you are standing, a raven's flight to the San Francisco skyline would be less than 100 miles. It is likely, however, that you can contemplate this fact in relative solitude. Despite its proximity to the Bay Area, the Mendocino is one of the Nation's least visited national forests.

Those who desire to further escape the modern world can travel north to the road's end at the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness. For a more sociable experience, head south for the off-highway vehicle facilities clustered in the Fouts Springs area. In between, you'll find places to camp, hunt, fish, hike, ride, and enjoy nature.

A night spent on one of the Forest's remote peaks will reward the amateur astronomer with a sky undimmed by city lights. Marvel at the stars and listen for the hoot of the northern spotted owl. Here at the southeast end of the Pacific Coast Range, this rare bird and several other species are near the southern edge of their range. Management of the Mendocino is governed by the provisions of the Northwest Forest Plan, a framework designed to improve habitat for this owl and other species that use old forests, restore and protect streams for salmon and other fish, and help local communities maintain diverse, healthy economies.

Accomplishing these interrelated objectives is a great challenge for the Mendocino. The ecological role of fire, an essential force in California ecosystems, must be restored through prescribed burning where conditions warrant. Timber stands must be managed

to help them develop into healthy productive forest habitats capable of producing wood products and providing important ecological services. Many stands need active management to restore them to their previous old growth condition or to make them resilient to the effects of wildfire.

While our road and trail system provides outstanding access to the Forest, keeping the system safe and useable requires annual maintenance. Some roads need to be repaired or decommissioned to prevent damage to other resources. Recreation and administrative facilities must be maintained. The safety of employees and the public must be provided for. Precious cultural resources must be protected and studied. Wildfires must be controlled where necessary. And all this must be accomplished with the smallest budget of any national forest in California!

We want the Mendocino National Forest to be recognized as a source for clean water, a home for abundant wildlife and fish, and a place for recreation and personal renewal. Though natural resource management decisions may be contentious, it is crucial that our decisions ensure that choices for future generations will always remain. Such a vision can only be realized when those who care about the Forest join with us to make that vision a reality. I invite you to be our partner as we learn and work together.

Jim Fenwood
Forest Supervisor from 2000 to 2005



Solitude and beauty abound in the Mendocino National Forest.

“Mendocino 2025” Our Vision for the Future

In the Year 2025, we will:

Meet the needs of the public by:

- providing diverse, high-quality recreation experiences;
- ensuring access through an improved transportation system;
- protecting investments and resources from wildland fire; and
- maintaining and improving facilities.

Maintain and improve the state of the land by:

- ensuring the sustained supply of clean water and the health of watersheds;
- restoring the ecological role of fire in ecosystems;
- maintaining the diversity of plants and animals; and
- practicing adaptive management.

Foster relationships with partners by:

- collaborating with others;
- participating with local governments to plan and implement programs;
- encouraging and rewarding the efforts of volunteer groups; and
- expanding interagency cooperation.

Guiding Principles for accomplishing our vision:

We will manage the Forest to:

- leave the land in better condition than it is in now; and
- improve the acres most in need and maintain those acres currently in the best condition.

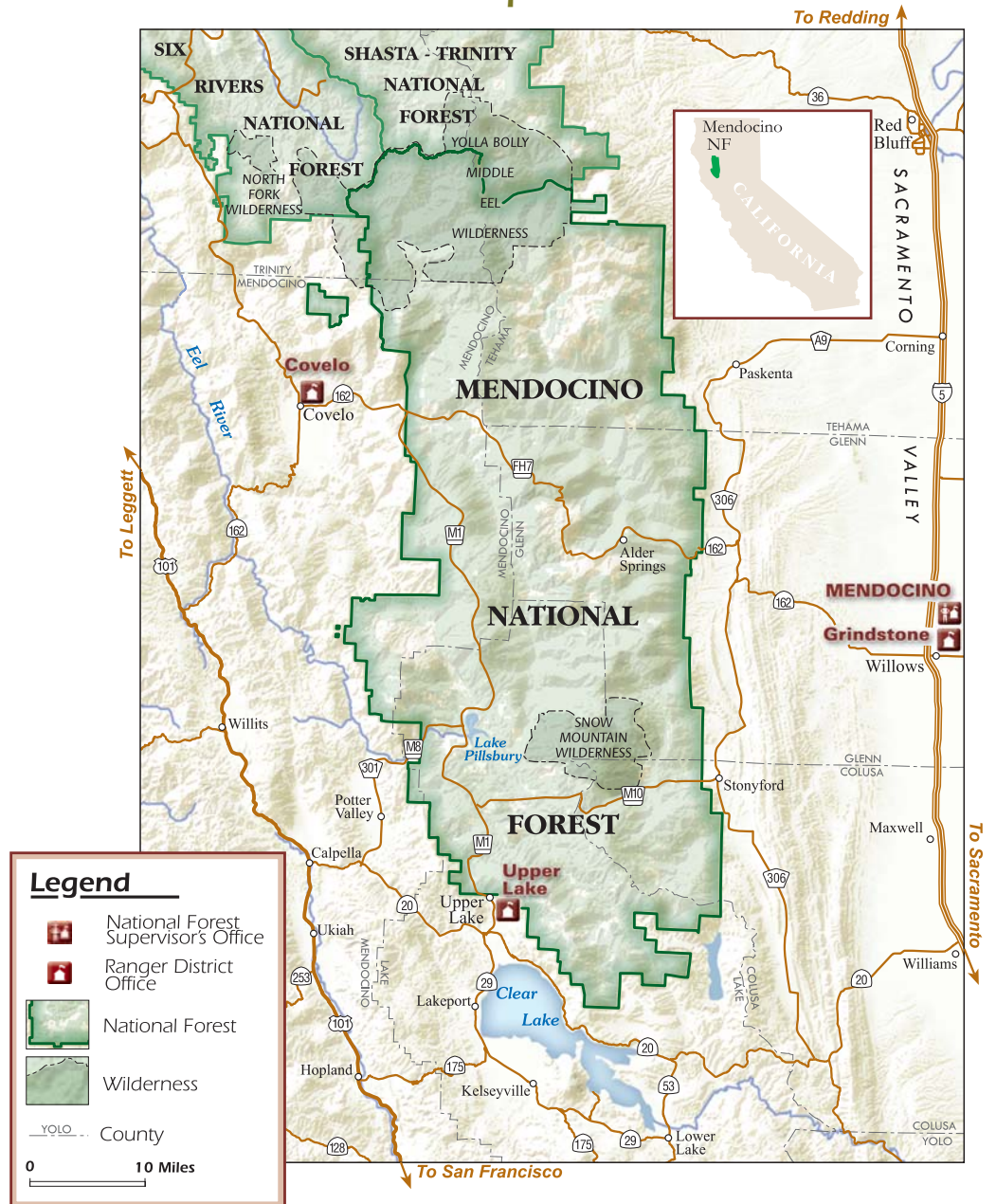
As a result of our management, we will:

- move closer to achieving our vision for “Mendocino 2025;” and
- generate forest products and ecological benefits.

To do this we must:

- build partnerships and collaborate with stakeholders who are concerned about the health of our National Forest and protection of our communities.

Mendocino National Forest Map



Executive Summary



Providing fresh water, clean air, and recreation are but a few of the many objectives facing forest management.

When adjusted for inflation, the Mendocino's base budget for non-fire operations declined by 51 percent between 1995 and 2004.

The Business Plan

This business plan provides a detailed snapshot of the Mendocino National Forest's operations in fiscal year (FY) 2004, placed in the context of historical trends over the past 10 years. The intent of the business plan is to shine a light on Forest operations to inform not only the Forest's leadership and personnel, but also the public, lawmakers, and stakeholders about the operations and finances of the Forest. By making the Forest's operations transparent and understandable, the hope is that all parties can better work with the Agency to achieve its mission.

Budget Outlook

When adjusted for inflation, the Mendocino's base budget for non-fire operations declined by 51 percent between 1995 and 2004. During that time, staff was reduced and programs were curtailed to the point where some programs are now less than one person deep. The Mendocino's budget is already the smallest in the Pacific Southwest Region, giving the Forest less flexibility to handle funding cuts. Future budgets are projected to decline even further. In addition to the decline in appropriations, the decline in timber sales and associated revenue has depleted timber trust funds for natural resource enhancement. Timber trust funds provided \$1.09 million for Forest operations in FY 2004. At the current rate of expenditures, timber trust funds will run out in 3 years, further reducing available funds.

The budget for fire pre-suppression and hazardous fuels reduction has increased over the last 10 years, with a dramatic increase in 2001 with implementation of the National Fire Plan. In FY 2004, the appropriated budget for fire pre-suppression and hazardous fuels reduction was \$7.8 million, which accounted for over 50 percent of the Forest's appropriated budget.

Independent consultants worked with the Forest's managers to: (1) establish realistic operational standards that describe the duties and responsibilities required to adequately satisfy critical functions for each program and (2) identify funding gaps that prevent the Mendocino from meeting these standards. Funding in FY 2004, excluding wildfire suppression funds, supported 188 full time equivalents (FTEs) of labor, with an operational cost of \$14.6 million. To fully meet operational standards, the Forest would need an additional 106 FTEs and \$9.6 million. The areas

with the greatest funding gaps are the roads and hazardous fuels reduction programs, with funding shortfalls of \$2.3 million and \$1.9 million, respectively.

Investments and Strategies

The final section of the business plan lists investment priorities necessary to meet program goals and discusses strategies for closing funding gaps. The Mendocino has developed a number of strategies to reduce costs, make operations more efficient, or increase revenue. The following strategies are discussed in detail later in the business plan:

- increasing revenue by implementing fees at eligible recreation sites under the Federal Lands and Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) and collecting fees associated with outfitter guides and recreation events;
- increasing the number and diversity of partnerships;
- reducing the cost of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and planning through better collaboration with stakeholders;
- reducing the cost of fleet operations; and
- reducing the cost of maintaining roads.

Difficult Choices

Facing choices to cut visitor services, close roads, let trails become impassible, defer maintenance on deteriorating infrastructure that is impacting habitat, or lose ground on hazardous fuels accumulations is difficult for Forest employees. However, the luxuries have long ago been eliminated from the Forest's operations, and tough choices have been made and continue to be made. As stewards of national forest lands, the Forest Service is charged with the difficult task of managing these lands to provide clean water, fresh air, and wildlife habitat, while providing places to seek solitude, recreation and a source of timber and other forest products. This business plan presents a picture of the Mendocino's efforts in meeting these challenges.

Forest Overview

The Mendocino National Forest straddles the eastern spur of the Coastal Mountain Range in northwestern California, just a 3-hour drive north of San Francisco and Sacramento. Some 65 miles long and 35 miles across, the Forest's 913,306 acres of mountains and canyons offer a variety of recreational opportunities - camping, hiking, backpacking, boating, fishing, hunting, nature study, photography, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) travel.

The only one of California's 18 national forests not crossed by a paved road or highway, the Mendocino is especially attractive to people seeking an outdoor experience of tranquility and solitude. The Forest, however, is a working forest as well as a recreation land, and resource activities, such as logging and livestock grazing, do occur on both national forest lands and private holdings within the Forest.

History and Archaeology

Thousands of years before pioneer explorers from the eastern United States entered the area, seven Native American tribes lived off its bounty – the Yuki, Nomlaki, Patwin, Eastern Pomo, Northeastern Pomo, Wailaki, and Huchnom. Archaeological artifacts and records from more than 1,800 sites have provided important information about their earlier settlement and use of the region, but we have much more to learn.

It takes only the slightest disturbance of any Native American or historic site by an untrained person to destroy the archaeological record. As a result, federal laws prohibit tampering with such sites or removing objects as souvenirs.

Between 1850 and 1900, many small sawmills operated within what is now the forest boundary. Ranchers living in the Sacramento Valley extensively used the mountains for summer grazing in the late 19th century. Mining also played a role in the history of the area. Most mining activity was limited to exploration for copper in the late 1800s and strategic minerals like manganese and chrome during World Wars I and II.

The minerals that attracted most people, however, were the ones dissolved in mineral and hot springs. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, visitors would travel many miles to drink the water from mineral springs and soak in baths at resorts and spas for their advertised therapeutic benefits. You can see remains of three

resort hotels, mineral baths, and a bottling plant for mineral water at Bartlett Flats. Fouts Springs, Hough Springs, and Allen Springs also boasted popular resort facilities, although little evidence of their buildings remains.

First set aside as the Stony Creek Reserve in 1907, it became the California National Forest in 1908 and then the Mendocino National Forest in 1932.

The Mendocino is divided into three ranger districts: Covelo, Grindstone, and Upper Lake. The Forest also manages two units that are located outside the Forest boundaries: the Genetic Resource and Conservation Center and the Red Bluff Recreation Area. The Mendocino partly or wholly manages two wilderness areas: the 37,679-acre Snow Mountain Wilderness and the 147,070-acre Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness.

The Mendocino's waters flow to the Pacific Ocean, westward through the Eel River system or eastward through the Sacramento River system and into the San Francisco Bay. Vegetation types include mixed conifer forests, oak woodlands and savannah, chaparral, annual and perennial grass glades, and wet meadows. The Forest also provides habitat for several Forest Service sensitive plants.

The Forest is home to many species of wildlife and fish. Management and public interest focus on special status and game species. The Mendocino's special status species include federally listed threatened or endangered (such as northern spotted owl, summer steelhead, and salmon) and Forest Service sensitive (such as goshawk, pacific marten, and yellow-legged frog). Game species include black tail deer, black bear, and several bird species. Upper Lake Ranger District has a small population of tule elk, making the Mendocino one of only two national forests in California with tule elk.

Lake Pillsbury, the only sizable lake on the Mendocino, is a popular attraction on Upper Lake Ranger District. Howard and Hammerhorn Lakes on Covelo Ranger District, and Letts and Plaskett Lakes on Grindstone Ranger District range in size from 3 to 13 acres, and are locally popular for camping and fishing. The Yolla Bolly - Middle Eel Wilderness Area is shared by the Covelo and Grindstone Ranger Districts as well as the Shasta-Trinity and



Mendocino National Forest employees working on the Forest, circa 1937.



Lake Pillsbury is the largest lake on the forest with 31 miles of shoreline.

Forest Service Motto

Caring for the land and serving people.

Mission Statement

We manage the Mendocino National Forest to maintain and restore healthy watersheds and diverse fire-adapted plant and animal communities. We administer our programs and infrastructure to provide a safe workplace for our employees and enjoyable experiences for the public. We foster partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders who are concerned about the health of our National Forest and protection of our communities. We are committed to an adaptive approach to management that leaves the land in better condition than it is in now by focusing on improving the acres most in need and maintaining those acres currently in the best condition. As a result, our management will generate forest products and ecological services now and for future generations.

Six Rivers National Forests and the Bureau of Land Management. The Snow Mountain Wilderness Area is shared by the Grindstone and Upper Lake Ranger Districts. Travel times to the major trail heads range from 3 to 6 hours from the San Francisco Bay Area, including 1 to 2 hours on dirt roads. Both the Grindstone and Upper Lake Ranger Districts manage a system of OHV trails that are recognized by users and environmentalists as a model for quality, environmentally-sound OHV recreation.

Genetic Resource and Conservation Center

The 209-acre Genetic Resource and Conservation Center is located in the city of Chico, about 50 miles east of the Mendocino National Forest. Since beginning operations in 1917 as part of the USDA Plant Introduction Station, the Center has been a site of advances in agriculture and tree improvement. Today, the center is a key link in reforestation efforts. Native conifer tree seedlings, developed with the most desirable characteristics for growth, vigor, and disease resistance, are grown at the Center and then planted in national forests throughout the state. The Center is also involved in chemical, biological, and clinical research projects that search for treatments for cancer, using such plants as the Pacific yew.

Red Bluff Recreation Area

The Red Bluff Recreation Area encompasses 488 acres of diverse habitats adjacent to the Sacramento River, just 2 miles from Red Bluff, California. This land is managed by the Mendocino National Forest, and is also home to the Sacramento River Discovery Center, which provides opportunities for the public to learn about the Sacramento River watershed. The site offers a unique birding experience and was singled out as a “watchable wildlife” area because of its many diverse habitats.

Northern California Province

The Mendocino, Klamath, Shasta-Trinity, and Six Rivers National Forests have worked together successfully for about ten years as the Northern California Province. This cooperation has strengthened the effort to serve the public by sharing employees with special skills, jointly managing wilderness areas, working closely on fire suppression efforts, and recognizing links between national forest system lands provided by the road and trail systems.

The cooperative effort between forests in the Northern California Province will continue in the future and include implementation of the strategies in the business plan wherever possible.



Over 310 miles of horse and foot trails are available.

