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Business Plan for the Stanislaus National Forest



A Window of Opportunity

Welcome to the Stanislaus National Forest

As the Forest Service enters its second century of service to the American public, it is an appropriate time for us to reflect on both where the Stanislaus National Forest has been and what the future may hold for your National Forest.



Cover Photo is of Powell Lake.

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Introduction

The Stanislaus National Forest is important to many people—from people who make a living from forest products to those who visit the Emigrant Wilderness for the solitude it provides. Generations of people have worked in, lived in, and visited the Forest, creating memories and lifestyles many hope will be passed on to future generations. Our challenge is to maintain these treasured lifestyles amid the changing times we are experiencing. Our hope is that we can bring people along with us as we evolve our operations to meet our motto of Caring for the Land and Serving People.

To this end, this business plan was initiated to provide the outline for how the Stanislaus will achieve its mission in the coming years. The purpose of this business plan is to communicate the Forest's financial status to principal stakeholders by answering the following questions:

- What kinds of programs, goods, and services does the Forest provide?
- Where does the money come from and what does the Forest do with it?
- What is needed to manage the Forest effectively?

The business planning process was undertaken to accomplish three main tasks. First, it provides forest managers with a synopsis of the Stanislaus' funding history. Second, it presents a clear, detailed picture of the state of current Forest operations and funding. Finally, it outlines the Forest's priorities and funding and operational strategies.

The Business Plan Initiative is a joint effort of the USDA Forest Service and the National Parks Conservation Association's (NPCA) Center for Park Management. This partnership with NPCA has allowed the Stanislaus to prepare the financial and operational baseline knowledge presented in the following sections of this business plan.

This business plan is part of a continuing effort by the Stanislaus to serve the people who care for the land. We look forward to working with you in this effort.

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Forest Supervisor's Foreword



Forest Supervisor

“Our responsibility to the Nation is to be more than careful stewards of the land; we must be constant catalysts for change.”

These words from Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the Forest Service, are as pertinent today as they were when they were stated in the early years of the Agency’s formation. As the Forest Service enters its second century of service to the American public, it is an appropriate time for us to reflect on both where the Stanislaus National Forest has been and what the future may hold for your National Forest. This reflection and forward look is the impetus behind the Business Plan Initiative.

Over the last century, the Stanislaus met the multiple-use mandate that guides the Forest Service. Meeting this multiple-use mandate today is more complex because of ever-increasing pressures on national forests, as outlined in the Chief of the Forest Service’s Four Threats. The threats facing the Stanislaus include: increasing levels of fuels and associated wild fire risk; encroachment of invasive species into productive range and timber land; loss of open space on neighboring private lands; and the impacts from unmanaged recreation. The recognition of these threats is reflected in the changing budget trends for the Stanislaus as seen in this plan.

Significant budget increases can be seen in the fuels program. Fuels reduction work can be accomplished while meeting other resource objectives. Appropriate fuels treatments not only result in a mosaic pattern of fuel breaks across the landscape, which protects local communities, but provides jobs and timber to local mills or biomass to co-generation plants. Without this symbiotic relationship between fuels treatments and an infrastructure to process the by-products of these treatments, this important work would not get done.

With this in mind, the Stanislaus National Forest is greatly intensifying its efforts in fuels treatments and the commercial timber volume that can flow from these treatments. Timber offered for sale is expected to more than double over the levels of recent years.

Further, as California’s—as well as the Nation’s—population grows, the value of the Stanislaus from a recreational, as well as intrinsic, perspective cannot be lost. Its spectacular scenery draws millions of visitors each year. We need to continue to provide quality recreation experiences to the public, protect the forest resources, and support the tourism industry that is important to the local economy.

Our work will not be accomplished without the continued assistance from our partners. This business plan recognizes the importance of these relationships and outlines opportunities for new partnerships. Without their assistance, the Stanislaus will not be able to provide the services the public has come to expect.

We are working to address these, as well as many more issues, that affect the management of the Stanislaus National Forest. This business plan, in conjunction with the Forest’s land and resource management plan, will assist us in formulating not only what we will accomplish, but how we will accomplish this work, as we move forward into the next century of service.

Tom Quinn

Forest Supervisor, Stanislaus National Forest



Granite Creek within the Groveland Ranger District

Executive Summary

The Business Plan Initiative is a tool that allows the Stanislaus to assess financial trends and develop strategies that, once implemented, could improve Forest operations or generate new resources for fulfilling the Forest's mission. By producing this business plan, the Stanislaus hopes to communicate the Forest's financial position and its proposals for future improvements to all stakeholders with an interest in the long-term success of the Forest and its surrounding communities.

Budget Trends and History

Between 1995 and 2004, the overall budget of the Stanislaus grew from \$22.4 million to \$25.2 million, displaying an average growth rate of just over 1 percent per year. Over this 10-year period, the budget has fluctuated year-to-year by as much as 15 percent. For example, the Forest's budget was 12 percent higher in 2004 than it was in 1995, but actually fell by 14 percent from 2003 to 2004.

Embedded within these overall changes are two opposite trends, one for fire-related activities of the Forest and the other for non-fire related programs. Funding for fire preparedness and hazardous fuels reduction has grown significantly over the past 10 years: fiscal year (FY) 2004 appropriations were 470 percent higher than 1995 levels. Funding for non-fire related activities fell during the same time period, decreasing by 31 percent from \$20.5 million to \$14.1 million between 1995 and 2004.

In addition to these trends, the Stanislaus has seen changes in the composition of its funding. In 1995, 59 percent of the Forest's funding came from Congressional appropriations, with the balance coming primarily from revenue generated by timber and other commodity-related activities. By 2004, significant declines in timber revenue meant that 90 percent of the Stanislaus' budget came from Congressional appropriations.

Overview of Operations

For analysis and presentation purposes, Forest activities have been broken down into 33 program areas that are grouped within the following six functional areas: facilities operations and maintenance, management and administration, commodities and commercial uses, resource management, fire and aviation management, and public use and enjoyment. Program area leaders and staff evaluated each program's goals and operational standards and identified unfunded program needs associated with achieving these goals and standards.

Nearly all of the program areas exhibited shortfalls in personnel and other non-personnel resources, such as equipment and supplies. Altogether, the Forest identified a shortfall of \$12.4 million, which includes the equivalent personnel costs of 148 full time equivalents (FTEs) of labor as well as other resources, such as supplies, training, and vehicles.

The analysis presented in this business plan represents a snapshot in time. Because of the changes occurring within the Forest Service, including national centralization of programs, such as financial management, human resources, and information technology, and outsourcing of fleet maintenance, the Forest's operations described in this business plan will continue to evolve.

Key Investment Needs

The Forest leadership team identified key investment needs for the Stanislaus, working with the Forest staff to discuss numerous projects and ideas and then prioritize them. The key investment priorities for the Forest are comprised of four projects, which total approximately \$110 million. These projects are not inclusive of all potential investment needs on the Forest. Three of the projects are focused on reducing the backlog of work in maintaining roads, trails, and facilities, which has not been accomplished due to years of funding shortfalls.

Strategies

Given current national government budget conditions, the Stanislaus must be creative in securing the resources needed to accomplish its mission. Financial resource gaps are likely to be closed through additional revenue sources, expanded partnerships, and efficiency initiatives, not through larger appropriations from Congress. The Forest leadership team identified strategies that the Forest will further explore to close identified funding gaps. These include:

- implementing a fleet analysis to identify potential cost efficiencies;
- implementing the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) legislation to collect recreation fees that can then be re-invested back into recreation programs on the Forest;
- collaborating with local communities to reduce fire risk and improve forest health; and
- developing a Forest-wide partnership program to seek out, develop, and manage partnership opportunities.

Forest Overview



Round Valley on the Calaveras
Ranger District



Three Chimneys and Cooper
Meadow in the Emigrant Wilderness

Bounded by the Mokelumne River to the north and the Merced River to the south, the Stanislaus covers almost a million acres, extending from the blue oak woodlands of the Sierra Nevada foothills in the west to the scenic crest of the Sierra Nevada mountain range to the east. Created in 1897 as a forest reserve, the precursor to national forests, the Stanislaus shares boundaries with three other national forests and Yosemite National Park, and is one of the Nation's oldest national forests.

History

The Stanislaus National Forest is named after the Stanislaus River, which has its headwaters within the Forest's boundaries. The name first originated from an American Indian leader, Estanislao. Archaeological records indicate that people have lived in the Sierra Nevada since 9000 BC, with the Central Sierra Me-Wuk Indians being the most recent Native American occupants of the area that is now part of the Stanislaus. The Me-Wuk lived in permanent villages and temporary camps, often located near springs or along small creeks.

European settlement began in earnest during the Gold Rush, which started in 1848. The area was occupied by miners and other immigrants, homesteaders and ranchers, dam builders, and loggers. The Gold Rush was the driving force behind much of the initial development within the Stanislaus. Ditches were built in the Forest to provide water to the mines in the lower foothills. Miles of railroad track were constructed to haul logs out of the woods. Evidence of these activities still exists, with these features now incorporated into rails-to-trails or other recreation opportunities.

Physical Setting and Climate

Lying mid-point along the Sierra Nevada mountain range, the Stanislaus is a mix of granitic and volcanic rock that blends to create the varied scenery beloved by visitors and residents alike. Elevation within the Forest ranges from a low point of 840 feet along the Middle Fork of the Tuolumne River to 11,570 feet at the summit of Leavitt Peak, 3 miles south of the Sonora Pass. From west to east, the Stanislaus rises steadily to the main crest

of the Sierra Nevada, where several peaks reach beyond 10,000 feet. The Forest's topography is characterized by a series of southwest-trending ridges, separating the deep river valleys and canyons of the Mokelumne, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced Rivers. This wide range of elevation and topography provides a diversity of micro-climates. In the summer, both the foothills and the higher elevations are warm and dry and punctuated by occasional thunderstorms. In the winter, snow blankets elevations above 6,000 feet, while the foothills receive most of their precipitation as rain and experience a moderately cool climate.

Fauna and Flora

The diversity of vegetation within the Stanislaus is a byproduct of its elevation and topography. Main vegetation types include oak woodland, ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, red fir, lodgepole pine, and subalpine forest. Riparian forest communities exist along streams, while meadows are scattered throughout the Forest, from the lowest to highest elevations. Although montane chaparral occurs above 6,000 feet, extensive chaparral vegetation is found primarily in the lower elevations, especially on south facing slopes of the river canyons. Alpine vegetation is found along the Sierra Nevada crest, at the Forest's highest elevations.

The Forest provides habitat for over 300 wildlife species and 18 fish species, including threatened, endangered and sensitive species. In the past 15 years, forest management has increasingly been driven by the need to manage sensitive species, such as the California spotted owl. In addition, wildlife viewing and photography are replacing hunting as the primary "use" of wildlife within the forest.

Scenery and Recreation

The Stanislaus is a place where visitors can camp, hike, mountain bike, ride horses, ski, fish, swim, enjoy water sports, target shoot, go off-roading, or simply enjoy the beautiful scenery of the Sierra Nevada. The Forest is a vital year-round recreation resource for the residents of northern and central California as well as the Bay Area. The diverse natural landscapes of the Forest provide an abundance of recreational

opportunities and scenic beauty. In the summer, steep gorges carved out by the Mokelumne, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced Rivers serve as a backdrop for rafting adventures, as visitors enjoy 40 miles of congressionally designated wild and scenic rivers. Others take advantage of the alpine lakes and breathtaking summit vistas seen from the trails in the Emigrant, Mokelumne, and Carson-Iceberg Wilderness Areas. The winter invites visitors to ski the slopes of the Dodge Ridge or Bear Valley ski resorts or snowmobile over forest lands blanketed by snow. Long-time visitors, including those who inhabit over 750 recreational residences spread across the Forest, enjoy the scenery and partake in numerous recreational activities.

Resource Values

In addition to providing millions of visitors with scenic recreation opportunities, the Stanislaus is also a working national forest. A wide variety of natural resources exist in the Forest, and these are of value to many people. Like many other national forests, the Stanislaus provides opportunities for commercial and commodity uses. The millions of trees within the Forest provide a source of timber, which eventually becomes wood products for the public. Livestock graze on thousands of acres of rangelands within the Forest. The Forest's watersheds provide clean drinking water to communities throughout California and its rivers are harnessed for energy production by a number of utility companies.

While the Stanislaus is truly a multiple use forest, the focus of its use, like its surrounding environment, is changing. As the population and economy continue to grow in northern and central California, Forest visitors and users continue to increase in both number and diversity. These increases, coupled with changes in the perceived benefits of various forest uses, present exciting challenges to forest managers. As it has done for over a century, the Forest will continue to adapt and evolve in Caring for the Land and Serving People.

Stanislaus National Forest Inventory

General

Acres of land:	889,099
Districts:	Calaveras, Groveland, Mi-Wok, Summit
Counties:	Alpine, Calaveras, Mariposa, Tuolumne
Employees (FY04)	
Permanent	275
Temporary	75

Natural Resources

Commercial Forest Land	325,000 acres
Fuels Treatments (FY04 acres)	5,613
Reservoirs/Acres of Water	7/786,000
Watersheds/Acre-feet of Water	4/890,000

Recreation

Campgrounds/Campsites	55/1470
Day use & Picnic Areas	20
Boat Launches	6
Recreational Residences	752
Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (miles)	3.2
Trails (miles):	
Motorized	610
Non-motorized	1,198
Over-Snow Vehicle	65

Special Designated Areas

Emigrant Wilderness (acres)	112,277
Mokelumne Wilderness (acres)	22,267
Carson-Iceberg Wilderness (acres)	77,793
Wild and Scenic Rivers (miles):	
Merced	11
Tuolumne	29



California Spotted Owl is one of five sensitive bird species living in the Forest

Wildlife Species

Threatened/Endangered Species	5
Sensitive Bird Species	5
Sensitive Mammal Species	7
Sensitive Reptile Species	1
Sensitive Amphibian Species	5
Sensitive Fish Species	1
Sensitive Plant Species	24

Heritage Resources

Prehistoric/Historic sites	6,353
National Register Sites	6
National Register Eligible Sites	477

Stanislaus National Forest Map



Historical

Founding Legislation

The Stanislaus was designated as a national forest with 691,200 acres of land by proclamation of President Cleveland on February 22, 1897. Land was transferred out of, and added to, the Stanislaus in a series of proclamations by Presidents Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, Coolidge, and Hoover between 1905 and 1930, resulting in today's Forest of almost one million acres.