Mendocino National Forest Inventory

As of Fiscal Year 2005

General

Acres of National Forest Land	913,306
Districts	
Grindstone Ranger District	
Upper Lake Ranger District	
Covelo Ranger District	
Work Centers	3
Special Interest Areas	2
Genetic Resource and Conservation Center	
Sacramento River Discovery Center	
Employees (FY 2004)	
Permanent	178
Temporary	118
Approximate Volunteer Hours	54,620
Including Senior Community Service	
Employment Program (SCSEP) and Hosted	

Recreational Resources

Wilderness Areas	2
Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness	147,070 acres
Snow Mountain Wilderness	37,679 acres
Developed Recreational Sites	65
Family Camp Grounds	38
Group Camp Grounds	4
Recreation Visitor Days/Year (2002)	257,100
Day Use and Picnic Areas	6
Boat Launches	4
Recreation Residences	110
Interpretive Sites	2
Dispersed Camp Sites	93

Trails and Roads

Miles of Road	2,487
Passenger Car Use	387
High Clearance Vehicle Use	2,100
Miles of Horse/Foot Trails	92
Miles of Trails through Wilderness Areas	217
Miles of Designated OHV Roads/Trails	252
National Recreational Trails	2
Ides Cove Loop	10.7 miles
Travelers Home Trail	7.6 miles
Historic Trails	2
Pedro Trail	10.4 miles
Nome Cult Trail	40 miles (approximate)
	(of total 100 miles)

Natural Resources

Miles of Perennial Streams	984
Acres of Lakes	2,165
Wild and Scenic Rivers	1
Middle Fork of the Eel River	24 miles
Average Annual Water Yield	3,474,300 acre feet
Highest Point	Mt. Linn at 8,092 feet
Plant Species	1,500 (approximate)
Amphibians	16
Reptiles	21
Birds	204
Mammals	70
Fish	18
Sensitive Species	
Wildlife	14
Fish	3
Plants	22
Threatened/Endangered Species	
Wildlife	6
Fish	7
Plants	1

Grazing Allotments

Total	27
Active	14

Heritage Resources

Archeological Sites	2,130
National Register Sites	0
National Register Eligible Sites	107

Infrastructure and Equipment

Total Buildings	316
Management Offices	14
Barracks, Residences, and Trailer Pads	71
Maintenance Buildings	73
Utility Buildings	38
Fire Stations	11
Active Fire Lookouts	2
(Anthony Peak and High Glade)	
Dams	3
Bridges	18
Major Culverts	97
Law Enforcement Vehicles	6
Fire Engines	11
Other Fire Fleet and Equipment	38
Non-Fire Heavy Equipment	11
All-Terrain Vehicles	4
Remaining Fleet Vehicles	80

Historical Context and Legislation

Founding Legislation

First set aside as a “forest reserve” by President Roosevelt in 1907, the Mendocino National Forest was originally named the Stony Creek Reserve, followed by the Stony Creek National Forest, and later, the California National Forest. This designation proved to be confusing relative to the state itself, and President Herbert Hoover renamed it the Mendocino National Forest on July 12, 1932, taking the name from Mendocino County, which was named for Cape Mendocino.



Nye Cabin, circa 1860, has been restored for public viewing.

Other Significant Legislation and Management Direction

The Northwest Forest Plan

The Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) established management direction for 10 national forests and 7 Bureau of Land Management districts in 1994. Management direction applicable to the Mendocino National Forest was adopted into the Mendocino’s Land and Resource Management Plan in 1995. The NWFP provides a comprehensive ecosystem management strategy for conserving old growth forests and their dependent species, including the northern spotted owl. A primary component of the NWFP is interagency cooperation and public involvement.

The NWFP area identified 12 major watersheds as provinces, and each province has a Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC), established under the Federal Advisory Committee Act to provide recommendations and advice to Federal land managers in implementing the NWFP. The Mendocino National Forest is a member of two PACs, the California Coast PAC and the Northwest Sacramento PAC.

Healthy Forests Initiative and Healthy Forests Restoration Act

The Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI) was launched in 2002 to reduce administrative process delays in implementing projects designed to treat hazardous fuels and restore healthy ecological conditions. The Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003 contains a variety of provisions to expedite hazardous fuels reduction and forest restoration projects in areas at high risk of wildland fire or insect and disease epidemics. These high risk areas include wildland urban interfaces, municipal watersheds, habitats for threatened and endangered species, and areas where windthrow, blowdown, or disease or insect epidemics significantly threaten natural resources or ecosystems.

Payments to States

On October 30, 2000, Congress passed **Public Law 106-393**. This law is called the “Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000” and is commonly known as Payments to States.

The Act addresses concerns about the decline in recent years in revenue received from the national forests, which has historically been shared with counties in which the forests are located. Revenue comes from commercial timber sales, recreation fees, grazing, and the sale of other forest products. The counties use their share of these revenues to fund local schools and roads. For each year from 2001 through 2006, the law allows counties to choose either to receive a constant annual payment from the Federal government, based on the state average of their top three years of payments, or to continue to receive 25 percent of national forest revenue receipts.

The purpose of the Act is to stabilize payments to counties to help support roads and schools, provide funding for projects that enhance forest ecosystem health and provide employment

opportunities, and improve cooperative relationships among Federal land management agencies and those who use and care about public lands. The Act establishes Resource Advisory Committees (RACs) under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Mendocino administers four county RACs, the largest number of any national forest in the country. They are the Glenn/Colusa, Tehama, Lake, and Mendocino RACs.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, formerly known as the “Recreation Fee Demonstration Program” became permanent under Title VIII of the FY 2005 Omnibus Appropriation Act.

For a 10-year period, the Act gives authority to the Forest Service and other agencies to collect fees at many developed recreational areas. Under the legislation, agencies can use 80 percent of the collected fees for only the following activities:

- repair, maintenance, and facility enhancement directly related to visitor enjoyment, visitor access, and health and safety;
- interpretation, visitor information, visitor service, visitor needs assessments, and signs;
- habitat restoration directly related to wildlife-dependent recreation, which is limited to hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, or photography;
- law enforcement related to public use and recreation; and
- direct operating or capital costs associated with the recreation fee program.

Fifteen percent of the collected fees are used to cover the direct and indirect costs associated with fee collection. The remaining 5 percent is deposited into a regional account from which each national forest in the Pacific Southwest Region can compete for grants.

The Commander South Property

In November 2003, the State of California Wildlife Conservation Board unanimously approved a \$7.03 million grant to The Conservation Fund to acquire the 22,574-acre Commander South Tract properties. Grant funds came from the voter-approved California Clean Water, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Funds.

In December 2003, The Conservation Fund conveyed the property to the Mendocino National Forest. It will be managed under the Forest’s land and resource management plan for multiple public benefits, including providing recreation opportunities, maintaining wildlife corridors, protecting threatened and endangered species, promoting old growth forest characteristics, reducing hazardous fuels, and enhancing watersheds.



The Forest celebrated the grand opening May 19, 2004, of the largest land acquisition, 22,574 acres, in California Region 5 history.

The Commander South property, acquired from Pioneer Resources I, LLC, was one of the largest single private inholdings within the Mendocino National Forest. The Conservation Fund is a national nonprofit organization that works with public agencies to protect the nation’s land and water resources.

Leech Lake Mountain Donation

In 2004, the Mendocino acquired two inholdings, totaling 201 acres, within and adjacent to the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness Area. The Wilderness Land Trust was the Mendocino’s partner in securing the Leech Lake Mountain donation.

Snow Mountain Purchase

In 2003, the Mendocino acquired five inholdings totaling 847.6 acres, including a 160-acre parcel within the Snow Mountain Wilderness Area and a 325.1-acre parcel adjacent to the Wilderness Area. Funding for this purchase was provided by the federally supported Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Fund Source Analysis

Highlights

Highlights from the Mendocino’s analysis of historical trends in fund sources include the following:

- The Mendocino’s total budget declined by 7 percent between 1995 and 2004.
- The Forest’s non-fire appropriated budget decreased 39 percent between 1995 and 2004.
- The appropriated budget for the fire pre-suppression and preparedness, hazardous fuels reduction, and fire management and administration programs increased 156 percent between 1995 and 2004.
- In FY 2004, the appropriated budget for the fire pre-suppression and hazardous fuels reduction, and fire management and administration programs exceeded appropriations for all of the Forest’s other programs combined.
- At the current rate of income and expenditures, timber trust funds will be depleted in 3 years.

Discussion

National forests acquire funds from three principal sources: (1) **appropriations** from Congress, including two special types of appropriations, Resource Advisory Committees (**RAC**) funds and **earmarks**; (2) **reimbursements** from other government agencies and organizations for services rendered; and (3) **revenue** from trust funds and a variety of fees.

Appropriations vary from year to year. The funds are allocated from the national level to the regional level and then to each individual national forest. The appropriated base budget provides the largest portion of the Forest’s total annual budget. The Forest uses appropriated funds primarily to meet its operational needs.

RAC funds are distributed through Resource Advisory Committees. Starting in 2002, counties had the option of using a portion of the funds for projects that are on or benefit national forests. Although RAC funds show up in the Forest’s budget, these funds go to projects selected by the county RACs, and do not necessarily fund Forest operations.

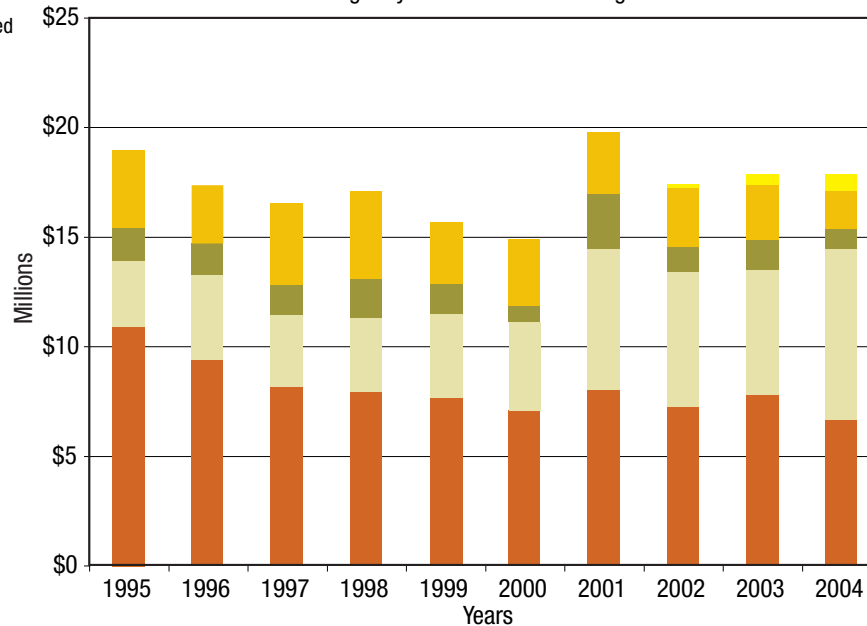
Earmarks are special allocations from Congress targeted at specific projects or regions. Earmarks for the Mendocino typically provide funding for capital construction projects, operation of the Genetic Resource and Conservation Center, or specific projects associated with the Northwest Forest Plan.

Fund Source Analysis
Total Budget by Fund Source Excluding Wildfire

Fire Appropriated : Appropriated funds for Fire Pre-Suppression and Preparedness, Hazardous Fuels Reduction, and Fire Management and Administration

Non-Fire Appropriated: Base appropriated budget, excluding Fire Pre-Suppression and Preparedness, Hazardous Fuels Reduction, and Fire Management and Administration

- RAC
- Revenue
- Reimbursement
- Fire Appropriated
- Non-Fire Appropriated



Fuels reduction is one of the largest programs on the forest.

Reimbursements are collected from other organizations, usually other government agencies, for services rendered by Forest employees. The largest portion of the Mendocino's reimbursements comes from the State of California for maintaining OHV trails and campgrounds. Reimbursements also come from private organizations to pay for wildlife habitat improvement projects.

Revenue is important for Forest operations as it can be used for a wider range of purposes than reimbursable funds and helps supplement appropriated funds. Revenue sources include timber trusts and fees from designated campgrounds and recreation sites. A distinction must be made between revenues from special uses, such as concession-operated campgrounds and communication sites, and fees from campgrounds and recreation sites. The Forest does not retain the revenue generated by commercial activities, such as concession-operated campgrounds and communication sites. This revenue is deposited in the U.S. Treasury in accordance with existing law. Under the newly enacted fee retention program, the Forest can collect fees at developed campgrounds and recreation sites that have a required set of amenities. Of the campground and recreation fees collected, 95 percent can be retained on the Forest.

The Forest also receives funds for fire suppression and national fire and disaster support. These funds are not included in this fund source analysis because they are unpredictable and the Forest has no control over how they are spent. Funds for fire suppression and national fire and disaster support come from Congress specifically for fighting fires and dealing with disasters, and these funds are not part of the Forest's budget.

Overall funding for the Mendocino has declined significantly over the last decade. The total budget declined by 7 percent from 1995 to 2004, while the appropriated budget for non-fire operations declined 39 percent. In addition, sources of funds are shifting. Historically, a significant portion of the Forest's operations was funded by revenue retained in trust for specific natural resource enhancement purposes. Trust funds, primarily derived from commercial timber sales, have declined dramatically. In 2004, the Forest withdrew \$1.1 million from the timber trust fund compared with deposits of \$133,000. At this rate, the current reserve of \$1.9 million in the timber trust fund will be exhausted in less than 3 years, leaving an additional gap in Forest funding.

Funding has increased for fire-related activities. Appropriated funding for the Mendocino's fire pre-suppression and preparedness, hazardous fuels reduction, and fire management and administration programs increased by 156 percent between 1995 and 2004. The Forest experienced a jump in fire-related funding in 2001, with the implementation of the National Fire Plan. Responding to a series of catastrophic fires, Congress reacted to public concerns about increasing fire hazards to the health of the forests and communities. Fire is a natural part of ecosystems; however, since the early 1900s, a policy of fire suppression has gradually allowed fuels to accumulate in Western forests. Although suppressing fires was intended to protect forests and communities, the long-term result is that many areas are now overloaded with forest fuels and susceptible to catastrophic fires. The increase in fire funding reflects the high priority of fire operations and fuels management for the Forest Service.

Funding directly impacts the Forest Service's ability to fulfill its mission of sustaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The types and levels of funding are changing across the Agency and across national forest activities. The Forest Service must adapt to meet the challenges of a changing fiscal environment. With limited funding levels, Forest managers are being challenged as never before to review forest operations, prioritize activities, and change the types of services provided to the public. Given current fiscal constraints, Forest managers must prioritize activities and focus on the essential tasks needed to fulfill the mission of the Forest. Caring for public lands takes resources, but clean water, clean air, healthy ecosystems, and natural beauty do not yet show up on the balance sheet and their value is often not fully recognized by the public.

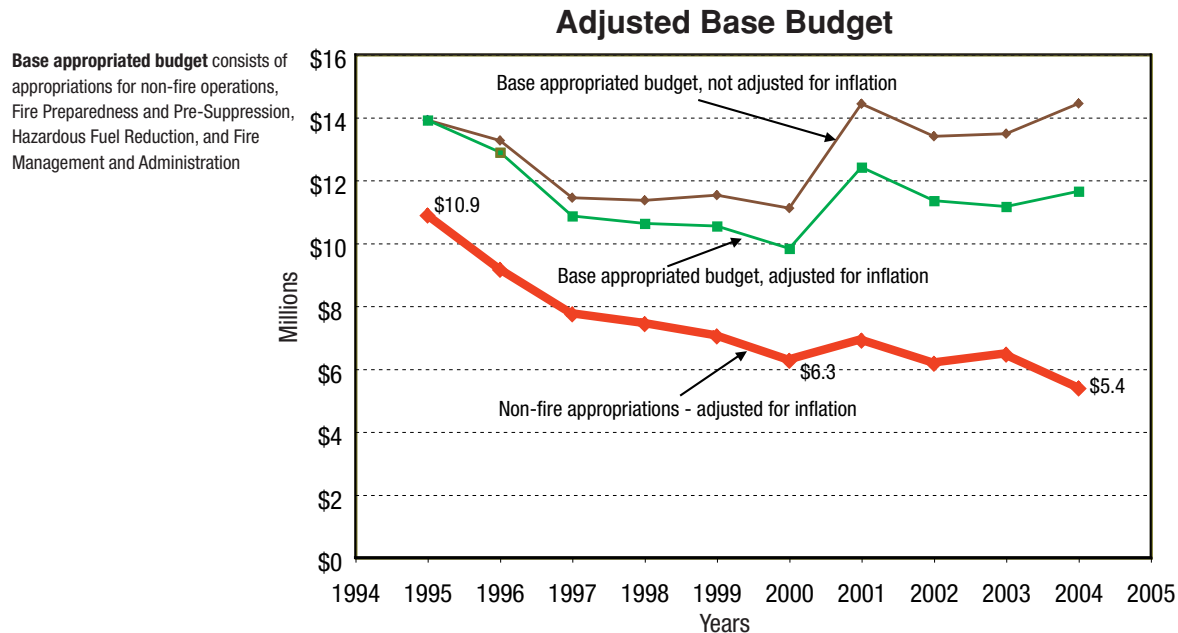
Adjusted Base Budget

The bulk of the Mendocino's budget comes from congressional appropriations. Revenues and reimbursables can vary significantly from year to year, while appropriations are more consistent. Therefore, the Mendocino's base budget is defined only as the appropriated portion of its funding. Between 1995 and 2004, the Forest's base budget grew 4 percent, increasing from \$13.9 to \$14.4 million. This does not take into account inflation, which reduces the Forest's buying power over time. When adjusted for inflation, the Forest's total budget decreased 16 percent between 1995 and 2004.

An examination of trends in fire and non-fire funding shows even greater cuts in funding for non-fire operations. Although funding increased from FY 2000 through 2004, the increase was fueled entirely by increased allocations for the Forest's fire pre-suppression and preparedness, hazardous fuels reduction, and fire management and administration programs. Funding for fire-related operations increased dramatically in 2001 with implementation of the National Fire Plan. In contrast, other Forest programs suffered during the same period. Consumer Price Index (CPI)-adjusted budgets for non-fire programs, which include all

recreational, commercial, natural resource, facilities operations and maintenance, and administrative programs, continued to decline between 2000 and 2004. Over the last 10 years, non-fire appropriations fell 51 percent, declining from \$10.9 million to \$5.4 million in 1995 dollars.

The decline in the Mendocino's purchasing power has affected the Forest's operations. The deferred maintenance backlog for roads across the Forest now stands at roughly \$22.9 million. Important projects, including wildlife management, heritage resource protection, vegetation management, and visitor services, are unfunded. Forest managers must leave many positions unfilled, resulting in a loss of capability in certain functional areas. The Mendocino has pursued partnerships to help address these shortfalls. Partnerships with the State of California to maintain OHV trails and campgrounds contribute much needed funding for recreation program areas. This business plan proposes additional initiatives to fill some of the other gaps created by funding shortfalls.