Other Significant Legislation & Management Direction

The **Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Record of Decision**, which was initially signed in 2001 and further amended in 2004, applies to 11 national forests in the Sierra Nevada Range. It defines how these national forests will meet the National Fire Plan goals by striving for ecological re-balancing and reducing the incidence of large, severe wildfires and their resulting negative consequences for forest resources and neighboring communities. The environmental analysis conducted for the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment projects that, over the next 50 years, acreages burned by severe wildfires should be reduced by more than 30 percent. For communities that lie adjacent to national forest lands, the strategy is to reduce hazardous fuel loadings on 700,000 acres within wildland urban interface areas across Sierra Nevada national forests over the next 20 to 25 years. To meet the goals of this decision, national forests will need to conduct aggressive tree-thinning and prescribed burning activities.

Healthy Forests Initiative and Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

The Healthy Forests Initiative was launched in 2002 to reduce administrative process delays associated with implementing projects that treat hazardous fuels and restore healthy ecological conditions. The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 contains a variety of provisions to improve processes for planning and implementing hazardous fuel reduction projects on national forest lands. It also provides other authorities and guidance to help managers reduce hazardous fuels and restore healthy forest and rangeland conditions on all ownerships.



Foresters preparing a timber sale in 1924



Adjusted Base Budget



Engine 42 at work

Highlights

- The base budget for the Stanislaus grew at an inflation-adjusted, compound annual growth rate of 2 percent.
- After adjusting for inflation, compound annual growth rates for the Forest's fire preparedness and hazardous fuels reduction programs were 14 percent and 24 percent, respectively.
- Allocations for non-fire related programs fell at an inflation-adjusted, compound annual growth rate of minus 5 percent. In FY 2004, non-fire allocations were 38 percent lower than in FY 1995, after accounting for inflation.

Base Budget

The majority of Stanislaus' budget is funded through appropriations from the U.S. Congress. While revenues and reimbursements also contribute to the budget, these amounts are relatively small compared to Congressional appropriations and can also vary significantly from year to year. Because appropriations are generally more consistent, only the appropriated funding portion of Forest's total budget is considered as its base budget. Appropriations for capital improvement projects, specific earmarked appropriations, permanent funds, and trust funds are not considered as part of the Forest's base budget. Between FY 1995 and FY 2004, the base budget of the Stanislaus grew at a 5 percent nominal compound annual growth rate, from \$13.3 million to \$19.8 million.

While the nominal, or base budget of the Forest in dollars, has generally increased over time, this increase does not take into account the effects of inflation. Inflation severely impacts the purchasing power by reducing the value of each dollar received. Adjusting the Forest's budget for inflation produces the "real" budget. Goods and services that cost a given amount 10 years ago cannot be purchased with the same amount of money today. For example, a \$1 million budget today can acquire only about 80 percent of what it could have acquired 10 years ago.

Adjustments for Inflation

The accompanying graph depicts the base budget of the Stanislaus in real dollars and also displays the impact of fire-related allocations. When adjusted for inflation, the total appropriated dollars received by the Forest for all its operations, including fire, increased only 2 percent compounded annually, half of the nominal growth rate of 4.5 percent, from \$13.3 million in FY 1995 to a 1995-dollar equivalent of \$16.0 million in FY 2004.

Fire versus Non-Fire Budgets

Behind this overall single digit growth rate in the total budget are two opposing growth trends, one for fire-related allocations and another for non-fire related funding. Fire-related allocations are comprised of appropriations for fire preparedness and hazardous fuels reduction. Separating the base budget into non-fire, fire preparedness, and hazardous fuels reduction allocations highlights the disparate funding trends in each area. Congressional appropriations directed toward fire preparedness and hazardous fuels reduction grew at inflation-adjusted growth rates of 14 percent and 24 percent, respectively. Much of this growth can be attributed to the implementation of the National Fire Plan, beginning in 2001. Since 2002, the inflation-adjusted allocations to these two programs, however, have remained relatively flat.

On the opposite spectrum is the remaining allocation the Forest receives for its work in recreation management, commercial uses, natural resource management, facilities operations and maintenance, and administrative programs. After adjusting for inflation, the allocation for these program areas decreased annually at a rate of minus 5 percent, from \$11.3 million in FY 1995 to a 1995-dollar equivalent of \$7 million in FY 2004, for an overall net decrease of 38 percent. While funding for fire-related programs has more than kept pace with inflation, reflecting a greater emphasis on wildfire protection, funding for non-fire activities has declined substantially in both nominal and real terms.

Fund Source Analysis

Highlights

- From 1995 to 2004, the Stanislaus National Forest's nominal budget followed an undulating trend, increasing and decreasing as much as 15 percent from the prior year. The total budget for the Stanislaus decreased 14 percent in FY 2004 compared with the FY 2003 budget, and was 12 percent higher than the budget in FY 1995.
- The wildland fire management budget has experienced a 470 percent increase over the past 10 years, growing from \$1.9 million in FY 1995 to \$11.1 million in FY 2004. The Forest's fire-related appropriations began surpassing non-fire related appropriations in FY 2003.
- Consistent with the overall Forest budget, but decreasing more dramatically, the total non-fire related budget dropped overall during the period from 1995 through 2004. Over the last 10 years, the non-fire budget decreased by 31 percent, from \$20.5 million in FY 1995 to \$14.1 million in FY 2004.
- The mix of funding sources has shifted over the last 10 years, with the Forest generally growing more dependent on appropriations. In FY 1995, appropriated funds accounted for 59 percent of the Stanislaus' budget, while in FY 2004, appropriations represented 90 percent of the Forest's budget. This change is primarily due to two factors: significant decreases in funding derived from Forest Service timber sales and increases in appropriations associated with adoption of the National Fire Plan in 2001.

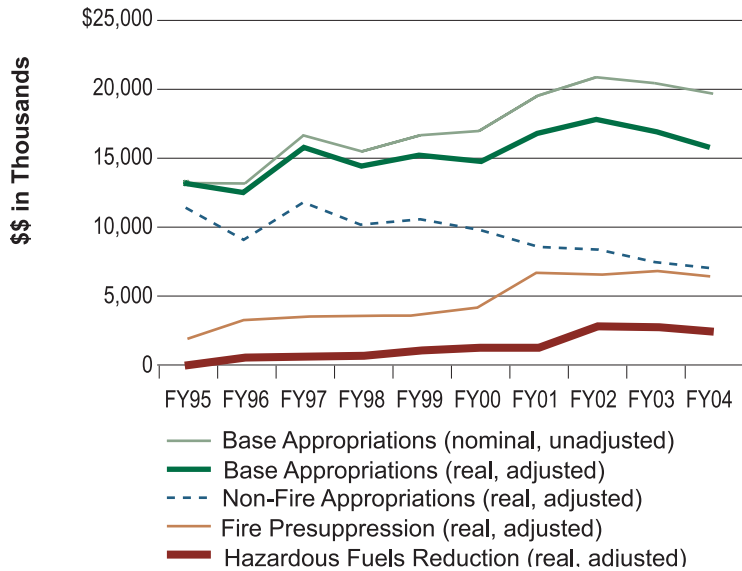
Sources of Funding

National forests acquire funds from three principal sources. The first source is appropriations by Congress to the Forest Service. The second funding source is reimbursable income, collected from other organizations via partnership agreements, for services rendered by the national forest. The third funding source is revenue, which the national forest receives from a variety of sources, including permits, donations, and services. Funding changes directly impact a national forest's ability to meet its mission and goals.

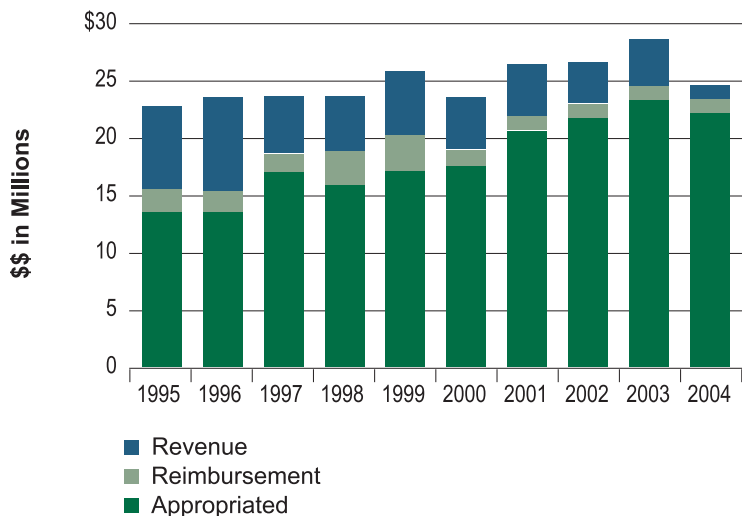
Appropriated Funds

Allocated Congressional appropriations provide the primary source of funding for operations of the Stanislaus. Allocated funds are appropriated to the Forest Service by Congress, with the amount of the appropriation varying from year to year. Appropriated funds are first allocated to the Forest Service's national office. These funds are distributed to the regional level and then down to each individual national forest. The appropriated base budget provides the largest portion of the Stanislaus' total annual budget. During the last 10 years, the Forest has become increasingly dependent on allocated funds. In FY 1995, 59 percent of the Stanislaus' budget came from appropriated funding, while the percentage climbed to 90 percent in FY 2004.

Adjusted Base Budget



Fund Source Analysis





Special places abound within the Forest

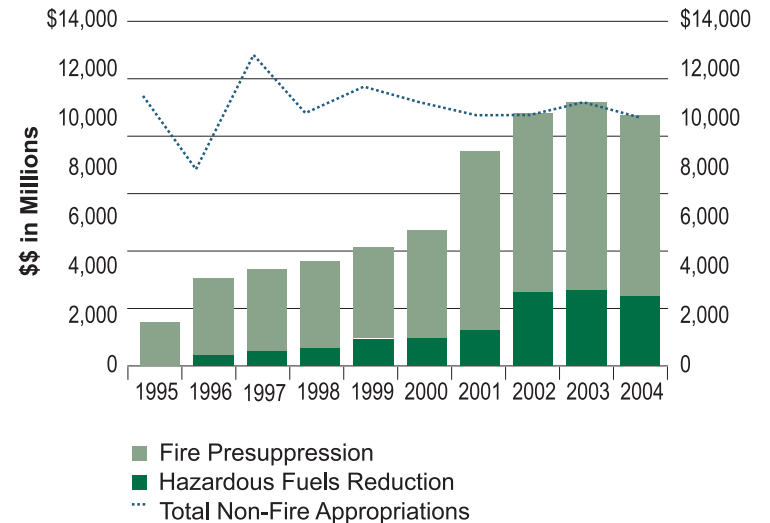
While the Forest's total appropriated funding has grown from \$13.3 million in FY 1995 to \$22.8 million in FY 2004, this increase has been driven largely by a 470 percent growth in the wildland fire management budget, which is composed of funds directed toward fire pre-suppression and preparedness and hazardous fuels reduction. Fire pre-suppression funds grew dramatically, increasing at a compound annual growth rate of 17 percent, from \$1.9 million in FY 1995 to \$8 million in FY 2004. Hazardous fuels reduction allocations increased at a compound annual growth rate of 27 percent, from \$0.5 million in FY 1995 to \$3.1 million in FY 2004. The increase in the wildland fire management budget resulted from implementation of the National Fire Plan in 2001, when the fire related appropriations increased by 58 percent in a single year. Growth has remained relatively flat since 2002. Beginning in 2003, the fire-related funding portion of the Forest's budget began to surpass the appropriations for all of the Forest's other programs combined.

Non-fire related appropriations, which are directed to all the other Forest operations, were nearly flat between 1995 and 2004. In FY 1995, non-fire appropriations were \$11.3 million, while in FY 2004 they were \$11.7 million. In FY 2003 and FY 2004, approximately \$2 million, or 20 percent of the non-fire related appropriations, were directed toward capital improvement projects and not operations and maintenance; thus, appropriations for non-fire related programs and activities have actually decreased by more than 5 percent over the past 10 years.

Reimbursements

Reimbursements are funds collected from other organizations for services rendered by the Forest Service. These services are typically provided through mutually beneficial, cooperative agreements with other organizations where the Forest is reimbursed for expenses it incurs when performing activities that benefit both the Forest and the other organization. These organizations can be nonprofit organizations, local and State government agencies, or other entities within the Federal government. For example, the

Fire vs. Non-Fire



State of California Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program provides grant funds to the Forest for maintaining OHV trail systems for the benefit of California residents.

In the last 10 years, reimbursements have decreased both nominally and as a percentage of the overall Forest budget. In FY1995, the Stanislaus received \$2.0 million in reimbursements representing 9 percent of the total Forest budget. By FY 2004, reimbursements had decreased to \$1.2 million, representing only 5 percent of the Forest's budget. This decrease was driven largely by a decrease in funds received through agreements with non-Federal organizations and agencies. Examples of such relationships include utility companies who provide funding to perform National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) analyses for projects they are conducting on the Forest. From 1995 to 2004, this source of funding decreased by 45 percent, from \$0.9 million to \$0.5 million.

Current Forest Operations

Revenue

The Forest Service generates revenue for the U.S. Treasury by charging fees for such goods and services as concession-operated campgrounds and ski areas, permits from non-recreational special uses (such as power companies and communication sites), and timber sales. In general, the Forest does not retain the revenue generated by these commercial activities, but receives some portion of the collections via trust funds created from the proceeds. These proceeds are deposited directly into the general fund of the U.S. Treasury in accordance with existing law. The Forest does, however, retain most of the revenue from recreation fees charged at campgrounds and other recreational sites.

Over the past 10 years, revenue received by the Stanislaus has also shifted, both decreasing as a percentage of the overall Forest budget as well as in actual dollar amounts. In FY 1995, 32 percent or \$7.1 million, of the total budget came from revenue receipts. By FY 2004, revenues were \$1.2 million, which represented only 5 percent of the total Forest budget. This decrease was largely driven by a decrease in Knutsen-Vandenberg and salvage sale trust funds, which make up a majority of the Forest's revenue sources.

The operations of the Forest were grouped into six functional areas as shown in the box at right. These functional areas were further divided into 33 program areas that more precisely describe the operations and activities that take place within the Forest.

Information for the business plan was compiled through interviews with Forest staff directly involved in completing program activities. This information was combined with an analysis of FY 2004 expenditures to develop narratives that describe the financial and operational needs of each program.

Program managers identified the goals specific to their respective program areas and the operational standards that describe the duties and responsibilities required to conduct critical functions of each program. By examining the current work level compared to the work needed to achieve program goals and standards, which are often mandated requirements, program managers determined the funding and personnel needed to bridge this gap. Personnel allocations were determined using a measurement of staff, known as full-time equivalents (FTEs), which are personnel "units" based on a working year of 2,088 hours. The cost of personnel shortfalls are based on the 2005 General Service (GS) pay scale, which includes the costs of benefits.

In the following sections, each program area's resource needs are compared to actual FY 2004 expenditures and FTE estimates expended in running the program area. The costs and justifications for closing these gaps and eliminating the program shortfalls are included in the analysis of each program area. The following pages discuss each program and its associated operational resource gaps and shortfalls in detail.

Business Plan Initiative Functional Areas & Programs

Resource Management

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

Commodity & Commercial Uses

- Grazing
- Minerals
- Non-recreational Special Uses
- Timber

Public Use & Enjoyment

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

Management & Administration

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

Fire & Aviation Management

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

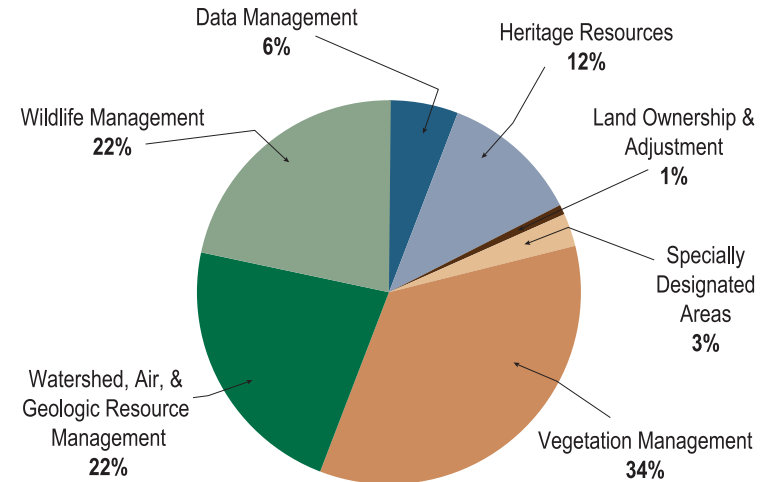
Facilities, Operations, & Maintenance

- Buildings, Grounds, & Utilities
- Campgrounds & Developed Sites
- Concentrated Use Areas
- Roads
- Trails



Twenty-four sensitive plant species are found within the Forest

Resource Management FY04 Expenditures by Program



REQUIRED		AVAILABLE		SHORTFALL	
FTE	COST	FTE	COST	FTE	COST
76.6	\$6,345,000	39.9	\$3,818,000	36.7	\$2,527,000

Resource Management

(14 percent of expenditures)

The resource management functional area encompasses all activities related to managing, monitoring, and protecting the Forest's natural, cultural, and informational resources.

This functional area is comprised of the following program areas:

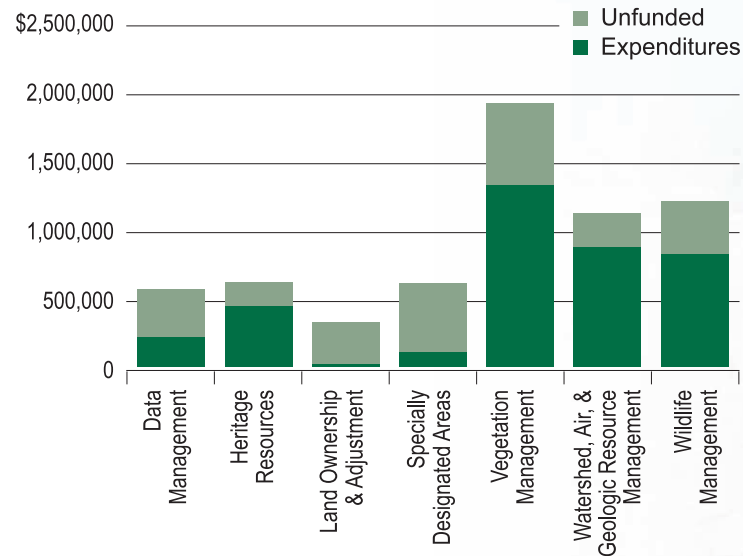
- Data Management
- Heritage Resources Management
- Land Ownership & Adjustment
- Specially Designated Areas Management
- Vegetation Management
- Watershed, Air, & Geologic Resource Management
- Wildlife Management

Data Management:

Objectives for the data management program are to manage natural resource-related information needed to assess current conditions and trends and identify needed treatments and analyze possible effects. The staff of this program area is tasked with providing map displays of natural resource information as well as other data requested by Forest program personnel; Federal, State, and local agencies; and the public. This program area also has responsibility for managing large databases that contain vital information about the Forest's infrastructure, biological, social, and economic resources; these data are utilized by all staff in managing the resources on the Forest.

In FY 2004, work in the data management program area was performed by 3.6 FTEs. This level of staffing was not enough to maintain data quality and standards across all the Forest's databases. To effectively coordinate data collection and input, mapping, and other resource applications, the data management program would require an additional \$340,000, comprised of 8.1 FTEs and equipment, supplies, and rent. These resources would ensure that data were updated and maintained and data quality standards were met going forward.

Resource Management
FY04 Expenditures by Program



Land Ownership & Adjustment:

The land ownership and adjustment program encompasses all of the Forest's real estate management functions, including land acquisition, road right-of-way construction and use agreements (cost share), right-of-ways, easements, boundary management, trespass resolution, and clarification of national forest boundaries and title. The Stanislaus currently has a backlog of cost share agreement supplements and associated easements. This program needs an additional 4.3 FTEs to work on this backlog and process right-of-ways needed for future projects. In addition, these extra personnel could help to restart the Forest's land exchange program and perform discretionary lands-related tasks that come up during other Forest business.

Heritage Resource Management:

The heritage resource management program aims to protect significant heritage resources, share their value with the American people, and contribute relevant information and perspective to natural resource management. This program area is mandated to



Bald Eagle nest within the boundaries of the Forest



Stanislaus Wilderness Volunteers at work in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness

manage, protect, conserve, and enhance heritage resources for public benefit through activities, such as site evaluations, National Register nominations, interpretation and education, and Passport in Time projects. In addition, the heritage resource program staff provides significant internal support and direction in managing Forest lands to meet Regional and Forest goals. The program includes archeology, ethnography, historic structures analysis, and cultural landscapes management.

Heritage resource management on the Stanislaus is guided by the principles of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Section 106 of this law mandates that Federal agencies consider the effects of their actions on heritage resources. Section 110 requires Federal agencies to establish a program of inventory, preservation, education, and nomination of heritage resources to the National Register of Historic Places.

The goals of the Stanislaus' heritage resource management program are further governed by the Sierra Programmatic Agreement, a regional plan developed between the Stanislaus National Forest, the Pacific Southwest Regional Office, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. To meet the intent of the Sierra Programmatic Agreement, an additional \$173,000 would be needed to fund 2.5 FTEs and provide supplies and materials.

Specially Designated Areas Management:

The specially designated areas management program includes activities and operations related to the managing the Forest's wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, research natural areas, special interest areas, and experimental forests. The Stanislaus is home to 3 designated and 3 proposed wilderness areas, 40 miles of existing and 113 miles of proposed wild and scenic rivers, more than 10 special interest areas, 4 research natural areas, and 1 experimental forest. These natural assets are managed to: (1) protect and restore each area's ecological values and wilderness character; (2) preserve areas with unique geologic, scenic, historic, archaeological, botanic, or memorial features; (3) promote an understanding of wilderness benefits; (4) provide primitive

recreation opportunities; and (5) provide examples of significant natural ecosystems for the purpose of ecological study.

In FY 2004, only 1.6 FTEs were funded in the specially designated areas management program, thus allowing only a fraction of this program area's relevant standards to be met. An additional \$494,000, comprised of personnel (8.1 FTEs) and other resources, would help alleviate this shortfall.

In addition to field personnel, the specially designated areas management program needs a special areas coordinator who would administer and coordinate management of all the areas associated with this program. An additional wilderness coordinator is needed to help harness the energy of the volunteer/non-profit group and provide support in this area. Lastly, a half-time wilderness education coordinator would be directed toward fulfilling one of the program area's objectives: providing opportunities for scientific study and education.

Vegetation Management:

The vegetation management program focuses on maintaining and improving healthy, productive stands of native trees in forested areas. Program activities include establishing and reestablishing desired vegetation for development of forested environments into old growth habitat and implementing vegetation treatments to protect ecological values and promote development of old growth stands. Funding for this program is provided by congressionally appropriated funds, reforestation trust funds (allocated from Federal taxes on private land timber exports), and Knutsen Vandenberg funds, which are collected from timber sale receipts and used for reforestation activities.

The current shortfall in the Stanislaus' vegetation management program is \$590,000, representing 3.7 FTEs and associated supplies and equipment. This lack of personnel reflects the challenges the Forest faces in responding to the effects of wildfires, for example, reforesting lands burned by the 1987 Stanislaus Complex Fire as well as other more recent fires, including the Pilot, Darby, Tuolumne, Creek, and Early Fires.

Unmanaged regrowth in burned-over areas consists primarily of brush species, and this condition contributes to a brush/fire cycle. If allowed to continue, this cycle will prevent burned lands from returning to a state supporting old growth trees and their dependent species. Without active management, it is unlikely that much of this land will return to old growth forest conditions in the future, and this will have a direct negative impact on future habitat values as well as forest productivity

Watershed, Air, & Geologic Resource Management:

The watershed, air, and geologic resource management program encompasses all activities associated with managing water quality and supply, soil productivity and stability, air quality, hazardous materials releases, and geologic resources on the Stanislaus. The objective of this program is to identify the quality of the Forest's air, water, and soil resources, and implement measures to protect and enhance their natural properties. To fulfill this objective, the program's staff: (1) provides input into the planning and implementation of activities in other program areas, (2) surveys watersheds and geology to inform planning and decision making, and (3) monitors water rights and air quality.

This program exhibited a shortfall of 3.5 FTEs and other resources for a total of \$247,000. Three FTEs (two hydrologists and one soil scientist) are needed to implement watershed restoration activities and provide support to other program areas that have projects mandated to undergo environmental analysis, such as the roads, timber, hazardous fuels reduction, and special uses programs. The remaining 0.5 FTE is needed for a geologist to increase the inventory of geologic hazards, manage the Forest's hazardous waste program, and plan and implement abandoned mine land reclamation projects.

Wildlife Management:

The wildlife management program is staffed with professional and technical specialists in the fields of wildlife biology, aquatic biology, and botany. The program's primary focus is on managing and protecting plant and animal habitats and species within the Stanislaus. Emphasis is placed on managing federally listed threatened, endangered, and proposed species as well as Forest sensitive species, management indicator species, and watch list or special interest species.

In addition to carrying out projects associated with monitoring and preserving key species, the wildlife management program staff spends a significant amount of time advising and supporting other Forest program areas. Currently, more than 80 percent of the wildlife management team's time is spent in these types of advisory and "support to project" work.

An additional \$381,000 to fund 6.5 additional FTEs and provide other resources, such as materials and supplies, training, and equipment would help the wildlife management program fulfill its goals. These additional resources would allow program staff to collect and compile data from inventory and monitoring efforts and provide technical support to program areas requiring environmental analysis. This in turn would allow the existing staff to more fully participate in directly managing habitats and wildlife across the Forest.

Granite Stewardship Contracts

The Granite Stewardship Project started on a hot August day in 1973, when a wildfire killed 17,500 acres of mixed conifer forest adjacent to Cherry Lake on the Groveland Ranger District. Almost 11,000 acres were successfully replanted in the succeeding years. In the early 1990s, awareness grew that loss of these plantations to another wildfire would be an economic disaster, and a threat to soil stability, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

In 1998, after a year of intense collaboration, a group of concerned citizens (called "OBY" for Our Back Yard) provided the Forest with a set of desired forest ecosystem conditions and activities to achieve them. Shortly thereafter, Congress passed legislation authorizing the Forest Service to award stewardship contracts and use the value of any logged timber to offset costs of other work in the project area. The Granite Stewardship Project was selected as a national "pilot" project to test these new authorities.

Since then, the Stanislaus National Forest has awarded five stewardship contracts, with several more in the works. The contract for sawlog and biomass removal is the largest in California and one of the five largest in the United States. By the end of 2005, the Forest's stewardship contractors will have:

- thinned 1,300 acres of overcrowded plantations;
- decommissioned 14 miles of roads;
- improved access on over 11 miles of roads;
- controlled noxious weeds on approximately 120 acres; &
- started harvest of nearly 7 million board feet of timber & biomass.

Future contracts will provide additional ecosystem benefits. Partnerships with State agencies and local interest groups have been crucial to the Forest's accomplishments, and will remain a key component in future successes.

Commodity & Commercial Uses



Thousands of acres of plantations are in need of thinning



Photograph courtesy of PG&E

Beardsley Reservoir is one of many hydropower facilities within the Forest

(6 percent of expenditures)

The commodities and commercial uses functional area is important for two reasons. First, it supports local and regional economies through utilization of the various natural resources that the Forest offers. Second, work performed in this functional area's programs plays a role in reducing hazardous fuels and managing healthy ecosystems.