Historical Expenditures

Since 1995, the Mendocino's expenditures (excluding emergency wildfire suppression expenditures) have remained relatively constant in nominal terms, in other words, without taking inflation into account. Nominal expenditures were \$14.56 million in 1995 and \$15.54 million in 2004. This constitutes a 6.7 percent increase, well below the compounded inflation increase of approximately 23.5 percent. This trend is consistent with decreasing base appropriations for non-fire related programs over the same time period.

The Forest's average expenditures over the 10-year period from 1995 through 2004 were \$15.1 million. In FY 2001, expenditures were \$16.39. This increased spending can be attributed to several purchases for the fire pre-suppression and preparedness program as well as increased expenditures related to fleet operations. Additionally, contract expenditures rose in 2001 to cover work related to storm damage repairs and restoration. In FY 2003, the Forest's expenditures were \$16.56 million. Increased cooperative road work agreements, related to Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) projects accounted for a majority of the overall rise in Forest expenditures during that year.

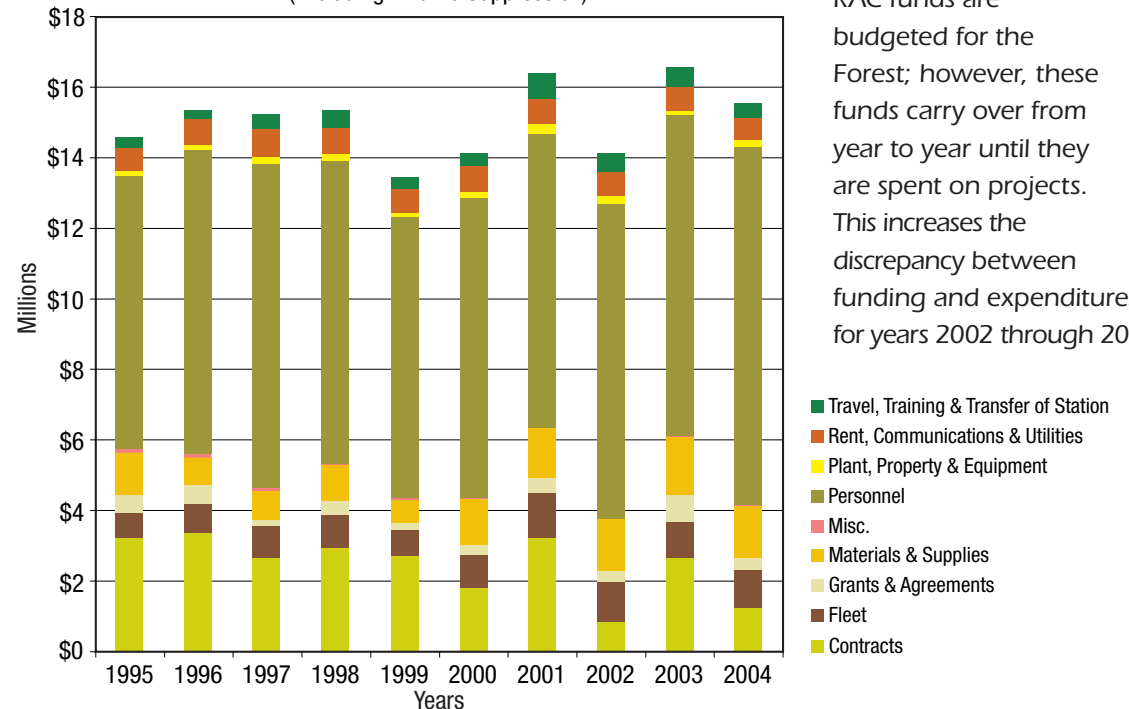
Personnel and contracted services have traditionally made up the bulk (74 percent on average) of the Forest's expenditures. Personnel costs were highest, 65 percent of total expenditures, in FY 2004. This increase was due to the authorization of additional fire management personnel, including an additional hand crew and full staffing of fire engines.

Since the end of FY 2004, several functions, including fleet management, financial management, information technology, and human resources, have either been centralized or outsourced, decreasing the number of permanent Forest staff. Over the next few years, it is expected that additional responsibilities will be studied for competitive sourcing, which may lead to an increase in contract-related expenditures and a decrease in personnel expenditures. A continually decreasing budget may also require the Mendocino to bring in outside expertise on an as-needed basis, as opposed to increasing staffing levels, to accomplish Forest goals and priorities.



Cooperative road work agreements have increased.

Historical Expenditures FY95 - FY04 (Excluding Wildfire Suppression)



Discrepancy between Funding & Expenditures

(Refer to charts on pages 12 and 15)

Funds for workers compensation and unemployment insurance are accounted for at a national level. This accounts for the discrepancy between the fund source and historical expenditures graphs. For the years 2002 through 2004, RAC funds are budgeted for the Forest; however, these funds carry over from year to year until they are spent on projects. This increases the discrepancy between funding and expenditures for years 2002 through 2004.

Current Forest Operations

The operational functions of the Forest have been broken down into six functional areas as shown in the box at right. These functional areas are broken down further into 35 different program areas that more precisely describe the Forest's operations. The program descriptions are general in nature to ensure that all activities of the Forest are encompassed within these 35 program areas.

Information for the business plan was compiled through interviews with and analysis by Forest staff directly involved with conducting program activities. The goal of presenting this information is to create an understanding of the financial and operational needs of each program.

Information collected includes a description of day-to-day activities of each program area, goals specific to the program area, and operational standards that describe the duties and responsibilities required to adequately satisfy critical functions of the program. The program standards are then used to determine the financial resources, in terms of personnel and non-labor expenses, needed to perform the critical functions of the program. Personnel are measured in terms of full time equivalents (FTEs), which are personnel units based on a working year of 2,088 hours. Needed financial resources are then compared to the actual expenditures and FTE estimates expended in running the program area.

Resource gaps and shortfalls are identified by comparing each program's operational standards to its available resources. The costs and justifications for closing these gaps and eliminating program shortfalls are the final elements of each program area analysis. The strategies at the end of this business plan were developed directly from these identified shortfalls in the program areas.

The following pages discuss each of the Forest's program areas and their associated operational resource gaps and shortfalls in more detail. The analysis was performed using financial data from FY 2004.

Functional and Program Areas

Resource Management:

- Wildlife Management
- Vegetation Management
- Heritage Resources
- Data Management
- Watershed, Air and Geologic Resource Management
- Land Ownership and Adjustment
- Special Designation Areas Management

Public Use and Enjoyment:

- Visitor Safety and Protection
- Recreation Fee Collection
- Visitor Centers, Public Information, Interpretation and Education
- Recreation Special Uses
- Law Enforcement

Facility Operations and Maintenance:

- Buildings, Grounds and Utilities
- Roads
- Trails (Motorized and Non-motorized)
- Transportation and Fleet
- Campgrounds and Developed Sites
- Concentrated Use Areas

Management and Administration:

- General Management
- Financial Management
- General Administration
- District Management
- Planning
- Public Affairs
- Information Technology

Commodity and Commercial Uses:

- Forest Products
- Non-Recreation Special Uses
- Minerals
- Timber
- Grazing

Fire and Aviation Management:

- Fire Management and Administration
- Pre-Suppression and Preparedness
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction
- Wildfire Suppression
- National Fire and Disaster Support

Resource Management

Managing natural resources in a sustainable manner for current and future generations is the core of the Forest Service's mission. The goal of resource management is to maintain and improve the condition of the land while meeting the needs of the public. The resource management functional area includes the following programs:

- Wildlife Management
- Vegetation Management
- Heritage Resources
- Data Management
- Watershed, Air, and Geologic Management
- Land Ownership and Adjustment
- Specially Designated Areas Management

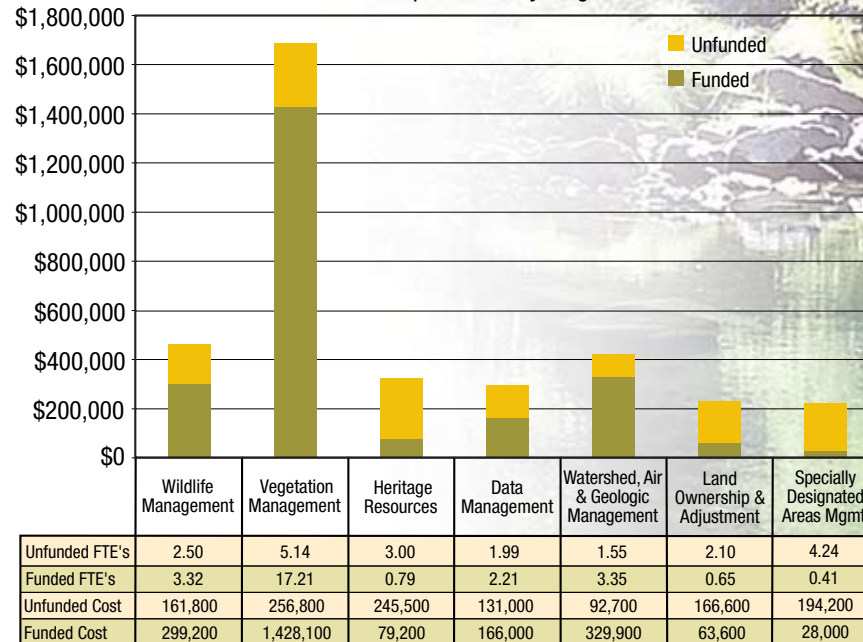
Resource management involves coordination across many program areas because activities that have some of the greatest potential impacts on forest resources are conducted outside this functional area, through the Forest's hazardous fuels management, roads, timber, vegetation management, and recreation programs. Activities in all program areas must meet environmental standards and disclose their potential environmental impacts through National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning processes. Current resource management activity on the Mendocino is driven largely by NEPA planning; hence, for purposes of this business plan, resource management activities conducted to support environmental planning and analysis are captured under the Forest's planning program, which is described under the management and administration functional area.

In FY 2004, the resource management functional area had an annual budget of 27.9 FTEs and \$2.4 million. An additional 20.5 FTEs and \$1.2 million would have been needed for the programs in this functional area to complete work to appropriate levels and standards. The following sections describe the goals, work activities, and financial situation of each program area within the resource management functional area.



Current resource management is driven largely by NEPA planning.

Resource Management FY04 Requirements by Program





The majority of wildlife management is accomplished through collaboration with other management areas.



A major area of vegetation management is reforestation after devastating forest wildfires.

Wildlife Management

The focus of wildlife management is restoring, protecting, and enhancing plant and animal habitats. The goals for the program are restoring ecosystem health where it has been disrupted; protecting and enhancing selected habitat components, vegetation communities, or both; and enhancing recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, fisheries, and botanical resources. Biologists spend their time conducting habitat improvement projects, providing scientific and technical assistance to support environmental analysis documentation required under NEPA as well as other environmental analyses, and performing wildlife monitoring activities. The majority of wildlife management work is accomplished through collaboration with the vegetation management, hazardous fuels reduction, watershed, roads, trails, and timber program areas.

An analysis of the Forest's operations showed that 3.3 FTEs and \$299,200 were dedicated to the wildlife management program in FY 2004. The analysis identified a funding gap of 2.5 FTEs and \$161,800. This shortfall does not include wildlife management program activities needed to support NEPA planning, which are captured under the planning program area.

Vegetation Management

The vegetation management program focuses on reforestation, timber stand improvement, and inventory and treatment of invasive weed species. Vegetation management program personnel work in conjunction with hazardous fuels program personnel to promote forest health and protect against devastating forest fires. Priorities for the vegetation management program are promptly treating new infestations of noxious weeds to prevent their establishment and spread, controlling known populations of noxious weeds, reforesting burned areas to restore the land to pre-fire conditions, and integrating timber stand improvement with other vegetation management programs.

FY 2004 expenditures for the vegetation management program were 17.2 FTEs and \$1.43 million. For this program to move forward efficiently, an additional 5.1 FTEs and \$256,800 are needed for site survey and assessment work.

Noxious Weeds

Noxious weeds and invasive plants are an increasing threat to native ecosystems and the function of plant communities. Noxious weeds are those that negatively impact range and agricultural lands. These weeds may be toxic to livestock, decrease the availability of desired forage species through competition, or both. Invasive plants include species that adversely affect biodiversity and alter ecological processes. Typically, invasive species out-compete native plants for water, nutrients, sunlight, and space. Some invasive species also contain chemical compounds that prevent other plants from growing nearby. Weed infestations can impact wildlife by reducing important food plants and modifying habitat characteristics.

Species, such as Scotch broom, plumeless thistle, Canada thistle, and goat grass, are just beginning to invade the Mendocino. Their spread can be prevented if aggressive and consistent treatments are employed before they become widespread. The best strategy for success is to establish eradication teams that can respond quickly to new outbreaks and continue treatments until the outbreak is eradicated.

Cooperating with a variety of agencies, interest groups, and local citizens can increase the effectiveness of weed control measures and add strength to these efforts. The Forest Service has entered into an agreement with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Bureau of Land Management, and others to cooperate and coordinate in managing noxious weeds. County weed management areas (CWMAs), which coordinate weed management across jurisdictional boundaries, are now in place across much of the state, in recognition of the need for coordinated management in controlling weeds. The Mendocino, Six Rivers, Shasta-Trinity, and Klamath National Forests participate in local CWMAs. It will take common goals and common resources to carry out the goals of this program.

Heritage Resources

The focus of the Forest's heritage resources program is ensuring that significant archaeological and historical resources are identified, protected, and preserved for the benefit and enjoyment of the American public and future generations. Program activities include developing strategies for inventory, evaluation, and management of historic properties to prevent their loss or damage and enhancing heritage resources and their values through interpretation, scientific study, public education, public participation, partnerships, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse.

In FY 2004, the heritage resources program was funded at 0.8 FTE and \$79,200 and had a deficit of 3.0 FTEs and \$245,500. This shortfall prevented the Forest from performing critical functions that often go unnoticed by the public, but result in the loss of important pieces of our cultural heritage. A popular program that suffers from lack of funding is the Passport in Time (PIT) program. The Forest cannot meet the demand for these popular projects, which provide opportunities for the public to participate in archeological site excavations and other heritage-related projects. Despite their popularity, PIT projects are conducted less than once annually due to lack of funding.

Data Management

The data management program focuses on storing, creating, analyzing, maintaining, and managing natural resource databases and developing and maintaining local geo-spatial data. The goals for the data management program are to coordinate data management activities and manage corporate databases to provide accurate, current data to support planning and reporting needs at the Forest, regional, and national levels.

Data management responsibilities are distributed across all the Forest's program areas, and coordination is currently accomplished on an ad hoc basis. There is a need to improve coordination across program areas to ensure that data resources are reliable and effectively managed. This requires assigning oversight and coordination responsibilities to a specific position. In FY 2004, the data management program was funded at 2.2 FTEs and \$166,000. This program area needs an additional 2.0 FTEs and \$131,000 for direct data management and coordination.

Annual Passport in Time Program Opportunities

"Passport in Time" (PIT) is a volunteer program that involves the public in archaeological and historical research and management on national forests. Volunteers assist Forest Service professionals in activities ranging from archaeological excavation to historic building restoration. The goal of PIT is to preserve the Nation's past with the help of the public. PIT is one of the Forest Service's most successful public programs, and has been recognized nationally for its focus and accomplishments.

The Mendocino's first PIT project was in 1994, when 22 volunteers assisted in archaeological projects at Nye Cabin (circa 1860), the oldest standing structure on the Forest. The Forest has sponsored 21 PIT projects, in which 1,044 volunteers have contributed 19,500 hours of labor worth more than \$231,800. Projects have ranged from historic cabin restoration to archaeological laboratory work to Native American basket weaving to archaeological site excavations. The PIT program has significantly increased the public's understanding of their cultural and natural resources and how these resources are managed on public lands. The volunteer labor provided through this program has allowed the Forest to restore historic structures and scientifically investigate archaeological sites – projects that would otherwise be difficult to accomplish under annual budget allocations.



Volunteers in the PIT program assist Forest Service professionals in archaeological excavations.

Watershed, Air, and Geologic Management

The watershed, air, and geologic management program is focused on managing water quality, water supply, soil productivity, and air quality. Forest personnel are involved in protecting and restoring the health of the land, assuring that the Forest's watersheds remain healthy, maintaining air quality standards on the Forest and in surrounding communities when prescribed burns are conducted, practicing soil conservation, and providing geologic information for Forest projects involving vegetation manipulation, facility development, and land management.

The watershed, air, and geologic management program was funded at 3.3 FTEs and \$329,900 in FY 2004. An additional 1.6 FTEs and \$92,700 are needed in this program area to keep a current inventory of water uses and development, assess and monitor watershed conditions and trends, monitor water quality, monitor the effects of projects on soil productivity and hydrologic function, ground truth aerial photo geomorphic mapping, and monitor air quality at OHV staging areas.

Land Ownership and Adjustment

The land ownership and adjustment program is responsible for the real estate management of National Forest System (NFS) lands administered by the Mendocino. Functions include land adjustments, right-of-way and easement acquisition, and boundary and title management. The overall mission of this program is to improve long-term management efficiency of the Forest by consolidating Federal lands through land exchanges, purchases, and donations; locating property boundaries between private and NFS lands in support of management activities; acquiring public easements to access additional NFS lands; and protecting the Federal government's title interest by investigating title claims and resolving unauthorized occupancy and use of NFS lands. In FY 2004, the Mendocino was involved in a unique opportunity to acquire a 22,574-acre private inholding through a donation, making it the largest single acquisition in California's national forests.

In FY2004, the land ownership and adjustment program was funded at 0.7 FTE and \$63,600. An additional 2.1 FTEs and \$166,600 are needed to meet the appropriate level of program management.



The wilderness areas have received low priority due to their remoteness and limited visitation.