The commodities and commercial uses functional area includes the following five programs:

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

Timber

The timber program includes activities related to managing timber vegetation in support of (a) the Forest's land and resource management plan objectives for developing old growth habitat, (b) fuels reduction to reduce wildfire threats to communities and the impacts associated with large, severe wildfires, (c) objectives for improving forest health, and (d) reforestation of areas affected by past wildfires or where timber harvest projects have been conducted. Activities are designed to meet either habitat improvement or hazardous fuels reduction objectives using timber stand improvement techniques to remove understory trees or other vegetation

The following two areas form the core components of the timber program:

Salvage involves the economic recovery of timber value after disturbance from wildfire, wind, or flood events that damage trees. Timber salvage activities are conducted to provide for public safety and prepare an area for restoration activities. Funding is provided by congressionally appropriated funds or

the salvage sale fund (when available), which is collected from salvage sale receipts for future salvage projects.

Timber Stand Improvement Program activities are designed in support of the old growth habitat and fuels reduction goals set forth in the Forest's land and resource management plan. This involves thinning of young stands, where removed material does not have commercial value. Thinning in older stands, along with treatment of surface fuels, creates forest stands that are more resistant to fire as well as attacks from insect and disease infestations. Funding for timber stand improvement is provided by congressionally appropriated funds, reforestation trust funds (allocated from Federal taxes on private land timber exports), and Knutsen-Vandenberg funds, which are collected from timber sale receipts and used for reforestation activities.

The Stanislaus currently has approximately 7.2 unfunded FTE's in timber positions, representing a shortfall in funding of \$834,000. These positions were established on the Forest organizational chart to meet the Forest's projected workload in vegetation management and timber sales.

Full staffing of the Forest organization for the timber program would ensure achievement of the goal to maintain a viable timber industry in the area, which would help reduce costs for fuels reduction projects and also benefit the local economy. Full staffing would also ensure the continued development of habitat for old growth dependent species as directed in the Stanislaus' amended land and resource management plan, including the restoration of forest habitats altered by wildland fire.

Grazing

The grazing program area has responsibility for authorizing and managing livestock grazing on National Forest System lands. The Stanislaus has allocated areas and allotments that are suitable for and capable of supporting livestock grazing. Permits are issued to qualified applicants for a specific type and class of

livestock, season of use, and specific terms and conditions of use. Allotment administration may also include private lands in and adjacent to the Forest, where such areas are included within a logical unit for grazing.

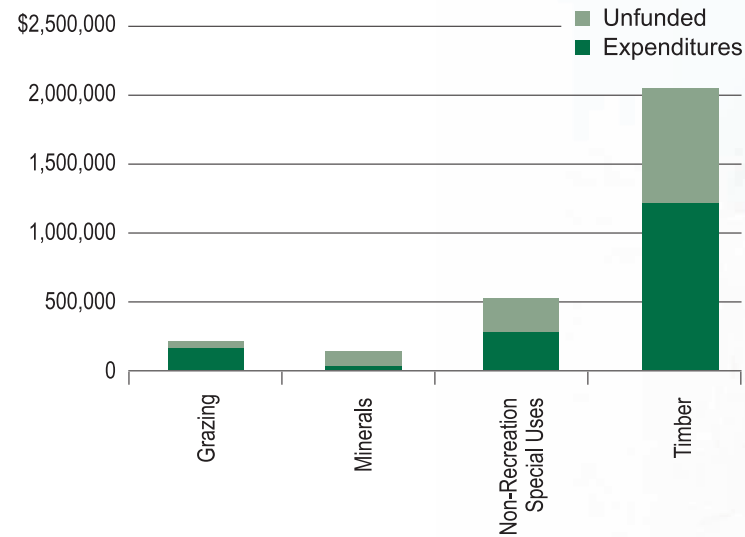
In FY 2004, 2.3 FTEs were involved in this program area. To achieve compliance with the Rescissions Act, the Stanislaus needs to fully fund the range management specialist position and add two range technician positions to assist in range permit administration and environmental analysis, resulting in an incremental need for 1 additional FTE. Forest managers also need to allocate time and funding for other specialists (wildlife biologist, botanist, archeologist, and hydrologist) to conduct environmental surveys, analyze environmental impacts, and prepare documents required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the Forest's range allotments.

Minerals

Work in the minerals program area involves preparing replies to Notices of Intent and Plans of Operation, coordinating with natural resource specialists to meet requirements under NEPA, administering the mineral sales program, conducting follow-up inspections on mining projects requiring performance bonds, decommissioning old mining tunnels and pits to provide better public safety, and patrolling mining claims at heavy use times to ensure compliance with Forest Service regulations.

The long history of mining in the Stanislaus has resulted in many abandoned mine sites and tunnels. These sites, sometimes unknown to Forest staff, pose a significant safety risk to the Forest's visitors. An additional FTE plus supporting supplies and equipment, estimated to cost approximately \$102,000 in total, would allow the Forest to speed the process of identifying and mapping abandoned mine tunnels and completing the environmental analysis necessary to close them.

Commodity & Commercial Uses FY04 Expenditures by Program

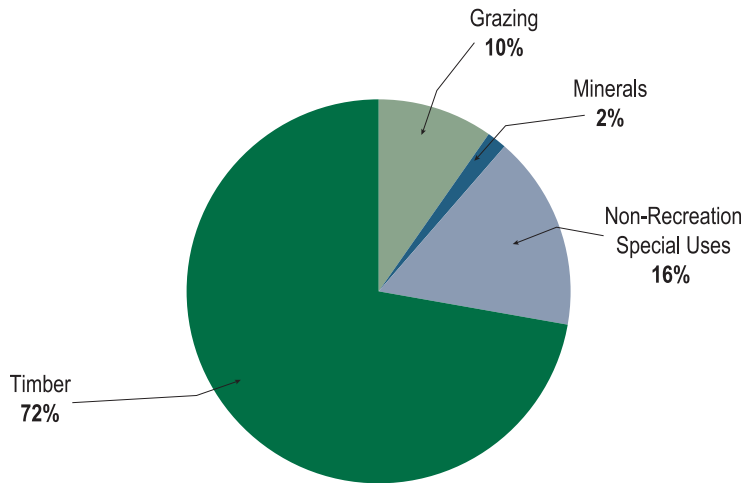


Non-Recreational Special Uses

The non-recreational special uses program area entails the permitting, monitoring, and processing of applications for non-recreation special uses in the Stanislaus. Such uses include utility corridors for pipelines and power transmission lines, communication sites, and non-extractive, commercially-oriented uses of the Forest's lands.

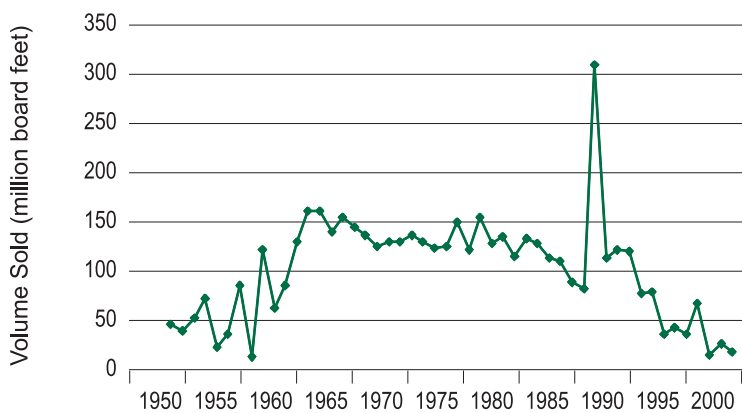
Lack of administrative support has had a major impact on permit administrators in this program. Increased funding of \$242,540 to add 2.9 FTEs is needed to meet responsible permit administration standards, process billing, conduct audits, and review insurance in a timely manner.

Commodities & Commercial Uses FY04 Expenditures by Program



REQUIRED		AVAILABLE		SHORTFALL	
FTE	COST	FTE	COST	FTE	COST
29.9	\$2,915,000	17.8	\$1,688,000	12.1	\$1,227,000

Timber Sold from 1951 to 2000



Source: Stanislaus National Forest Cut & Sold Reports. The 300 MMBF spike in 1988 was due to fire salvage from the Stanislaus Complex fire in 1987

Timber Sold from the Forest

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, production of commodity outputs (grazing, timber, mining, and so forth) from national forest lands was a primary objective of the Forest Service in response to increased population growth and development following the World Wars and public social values of the time. Timber harvest levels increased during this period. By the turn of the century, new understandings of human influences on forest environments gained through science and a social concern for the ecological conditions of public lands began to increase. During the 1960s and 1970s, a great deal of legislative activity (Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and the Wilderness Act) occurred, reflecting this change in public values. By the 1990s, the Agency had shifted to a primary objective of maintaining healthy forest ecosystems with commodity outputs as byproducts.

Timber production from the Stanislaus National Forest has fallen steadily, from an annual average timber harvest of 149 million board feet (1963 to 1972) to 18 million board feet in 2000. This drop in timber sold from the Forest began in the 1980s. Preparing and harvesting sales of predominantly large trees using regeneration prescriptions (clear cutting) for the benefit of providing timber outputs has been replaced with sales of smaller trees, using understory thinning and biomass removal as prescriptions to meet hazardous fuels reduction objectives. Current Forest Service policies and forest plan direction, such as the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment and the National Fire Plan, continue this type of management strategy, aimed at hazardous fuels reduction and old growth habitat improvement.

There are three markets for timber related materials near the Forest: a sawmill for large logs at Standard, a small log sawmill at Chinese Camp, and a biomass electricity generating plant that purchases forest wood chips at Chinese Camp. Other sawmills are located within a couple hundred miles of the Forest; however, they tend to be less competitive in purchasing timber sales due to higher haul costs. It is rare for a national forest in California to have a biomass plant and more than one sawmill, and their availability near the Stanislaus provides the Forest with very valuable economic tools to help accomplish its mission.

The purchase of logs by the Sierra Pacific Industries sawmills at Standard and Chinese Camp makes it possible to accomplish much of the Stanislaus' needed vegetation management on a timber sale basis, in which the government receives money rather than pays money for the work. The removal of merchantable trees also reduces tree density, which contributes to the fuels reduction effort while improving the health and vigor of the remaining trees. For some vegetation management projects, the cost of additional forest improvement work exceeds the profit from the sale of timber. The sale of the timber, through service or stewardship contracts, partly subsidizes the accomplishment of the forest improvement work.

Public Use & Enjoyment

(5 percent of expenditures)

As the number of visitors coming to the Stanislaus to recreate and enjoy the Forest's scenic beauty continues to grow, the public use and enjoyment functional area is critical in providing and serving the needs of the visiting public. This functional area includes all activities directed at providing visitors with a safe, educational, and enjoyable experience in the Forest. Program areas in the public use and enjoyment functional area include:

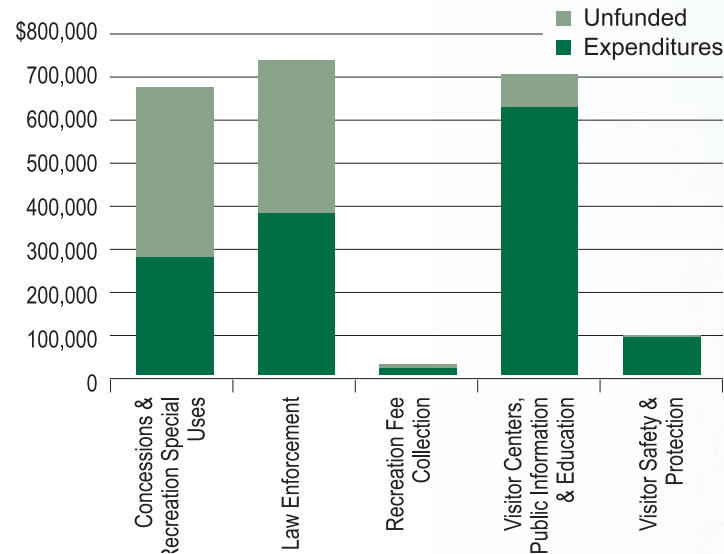
- Concessions & Recreation Special Uses
- Recreation Fee Collection
- Visitor Centers, Public Information, Interpretation, & Education
- Visitor Safety & Protection
- Law Enforcement

Concessions and Recreation Special Uses:

The concessions and recreation special uses program incorporates the management and monitoring of all concession and recreation special use permits on Forest lands. The program provides opportunities for occupancy and use of National Forest System lands and resources where there is a bona fide need that is in the public's interest and the opportunity cannot be reasonably accommodated on private land. The Stanislaus currently administers over 800 recreation special use permits, which include 745 recreation residences, 2 ski areas, 21 outfitter/guides, 3 resorts, 38 concession campgrounds, 10 organization camps, and numerous recreation events.

In administering this program, the staff reviews permit applications and project proposals, performs inspections for compliance with permit terms and conditions, and conducts mandated environmental analysis for permits and projects. Because of the Forest's large volume of recreation special uses, the current workload of the program exceeds the amount of staffing available to respond to customer and permit requests. In FY 2004, only 3.2 FTEs were funded to process this program's

Public Use & Enjoyment
FY04 Expenditures by Program



existing workload. An additional \$399,000, comprised of 6.8 FTEs and supporting resources, would help program staff in reviewing, evaluating, inspecting, and responding to potential and current permittees in a timely manner.

Recreation Fee Collection:

The recreation fee collection program area includes all Forest activities related to collecting and managing recreational activity fees, including the sale of recreational passes, such as the Golden Passport and Golden Eagle, and monitoring of permit compliance. Recreation fee collection involves collecting fees, ensuring fee compliance and enforcement, safe-guarding passes and revenues, ordering passes, reporting, billing, making deposits, and auditing.

The Stanislaus has 11 campgrounds that charge fees. Total revenue from these 11 sites in 2004 was \$76,517. Since 1999, the Forest has had the authority to retain 95 percent of these receipts to fund local management of the program (as opposed to



Forest trails provide entry to the three wilderness areas within the Forest



Pinecrest Lake is the most popular recreation destination on the Forest

depositing the receipts in the U.S. Treasury as is standard with other types of permit proceeds.) These fees are re-invested locally to fund improvements at the Forest’s recreation sites. In FY 2004, the Forest spent \$15,907 and used 0.2 FTEs in collecting recreation fees. An additional 0.1 FTE in this program area would help improve accounting and collection procedures.