Specially Designated Areas Management

The specially designated areas management program focuses on managing threats and facilitating human use in the Forest's two wilderness areas and along one wild and scenic river. The reality on the ground is that these areas have received low priority due to their remoteness and limited visitation. In FY 2004, the specially designated areas management program was funded at 0.4 FTE and \$28,000. This amounts to less than half of one person's time to manage over 187,000 acres in the Yolla Bolly and Snow Mountain Wilderness Areas and 24 miles of the Middle Fork of the Eel River designated as wild and scenic. An additional 4.2 FTEs and \$194,200 are needed to: (1) implement a schedule and strategy to monitor and evaluate threatening conditions and trends arising from human influences or natural processes and (2) facilitate appropriate human use and enjoyment of these special management areas.

Public Use and Enjoyment

As OHV use, hunting, and other recreational activities continue to grow and the number of people visiting the Forest continues to increase, the public use and enjoyment functional area becomes ever more important. The most recent Forest Service visitation statistics estimated over 257,000 annual visitor days in the Mendocino. While one of the Forest Service's primary objectives is to encourage recreational use of the land, visitation has a direct impact on water quality and land and natural resource conditions. A key challenge for the Forest and its partners is to continue to improve the recreational experiences available to visitors while effectively managing natural resources.

The public use and enjoyment functional area includes the following programs:

- Visitor Safety and Protection
- Recreation Fee Collection
- Visitor Centers, Public Information, Interpretation, and Education
- Recreation Special Uses
- Law Enforcement

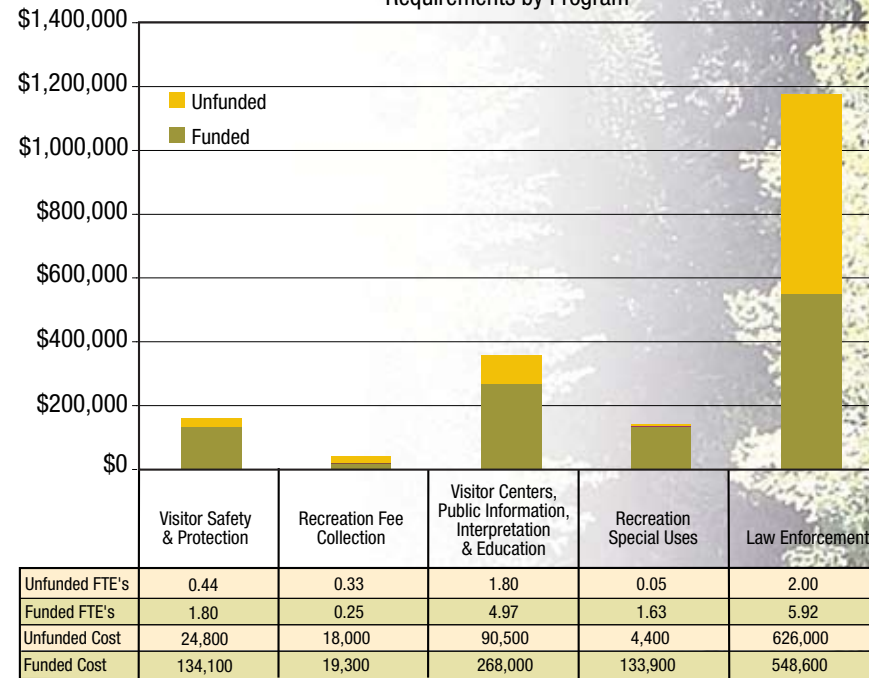
In FY2004, public use and enjoyment resources available to the Mendocino totaled 14.6 FTEs and \$1.10 million. However, required resources totaled 19.2 FTEs and \$1.87 million, resulting in a deficit of 4.6 FTEs and \$0.76 million in this functional area.

Visitor Safety and Protection

Visitor safety and protection on the Mendocino is provided through forest protection officers (FPOs) as well as specific activities that are designated to optimize public welfare. These duties are "collateral" duties, completed along with other work responsibilities. These activities and responsibilities are elemental to a number of programs, including forest recreation, special use operations, fire prevention patrols, and vegetation management.

FPOs work closely with Mendocino law enforcement staff. Special emphasis is placed on enforcing OHV regulations, camping and campfire regulations, wilderness regulations, and recreation event and holiday enforcement. In addition, an ongoing activity in direct support of visitor safety involves identifying and removing hazardous trees in developed facilities. The visitor safety and protection program also includes providing the necessary support for search and rescue and emergency medical services.

Public Use and Enjoyment FY04
Requirements by Program



Additional dedicated FPO patrol personnel, supporting the recreation, fire prevention, and wilderness programs, would be a significant step toward reaching an optimum level of visitor safety and enforcement performance on the Mendocino. The Forest has also identified a need for supplemental law enforcement awareness training for the majority of its field employees (1-day training for approximately 100 individuals). In addition, OHV enforcement needs for the Mendocino are not being met with available staffing. In FY 2004, the visitor safety and protection program had 1.8 FTEs and \$134,100. An additional 0.4 FTE and \$24,800 are needed to meet this program's needs.

Recreation Fee Collection

Fees are collected at the Mendocino's recreation fee campgrounds under authority of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement



A key challenge for the Forest and its partners is to improve the recreational experiences available to the public.

Act (FLREA). Currently, fees are collected at 14 sites on the Forest under this program, including:

- 3 group campgrounds,
- 10 family campgrounds, and
- 1 recreational vehicle dump station.

Fees are being considered for additional sites under FLREA, as described in the “Strategies” section of this business plan. Recreation fees are collected by designated “collection officers,” and these duties are “collateral” duties, meaning that specially-trained employees perform them alongside their normal, assigned responsibilities. Fee processing and accountability audits are conducted by authorized financial staff.

In FY 2004, recreation fees collected on the Mendocino totaled \$63,100. Legislation requires that 80 percent of the collected amount be used to improve public service for the sites where the fees are collected. Fifteen percent of the collected fees are used to cover the direct and indirect costs associated with fee collection while the remaining 5 percent are deposited into a regional account from which each national forest in the Region can compete for natural resource enhancement grants. The recreation fee program had 0.3 FTE and \$19,300 available in FY 2004; however, an additional 0.3 FTE and \$18,000 are needed to bring this program up to standards.

Visitor Centers, Public Information, Interpretation and Education

The visitor centers, public information, interpretation and education program is the primary first contact with the visiting, telephoning, and web browsing public and provides basic public information to persons interested in the Mendocino National Forest. Through interpretive programs, this program area also provides conservation education to the public to build an informed citizenry. The Mendocino’s interpretive services program strives to assist visitors in gaining a greater understanding, awareness, and appreciation of the Forest. Interpretative and educational products are provided at various locations throughout the Forest, including visitor and educational centers, points of interest, trailheads and interpretive trails, as well as through various conservation education programs.



Camp Discovery offers a unique birding experience and was singled out as a “watchable wildlife” area because of the many diverse habitats.

This program had 5.0 FTEs and \$268,000 available in FY 2004. An additional 1.8 FTEs and \$90,500 are needed to ensure that the visitor information function operates at appropriate standards. Of the identified gap, 0.5 FTE would be allocated for an interpretive specialist to conduct and manage the Forest’s interpretive and conservation education programs.

Recreation Special Uses

Many of the recreational opportunities available to Forest visitors are provided through entities operating under special use permits granted by the Mendocino. Recreation special uses on the Forest include:

- 2 organizational camps, 3 campgrounds, 2 boat launches, and 3 picnic areas;
- 1 fire lookout, which can be rented for overnight camping;
- 1 interpretive center;
- 1 outfitter-guide permit;
- 110 recreation residence permits in 5 tracts (106 recreational residences and 4 isolated cabins);
- approximately 7 annual recreation events, including “enduros” and “boat drags;”
- other recreation uses; and
- 1 resort at Lake Pillsbury

In FY 2004, the Mendocino generated approximately \$115,000 in fees from recreational special use permit holders. Forests were not allowed to retain the FY 2004 proceeds generated through special use permits: essentially all of this money went directly to the U.S. Treasury. While there has been a disconnect between recreational usage and the funding available for managing related resource impacts, FLREA legislation passed in December 2004 will change the way recreation special use fees are handled.

In FY 2004, 1.6 FTEs and \$133,900 were available to run the recreation special uses program. An additional 0.1 FTE and \$4,400 are needed to close the operational gap in this program area.

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement officers (LEOs) are responsible for detection, investigation, apprehension, detention, and prosecution activities associated with enforcing laws and regulations related to National Forest System lands, natural resources, employees, and the public. Work in this program area has been affected by the large increase of illegal marijuana production operations and fire investigations. The patrol environment requires working cooperatively with agencies of two Federal judicial districts, seven counties, the U.S. Marshall Service, Immigration and Customs agents, the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Highway Patrol, and Native American tribes.

The law enforcement program has responsibility for supervising and overseeing all law enforcement operations on the Forest. In addition, law enforcement personnel provide technical assistance to Forest Service departments in drafting special regulations to further the specific goals and objectives of the Forest. Subsequent enforcement of these regulations is carried out by LEOs and FPOs in misdemeanor, criminal, and civil cases. The Forest patrol captain provides support to the U.S. Attorney's Office by prosecuting misdemeanor cases generated on the Forest for Federal courts. This includes all related administrative tasks and case follow-ups, including the execution of arrest warrants and subpoenas.

In FY 2004, available resources for the Mendocino's law enforcement program totaled 5.9 FTEs and \$548,600. The Forest identified a need for an additional 2.0 FTEs and \$626,000 in this program area to cover costs for these personnel as well as appropriate

training, supplies, and vehicles. This figure also covers needs for additional contracting to cover air support in fighting the increasing marijuana operations on Forest lands.



The annual drag boat races at the Red Bluff Recreation Area illustrate one type of special uses on the Forest.



Law enforcement officers oversee all law enforcement operations on the Forest.

Facility Operations and Maintenance



Maintaining the Forest's facilities has proven to be one of the most challenging areas to manage.

The Mendocino's infrastructure, grounds, and facilities are maintained and operated through the following six programs:

- Buildings, Grounds, and Utilities
- Roads
- Trails (motorized and non-motorized)
- Transportation and Fleet
- Campgrounds and Developed Sites
- Concentrated Use Areas

Maintaining the Forest's facilities has proven to be one of the most challenging areas to manage due to the number of facilities that need maintenance relative to available funding. The Forest has had difficulty keeping up with annual maintenance for trails, campgrounds, roads, and buildings. Hence, deferred maintenance has increased to a level currently beyond the Forest's ability to tackle. Funds necessary to address the maintenance backlog are discussed in the "Investments" section of this business plan.

In FY 2004, facility operations and maintenance resources available to the Mendocino totaled 27.4 FTEs and \$2.44 million. However, this functional area needed resources of 40.9 FTEs and \$5.19 million, resulting in a shortfall of 13.6 FTEs and \$2.75 million.

Buildings, Grounds, and Utilities

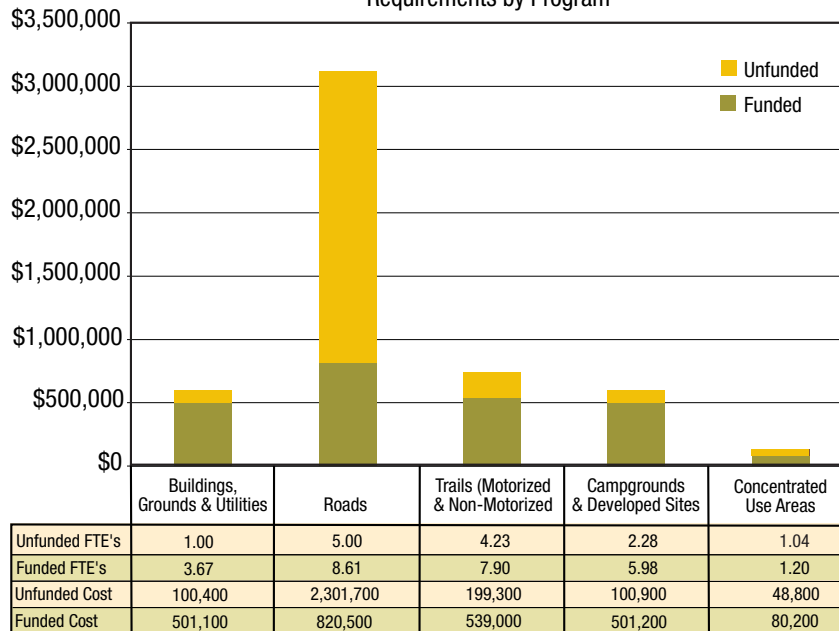
Forest Service engineers provide technical assistance for managing the Forest's infrastructure. This includes playing a vital role in assuring the safety and utility of the Forest's bridges, dams, water and waste water systems, and facilities. Building, grounds, and utilities program personnel also play a role in maintaining corporate data for all buildings and utilities.

Available resources for the buildings, grounds, and utilities program in FY 2004 totaled 3.7 FTEs and \$501,100. This program needs an additional 1.0 FTE and \$100,400 to provide technical assistance for maintaining the facilities on the Forest.

Roads

The roads maintenance program is responsible for maintaining the Mendocino's 2,487 miles of roads. Managing the road system also involves analysis of the needed road infrastructure at the present time and into the future, appropriate road design and construction by qualified personnel, and safe operation and

Facility Operations and Maintenance FY04
Requirements by Program



Update Facilities Master Plan/Conveyance

Many of the Mendocino's administrative facilities are in a state of decay, and the deferred maintenance total for the Forest has become unmanageable. The Forest leadership team is taking a proactive approach to address this issue. New legislation has recently been passed regarding "conveyance." This legislation allows national forests to sell surplus buildings and land that are not part of the contiguous forest. The proceeds from these sales can then be used for other capital improvement projects, such as remodeling, replacing, or constructing new facilities. The Mendocino plans to update its facilities master plan to explore new opportunities presented by this legislation.

maintenance of the road system. This program had the largest funding gap between available and needed resources of all the Forest's programs: it had a total of 8.6 FTEs and \$820,500 in FY 2004 with identified needs for an additional 5.0 FTEs and \$2.30 million. A strategy to reduce this funding gap is discussed in the "Strategy" section of this business plan.

Of the \$2.30 million identified as unfunded for the Mendocino's roads program, \$1.98 million is needed for additional outside contracts to complete annual road maintenance work, including replacing 88 culverts annually on maintenance level 3, 4, and 5 roads. Additionally, the Forest currently has a vacancy for a transportation engineer who would analyze the Forest's transportation needs, prepare service and construction contracts, and manage the backlog of deferred maintenance projects. A civil engineer is also needed to assist with contract preparation and construction inspection. Finally, one full-time and one part-

time equipment operator plus a full-time swamper are needed to perform routine maintenance on the Forest's roads.

Trails (Motorized and Non-Motorized)

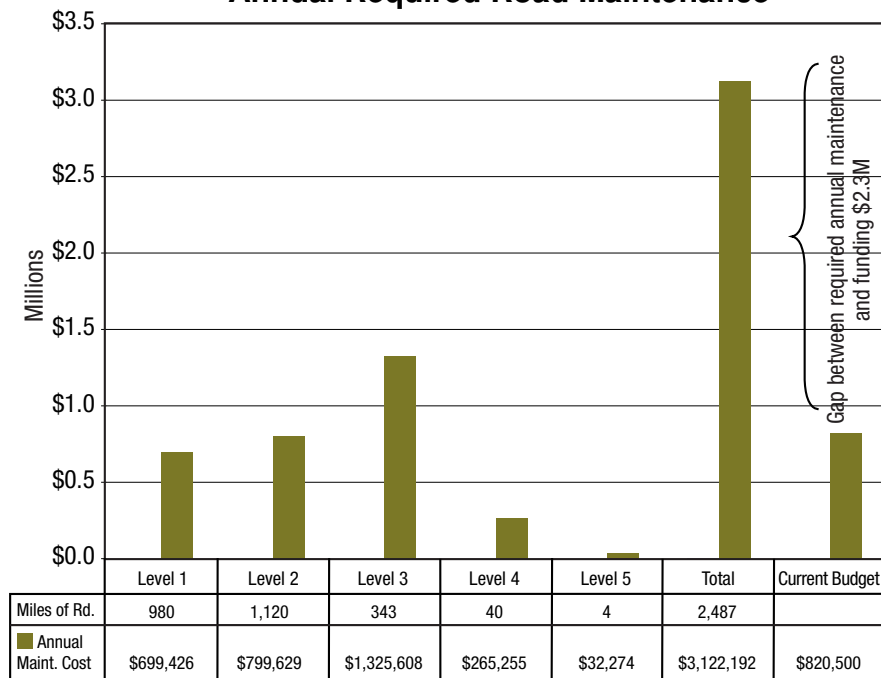
The Mendocino's trails program manages 217 miles of horse and foot trails in the two wilderness areas, 92 miles of horse and foot trails in the general forest area, and a designated OHV route trail system, consisting of 252 miles of trail concentrated in three areas: Fouts Springs, Middle Creek/Deer Valley, and the Lake Pillsbury area. Mountain bike trails are included with horse and foot trails in the general forest area as well as within the designated OHV routes.

The trails program focuses on two key activities: maintaining trails and implementing a sustainable trails system. Toward this end, the Forest is currently reviewing the established OHV trail system. There is concern that many unofficial trails are being



The only one of California's 18 national forests not crossed by a paved road.

Annual Required Road Maintenance



Road Rating Level

Definitions of Road Maintenance Levels

Level 1:

The road has been closed for more than 1 year. Maintain basic custodial care to keep adjacent resource damage to an acceptable level.

Level 2:

Maintain the road for high clearance vehicles. Discourage or prohibit passenger vehicle use.

Level 3:

Maintain the road for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger vehicle – the road surface is not smooth. User comfort and convenience are not considered priorities.

Level 4:

Maintain the road for passenger vehicles – the road surface is smooth. Provide a moderate degree of user comfort and convenience.

Level 5:

Maintain the road for passenger vehicles – the road is dust free and possibly paved. Provide a high degree of user comfort and convenience.

Note: The annual road maintenance value was calculated by multiplying the average miles of roads needing yearly maintenance by the average cost per mile to maintain roads of the given road maintenance level



The Forest manages a 252 mile designated OHV route trail system.



There are 217 miles of horse and foot trails in the two wilderness areas.



Developed recreation sites are managed to provide a quality experience for the public.

used, causing resource damage and making user safety more difficult to monitor. Results from the review will be used to protect environmentally sensitive areas as well as prevent excess soil erosion while providing visitors with a trail system that is safe and provides rewarding recreation opportunities.

In FY 2004, 7.9 FTEs and \$539,000 were available to the trails program. An additional 4.2 FTEs and \$199,300 are needed to close service gaps and allow the trails program to operate at identified standards.

Transportation and Fleet

Beginning in FY 2005, fleet maintenance services were contracted out, leaving only 2.0 FTEs related to fleet management on the Forest. Under this new arrangement, local managers have little control over the kinds of activities formerly covered in the fleet program. The Forest does however, have control over the number and use of vehicles (see “Fleet and Heavy Equipment Strategy” section).

Each Forest program pays for vehicles in two ways: (1) a fixed ownership rate (called an “FOR” charge), paid each year based on the number of vehicles the program holds and (2) a mileage-related charge for vehicle use. For the purpose of this business plan, these charges are accounted for within each program’s expenditures. Therefore, funding and expenditure levels for the transportation and fleet program area are not reflected in the “Facility Operations and Maintenance” table or the “Summary Financial Statement.”

Campgrounds and Developed Sites

The Mendocino manages developed recreation sites to provide a quality recreation experience for the public. The Forest’s developed recreation sites include:

- 4 group campgrounds, 1 of which is an OHV group campground;
- 38 family campgrounds, 13 of which are OHV campgrounds;
- 3 picnic sites, 4 boat launches, and 8 trailheads, 2 of which are OHV trailheads; and
- 5 visitor information sites.

All of the fee campgrounds, except for Lake Pillsbury campgrounds, are under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, formerly known as the Fee Demonstration Program, where 80 percent of collected fees are returned to the sites where fees were collected and 15 percent of the fees are used for fee collection and enforcement. The remaining 5 percent is deposited to a regional account from which each national forest in the Region can compete for natural resource enhancement grants.

The Forest’s goal is to offer visitors developed recreation facilities that provide a clean, healthy, safe, and welcoming environment. Additionally, all facilities must be kept in good repair and remain accessible to all users. In FY 2004, 6.0 FTEs and \$501,200 were available to accomplish program goals for campgrounds and developed sites. However, 2.3 FTEs and \$100,900 in additional resources would be required to close service and operational gaps identified for this program area.

Concentrated Use Areas

A concentrated use area (CUA) refers to an undeveloped site or area that requires maintenance and management because recreation use in these areas can leave evident impacts, such as litter, vandalism, or soil compaction. The Mendocino manages CUAs, or dispersed recreation sites, in the general forest area to provide a quality recreation experience for the public. Visitors to these areas generally desire a quieter experience with less developed facilities. The Forest’s CUAs include 93 dispersed recreation sites around the Forest and 2 OHV kid play areas at the Nail Track and Middle Creek trailheads.

In FY 2004, resources totaling 1.2 FTEs and \$80,200 were available to run the concentrated use area program. To meet identified goals for this program at appropriate standards, additional resources of 1.0 FTE and \$48,800 would be required.

Management and Administration

The management and administration functional area has responsibility for overall management of the Forest's operations at the forest supervisor's office and three ranger district offices. Management and administration includes the following seven program areas:

- General Management
- Financial Management
- General Administration
- District Management
- Planning
- Public Affairs
- Information Technology

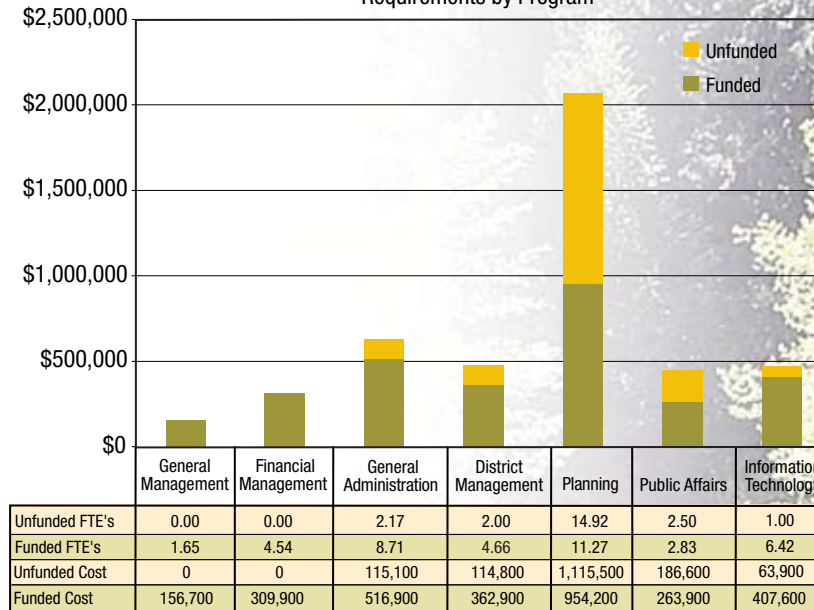
Managing the Mendocino National Forest requires adapting to changing conditions. Over the past 10 years, the Forest's appropriated base budget has declined by 51 percent, when adjusted for inflation, requiring managers to make tough choices in prioritizing operations. Recent challenges include implementing Forest Service national initiatives to centralize the Agency's information technology and financial management functions. Shifting congressional mandates, demands from the public, and unplanned events, such as fires and floods, add to the challenge of managing 178 permanent and seasonal employees and 118 temporary employees.

In FY 2004, resources dedicated to the Mendocino's management and administrative functions totaled 40.1 FTEs with a budget of \$2.97 million. Analysis of Forest operations shows a need for an additional 22.6 FTEs and \$1.60 million. The following sections describe the responsibilities, work activities, and financial situation of each program area within the management and administration functional area.

General Management

The Forest Supervisor and an administrative analyst fulfill the general management function. The Forest Supervisor coordinates the Forest leadership team, provides leadership and oversight of staff operations, directs short and long term planning, and oversees integration of programs across the Forest. The Forest Supervisor is the official voice of the Forest to the public and elected officials.

Management and Administration FY04 Requirements by Program



The general management program was funded at 1.7 FTEs and \$156,700 in FY 2004. There were no shortfalls identified for this program area.

Financial Management

Financial management for the Mendocino is handled at both the Northern Province and Forest levels. Budget analysis, execution, and reporting are handled on Forest, while fiscal and accounting activities are handled on a province-wide basis by the fiscal operations team. At the end of 2004, fiscal operations were consolidated nationwide across the Forest Service. Budget analysis remains on the Forest; however, all other fiscal and accounting activities are conducted at the Albuquerque Service Center. The Mendocino's financial management program (excluding funding for the fiscal operations team) was funded at 4.5 FTEs and \$309,900 in FY 2004. No unfunded FTEs have been identified in this program area, although this could change pending the outcome of consolidation of financial operations.

General Administration

The general administration program covers human resources; civil rights; safety, grants and agreements; acquisitions, purchasing,



The administrative staff is often the first contact by the public with the Forest.

and contracting; and operation of the mail and reproduction room. Human resources personnel provide overall leadership and expertise on employee and labor relations, staffing and classification, pay, benefits, position management, and workforce composition. The human resources function is slated to be consolidated Agency-wide in the near future. Civil rights personnel manage all civil rights programs and provide expert advice and counsel to the Forest leadership team and Forest and district staff to: (1) remove barriers to equal employment for all employees and employment candidates and (2) ensure equity and fairness in all Agency activities. The safety element of the general administration program is responsible for ensuring implementation of comprehensive health and safety programs. Grants and agreements personnel advise and assist project managers in negotiating, developing, and administering a wide variety of grants, cooperative agreements, and other partnership agreements. Acquisitions, purchasing, and contracting operations are handled at the Province level, so they are not included as part of Forest operations.

The general administration program was funded at 8.7 FTEs and \$516,900 in FY 2004. A shortfall of 2.2 FTEs and \$115,100 was identified for this program. Filling this gap would increase efficiency and allow the various functions within this program area to be managed to appropriate standards.

District Management

District management is responsible for providing professional, technical, and administrative leadership for managing the natural resources and goods and services of a specific area (ranger district) on the Mendocino. District management provides guidance for developing, producing, conserving, and utilizing the natural resources within each district as well as inventorying, planning, evaluating, and managing Forest resources, including timber, soil, land, water, wildlife and fish habitat, forage, wilderness and visual areas, and outdoor recreation. District management includes coordination with internal agency personnel as well as external agencies, groups, governments, organizations, and individuals.

District management was funded at 4.7 FTEs and \$362,900 in FY 2004. A need for an additional 2.0 FTEs and \$114,800 was identified to provide administrative support for this program area.



Inventory and monitoring of forest resources has increased substantially.

Mendocino Workforce Skill Needs and Recruitment Strategy

Anticipated attrition of employees in leadership and mission-critical positions on the Mendocino is expected to negatively impact the Forest's operational capacity and ability to engage in proactive management. A competency and skill needs assessment strategy outlines how the Forest will identify currently available skills, anticipated loss of skills, and budgetary restrictions. The strategy also addresses the flexibility needed in acquiring skills while staying within a reduced budget. Past budgets have forced numerous combinations of several specialty skills into fewer positions and left the Forest with no backup in many critical skill areas.

Addressing the human resources situation at the Mendocino is particularly important in light of the Forest's commitment to developing partnerships. With Agency business process reengineering efforts, increased focus on coordination between program areas and within the Agency will be essential.

Skills vital to accomplishing Forest goals and objectives reside in several positions anticipated to be vacated through retirements in the next 2 to 5 years. Identifying mission-critical skill gaps will assist the Forest in planning for future hiring and enhance competencies in the existing workforce. Transferring knowledge, established contacts, collaboration efforts, and partnerships will also be critical for maintaining continuity.

Current Situation

With over a third of the current workforce over the age of 50, a significant number of vacancies are likely during the next 5 years. The accompanying table presents an analysis of positions by how many employees will be eligible for retirement within the next 1 to 5 years. This analysis should be used to build a strategy that will mitigate the effects of a wave of retirements

Age distribution and roles of permanent employees.

	Forest Leadership	District Leadership	Critical Specialists	All other Supervisory	All Permanent Forest Positions
Over 50	80%	58%*	29%	26%	36%
Under 50	20%	42%	71%	74%**	64%

* Two District Rangers also reflected under Forest Leadership.

** Fire makes up 97 percent of other supervisory positions.

Planning

The planning program area incorporates all resource planning at the national forest and project scale. Planning program personnel also work closely with data management program personnel in documenting the inventory and monitoring of forest resources. This program area has responsibility for developing various required planning documents, including resource assessments, forest plan amendments, project environmental analyses, appeals, objections, and litigation. The planning program is also responsible for preparing annual monitoring reports as well as managing the Forest's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) programs.

All land management projects must be consistent with the forest plan and comply with a complex variety of environmental laws, regulations, and Forest Service policy. It is the job of the district planning teams and natural resource specialists to assess and document each project's environmental effects in compliance with NEPA, for the purpose of informing the decision maker (district ranger or forest supervisor) and public. The work needed to adequately document a project's environmental effects increases substantially when the level of controversy is high, such as with most projects that involve timber harvest. The cost of the additional documentation diverts funding that could be used to implement projects. The net effect is that controversial projects require more analysis and documentation to comply with regulations and less is accomplished on the ground.

Analysis of the Mendocino's planning program shows a FY 2004 budget of 11.3 FTEs and \$954,200, with an additional 14.9 FTEs and \$1.12 million needed to perform at operational standards. Complying with NEPA requirements represents the bulk of the shortfalls in this program area. Presently, a backlog of NEPA clearance work is a roadblock to executing many different projects across the Forest. Acquiring the additional resources identified for the planning program would remove this bottleneck, thereby speeding project implementation across all Forest programs. Strategies to make complying with NEPA more efficient are discussed in the "Strategies" section of this business plan.

Public Affairs

The public affairs program provides leadership, strategic planning, and staff support for developing and maintaining positive

external relationships and collaborating with local communities; Native American tribes; elected officials; news media; partners and volunteers; interest groups and organizations; permittees; Federal, State, and local governments; cooperators; and the public. Public affairs personnel facilitate positive internal relationships and information sharing between Forest personnel, the Northern Province, the Pacific Southwest Regional Office, Northwest Forest Plan Provinces, Regional Ecosystem Office, and the Washington Office. The public affairs program also maintains internal and external websites and produces a variety of information materials and programs.

In FY 2004, 2.8 FTEs and \$263,900 were dedicated to the Mendocino's public affairs program. A shortfall of 2.5 FTEs and \$186,600 has been identified for the program. Currently, the public affairs officer is only able to spend 60 percent of her time dedicated to public affairs, making it very difficult to accomplish program standards for internal communication, coordination of public collaboration opportunities, issues management, strategic planning, and production of information materials. An additional FTE for a public affairs assistant would help cover this identified gap. Another 0.5 FTE is needed for a tribal relations manager to assist an already over-committed civil rights officer as well as an additional 0.5 FTE to accomplish the conservation education standards. Because the Mendocino is only able to respond to public requests on a very minimal basis, another 0.5 FTE is needed for a partnership coordination/rural community grant program management assistant to meet minimum standards.

Information Technology

The information technology program covers all telecommunications, radios, computer network, phones, dispatch, and alarm systems used by the Forest, except for fire dispatch and other fire-related information technology activities. Starting in 2005, information technology was consolidated across the Forest Service as part of the competitive sourcing initiative. In FY 2004, the Mendocino's information technology program was funded at 6.4 FTEs and \$407,600. Although the information technology program has been formally eliminated on the national forests, 1.0 FTE will be needed on the Forest to support work that has not been consolidated.

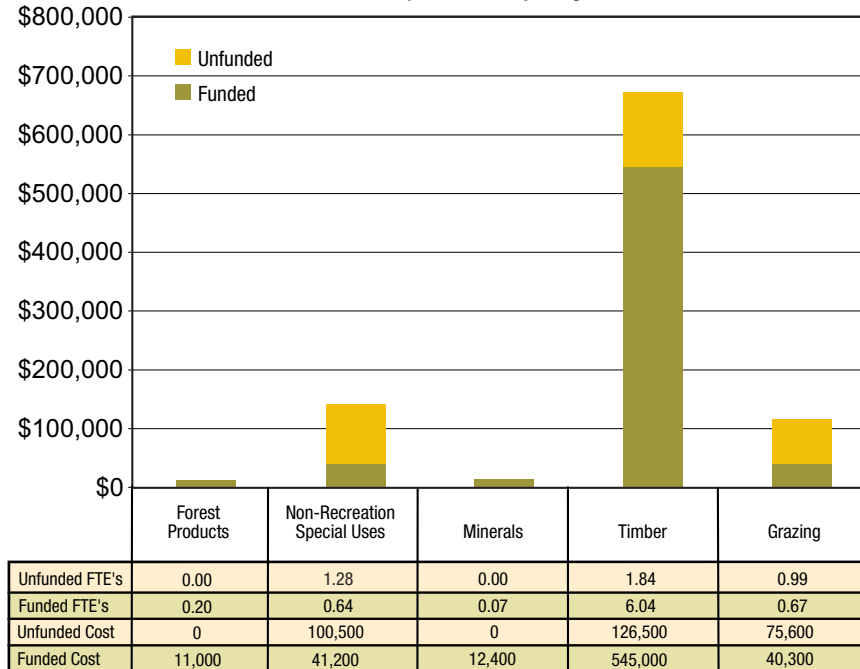
Commodity and Commercial Uses

Management of national forest lands has always been closely tied to the local, regional, and national economies. Communities tied to timber production have experienced dramatic changes as market conditions and environmental concerns have shifted the Forest's focus from commodity and commercial uses toward an emphasis on reducing hazardous fuels and implementing ecosystem management objectives. Today, commodity and commercial uses are the tools for creating healthy forests, restoring ecosystems, and contributing to community stability.

The commodity and commercial uses functional area includes the following programs:

- Forest Products
- Non-recreation Special Uses
- Minerals
- Timber
- Grazing

Commodity and Commercial Uses FY04
Requirements by Program



This functional area is a relatively small component of the Mendocino's operations. Timber, which is the largest program, now comprises just 2.2 percent of the Forest's budget. There are currently no significant mineral or non-timber forest products extracted from the Forest. There is a small grazing component on the Forest; however, conditions for forage production are marginal on most areas, limiting grazing opportunities. The commodity and commercial uses functional area was funded at 7.6 FTEs and \$649,900 in FY 2004. An additional 4.1 FTEs and \$302,600 are needed to operate this area's programs at their identified operational standards.

Forest Products

Activities related to harvesting forest vegetative products other than commercial timber are insignificant on the Mendocino. There are currently no identified opportunities for using by-products from vegetation treatments or thinning operations as biofuels or other uses. The FY 2004 budget for this program was 0.2 FTE and \$11,000. No additional resources are currently needed for this program.

Non-recreation Special Uses

The Mendocino's non-recreation special uses program administers special use permits for a wide variety of uses, including agricultural uses (such as three apiaries), water diversions for domestic and agricultural uses, and telecommunications. The Forest houses a weather station, powerlines, phone lines, road easements, and electronic sites on mountain tops. These special uses provide amateur radio connections, microwave sites, private mobile radio service, cable television and cellular phone services, irrigation water ditches and pipelines, water wells or springs, and service buildings.