Visitor Centers, Public Information, Interpretation, & Education:

The primary focus of the visitor centers, public information, interpretation, and education program is to provide information to the public about the mission of the Forest. Work in this program is supported by the Forest’s interpretive team and the front desk staffs at each ranger district and the supervisor’s office.

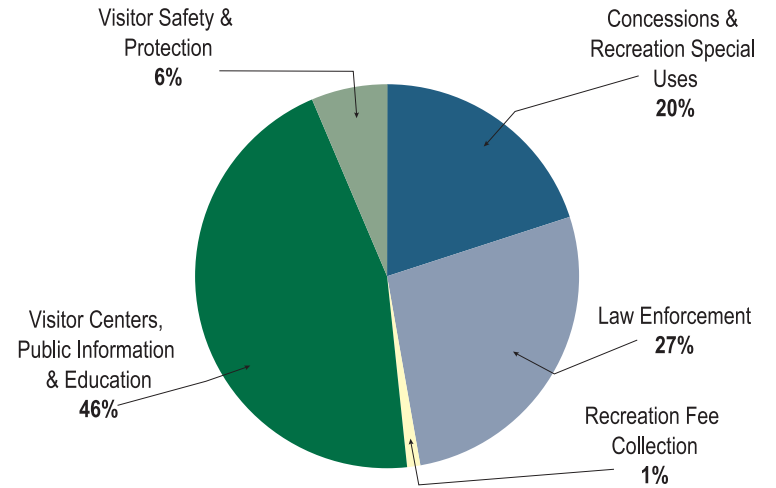
The Forest interpretive team provides numerous activities, such as guided hikes, evening programs, and educational demonstrations for children, geared toward helping the public understand the importance of forest ecosystems and lifecycles. The team has developed a strong corps of volunteers, who contributed over 50,000 service hours in 2004, and initiated several programs, such as the Summer of Success, with other local community organizations and agencies.

The front desk staff plays a vital role in disseminating information to visitors seeking opportunities to enjoy their national forest. They also provide wilderness and personal use fuelwood permits. Due to the large and growing influx of visitors to the Forest, the interpretive team and the visitor center staff could use additional seasonal staffing, particularly during the busy summer months. An additional 1.3 FTEs and associated resources, totaling \$76,000, would allow the Stanislaus to fill existing vacant positions in this program area, thereby meeting this program’s identified shortfall.

Visitor Safety & Protection:

The visitor safety and protection program includes a broad range of activities designed to protect visitors, employees, and forest resources. Forest protection officers (FPOs) are the first line in providing visitor safety. FPOs are Forest employees,

**Public Use & Enjoyment
FY04 Expenditures by Program**



REQUIRED		AVAILABLE		SHORTFALL	
FTE	COST	FTE	COST	FTE	COST
34.7	\$2,250,000	23.8	\$1,403,000	10.9	\$847,000

typically recreation or fire patrol personnel, who work in the field and have contact with the public while performing their primary responsibilities. The nature of their normal work allows them to assist the law enforcement program in meeting its objective of preventing violations by informing visitors of applicable laws, regulations, and closures. These individuals initially receive 1 week of FPO training to learn about conducting basic enforcement procedures, such as writing warning notices and violation notices, while they are in the field fulfilling their primary responsibilities. The work of FPOs in FY 2004 amounted to an equivalent of 1.5 FTEs. This program could benefit from additional funding to provide more extensive training for FPOs than the current 1-day annual refresher class.

Law Enforcement:

The law enforcement program encompasses specific law enforcement efforts that extend beyond the basic scope of visitor safety, such as illegal drug eradication and criminal investigations. Law enforcement officers (LEOs) detect and respond to crimes, provide security for personnel and facilities, and work closely with other Federal, State, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies, such as sheriffs' departments of Mariposa, Tuolumne, Calaveras and Alpine Counties; the California Highway Patrol; California Department of Fish and Game; and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Because the Stanislaus is located close to the large urban population of the San Francisco Bay Area, the law enforcement workload is particularly heavy at developed recreation sites. Current staffing is insufficient to cover an area the size of the Forest or the number of visitors to the Forest.

Because the law enforcement program is a separate branch of the Forest Service, its funding is provided at the regional level. Law enforcement is divided into two branches: uniformed patrol and investigations. In FY 2004, 4.8 FTEs, consisting of four LEOs, a patrol captain, and an investigator, were funded on the Stanislaus. Budget shortfalls have reduced staffing levels further since 2004.

Currently, the Stanislaus has only three LEOs and one patrol captain funded to deal with law enforcement issues that arise in the Forest. Adding two more LEOs at the Calaveras and Groveland Districts would bring law enforcement patrol up to the minimum staffing level needed to detect crime and protect the public. There is also enough of an investigations workload in both drug cultivation and resource violations to justify adding 0.8 FTEs of an investigator position. To deal with the marijuana cultivation problem, the Forest and local law enforcement agencies need funding to establish a regional task force to counter this serious public safety risk.



Stanislaus Interpretive Team offers an Earth Day event each year to local school children

Illegal Marijuana Plantations

A serious public safety problem exists in the national forests of the central Sierra Nevada, created by armed people cultivating marijuana in large hidden gardens. Most of these gardens are tended and guarded by foreign nationals working for organized groups. There have been several incidents where the public has wandered into these gardens and been harassed and chased at gunpoint. During law enforcement raids, several grower fatalities have occurred. Growers also cause serious resource damage, including erosion. Forest Service and local law enforcement resources are not large enough to detect and eradicate all of these gardens.

Management & Administration



Smokey is always popular with the kids

(11 percent of expenditures)

The management and administration functional area deals with all administrative duties at the supervisor's office and ranger districts. The key program areas that comprise this functional area are:

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

General Management

The general management program has responsibility for the overall management, protection, and development of the Forest's resources. This responsibility includes short- and long-range planning; organizing, directing, and overseeing all operations and people; promoting diversity in the workforce; coordinating on-going activities; and integrating resource programs across the Forest. This program is also responsible for high-level interactions with other agency, government, corporate, nonprofit, public, and tribal institutions as well as individual members of the Forest's internal and external publics.

The forest supervisor, deputy forest supervisor, and forest supervisor's secretary form the core of this program. Present funding is adequate in this program area.

District Management

The Stanislaus is comprised of four ranger districts: Mi-Wok (169,325 acres), Calaveras (252,917 acres), Summit (269,347 acres), and Groveland (206,688 acres).

Each district ranger is responsible for overall management of the resources, goods, and services of a designated geographic area

(ranger district) of the Forest. The district ranger is responsible for short- and long-range planning; organizing, directing and overseeing all operations and people on the district; oversight of unit business practices and services; developing and administering partnerships and external relations; coordinating ongoing activities; and integrating resource programs across the district as well as assisting in integrating programs across the Forest. District rangers are also responsible for establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with other agency, government, corporate, nonprofit, and public institutions. Current funding is sufficient to complete necessary tasks in this program area.

Planning

Planning program staff provides leadership, strategic planning, and support for all environmental review and planning efforts on the Forest. This includes national forest land and resource management plan monitoring, revision, and amendment; project environmental analysis; appeals; and litigation. The planning staff also plays a key role in the relicensing of hydroelectric projects on the Forest.

Planning activities include:

- developing and updating the Forest's land and resource management plan (forest plan);
- coordinating and monitoring project level implementation of the forest plan;
- coordinating with other agencies, especially in developing and implementing their management plans;
- developing landscape and ecosystem scale assessments and planning documents; and
- responding to challenges associated with management decisions (appeals and litigation).



Permits are needed to raft the Tuolumne River

Beginning in 2007, the Stanislaus will revise its forest plan for the first time since 1991. The forest planner will be the forest plan revision team leader, working with a team of scientists and resource specialists assigned to assist in revising the plan. Forest plan revision must comply with the requirements of the National Forest Management Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and other laws and policies, which include specific requirements related to consideration of alternatives, environmental effects, and public participation.

There is an unfunded need of 8 FTEs, representing a shortfall of \$564,000, in the planning program. Additional staffing and funding would allow the Forest to revise the forest plan as well as monitor implementation of the forest plan and produce an annual monitoring report. This report, an annual requirement, has not been produced for several years due to inadequate staffing.

Public Affairs

The public affairs office is responsible for building and maintaining a variety of community, media, legislative, and public relationships to enhance public understanding of the Forest's mission and programs and provide support for internal communications between various levels of the Forest Service

In addition to a public affairs officer and support staff, the Forest also has a tribal relations program manager and rural development coordinator. These individuals provide leadership, strategic planning, and staff support for developing and maintaining positive external relationships and partnerships with entities including, but not limited to, local communities; Native American tribes; elected officials; news media; partners and volunteers; interest groups and organizations; Federal, State, and local governments and cooperators; and the public. This program also supports the maintenance of positive internal relationships between Forest personnel, the Southern Sierra Province, the Pacific Southwest Regional Office, and the Washington Office.

Adding a part-time web master, at an expense of \$11,000 for 0.1 FTE, would enhance the Forest's ability to communicate with various constituencies via the Internet.

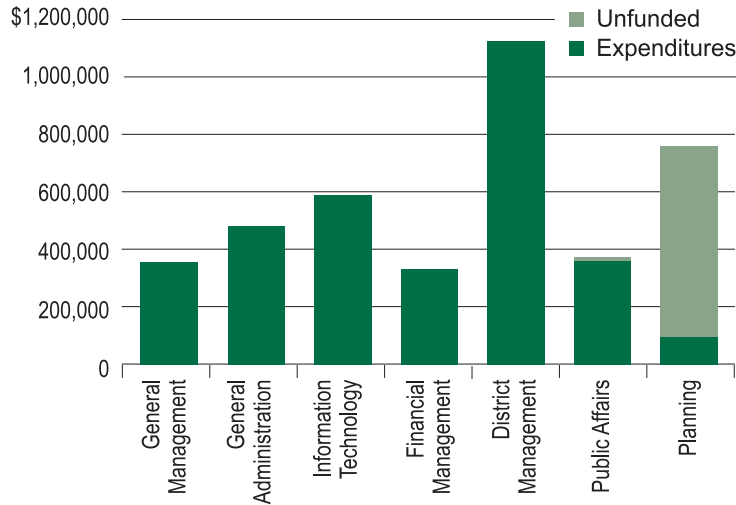
General Administration

The general administration program covers human resources, civil rights, and liaisons with the Province's human resource and safety operational teams. The human resource program provides advice and guidance to supervisors and managers in all areas of human resources, including staffing, classification, employee relations, union and labor relations, employee performance, and training. The human resources staff strives to provide timely advice and guidance in all of the above areas. Present funding is sufficient in this program area.

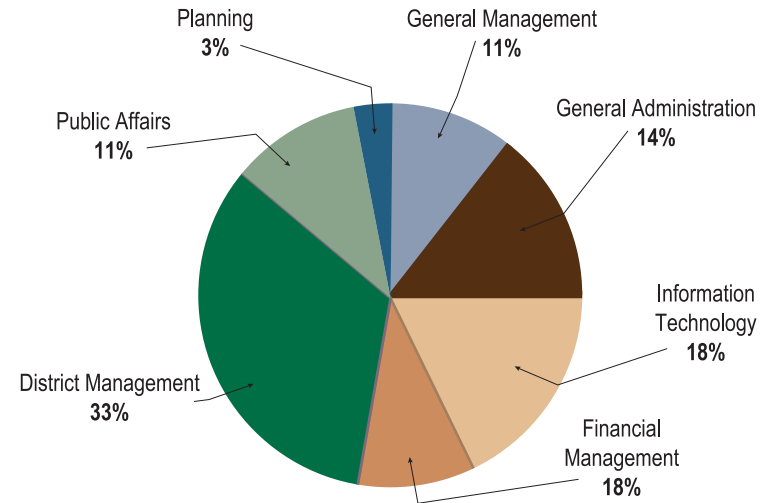


Restoration of old growth forest is the goal of many Forest vegetation management projects

Management & Administration
FY04 Expenditures by Program



Management & Administration
FY04 Expenditures by Program



Budget & Financial Management

The budget and financial management program involves all budget and financial activities, including budget formulation and execution. This program area's staff also performs accounting and analysis activities and develops documentation to meet all annual fiscal reporting requirements.

The Forest Service is in the process of consolidating its finance activities across the Nation in a new service center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. As a result of this change, many of the tasks formerly performed at the Forest will instead be carried out in Albuquerque. In addition, many Forest budget and financial management positions have been eliminated. Although it is expected that current funding will be adequate to support the budget and financial functions remaining at the Forest, final determination will not be possible until the transition is completed toward the end of FY 2005.

REQUIRED		AVAILABLE		SHORTFALL	
FTE	COST	FTE	COST	FTE	COST
42.3	\$3,437,000	34.1	\$2,861,000	8.2	\$576,000

Information Technology

The information technology program covers all telecommunications, radios, computer network, phones, dispatch, and alarm systems. It includes technical support and management of communication systems as well as equipment maintenance, information technology support and network administration, and website creation and maintenance. All information technology functions were recently centralized across the Forest Service. Current funding is adequate for the Forest's existing staffing and activity levels in this program area.

Fire & Aviation Management

(51 percent of expenditures)

The Stanislaus' fire and aviation management functional area covers all activities related to preventing wildfires and protecting natural resources and human life. Program areas in this functional area include:

- Management & Administration
- Fire Pre-Suppression & Preparedness
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction
- Wildfire Suppression
- Fire & Disaster Relief Support

Management & Administration

The Forest's resource protection officer; assistant resource protection officers; and district division and battalion chiefs carry out the bulk of fire-related management and administrative work on the Stanislaus. This work involves oversight and direction of all fire management activities, including wildland fire suppression, wildland fire use, prescribed burns, fuels reduction projects, and fire prevention and education activities. The increasing emphasis on community involvement and interagency collaboration is evident by the emergence of three local fire safe councils as well as the Southwest interface team and the Highway 108 strategic planning group.

The Stanislaus' emergency communications center (dispatch) coordinates daily and emergency radio communications for all Forest personnel. Dispatch is responsible for coordinating and maintaining the weather information management system and ensuring that weather data are correct and appropriate for determining fire danger ratings. Dispatch maintains all emergency equipment rental agreements and interagency agreements needed for emergency response on the Forest and provides support for off-Forest emergencies. Dispatch staff also tracks individual firefighter qualifications and coordinates

required fire training for all fire (fire management and fire support) personnel. Dispatch personnel are responsible for preparing and processing billings; the forest resource protection officer is responsible for approval of payments to other agencies. The emergency communications center staff maintains the fire training and qualifications master record for all Forest employees. The training/safety battalion is responsible for coordinating the Forest's fire qualifications review committee.

Presently, this program area is fully funded.

Fire Pre-Suppression & Preparedness

The fire pre-suppression and preparedness program has responsibility for protecting the Forest's natural resources, facilities, and infrastructure and preventing wildfires within the boundaries of the Forest and on private lands, as described in the Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement. This agreement between the California Department of Forestry, USDI Bureau of Land Management, local government, and the Forest Service provides fire management services within pre-defined direct protection areas, regardless of land ownership or administrative responsibility.

Primary preparedness activities include fire prevention, detection, maintenance of fire suppression equipment and apparatus, and training of personnel.

Aerial bases of operation include the Bald Mountain Helitack Base and Stockton Airtanker Base. Firefighting resources are utilized cooperatively between agencies to support a variety of incidents. Pre-incident planning with cooperators has been successful with the development of community wildfire protection plans.

Training of fire personnel is an important task that usually occurs year-round at varying levels. Maintenance of fire suppression equipment and apparatus is a daily effort.



Helicopter 517 is an important initial attack resource



Fire use is an emerging part of the Forest fire management program

Fire prevention personnel are responsible for implementing State and Federal fire laws regarding hazard abatement around structures on both public and private lands within the Forest's administrative boundary. Prevention personnel focus on making public contacts, issuing campfire permits, conducting home inspections, issuing burn permits, and participating in fire prevention education programs and events. The Forest works cooperatively with other agencies and local fire safe councils to provide education and fire prevention information to communities.

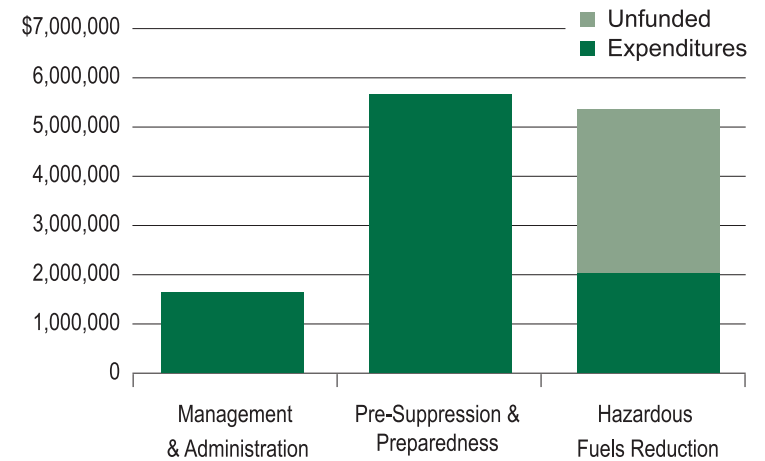
At present, the wildfire pre-suppression and preparedness program has no unfunded needs.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction

Implementation of the Forest's hazardous fuels reduction program is closely linked with the vegetation management program. Fuels reduction and vegetation management activities are used to re-introduce fire, reduce fuel levels, and mitigate consequences of large, damaging wildfires. Fuels treatments are strategically designed across landscapes so that wildland fire spread and intensity are reduced, habitats are protected, old forest ecosystems are enhanced, and fire can be reintroduced into fire-dependent ecosystems.

Prescribed fire and non-fire treatments (such as biomass thinning) are methods used to reduce forest fuels. Prescribed fire is used to manage natural and activity fuels to create forest conditions that contribute to: cost-effective fire suppression, meeting resource management objectives, and sustaining ecosystem values. Prescribed fire is the preferred method of managing fuels in areas sensitive to impacts of mechanical treatments, such as California spotted owl and northern goshawk protected activity centers, riparian conservation areas, and steep slopes. Prescribed fire can also be used to mimic naturally occurring fire, enhance native plant species, provide forage and habitat for wildlife species, contribute to soil nutrient cycling, and create diversity in vegetation structure and distribution.

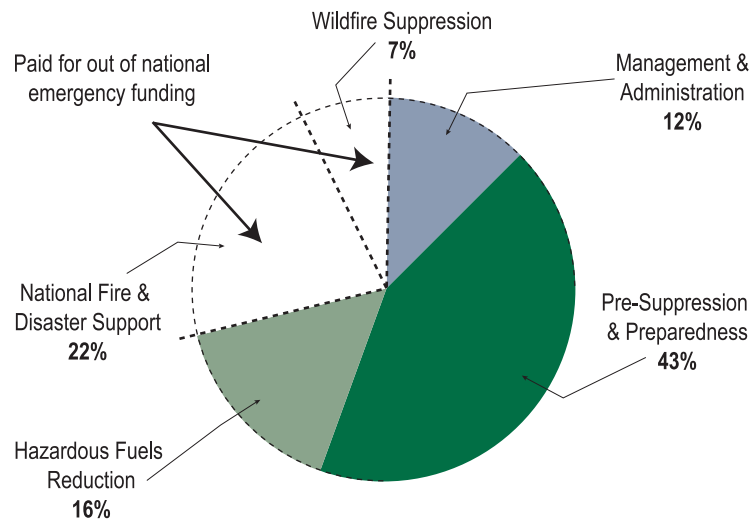
Fire & Aviation Management FY04 Expenditures by Program



Non-fire treatments can be designed to remove or rearrange fuels, mitigate the consequences of wildfire, and allow for efficient and safe appropriate management responses to wildland fire ignitions. These treatments are especially useful in areas where prescribed fire is not feasible or in smoke-sensitive areas.

The fuels out-year request and budget system (FORBS) analysis completed by the Forest in 2004 found that, in order to treat 15,000 acres annually, an additional 40 FTEs, representing a funding gap of \$3.35 million would be needed (for a total hazardous fuels reduction program funding level of \$5,413,000). To achieve the "most efficient level," or the maximum production capability, the Forest could treat 25,100 acres annually, which would require total funding of approximately \$9 million for this program area.

Fire & Aviation Management FY04 Expenditures by Program



REQUIRED		AVAILABLE		SHORTFALL	
FTE	COST	FTE	COST	FTE	COST
174.4	\$12,785,000	134.7	\$9,431,000	39.7	\$3,354,000

National Fire & Disaster Relief Support

National fire and disaster relief support includes all off-Forest assignments of Forest employees helping other jurisdictions throughout the Nation and occasionally foreign countries. Most of these assignments relate to fighting large fires within the United States; however, a smaller number of assignments relate to non-fire response. In both types of assignments, employees spend

a considerable amount of time away from their home unit, either on individual assignment, module assignments, or as members of an incident management team. The minimum commitment to an assignment lasts 2 weeks. Employees across the Forest support this activity. In addition to supporting large fire suppression operations nationally, other types of assignments come through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Past assignments have included responses to earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, super typhoons, and terrorist attacks.

Wildfire Suppression

All human-caused fires or fires with a protection objective are suppressed. Suppression actions range from aggressive initial attack to a combination of strategies to confine the fire. Fire management responses are based on fire management unit objectives (established in the Stanislaus National Forest Fire Management Plan), relative risks (external influences), complexity, and defensibility of management boundaries. The intensity of suppression action is based on local and predicted conditions at the time of the fire.

Initial attack firefighting can involve dozens of firefighters from different agencies, and is usually short term in duration. Extended attack operations involve the supervision of up to several thousand firefighters and support personnel in a complex interagency environment, often with urban interface issues, such as structure protection along jurisdictional boundaries.

At present, the Forest's wildfire suppression program has no unfunded needs.

Wildland Fire Use

Fire is an important and inevitable part of the Stanislaus National Forest. It is now widely recognized that fire must be restored to many areas where it has been excluded.

Managing wildland fires for natural resource benefits is known as wildland fire use. When a wildfire on the Stanislaus is detected, specified protocols are used to determine if it will be managed for wildland fire use benefits.

Wildland fire use, based on Federal fire policy direction, is a component of wildland fire management. It is a management action equal to wildfire suppression, and thus constitutes an emergency action. Wildland fires used to achieve resource benefits receive consideration, management attention, and management policies equal to wildfire suppression, except for specific differences related to ignition source (for example, lightning) and management action success.

Effective use of wildland fire provides substantial benefits to both society and the environment, including:

- increased safety for both firefighters and the public;
- minimized effects of inevitable smoke production on visibility and public health;
- minimized damage from uncontrolled wildfire;
- protection of fire-dependent plants and animals; and
- improved habitat, watersheds, grasslands, and forest ecosystems.

Facilities, Operations, & Maintenance

(15 percent of expenditures)

The facilities, operations, and maintenance functional area encompasses all activities directed toward operating and maintaining the Forest's facilities and infrastructure, which provide important public services and help mitigate resource impacts related to recreation use. This functional area is comprised of the following five program areas:

- Buildings, Grounds, & Utilities
- Campgrounds & Developed Sites
- Concentrated Use Areas
- Roads
- Trails

Buildings, Grounds, & Utilities

More than 173 buildings are maintained throughout the Stanislaus. These include fire stations, barracks, visitor centers, and other administrative offices and buildings. Facilities are in high demand by the large population surrounding the Forest, and require continual rehabilitation and maintenance. Spending on facilities falls into two categories: maintenance and capital improvements. Capital improvements are typically one-time yearly expenditures that are allocated to the Forest for specific projects and not considered part of this program's annual operating expenses.

Due to insufficient funding, the Forest has been unable to keep up with routine maintenance for a number of years. Accordingly, the Forest currently faces a \$4 million maintenance backlog, referred to as deferred maintenance. Adding 3.5 FTEs and other resources, such as supplies and equipment (for a total of \$290,000) to this program would ensure that annual maintenance obligations were met, thereby preventing the backlog from increasing further.

Campgrounds & Developed Sites:

Campgrounds and other developed recreation sites play an important role in supporting most of the recreation use that occurs within the Forest. When properly designed and managed, these facilities enhance the recreation experience for large numbers of people while protecting natural resources. Most urban visitors are first introduced to the Stanislaus at these locations. Without these facilities, the current levels of use at the most popular locations would not be sustainable.

The Forest has felt the growing demand for outdoor recreation and is challenged to maintain existing recreational facilities, let alone meet the growing demands of the public for new updated facilities, such as showers, flush toilets, and hot and cold running water. Without adequate, proactive maintenance and monitoring, the Forest's recreational infrastructure falls prey to overuse and creates adverse environmental impacts.

Critical health and safety standards are being met most of the time at the developed sites on the Forest, but resources are significantly less than required to meet all standards. It is only support from other program areas that has enabled a large number of recreation sites to remain open and minimally serviced. Forest recreation appropriations have not met the increasing maintenance needs at developed sites, which range from large recreational complexes to remote trailheads and picnic areas, contributing to an ever growing backlog of deferred maintenance. An additional 8.4 FTEs in the campgrounds and developed sites program area would improve the Forest's ability to respond to visitor needs by maintaining and enhancing facility conditions, improving accessibility, and meeting resource demands during the peak summer season.

Concentrated Use Areas:

The Forest Service's recreation programs provide a spectrum of motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities in natural settings. Concentrated use areas (CUAs) are undeveloped sites or areas outside of wilderness areas where recreational activities occur. An estimated 62 percent of all recreation use on the Stanislaus occurs in CUAs, which are dispersed along 2,500 miles of roads and hundreds of miles of trails.

In the past, most of the funding for management of the Forest's CUAs came from grants from the State Off-Highway Vehicle Program. Until recently, this funding averaged \$300,000 annually. While the Forest continues to receive money from this program, the funding emphasis has shifted from operations to restoration.

Beyond OHV use, there are many recreation activity growth areas that have received little attention. A balanced CUA program with adequate funding, in the amount of \$521,000 for 4.3 FTEs and associated supplies and other resources, would



Winter time offers over snow vehicle riding opportunities

enable the Forest to recruit volunteers and develop new partnerships to leverage resources. This additional funding would allow the Forest to take advantage of existing opportunities to improve utilization of volunteers for resource protection, enhance visitor safety, and provide adequate maps and signing in CUAs.

Roads:

The roads program focuses on the operations and maintenance of the Forest's road system. The Stanislaus has approximately 2,929 miles of system roads.

Roads are maintained to provide for user safety, consistent with road maintenance management objectives. Road maintenance capabilities on the Stanislaus have declined as timber harvest levels and associated road maintenance activities have declined and funding for this program has decreased to the current level of \$300,000. The roads program has suffered a resulting decline in staffing due to these factors.

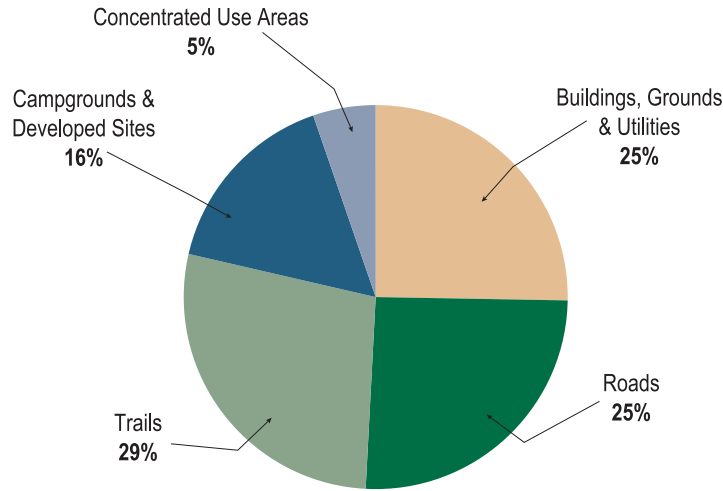


Trail construction skills are provided by the California Conservation Corps



Reforestation and plantation maintenance are important investment priorities.