Currently, the Mendocino administers approximately 150 non-recreation special use permits. Fees collected for non-recreation special uses are not retained on the Forest; this revenue is deposited in the U.S. Treasury. In FY 2004, the Mendocino's non-recreation special uses program was funded at 0.6 FTE and \$41,200. This program has a shortfall of 1.3 FTEs and \$100,500 needed to administer the program to appropriate standards.

Minerals

There are currently no significant activities related to minerals on the Mendocino. For the last several years, the Forest has received no demands or inquires for minerals. Current activity in this program is limited to abandoned mine reclamation for the Jade Mine. The Gray Eagle and Black Diamond Mines are also listed as projects for chromite leachate control; however, these mines have not been investigated for reclamation needs.

The minerals program area was funded at 0.1 FTE and \$12,400 in FY 2004. No shortfalls have been identified for the minerals program.

Timber

The timber program encompasses all activities related to commercial timber extraction of both living (green) trees and salvage (dead and dying) trees. Program activities include planning and lay out of sale areas, preparation and administration of timber sales, and collection and accounting for payments for timber. Primary objectives for the timber program have changed from producing commercial lumber to restoring naturally fire resistant forests through reducing hazardous fuels and modifying forest structure. The timber that is extracted from the Forest for commercial purposes is primarily aimed at generating revenue to help offset costs of fuels treatment. The challenge for stewardship timber sales, which are intended to improve the ecological condition of the Forest, is making them economically viable and environmentally acceptable.

A portion of commercial timber sales revenue is deposited into trust funds that the Forest can use to fund a variety of restoration projects. The declining value of timber receipts has depleted the monies in these trust funds. At the current rate of expenditures, the timber trust funds will run dry in a few years, creating an additional funding gap on the Forest. The timber program was funded at 6.0 FTEs and \$545,000 in FY 2004. A shortfall of 1.8 FTEs and \$126,500 were identified for the timber program.

Grazing

The grazing program consists of all activities related to administering commercial grazing permits for livestock and implementing structural improvements for livestock forage



Objectives for the timber program are focused on fire-resistant restoration rather than commercial lumber production.



Conditions for grazing are marginal on the Forest.

management. The focus of the grazing program is to effectively administer grazing permits and maintain grazing allotments that are compatible with the available forage. Conditions for grazing are marginal on most areas of the Mendocino, and this limits opportunities for sustainable grazing operations.

In FY 2004, funding for the grazing program was 0.7 FTE and \$40,300. An additional 1.0 FTE and \$75,600 are needed to ensure that grazing activities are designed to maintain properly functioning riparian areas and protect sensitive, endangered, and threatened plants on active allotments. These resources are also needed to: (1) meet the regional guideline of administering one-third of the allotments each year to standard, (2) conduct required allotment monitoring, and (3) maintain and update data in the infrastructure (INFRA) database.

Fire and Aviation Management



Fire preparedness on the Forest includes preparing crews and equipment.

In FY 2004, 70.5 FTEs and \$5.05 million went toward fire management on the Mendocino. In addition, 66.6 FTEs and \$8.22 million were used in wildfire suppression and national fire and disaster support activities. These activities were funded through a national fire account and not out of the Mendocino's appropriations. Total FY 2004 shortfalls identified within the fire management functional area were 40.6 FTEs and \$2.97 million, all associated with the Forest's hazardous fuels reduction and fire pre-suppression and preparedness programs.

As a part of implementing the National Fire Plan and the Healthy Forest Initiative, which is focused on reducing the risk of wildfires by restoring forest health, the Mendocino has made great efforts to protect forest resources and ensure the safety of surrounding communities through development of community wildfire protection plans. Much of the focus has been centered on hazardous fuels reduction.

Fire and aviation management encompasses the following programs:

- Management and Administration
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction
- Fire Pre-Suppression and Preparedness
- Wildfire Suppression
- National Fire and Disaster Support

Management and Administration

The Mendocino's fire and aviation management and administration program is supervised by the forest supervisor and two district rangers. The forest fire management officer works for the forest supervisor and supervises the deputy forest fire management officer and forest fire planner/fuels officer. The Forest level program includes the emergency communications center (ECC), training and incident qualifications, aviation program, preparedness and hazardous fuels budget, fire planning, and hazardous fuels planning.

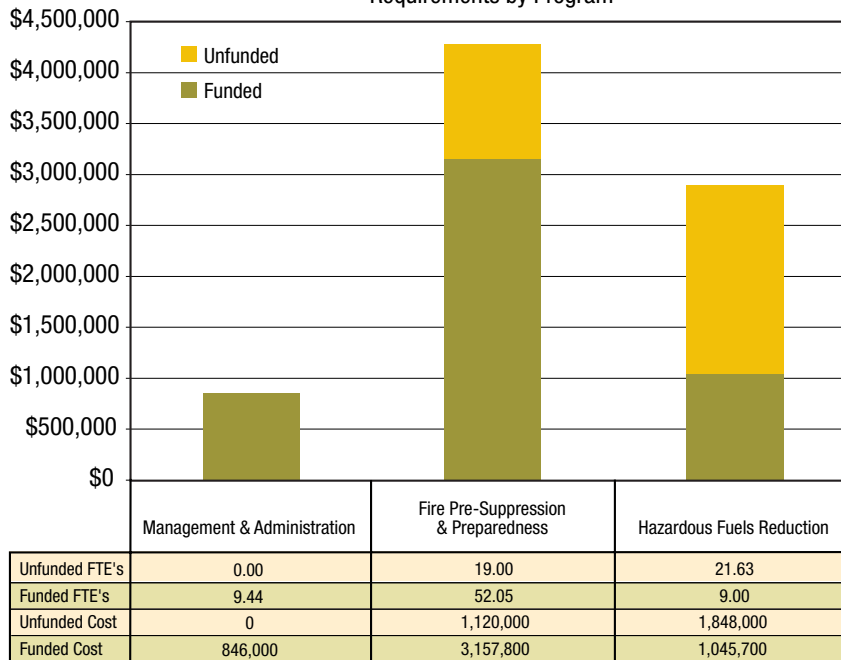
The district rangers supervise the district fire management officers (division chiefs). The district programs consist of wildland fire operations, including preparing and planning for wildland firefighting and hazardous fuels management. The division chiefs supervise battalion chiefs for wildland fire operations and hazardous fuels management. These individuals work together to ensure that a well-planned and well-executed wildland and prescribed fire operations program, which is responsive to land and resource management objectives, is in place. The battalion chiefs for wildland fire operations supervise fire engine captains, hotshot crew superintendents, and fire prevention captains.

This program's managers place highest priority on ensuring employee and public safety through development and management of safety plans, inspections, and workplace monitoring. Additionally, this program's personnel seek to maintain positive working relationships with neighboring fire cooperators. In FY 2004, a total of 9.4 FTEs and \$846,000 were dedicated to the fire and aviation management and administration program area. No shortfalls were identified for this program.

Fire Pre-Suppression and Preparedness

Fire pre-suppression and preparedness activities on the Mendocino include preparing crews and equipment for wildland fire suppression, conducting fire prevention activities, updating the Forest's fire management plan, maintaining and coordinating interagency fire agreements, planning for dispatch mobilization,

Fire and Aviation Management FY04
Requirements by Program



Hazardous Fuel Reduction

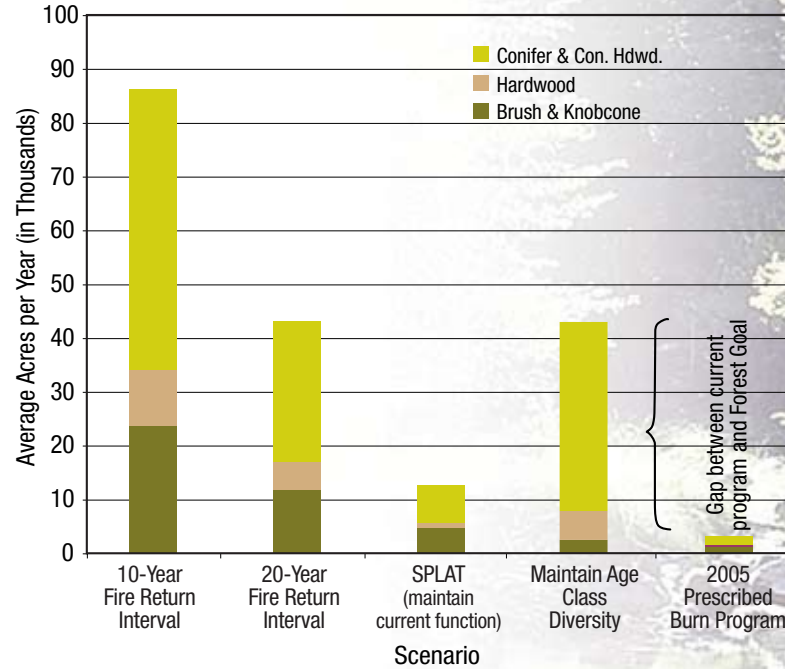
Fire plays an essential role in wildland ecosystems. Historically on the Mendocino, wildfires would burn much of the Forest every 10 to 20 years, clearing out underbrush and fuels on the forest floor while leaving the large, healthy trees standing. This natural cycle kept fuels from building up in the forest, limiting the extent and intensity of individual fires. A policy over the last century of putting out fires to prevent damage to human-made structures and to “save” the forest allowed fuel loads to build to the current dangerous levels. Clearing out the fuels to return the forest to a more natural state, and keep it there, will be an expensive and continuous effort. The alternative is to allow the risk of catastrophic fires to continue growing. The graph shows five bars depicting: (1) average amount of acreage that would naturally burn with a fire return interval of 10 years, (2) average amount of acreage that would naturally burn with a fire return interval of 20 years, (3) acreage needing treatment just to maintain the current (high fuel load) state of the forest using strategically placed area treatments*, (4) the average acreage needing prescribed burning to maintain the minimum age class diversity** called for in the Mendocino’s forest plan, and (5) the acreage of prescribed burning planned for 2005.

* Strategically placed area treatments (SPLAT) refers to a method of arranging fuel treatments in strategic locations across the landscape so that wildfire growth is more effectively reduced compared to randomly located treatments.

** Minimum age class diversity acreage is an estimate of the level of prescribed burning that would be necessary to maintain the forest plan’s minimum levels of 5 percent of each age class per major vegetation type, assuming no other treatment methods (such as mechanical treatments) were used.

In FY 2004, a total of 52.0 FTEs and \$3.16 million were assigned to the Mendocino’s fire pre-suppression and preparedness program. However, an additional 19.0 FTEs and \$1.12 million are needed for this program to operate at recommended standards.

Natural Fire Regime and Prescribed Burning Acres



Hazardous Fuels Reduction

Hazardous fuels reduction treatments are an essential element of the Forest’s vegetation management program. These treatments are needed to reduce the number and severity of large catastrophic wildfires. This program seeks to reintroduce fire to fire-dependent ecosystems, restore the health of the Forest’s numerous vegetation communities, and enhance protection of facilities and communities within and along the Forest boundary. Hazardous fuels reduction activities involve directly managing vegetation using prescribed fire and manual and mechanical thinning methods. Additionally, program managers plan to use wildland fire, when appropriate, to accomplish resource objectives.

ensuring employee physical fitness, inspecting and overseeing crew and equipment readiness, managing the aviation program, and training. Above all, safety is the number one objective. In FY 2004, the Mendocino fire suppression organization’s “most effective level” (or MEL) resources, as determined by the national fire management analysis system program, were 11 fire engine modules, 1 interagency Hotshot hand crew, 1 regional hand crew, 4 1,500-gallon initial attack water tenders, 1 initial attack fire dozer, 4 fire prevention units, 1 emergency command center, and 11 chief officers.



Hazardous fuels reduction is an essential element of the Forest's vegetation management program.

While this business plan makes a distinction between the vegetation management and hazardous fuels reduction programs (vegetation management is included within the resource management functional area), these programs are operationally integrated, enabling the Mendocino to more effectively manage vegetation and fuels.

In FY 2004, available resources for the hazardous fuels reduction program totaled 9.0 FTEs and \$1.05 million. The second largest funding gap on the Forest was identified in the hazardous fuels program. To achieve its annual acreage targets for vegetation and hazardous fuels treatments, the Mendocino needs an additional 21.6 FTEs and \$1.85 million. This would cover a vegetation and hazardous fuels management crew, including supervisory staff, to execute hand-thinning and prescribed burning, as well as a fire ecologist, geographical information system specialist, forest fuels officers, and fuels technicians. Additionally, computer upgrades and a masticator have been included in the identified \$1.85 million needs for this program.

Wildfire Suppression

The wildfire suppression program entails fighting wildland fires within the Mendocino's boundaries. The program's goal is to contain fires to the smallest acreage with the least amount of resource damage and cost while providing for public and firefighter safety. Additionally, the Forest seeks to manage certain wildland fires under specific conditions to restore healthy ecological conditions and maintain scenic landscape character.

Mendocino fire management personnel respond to reports of wildland fires and all risk emergencies due to the threat of fire. Incidents include wildland fires, structural fires, vehicle fires, hazardous material spills, traffic accidents, and false alarms. Larger fires require setting up and operating an incident base to provide food, lodging, sanitation, and supply needs for firefighters. Coordination with law enforcement and adjoining fire jurisdictions is often required. Extended attack operations can involve supervision of hundreds of firefighters and support personnel in a complex interagency environment with substantial urban interface issues.

No needs were identified within the wildfire suppression program, since these activities are funded through a national fire account and not through the Forest's appropriated funds. In FY2004, a total of 28.4 FTEs and \$5.71 million were used for this program.

National Fire and Disaster Support

All off-Forest emergency assignments, during which Mendocino employees help other jurisdictions throughout the United States and abroad, are included within the national fire and disaster support program. The majority of these assignments relate to fighting large forest fires within the United States on national forest lands.

In addition to supporting large fire suppression operations nationally, the Mendocino has also supported the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Past assignments for Mendocino employees have included response to earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, typhoons, and 9-11; space shuttle recovery; and food distribution in Guam, Saipan, and American Samoa.

No shortfalls were identified within the national fire and disaster support program, as these activities are funded through a national fire account and not through the Mendocino's appropriated funds. In FY 2004, a total of 38.1 FTEs and \$2.51 million were dedicated to this program.



The goal of wildfire suppression is to provide the least amount of resource damage to the forest as possible.

Financials and Investments

Financial Summary

Excluding wildfire suppression and capitalized expenditures, the Mendocino's expenditures in FY 2004 totaled \$14.6 million, which was 40 percent (or \$9.6 million) less than that required to execute the Forest's programs to their full operational standards. This gap is based on the business plan's analysis that compares actual services relative to programmatic operating standards and objectives.

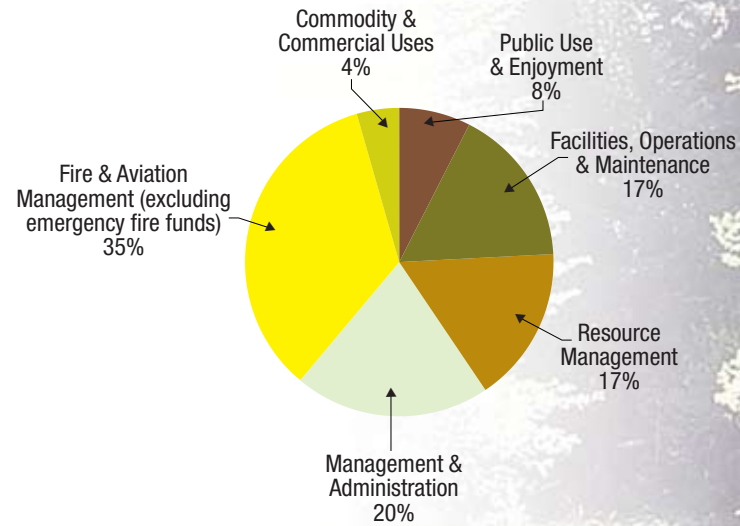
Note to Management and Administration Graph

In FY 2004, the management and administration functional area accounted for 20 percent of the Mendocino's overall budget, excluding wildfire suppression. One-third of the expenditures that fall under this functional area are related to planning as opposed to overhead and administration.

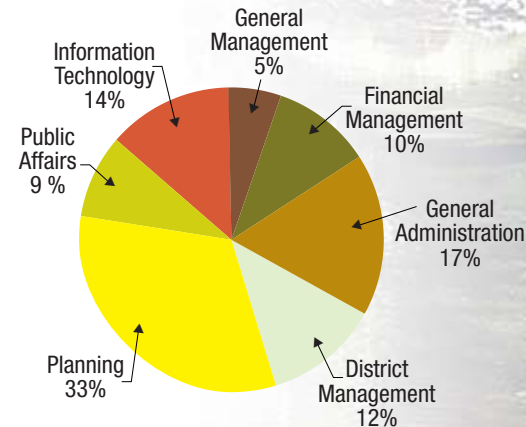
Planning incorporates all natural resource planning at the Forest and project scale. Planning program personnel also work closely with staff in the data management program area, through the inventory and monitoring of forest resources. Planning has responsibility for developing various required planning documents, including resource assessments, forest plan amendments, project environmental analyses, appeals, objections, and litigation. The planning program also has responsibility for preparing annual monitoring reports as well as managing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) programs.

All land management projects must be consistent with the forest plan and comply with a complex variety of environmental laws, regulations, and Forest Service policy. The work needed to adequately document a project's environmental effects increases substantially when the level of controversy is high, such as with most projects that involve timber harvests and other resource extractions. The cost of the additional documentation diverts funding that would be used to implement projects. The Mendocino is attempting to reduce the amount spent on planning through a more collaborative approach as described in the "Strategies" section of this business plan.