Facilities, Operations & Maintenance FY04 Expenditures by Program



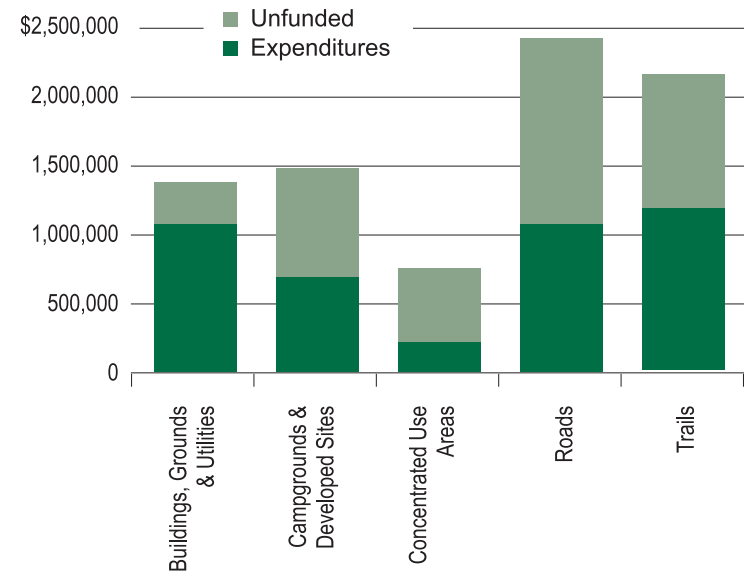
REQUIRED		AVAILABLE		SHORTFALL	
FTE	COST	FTE	COST	FTE	COST
74.4	\$8,000,000	34.4	\$4,147,000	40	\$3,853,000

To bring the roads program up to standard would require an additional \$1.3 million annually; this amount would cover 13.7 FTEs directed toward road maintenance, road operations, transportation development, and transportation planning. Critical needs for the roads program include stabilizing roads where erosion can result in negative effects on access and the environment. This level of funding would halt the ongoing accumulation of the maintenance backlog in roads, which now stands at \$89.2 million across the Forest.

Trails:

The trails program has responsibility for managing 1,198 miles of non-motorized trails designated for hiking and equestrian use within the Stanislaus. (Motorized trails are handled in the concentrated use areas program.) Typical trails program activities

Facilities, Operations & Maintenance FY04 Expenditures by Program



include trail tread repair, major reconstruction, trail bridge repair, brushing, trail replacement, and sign placement. Upkeep of the trail system ensures prolonged trail life; protection from erosion, sedimentation, and off-site trampling; and reduction in other environmental and wildlife impacts. The amount of trail maintenance work that the existing staff is able to accomplish each year depends on funding and donated volunteer time. Another challenge the trails program staff faces is a limited field operating season, as the trail work that needs to be performed is under heavy snow pack for most of the year. A shortage of past funding for this program has led to a deferred maintenance backlog of \$14.5 million for trails across the Stanislaus. To meet standards and prevent an even larger maintenance backlog, additional annual funding of \$950,000 to cover personnel and resources, such as contracting California Conservation Crews, would be required for the trails program.

Investment Opportunities

Investments are distinct from the funding gaps presented in the previous section in that they require a one-time or finite infusion of funds rather than an ongoing, perpetual commitment. The business planning team considered the various potential investment opportunities and selected the following to be high priority initiatives that the Forest should embark upon. These investments do not have funding available at the present time. Each investment is described below, with an estimate of the amount of funding needed.

Assessment of Recreational Access: Motorized Trails and Mountain Bikes

Cost: \$150,000 annually for four years

In the next four years, the Stanislaus, along with all national forests, will be required to complete route designation for off highway vehicles. Included in this effort, is a coordinated look at recreational access on the Forest. The timing is excellent to evaluate not only access needs and any recreational impacts, both positive and negative, but to take a comprehensive look at associated recreational facilities needs in support of the access issue. This can be done through a joint project that links recreational facility master planning with off highway vehicle access issues and route designation and mountain biking recreational needs. This multi-year project would require a high degree of public involvement and collaboration.

Road Maintenance Backlog

Cost: \$89.2 million

Funding shortfalls in the Forest's roads program have led to a maintenance backlog estimated at \$89.2 million. Of this amount, \$13.7 million is for 421 miles of roads maintained for passenger car traffic and subject to the Highway Safety Act, classified as maintenance level 3, 4, and 5 roads. The remaining \$75 million is for 2,117 miles of roads that are maintained for high clearance vehicles and 385 miles of closed roads. Timber sales no longer provide the opportunities for significant contributions to road maintenance that they once did. This backlog poses critical safety, environmental, and access issues in

the Forest. Lack of road maintenance can create safety problems and result in washouts that lead to sedimentation in vital watersheds within the Forest. Watershed- and project-level roads analyses are needed to identify the road system needed to serve long-term management and opportunities to decommission unneeded roads. A long-term effort, funded at an estimated \$3 to \$4 million annually over the next 20 years, would assure fire, administrative, and recreational access; restore the most essential elements of the road system; help retire the maintenance backlog on arterial and selected collector and local roads; and enable the Forest to decommission unneeded roads.

Facilities Backlog and Unfunded Projects

Cost: \$16.3 million

Similar to the roads program, the facilities operations and maintenance program has developed a maintenance backlog over time due to aging infrastructure, changing standards, and shortfalls in funding. Capital investments in needed facilities, such as water systems, administrative buildings, barracks housing for employees, and fire engine garages, have been deferred due to lack of available funding. Barracks housing is a crucial tool for the Forest in attracting, hiring, and retaining employees. The high cost of living in California, in general, and the lack of affordable housing in communities adjacent to the Forest many times dissuades talented candidates from pursuing employment on the Stanislaus. Fire and Administrative facilities, such as fire engine garages and barracks housing, are needed to support fire, fuels, and vegetation management initiatives.

Integrated Vegetation Management

Cost: \$5 million

Over the past 15 years, the Forest has experienced a number of major wildfires, and these fires have caused extensive damage to vegetation resources. An investment of \$5 million would enable the Forest to reforest the extensive tracts of burned lands, covering approximately 10,000 acres, that have been damaged by major wildfires.



Hundreds of miles of Level 2 roads do not receive needed annual maintenance



Off highway vehicle route designation process begins in FY06

Financials & Investments

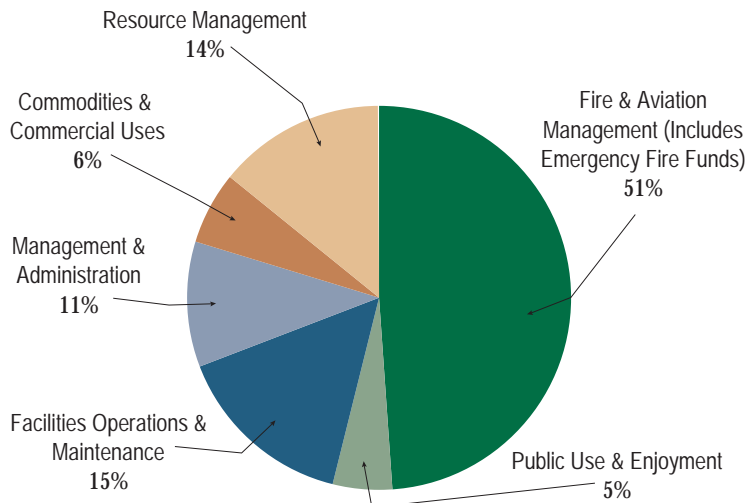
Summary Financial Statement 2004

Results of the FY 2004 financial analysis for the Stanislaus are presented in the following table and charts. In the Summary Financial Table on page 35, the “Available” columns display the amount of money and FTEs that the Stanislaus actually spent in FY 2004. The “Unmet Needs” columns represent the financial and personnel requirements to accomplish needed work, as defined by the program managers. The “Required” columns sum “Available” and “Unmet Needs” to show how much money and labor hours would have been required in FY 2004 for the Forest to accomplish all of the defined workload. Not including emergency fire funds, the Stanislaus required \$36 million (including personnel costs for 432 FTEs); however, only \$23.3 million were available in FY 2004, which was 65 percent of the amount required. None of the functional areas were funded at 100 percent of the amount required to do all work at desired levels.

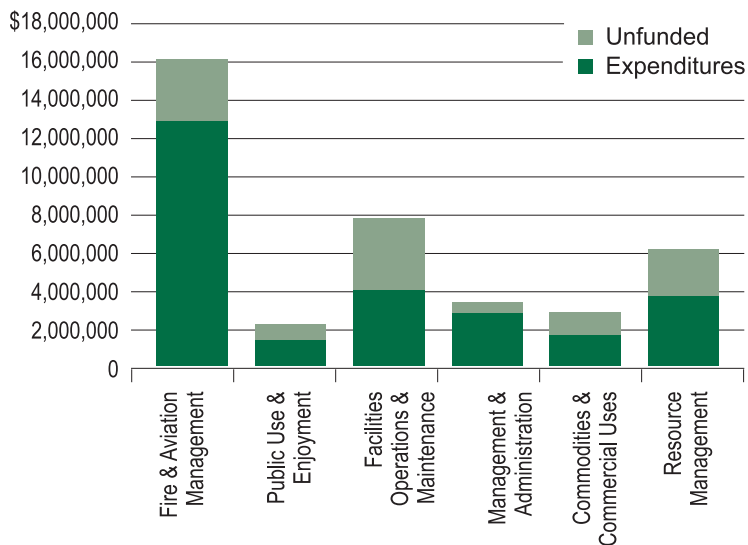
The functional areas with the greatest financial shortfalls in FY 2004 were facilities operations and maintenance (\$3.9 million), fire and aviation management (\$3.4 million), and resource management (\$2.5 million). The facilities operations and maintenance functional area was also the least funded to complete its required work: in FY 2004, this functional area received only 52 percent of the necessary funding to meet standards and accomplish objectives. As a percentage of available funding, the commodity and commercial uses, public use and enjoyment, and resource management functional areas follow behind facilities operations and maintenance in terms of relative shortfalls. In FY 2004, these functional areas all received approximately 58 to 62 percent of the required funds needed to meet their operating goals. The fire and aviation management (excluding emergency funds) and general management functional areas received 74 percent and 83 percent of required funding, respectively. The shortfall in fire and aviation management is exclusively in the hazardous fuels reduction program area, while general management identified needs in the public affairs and planning programs. The program areas of financial management, general administration, and information technology are undergoing a re-engineering process and slated to consolidate under a national, centralized division. These areas will cease to exist at the Forest level beginning in FY 2005; thus, no needs were identified in these areas.

The pie chart indicates the distribution of funds among the six functional areas. Fire and aviation management includes both emergency and non-emergency funds. The total funds for this functional area dwarf the amounts received by the other functional areas and in total compose 49 percent of all available funding the Forest received in FY 2004.