FY04 Expenditures by Functional Area
(Excluding Wildfire Suppression)

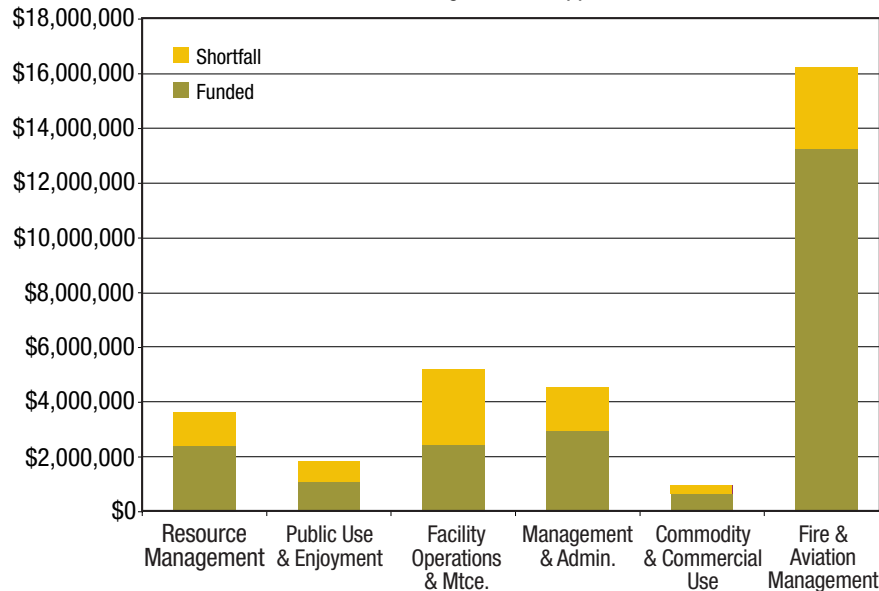


Management & Administration



Of the identified \$9.6 million gap, \$5.9 million was the result of a personnel shortfall of 106 FTEs, or 35 percent of the total FTEs required. This FTE shortfall was distributed throughout the organization. The FTE shortfall represents the magnitude of the human resource needs identified in FY 2004; however, these needs could be fulfilled with various resources, including permanent employees, temporary or seasonal employees, increases in contracted services, additional training, and so forth. Excluding the wildfire suppression program, five of the Mendocino's six functional areas operated at least 33 percent below required FTE levels in FY 2004.

FY04 Required by Functional Area
Excluding Wildfire Suppression



Summary Financial Statement Notes:

Required, available, and surplus/shortfall funds include both personnel and non-personnel expenditures.

Unfunded investments are not considered in the summary financial statement. Information on them can be found in the "Investment Priority" section of this business plan. FY 2004 investments, such as construction projects, are included in the non-base column.

The wildfire suppression and national fire and disaster support programs are deemed to be fully funded, as these programs are funded through a national fire account and not through the Mendocino's appropriated funds. Accordingly, these programs are separated from the rest of fire and aviation management and other Forest programs in the summary financial statement.

Law enforcement is directly funded through the Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Regional Office rather than Mendocino appropriated funds. The law enforcement program's FY 2004 non-personnel expenditures have been excluded from this analysis. However, both personnel and non-personnel needs have been identified.

FY 2004 total expenditures, displayed in the "Historical Expenditures" section (excluding wildfire suppression) of the business plan, are approximately \$900,000 greater than the total shown in the summary financial statement. This is because the summary financial statement excludes obligations that were incurred during previous years and expended in FY 2004, as described in the "Current Forest Operations" chapter of this business plan.

Summary Financial Statement

FUNCTIONAL AREAS AND PROGRAMS	REQUIRED		AVAILABLE					SURPLUS/(SHORTFALL)			
	FTE	Funds	APPROPRIATED			NON-APPROPRIATED		TOTAL		FTE	Funds
			Base	Non-Base (Earmarks, Other)	RAC	Reimbursable	Revenue	FTE	Funds		
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT											
Wildlife Management	5.8	\$461,000	\$251,500	\$0	\$19,000	\$28,700	\$0	3.3	\$299,200	(2.5)	(\$161,800)
Vegetation Management	22.3	\$1,684,900	\$208,100	\$381,900	\$17,300	\$33,800	\$787,000	17.2	\$1,428,100	(5.1)	(\$256,800)
Heritage Resources	3.8	\$324,700	\$79,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.8	\$79,200	(3.0)	(\$245,500)
Data Management	4.2	\$297,000	\$166,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	2.2	\$166,000	(2.0)	(\$131,000)
Watershed, Air & Geologic Management	4.9	\$422,600	\$114,000	\$106,400	\$40,400	\$69,100	\$0	3.3	\$329,900	(1.6)	(\$92,700)
Land Ownership & Adjustment	2.8	\$230,200	\$61,700	\$0	\$0	\$1,900	\$0	0.7	\$63,600	(2.1)	(\$166,600)
Specially Designated Areas Management	4.7	\$222,200	\$28,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.4	\$28,000	(4.2)	(\$194,200)
Subtotal	48.5	\$3,642,600	\$908,500	\$488,300	\$76,700	\$133,500	\$787,000	27.9	\$2,394,000	(20.5)	(\$1,248,600)
PUBLIC USE & ENJOYMENT											
Visitor Safety & Protection	2.2	\$158,900	\$59,000	\$9,900	\$1,600	\$56,100	\$7,500	1.8	\$134,100	(0.4)	(\$24,800)
Recreation Fee Collection	0.6	\$37,300	\$8,500	\$1,400	\$200	\$8,100	\$1,100	0.3	\$19,300	(0.3)	(\$18,000)
Visitor Centers, Public Information, Interpretation & Education	6.8	\$358,500	\$246,600	\$0	\$21,100	\$300	\$0	5.0	\$268,000	(1.8)	(\$90,500)
Recreation Special Uses	1.7	\$138,300	\$59,000	\$9,200	\$1,600	\$56,800	\$7,300	1.6	\$133,900	(0.1)	(\$4,400)
Law Enforcement	7.9	\$1,174,600	\$483,000	\$0	\$0	\$65,600	\$0	5.9	\$548,600	(2.0)	(\$626,000)
Subtotal	19.2	\$1,867,600	\$856,100	\$20,500	\$24,500	\$186,900	\$15,900	14.6	\$1,103,900	(4.6)	(\$763,700)
FACILITY OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE											
Buildings, Grounds & Utilities	4.7	\$601,500	\$352,200	\$58,000	\$36,700	\$2,200	\$52,000	3.7	\$501,100	(1.0)	(\$100,400)
Roads	13.6	\$3,122,200	\$699,600	\$45,800	\$38,400	\$27,700	\$9,000	8.6	\$820,500	(5.0)	(\$2,301,700)
Trails (Motorized and Non Motorized)	12.1	\$738,300	\$237,000	\$42,600	\$6,300	\$222,500	\$30,600	7.9	\$539,000	(4.2)	(\$199,300)
Campgrounds & Developed Sites	8.3	\$602,100	\$178,500	\$123,700	\$4,800	\$170,800	\$23,400	6.0	\$501,200	(2.3)	(\$100,900)
Concentrated Use Areas	2.2	\$129,000	\$34,300	\$8,600	\$900	\$31,900	\$4,500	1.2	\$80,200	(1.0)	(\$48,800)
Subtotal	40.9	\$5,193,100	\$1,501,600	\$278,700	\$87,100	\$455,100	\$119,500	27.4	\$2,442,000	(13.6)	(\$2,751,100)
MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION											
General Management	1.7	\$156,700	\$156,500	\$0	\$0	\$200	\$0	1.7	\$156,700	-	\$0
Financial Management	4.5	\$309,900	\$309,500	\$0	\$0	\$400	\$0	4.5	\$309,900	-	\$0
General Administration	10.9	\$632,000	\$516,200	\$0	\$0	\$700	\$0	8.7	\$516,900	(2.2)	(\$115,100)
District Management	6.7	\$477,700	\$362,400	\$0	\$0	\$500	\$0	4.7	\$362,900	(2.0)	(\$114,800)
Planning	26.2	\$2,069,700	\$954,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	11.3	\$954,200	(14.9)	(\$1,115,500)
Public Affairs	5.3	\$450,500	\$263,500	\$0	\$0	\$400	\$0	2.8	\$263,900	(2.5)	(\$186,600)
Information Technology	7.4	\$471,500	\$407,000	\$0	\$0	\$600	\$0	6.4	\$407,600	(1.0)	(\$63,900)
Subtotal	62.7	\$4,568,000	\$2,969,300	\$0	\$0	\$2,800	\$0	40.1	\$2,972,100	(22.6)	(\$1,595,900)
COMMODITY & COMMERCIAL USES											
Forest Products	0.2	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.2	\$11,000	-	\$0
Non-Recreation Special Uses	1.9	\$141,700	\$41,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.6	\$41,200	(1.3)	(\$100,500)
Minerals	0.1	\$12,400	\$12,400	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.1	\$12,400	-	\$0
Timber	7.9	\$671,500	\$375,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$169,200	6.0	\$545,000	(1.8)	(\$126,500)
Grazing	1.7	\$115,900	\$40,300	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.7	\$40,300	(1.0)	(\$75,600)
Subtotal	11.7	\$952,500	\$480,700	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$169,200	7.6	\$649,900	(4.1)	(\$302,600)
FIRE & AVIATION MANAGEMENT											
Management & Administration	9.4	\$846,000	\$846,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	9.4	\$846,000	-	\$0
Fire Pre-Suppression & Preparedness	71.0	\$4,277,800	\$3,136,000	\$0	\$0	\$21,800	\$0	52.0	\$3,157,800	(19.0)	(\$1,120,000)
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	30.6	\$2,893,700	\$867,900	\$0	\$48,800	\$16,700	\$112,300	9.0	\$1,045,700	(21.6)	(\$1,848,000)
Subtotal	111.1	\$8,017,500	\$4,849,900	\$0	\$48,800	\$38,500	\$112,300	70.5	\$5,049,500	(40.6)	(\$2,968,000)
Total (excluding Wildfire Suppression)	294.1	\$24,241,300	\$11,566,100	\$787,500	\$237,100	\$816,800	\$1,203,900	188.0	\$14,611,400	(106.0)	(\$9,629,900)
Wildfire Suppression	28.4	\$5,706,500	\$5,706,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	28.4	\$5,706,500	-	\$0
National Fire & Disaster Support	38.1	\$2,513,300	\$2,513,300	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	38.1	\$2,513,300	-	\$0
Subtotal	66.6	\$8,219,800	\$8,219,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	66.6	\$8,219,800	-	\$0
Grand Total	360.7	\$32,461,100	\$19,785,900	\$787,500	\$237,100	\$816,800	\$1,203,900	254.6	\$22,831,200	(106.0)	(\$9,629,900)

Investment Priorities



Howard Basin Recreation Area needs rehabilitation.



Road improvements will greatly enhance safety and access in many areas.

In addition to the funding shortfalls identified in the “Current Forest Operations” section of this business plan, the Mendocino has also developed a list of investment priorities, which if funded, would address many of the Forest’s most pressing needs. The following investments, with a total estimated cost of \$10.9 million, fall into two major areas of need: (1) deferred maintenance and new facilities and (2) resource management.

Deferred Maintenance and New Facilities

The Mendocino has an extremely large deferred maintenance backlog. Many of the existing office, work center, and housing facilities are below health and safety standards and need to be renovated, remodeled, demolished, or replaced. An investment in permanent, Forest Service-owned facilities would reduce deferred maintenance, improve employee recruitment and retention, and provide a safer and more enjoyable working and living environment for employees. The following list describes the Forest’s top deferred maintenance and capital improvement priorities.

Recreation Campgrounds and Facilities, Estimated Cost \$3,209,600

The three campgrounds in the Howard Basin Recreation Area need to be rehabilitated to improve conditions at these facilities and allow the Forest to charge fees under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act at these sites.

- Rehabilitating Howard Basin Recreation Area campgrounds – Little Doe, Howard Meadows, and Howard Lake. Estimated cost \$405,600.

The deferred maintenance backlog at recreational sites and facilities could be greatly reduced by replacing toilets, picnic tables, and fee collection tubes.

- Replace remaining wooden toilets with concrete toilets (15 toilets). Estimated cost \$225,000.
- Replace remaining wooden picnic tables with concrete tables (40 tables). Estimated cost \$30,000.
- Replace fee tubes with cash box style fee collection stations (30 fee stations). Estimated cost \$24,000.

Access to the four campgrounds at Letts Lake would be greatly improved by putting a chipseal on the main access road. Paving other access roads as well as campground spurs, paths to toilets,

and the parking area at the Plaskett Meadows Recreation Area would reduce dust throughout the recreation area and make the new toilets accessible. Gravel for the roadways for the Penny Pines and Deer Valley campgrounds would provide easier access during winter, which is the main OHV use period.

- Install pavement (chipseal) on Roads M10 and 17N02 to Letts Lake Recreation Area (7 miles). Estimated cost \$1,500,000.
- Pave Plaskett Meadows campground and day use area access roads, two loops, 34 campground spurs, and paths to toilets. Estimated cost \$530,400.
- Gravel Penny Pines and Deer Valley campgrounds’ access roads, parking spurs, and paths to toilets. Estimated cost \$494,400.

Fire Facilities, Estimated Cost \$2,905,000

A number of investments are needed to provide safe and effective work and living spaces for fire crews stationed on the Mendocino:

- Remodel existing structures, office building, and barracks to accommodate fire crews at the Eel River Fire Station. Estimated cost \$200,000.
- Construct new barracks and office space for fire crews stationed at Howard Mill Station. Estimated cost \$1,500,000.
- Construct new engine bay and a second barracks at Soda Creek Station. Estimated cost \$800,000.
- Build new barracks for fire crew stationed at Alder Springs Station. Estimated cost \$405,000.

Administrative Facilities and Transportation System, Estimated Cost \$3,400,000

Road M6 connects Alder Springs and the Lake Pillsbury basin, and is located within the Eel River and Black Butte key watersheds. Nine miles of Road M6 remain unsurfaced. Placing crushed aggregate base on Road M6 for this 9-mile section would improve safety and convenience for travelers and reduce sediment in the key watersheds. Estimated cost \$1,700,000.

The Upper Lake District Office complex is below health and safety standards and needs to be demolished and replaced. Estimated cost \$1,700,000. (Cost of the repair, if possible, would equal or exceed cost to replace the complex.)

Resource Management Benefits

Investments in the area of resource management fall into two general categories: (1) protecting habitats from fire and road impacts and (2) educating the public. The investments for decommissioning roads for habitat protection highlight the need for integrating activities across many program areas. Overall, these investments address needs for (1) gathering background data to understand the response of the land to management activities, (2) gathering data to characterize sedimentation of streams from roads, (3) decommissioning roads to stop erosion and sedimentation of streams, (4) rehabilitating riparian habitat, and (5) educating the public about the nature and value of heritage resources on the Forest, which could lead to additional volunteer and partnership opportunities.

Road Sediment Survey to Comply with Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plan, Estimated Cost \$100,000

The Middle Fork Eel River and Upper Main Eel River total maximum daily load (TMDL) analysis identified roads as a source of sediment to these anadromous fisheries. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and North Coast Water Quality Control Board will develop an implementation plan to reduce sediment production from roads. The road sediment survey will use forest roads analysis to identify specific roads and sites of pollution and determine the extent of sediment delivery to streams. The Forest will use the survey information to develop rehabilitation plans for future contract work.

Bedrock and Geomorphic Mapping and Landslide Delivery Rates, Estimated Cost \$90,000

Portions of the Forest have not been mapped for bedrock geology nor has geomorphic mapping from aerial photography been validated in the field. Both are important for determining the response of the land to management activities.

Landslide delivery rate studies will be needed where the EPA and North Coast Water Quality Control Board will require sediment budgets, such as the Middle Fork Eel River and Upper Main Eel River TMDLs.

Road Decommissioning and Improvement, Estimated Annual Cost \$350,000

The forest roads analysis process (RAP) has identified potential areas of road sediment delivery to streams, and the road sediment survey will locate exact sources of pollution and develop remediation plans. This investment is to fund road decommissioning projects and eliminate chronic sediment delivery from Forest roads. Downstream water quality, cold water fisheries and aquatic conditions, reservoir storage, and domestic water use would benefit from eliminating sediment generated from roads.

Soda Creek Riparian Improvement Project, Estimated Cost \$250,000

This long-term stream improvement project is designed to benefit anadromous fish passage and rearing and improve water quality on a tributary stream to the Main Fork of the Eel River. Since 1997, stream improvement structures have been constructed in several eroding portions of the channel. The channel has stabilized and riparian vegetation is flourishing. The work is approximately one-half completed. Funding is needed to fully implement the project according to design plans and objectives.

Lee Logan East and West, Estimated Cost \$450,000

This investment would fund decommissioning of closed sections of Lee Logan Road to improve habitat for anadromous fish by reducing the risk of sedimentation. This portion of the road is activating a landslide which, left unchecked, will put tons of sediment into the Black Butte River. The road needs to be removed and reshaped. Some structures may be needed to control surface and ground water runoff and stabilize the slide.

Passport in Time, Estimated Annual Cost \$45,000

The "Passport in Time" (PIT) program is one of the Mendocino's priority investments. Expanding this program will increase the number of and opportunities for volunteers on the Forest and will help achieve broader heritage resources management and enhancement goals. An estimated \$45,000 would support three PIT projects annually.



Soda Creek Riparian Improvement Project will benefit wildlife and water quality.

Heritage Resources Interpretation and Public Education, Estimated Annual Cost \$41,000

The purpose of this project is to increase the public's knowledge about the nature and value of heritage resources on the Forest. To accomplish this goal, thematic brochures and other products focusing on archaeological and historic resources, prehistoric cultures, Native American tribes, local history, and the Mendocino's administrative history would be developed. This information would be distributed to the public and added to the Forest's web page. Some of this information, along with artifacts, historic photographs, and other documentary information, would be used to develop displays for the Forest's administrative office. To increase public interpretation and education opportunities, \$6,000 is needed to prepare revolving office exhibits, and \$35,000 is needed to develop, print, and distribute interpretive brochures.



All improved recreation facilities should be added to the fee collection system.

Strategies

While the Forest has identified many personnel and funding gaps that would need to be filled to fully accomplish all of the programs' work and expectations, the Forest also understands and acknowledges that it is unrealistic to expect all of these unfunded needs to be met. The Mendocino staff has maintained basic resource management and public service levels through creatively using its workforce and integrating the work of its various programs. While all program areas have identified shortfalls in their capability to fully accomplish their missions, some areas stand out as most critical. Therefore, the Forest leadership has identified five strategies aimed at meeting the Mendocino's most critical shortfalls, where the Forest can focus attention and efforts in the coming years.

Strategy: Increase revenue by implementing fees at eligible recreation sites under the Forest Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) and collecting fees associated with outfitter guides and recreation events.

To improve the recreating public's opportunities and experience, the Mendocino would like to include all recreation facilities that offer improved facilities and specific amenities in the recreation fee collection system. The Forest Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) requires that a majority of the fees be reinvested at the site of collection.

The Mendocino currently manages 14 out of 40 recreation sites under FLREA. The Forest has been able to improve facilities and services over the last few years at the 14 sites where fees have been collected.

Benefits

- In FY 2004, the Mendocino collected \$63,000 in recreation fees. An estimated additional \$45,000 a year could be collected in fees at the seven proposed new sites that would be eligible under FLREA.
- Fee collection at the new sites would help the Mendocino eliminate the deferred maintenance workload at these sites, which the Forest has been unable to afford up to this time.
- Once the deferred maintenance workload is eliminated, the Forest could then look at other opportunities to improve services for the users at these sites.

- The Forest would be able to use the majority of collected outfitter guide and recreation event fees to locally administer associated permits and events.

Challenges

There are very few obstacles related to this strategy since the procedures for fee collection are already a part of current operations. However, some of the new sites would need:

- additional trash collection services and minor facility upgrades and
- new fee collection tubes.

Action Plan and Investments

As soon as guidelines for FLREA are completed, the Mendocino will identify all possible recreation sites that may be eligible for inclusion in the recreation fee collection system. The Forest has already identified seven potential sites. The Forest would then develop business plans for the sites to be added, and submit the plans to the recreation resource advisory committee for approval and, upon approval, notify the public of the new charges. Costs associated with these steps are estimated to be less than \$10,000. Implementation of this strategy can be expected in 2006.

Strategy: Increase the number and diversity of partnerships.

Partnerships are currently an important, but relatively small part of the Mendocino's overall operations. Many program area staffs identified partnership opportunities that were available to them, but which they were unable to pursue due to lack of adequate resources. The Forest's strategy is to invest in developing the internal processes necessary to make partnerships a standard way of doing business and identify external efforts that will result in future partnerships.

The Forest's goal is to increase partnership and volunteer programs by at least 4 percent annually as interested citizens, groups, and organizations join with the Forest Service to maintain, improve, restore, and protect the rich diversity of natural resources in the Mendocino. Whether contributions are through volunteers, funding, or other in-kind services, partnerships are an important part of the Mendocino's future.

Partnerships provide creative ways for solving public land management issues where consensus and community interaction are essential to achieving the most productive outcome. Partnerships have been effective at strengthening community relations and broadening support for the Agency's actions. The Forest recognizes that collaboration with key publics is critical to achieving the Mendocino's resource management goals. Because most of the Forest's landscapes are fragmented geographically, politically, and by ownership, cooperation across boundaries is essential. Cooperation and coordination are embodied within such partnerships as those between the Forest and Coordinated Resource Management Planning (CRMP) groups and the Forest and Resource Advisory Committees (RACs), both of which bring together people from diverse interests to collaboratively solve problems.

Benefits

The benefits of the Forest's strategy to increase the number and diversity of its partnerships include:

- improved public service,
- increased volunteer participation,
- better decision making through increased collaboration,
- additional work on the ground accomplished (\$1.2 million worth of work on the Mendocino was contributed by partners and volunteers in FY 2004), and
- improved coordination with partners.

Challenges

- It takes continuous effort to establish and maintain partnerships. Partnerships often go unrealized because employees do not have the time or resources to pursue partners. Strong coordination is needed to identify and maintain contacts and manage program logistics.
- Partners are interested in participating on projects; however, projects require proper environmental analysis, which takes time and resources. Partners are often not willing to fund environmental analyses.
- The Forest will need to secure the resources to develop and maintain a partner database.

Action Plan and Investments

The action plan for implementing the Forest's partnership strategy includes the following tasks and investments:

- Create and maintain a partnership database.
\$12,000/year
- Provide salary for partnership and volunteer coordination.
\$70,000/year
- Provide funding for employee time to pursue partnerships as a way of doing business.
5 days/year/employee
- Set aside seed money to pay for environmental analysis so that projects are ready to take advantage of partnership opportunities.
\$20,000/year
- Fund outreach to new partners and volunteers.
\$25,000/year
- Create awareness for partnerships and volunteers through a marketing plan.
\$45,000
- Develop an "Adopt-A-Resource" program.
\$4,000/year
- Host volunteer events.
\$25,000/year
- Encourage establishment of a "Friends of the Mendocino" Association.
\$10,500/year

External Efforts

Key components of the Mendocino's external efforts for building partnerships include:

• Adopt-A-Resource Program

The goal of this program is to have partners and volunteers participate in restoring, improving, and maintaining the national forests. Some key potential areas for increasing partner and volunteer involvement on the Mendocino are trail maintenance, recreation facility repair and maintenance, resource monitoring, watershed improvement, forest stand improvement, and fish and wildlife habitat improvement.

• Volunteer Events

Annual observances, such as Arbor Day and National Public Lands Day, provide excellent opportunities to involve a broad spectrum of the public in hands-on resource management on the Mendocino. Additionally, participants benefit from learning new skills and increasing their knowledge about the Forest and its resources. Developing volunteer event templates would assist potential partner groups, organizations, and individuals in understanding and organizing these events.

• "Friends of the Mendocino" Association

Introducing the public to the Forest through partnerships and volunteer programs helps create an environment where friendships are born and associations formed. This longer-term goal conforms to the Mendocino National Forest Vision 2025 guiding principle of "building partnerships and collaborating with stakeholders who are concerned about the health of their national forest and protection of communities."



Volunteers can become valuable partners to the Forest.

Partners

Partners have made significant contributions to Mendocino's operations. Some examples include:

Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Community

The California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission (OHMVR) has provided annual grants to the Mendocino for OHV program operation and maintenance, facilities, restoration projects, and law enforcement and conservation activities. In conjunction with OHMVR Commission funding, the Blue Ribbon Coalition, California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA), and a number of local OHV user clubs have donated many hours of valuable people and equipment time to maintain and improve OHV trails through vegetation trimming, erosion control, and other restoration work as well as repair of fire-damaged campgrounds and trails.

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) is a non-profit organization supporting education, conservation, restoration, and enhancement of natural habitats related to the future of elk, other wildlife, and their habitats. The RMEF has provided grants for elk habitat improvement projects in the Lake Pillsbury basin area of the Upper Lake Ranger District. This work involved prescribed burning and brush mastication to increase foraging opportunities for elk and other wildlife. In 2004, RMEF also provided funding to purchase and install an interpretive sign for the tule elk herd at Lake Pillsbury.



The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation has provided grants for elk habitat improvement projects.

National Wild Turkey Federation

The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), a non-profit organization supporting scientific wildlife management on public and private lands, has provided funding for prescribed burning, meadow restoration, and construction of water guzzlers to improve wild turkey habitat on the Grindstone Ranger District.

Sacramento River Discovery Center

The Sacramento River Discovery Center (SRDC) is a non-profit organization headquartered at the Mendocino's Red Bluff Recreation Area. The SRDC provides outreach and environmental education to enhance the public's understanding, appreciation, wise use, and stewardship of the resources of the Sacramento River watershed. Schools and community groups visit the SRDC to take part in educational programs to learn about natural resource management, Native American cultural heritage, and watershed rehabilitation.



Schools and community groups visit the Sacramento River Discovery Center to take part in educational programs.

Resource Advisory Committees

Four local county resource advisory committees (RACs) have been established under the Payments to States Legislation of 2000. The RACs, which are comprised of individuals representing community, government, business, tribal, recreation user, and environmental interests, recommend resource improvement and development projects on Mendocino National Forest System lands, or on private lands where there is a benefit to the Forest. Meadow enhancement,



Valley View Conservation Camp Crews construct a trail from the North Fork Campground to the Middle Fork of Stony Creek.

watershed improvement, campground rehabilitation and improvement, and wildlife and fisheries habitat improvement projects have been realized as a result of this program.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF)

The objectives of this program are to provide meaningful work opportunities and valuable job training and development program for State inmates and residents of California Department of Corrections (CDC) Conservation Camps. The Forest Service serves as a host agent by providing worksites and training for enrollees. In past years, CDC crews have been involved in making signs, clearing vegetation from roads and trails, and assisting in fire suppression activities.

The California Conservation Corps

The Forest Service serves as a host organization, in conjunction with the California Conservation Corps (CCC), and provides work opportunities for the participants. Participants are paid minimum wage and engage in conservation work, community service, and emergency assistance. CCC crews have reconstructed wilderness trails in both the Snow Mountain and Yolla Bolly Wilderness Areas. They have also been involved in burned area emergency rehabilitation activities following wildfire events.

Student Conservation Association

In conjunction with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), the Forest Service provides skill development and educational opportunities in principles and practices of natural resource management and conservation to SCA members. Students work during the summer and receive no salary, contributing their time. In 2004 and 2005, SCA students have been involved in northern spotted owl surveys and research into potential noise impacts on owls from off highway vehicles.

Strategy: Reduce the cost of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and planning through better collaboration with stakeholders.

The cost and effort involved in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), appeals, and litigation has grown tremendously, reducing the amount of funding available for getting work done on the ground. The Forest's strategy is to analyze the entire planning process to identify key decision points and determine where choices can be made earlier in the process to avoid incurring costs later. Moving decision points to earlier in the process can be accomplished by using better information, changing decision criteria, and involving stakeholders earlier in the process.

Involving stakeholders earlier will be a key component of this strategy. By working with stakeholders to develop shared goals and priorities, the Mendocino hopes to minimize controversy while maximizing opportunities for collaborative partnerships. The Forest's leadership has developed some preliminary ideas about how this will be accomplished. Most of these ideas center on providing an environment that encourages more productive dialogue on a regular, ongoing basis. Examples include interest-based forums and multi-party project reviews. The Forest needs to involve stakeholders in developing these ideas and adapt as planning proceeds.

Benefits

The benefits of this strategy include:

- better focus on accomplishing the most important resource management projects,
- the ability to treat more acres by freeing up funds previously spent on planning and by more effectively using resources directly for resource management, and
- better relationships with stakeholders.

Challenges

There are some challenges associated with this strategy, including,

- some targets missed in the short term;
- lack of staff time to analyze the planning process;
- current lack of understanding between the Forest Service and some stakeholders;

- need for a methodology to communicate and collaborate with stakeholders; and
- resistance by staff to using a collaborative approach, which requires extra time up front.

Action Plan

- Assess the environmental planning process to identify cost drivers; bottlenecks, in terms of program areas and process points; and key stakeholders with an interest in the affected program areas.
- Implement recommendations of the Forest’s collaboration task group for improving communication and collaboration with stakeholders to better identify shared priorities for the Mendocino’s program or work.
- Modify the Forest’s program of work to make best use of projects that have broad support to accomplish the Mendocino’s assigned targets.

Cost

- Analysis and mapping of the planning process *to be determined*
- Training in interest-based negotiations \$10,000
- Facilitator services for new interest-based forums \$15,000
- Initial data acquisition needed for informing decisions early in process to be determined
- Development of methodology for collaboration and initial outreach to be determined

Strategy: Reduce costs associated with fleet and heavy equipment operations.

Proper management of the Mendocino’s fleet and heavy equipment is an important part of administering the Forest’s programs. After FY 2004, most of the Forest’s fleet maintenance work was outsourced. The Forest does, however, have control over the number and use of vehicles.

There are currently 91 passenger vehicles on the Mendocino for 175 permanent and seasonal employees as well as 121 temporary and part time employees. Every program on the Forest pays for vehicles in two ways: (1) a fixed ownership rate paid each year based on the number of vehicles the program holds and (2) a mileage-related charge for use. In FY 2004, the Forest spent approximately \$1.4 million on fleet.

The focus of this cost reduction strategy is on analyzing vehicle utilization and determining the number of vehicles and heavy equipment needed to support program and Forest needs. The analysis would also determine the appropriate type and capacity of vehicles needed as well as consider the possibility of making more Forest vehicles “pooled,” in other words, not specifically designated for one person or program.

Benefits

This strategy could provide multiple benefits.

- Reducing the fleet would lower program fixed ownership rates.
- Fewer vehicles would lower annual maintenance costs.
- Sold surplus vehicles would increase the amount of money in the Forest’s working capital fund, which would allow for future purchases and repairs.
- An organized “pooled” vehicle system would increase efficiencies and lower costs.
- The Forest would encourage the most cost effective use of either personal occupancy vehicles or Forest fleet vehicles.
- Sharing heavy equipment with other national forests would save money and increase economies of scale.



Involving stakeholders to develop shared goals and priorities.

Challenges

The Forest would face several challenges in implementing the fleet and heavy equipment strategy, including:

- changing the employees' mindset of having fully dedicated vehicles,
- the time associated with selling surplus vehicles, and
- the time-consuming analysis to determine actual vehicle and heavy equipment needs across the Forest.

Action Plan

The action plan for implementing the Forest's fleet and heavy equipment cost reduction strategy includes the following tasks and investments:

1. Complete the fleet analysis.
 - Analyze Forest Service vehicle utilization.
 - Analyze utilization records for personal occupancy vehicles by month and traveler.
 - Compare utilization trends between four- and two-wheel drive vehicles.
 - Analyze the Forest's needs and season of use for heavy equipment.
2. Develop new fleet policies and processes.
 - Based on the above analysis, determine which vehicles are surplus and which vehicles are best "pooled" for multiple users.
 - Create a web-based sign-out program and policy for use of "pooled" vehicles.
 - Examine current Mendocino policy, which encourages personal occupancy vehicle use, to determine appropriateness of such a policy and to revise it, if necessary.

3. Realign fleet infrastructure with new policies and processes.
 - Sell or release surplus vehicles.
 - Replace vehicles to match the determined mix of four- and two-wheel drive vehicles needed for the Forest
 - Meet with other Northern Province national forests to determine the feasibility and availability of heavy equipment sharing.

Total estimated costs \$15,850

- Analysis \$6,000
- Action based on analysis \$2,000
- Sale of surplus vehicles \$3,000
- Creation of web-based sign out for "pooled" vehicles \$2,350
- Replacement of vehicles to match appropriate capacity needs No Net Change
- Meetings with other Province forests to discuss sharing \$2,500



Determine the most cost effective use of vehicles and heavy equipment.

Strategy: Reduce costs associated with the annual and deferred maintenance of roads.

Operation and maintenance of the Mendocino's transportation system is important for public use and enjoyment as well as management of the Forest. However, due largely to decreases in commercial forest products revenue combined with an associated decline in appropriated funding, spanning the last two decades, the deferred maintenance backlog for the existing transportation system has skyrocketed to an estimated \$22.9 million. Deferred maintenance is defined as the accumulation of unperformed annual maintenance, and it is expected to continue growing as a vast majority of the Forest's culverts are rapidly approaching the end of their life expectancy. Left unattended, roads will continue to deteriorate with unacceptable consequences, potentially depositing thousands of cubic yards of sediment into critical watersheds. Future investments in roads could substantially reduce annual maintenance costs as well as improve water quality and aquatic habitat.

Based on current funding levels, only 26 percent of the basic annual maintenance operations are being conducted, leading to a \$2.3 million unfunded service gap. The simplest means of reducing annual costs would be to lower the assigned maintenance level of established roads, where appropriate, and to convert existing road templates to a more modern, self-maintaining style and design (with dips, out-sloping, and so forth). The primary tools available to reduce the Forest's annual road maintenance costs are seasonal use restrictions, downgrading of service levels, and road closures. Because all of these options require potentially controversial trade-offs in driver comfort, convenience, mileage of open roads, and seasonal access, the Forest must collaborate with stakeholders to develop workable solutions.

Benefits

This strategy could provide the following benefits:

- lower annual maintenance costs associated with downgraded service levels and self-maintaining designs;
- less erosion and run-off, resulting in reduced sedimentation and higher water quality;
- decreased levels of deferred and annual maintenance; and
- a safer and better managed transportation system.

Challenges

The Forest recognizes a number of challenges in implementing this roads strategy.

- A large time commitment is required to complete the processes to decide which roads should have their service levels lowered.
- There would be public concerns about decisions to close and/or decommission roads.
- Decommissioning and redesigning roads is extremely costly.
- Costs are associated with closure gates, enforcement, analysis, public outreach, and environmental analyses to inform decisions related to road management activities.

Action Plan

The action plan for implementing the Forest's roads cost reduction strategy includes the following actions:

- Update and analyze the Mendocino's Forest-Scale Roads Analysis Report (January 2003) to prioritize which roads can be downgraded, seasonally closed, converted to a lower maintenance design, or decommissioned.
- Seek low-investment ways to reduce the annual routine surface maintenance workload to maximize funding available for critical maintenance work.
- Address the annual and deferred maintenance backlog by implementing recommendations in the updated Forest-Scale Roads Analysis Report.
- Continually update the Infrastructure database.



Left unattended, roads will continue to deteriorate with unacceptable consequences.

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