Breakdown of Expenditures, FY04



Functional Area Funding, FY04



Summary Financial Statement 2003	REQUIRED		AVAILABLE				SURPLUS/(SHORTFALL)		
			APPROPRIATED	NON-APPROPRIATED		TOTAL			
FUNCTIONAL AREAS AND PROGRAMS	FTE	Funds	Base	Revenue	Reimbursable	FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds
FIRE & AVIATION MANAGEMENT									
Management & Administration	14.5	\$1,646,000	\$1,646,000	-	-	14.5	\$1,646,000	0.0	\$0
Pre-Suppression & Preparedness	95.7	\$5,722,000	\$5,722,000	-	-	95.7	\$5,722,000	0.0	\$0
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	64.1	\$5,417,000	\$1,985,000	\$78,000	-	24.4	\$2,063,000	(39.7)	(\$3,354,000)
Subtotal	174.4	\$12,785,000	\$9,353,000	\$78,000	-	134.7	\$9,431,000	(39.7)	(\$3,354,000)
PUBLIC USE & ENJOYMENT									
Concessions & Recreation Special Uses	10.0	\$679,000	\$206,000	-	\$74,000	3.2	\$280,000	(6.8)	(\$399,000)
Law Enforcement	7.6	\$743,000	\$384,000	-	-	4.8	\$384,000	(2.8)	(\$359,000)
Recreation Fee Collection	0.2	\$26,000	-	\$16,000	-	0.1	\$16,000	(0.1)	(\$10,000)
Visitor Centers, Public Information & Education	15.3	\$709,000	\$615,000	\$12,000	\$6,000	14.1	\$633,000	(1.3)	(\$76,000)
Visitor Safety & Protection	1.5	\$93,000	\$7,000	-	\$83,000	1.5	\$90,000	0.0	(\$3,000)
Subtotal	34.7	\$2,250,000	\$1,212,000	\$28,000	\$163,000	23.8	\$1,403,000	(10.9)	(\$847,000)
FACILITY OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE									
Buildings, Grounds & Utilities	9.7	\$1,344,000	\$1,012,000	\$42,000	-	6.1	\$1,054,000	(3.5)	(\$290,000)
Roads	23.2	\$2,369,000	\$627,000	\$6,000	\$421,000	9.5	\$1,054,000	(13.7)	(\$1,315,000)
Trails	21.3	\$2,103,000	\$938,000	-	\$215,000	11.2	\$1,153,000	(10.1)	(\$950,000)
Campgrounds & Developed Sites	13.0	\$1,448,000	\$533,000	\$44,000	\$94,000	4.6	\$671,000	(8.4)	(\$777,000)
Concentrated Use Areas	7.3	\$736,000	\$211,000	\$4,000	-	3.0	\$215,000	(4.3)	(\$521,000)
Subtotal	74.4	\$8,000,000	\$3,321,000	\$92,000	\$730,000	34.4	\$4,147,000	(40.0)	(\$3,853,000)
MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION									
General Management	3.5	\$304,000	\$304,000	-	-	3.5	\$304,000	0.0	\$0
General Administration	5.2	\$413,000	\$413,000	-	-	5.2	\$413,000	0.0	\$0
Information Technology	3.2	\$504,000	\$504,000	-	-	3.2	\$504,000	(0.0)	\$0
Financial Management	3.8	\$286,000	\$286,000	-	-	3.8	\$286,000	0.0	\$0
District Management	14.4	\$961,000	\$916,000	\$14,000	\$30,000	14.4	\$960,000	0.0	(\$1,000)
Public Affairs	3.2	\$321,000	\$285,000	-	\$25,000	3.1	\$310,000	(0.1)	(\$11,000)
Planning	9.0	\$648,000	\$84,000	-	-	1.0	\$84,000	(8.0)	(\$564,000)
Subtotal	42.3	\$3,437,000	\$2,792,000	\$14,000	\$55,000	34.1	\$2,861,000	(8.2)	(\$576,000)
COMMODITY & COMMERCIAL USES									
Forest Products	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	\$0
Grazing	3.3	\$211,000	\$158,000	\$4,000	-	2.3	\$162,000	(1.0)	(\$49,000)
Minerals	1.4	\$133,000	\$31,000	-	-	0.4	\$31,000	(1.0)	(\$102,000)
Non-Recreation Special Uses	6.3	\$520,000	\$237,000	-	\$41,000	3.4	\$278,000	(2.9)	(\$242,000)
Timber	18.9	\$2,051,000	\$1,173,000	\$14,000	\$30,000	11.7	\$1,217,000	(7.2)	(\$834,000)
Subtotal	29.9	\$2,915,000	\$1,599,000	\$18,000	\$71,000	17.8	\$1,688,000	(12.1)	(\$1,227,000)
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT									
Data Management	11.7	\$564,000	\$224,000	-	-	3.6	\$224,000	(8.1)	(\$340,000)
Heritage Resources	8.0	\$618,000	\$435,000	-	\$10,000	5.5	\$445,000	(2.5)	(\$173,000)
Land Ownership & Adjustment	4.7	\$329,000	\$27,000	-	-	0.4	\$27,000	(4.3)	(\$302,000)
Specially Designated Areas	9.7	\$602,000	\$108,000	-	-	1.6	\$108,000	(8.1)	(\$494,000)
Vegetation Management	12.9	\$1,913,000	\$1,111,000	\$203,000	\$9,000	9.2	\$1,323,000	(3.7)	(\$590,000)
Watershed, Air, & Geologic Resource Management	11.8	\$1,115,000	\$786,000	-	\$82,000	8.3	\$868,000	(3.5)	(\$247,000)
Wildlife Management	17.8	\$1,204,000	\$795,000	-	\$28,000	11.3	\$823,000	(6.5)	(\$381,000)
Subtotal	76.6	\$6,345,000	\$3,486,000	\$203,000	\$129,000	39.9	\$3,818,000	(36.7)	(\$2,527,000)
Total, less emergency fire funds	432.3	\$35,732,000	\$21,763,000	\$433,000	\$1,148,000	284.7	\$23,348,000	(147.6)	(\$12,384,000)
EMERGENCY FIRE FUNDS									
National Fire & Disaster Support	57.6	\$2,896,000	\$2,896,000	-	-	57.6	\$2,896,000	0.0	\$0
Wildfire Suppression	16.6	\$951,000	\$951,000	-	-	16.6	\$951,000	0.0	\$0
Subtotal	74.1	\$3,847,000	\$3,847,000	-	-	74.1	\$3,847,000	0.0	\$0
Grand Total	506.4	\$39,579,000	\$25,610,000	\$433,000	\$1,148,000	358.8	\$27,195,000	(147.6)	(\$12,384,000)



Strategies

Forest Strategic Objectives

The Stanislaus' leadership has identified the following strategies aimed at leveraging the Forest's limited financial and personnel resources to most effectively accomplish key Forest goals and objectives. These strategies are initiatives that would result in long-term benefits for the Stanislaus National Forest.

Fleet Analysis

Investment Required: \$20,000 to \$30,000

Benefits: Cost savings of \$20,000 to \$50,000 annually and a \$20,000 to \$50,000 one-time cost

The Stanislaus National Forest covers almost a million acres. Given this size, Forest employees must travel to the field to perform such duties as maintaining campgrounds; gathering inventory, and monitoring data in specific areas, and conducting assessments for permit approvals. In addition to passenger vehicles, the Forest's fleet also has specialized vehicles, such as fire trucks, and heavy equipment, such as tractors, which allow the Forest staff to prevent and fight forest fires and perform necessary work. In FY 2004, the Forest's fleet was comprised of 263 vehicles, ranging from passenger cars to fire engines.

The Forest's fleet analysis strategy is focused on developing efficiencies to reduce annual fleet costs. A preliminary assessment of the Forest's passenger vehicles found a wide range of utilization rates and associated costs among the current fleet. Currently, most vehicles on the Forest are assigned and dedicated to either a particular program or an individual. The Forest would conduct a full fleet utilization and needs study to identify and explore opportunities for sharing vehicles or leasing them during peak periods instead of owning them year-round. The Forest's heavy equipment has already undergone a similar assessment as part of the "most efficient organization" initiative in the roads program, with the result being that a majority of the Forest's heavy equipment is already shared or pooled with other national forests. A full utilization study will be lengthy and data intensive; however, it will provide valuable information to the Forest in

determining the optimal number and type of vehicles required to support the work of the Forest's many programs.

Benefits

- Reducing the Forest fleet and determining the appropriate mix of vehicle types (for example, four-wheel versus two-wheel drive vehicles) will lower annual fixed vehicle costs, maintenance charges, and associated storage costs.
- Surplus vehicles identified by the utilization study may be sold to generate revenues for the Forest's working capital fund.

Implementation Challenges

- A complex fleet utilization analysis requires time and funding.
- It may be difficult to change the mindset of employees who are accustomed to having a dedicated vehicle.
- The Forest will need to develop an efficient and effective system for "checking-out" vehicles and will need to train employees in using the system.
- Uncertainty associated with changing workloads and staffing and the potential need for more vehicles (related to the strategic fuels reduction strategy discussed below) could affect future fleet needs.

Action Plan

- Implement full utilization study of all vehicles on the Forest.
- Evaluate results and obtain feedback from Forest staff.
- Develop a strategy to sell off or release surplus vehicles.
- Identify vehicles that will be placed in a pool and those that will be sold or released.
- Compare the costs savings associated with leasing vehicles to meet seasonal needs.
- Justify needs of four-wheel drive versus two-wheel drive vehicles.
- Develop a method and process for sharing pooled vehicles.
- Implement vehicle pooling and release of excess vehicles.

- Conduct quarterly or semi-annual reviews of vehicle usage to actively optimize fleet utilization.

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act Implementation

Investment Required: \$150,000 to \$200,000
one-time investment

Potential Benefits: Revenues of \$50,000 to \$150,000 annually

In December 2004, Congress passed new legislation, known as the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA). This act provides all Federal land management agencies, including the Forest Service, the ability to collect recreation fees at particular areas in the Forest. Unlike the National Park Service, the Forest Service does not charge a fee for entrance and receives fees from visitors for services, such as campgrounds. With the new legislation, the majority of these fees (80 percent), will be retained on the Forest, and reinvested in the Forest's recreation programs and infrastructure, such as campground or trail improvements.

By taking advantage of this new opportunity, the Stanislaus can generate new and additional funding and directly utilize the proceeds to rehabilitate or improve existing recreation opportunities and facilities. This strategy would require a full analysis of the potential areas within the Forest that meet the criteria defined under the FLREA legislation, pricing studies on appropriate fees to charge, and an assessment of the investments and improvements needed before a fee-collection system could be implemented.

Benefits

- Recreation fee collection provides opportunities to generate additional funding.
- Revenues from fees can be reinvested in the Forest's recreational programs and infrastructure.

Implementation Challenges

- A large upfront investment may be needed for improvements before fee collection can begin, and this will likely create challenging cash flow needs and requirements.

- Implementation of any new fee assessments requires Regional Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) approval, as required by FLREA legislation. A RAC has not yet been formed.
- Strategic communication will be needed to gather support from the public and visitors who are not accustomed to paying recreation fees in specific areas of the Forest.

Action Plan

- Develop and prioritize a list of potential areas meeting the criteria for fee assessment.
- Develop cost-benefit analysis of needed investments and improvements and expected annual revenue.
- Gather feedback and input from Forest staff and possibly local communities.
- Develop a comprehensive plan and strategy to implement priority recreation fee collection opportunities.
- Explore pricing structures; develop staff training; develop a plan for improvements; and develop a plan for re-investing collected fees.
- Seek RAC approval.
- Begin public communication to gather support.
- Begin required improvements in areas targeted for recreation fee assessments.
- Launch the new recreation fee system.
- Analyze realized costs and revenues generated.
- Conduct quarterly or bi-annual reviews of the fee assessment plan and identify opportunities for improvement.

Collaboration & Strategic Fuels Reduction

Investment Required: \$5 to \$9 million annually

Potential Benefits: \$3 to \$6 million annually (and intangible benefits described below)

For over 100 years, the Stanislaus National Forest and the many communities that border it have depended on one another. The Forest has long been a source of tangible resources, such as timber, minerals, and clean water, on which companies and communities throughout California depend. It has also been the backbone of a thriving local tourist economy, drawing millions of visitors who come to hike, ski, fish, raft, hunt, and otherwise enjoy the Forest's mountains and rivers.

The Forest is similarly dependent on the local communities. Many employees come from and make their homes in local towns. Close collaboration between Forest programs and local agencies helps protect Forest resources. And, local mills and power plants provide the infrastructure needed to process Forest timber and vegetation removed to reduce fire hazards and improve forest health.

In recent years, these working relationships have been strained by the many changes affecting public land management. Wildfire danger is always present, with every late-summer incident being a potential catastrophe. Population growth and demographic shifts have driven recreational use ever closer to the Forest's carrying capacity. And, major environmental policies and regulations sometimes come into conflict with traditional forest uses.

Maintaining the close working relationships between the Forest and local communities in the face of these changes will require far greater collaboration than

needed in the past. The Stanislaus' leadership team will implement the following strategy, with the goal of strengthening forest-community relationships and reducing hazardous fuel levels in the Forest.

Benefits

The Forest's collaboration and strategic fuels reduction strategy is expected to result in the following benefits:

- community safety as a result of reduced fuel levels in wildland urban interface,
- improved forest health,
- faster project execution,
- greater collaboration and coordination across jurisdictions, including tighter coordination across Southern Sierra national forests;
- increased community support for management actions, and
- improved opportunities for funding and project implementation.

Implementation Challenges

- This strategy requires close cooperation and mutual trust between the Forest and the community.
- It depends on a clear realization of the mutual dependence of each party with the other.
- The strategy may require additional financial resources and personnel to support increased planning and outreach.

Action Plan

- Launch an ongoing outreach campaign to ensure that local stakeholders have opportunities to

provide input to and receive information on forest management initiatives.

- Conduct community workshops as part of the stewardship and firehazard assessment process.
- Hold meetings with other government and non-government organizations, such as local Native American tribes, local Boards of Supervisors, fire safe councils, environmental groups, Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources and the Environment (TuCARE), and other interested parties.
- Through this collaboration, identify site-specific projects that satisfy the objectives of key legislation, such as the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, and Forest Service policies, such as the Healthy Forests Initiative, and complete the required planning.
- Integrate the outcomes of these planning efforts into FY 2006 and future budgets and programs of work.
- Coordinate with the Sierra and Sequoia (Southern Sierra Province) National Forests in developing community-related activities and projects within the Province.
- Identify possible projects and partnerships across Forest boundaries.
- Utilize stewardship contracting to increase opportunities to leverage Forest Service appropriations.
- Incorporate results of forest-community collaboration into the upcoming revision of the Stanislaus National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

Expand Partnerships & Relationships

Investment required: \$70,000 annually for personnel needs

Benefits: \$500,000 to \$800,000 annually, plus non-monetary benefits.

This strategy is aimed at increasing the Forest's ability to take advantage of partnership opportunities with cooperating non-profit organizations, agencies, and other entities as a way to reduce costs or leverage the Forest's limited resources. There are three parts to this strategy: (1) nurturing and maintaining existing partnerships, (2) expanding partnerships, and (3) building internal capacity to maintain the Forest's existing and future partnerships.

The Forest would like to focus future partnerships on programs with unfunded needs (opportunities) and investment priorities identified in this business plan. The following programs have opportunities for future partnerships: hazardous fuels reduction, roads, interpretation, watershed restoration, campgrounds, trails, vegetation management, concentrated use areas, specially designated areas, and wildlife. Road access and watershed analysis are future investment needs that would benefit from partnership efforts. In some cases, a partnership may directly benefit the program, while in others, a partnership can free up resources (money or personnel) that can be channeled to another program or investment.

In addition to establishing new partnerships, the Forest will nurture and maintain existing partnerships. Highlighted below are three of the Forest's many existing partnerships:

Stanislaus Wilderness Volunteers (SWV), currently over 45 members strong, contributed almost 6,000 hours in FY 2004. SWV members conduct

wilderness patrols; serve at front desks to provide information and issue wilderness permits; post signs; work on restoration, rehabilitation, and wilderness education projects; and report on field conditions. All of these volunteer activities provide significant value to the Stanislaus' wilderness (specially designated areas) program. In addition, SWV members assist in gathering data for the monitoring required in the Emigrant Wilderness Plan. The SWV has received the Forest Service National Volunteer Program Award.

The **Baker Station Project**, a partnership with Columbia College, will create the "High Sierra Institute at Historic Baker Station", an academic experiential learning center. The facility will be managed to provide space for nature-based summer classes, where course work will include implementing needed restoration, monitoring, maintenance, and interpretation/education activities, which can make significant direct contributions to the Forest's wilderness, watershed, recreation, and trails program areas. In addition, the involvement of students at Baker will strengthen the relationship between the Forest and other third parties.

The **Clavey River Ecosystem Project (CREP)** is comprised of interested stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds (ranching, logging, recreation, OHV, education, environmental, and business) working together to produce a scientifically credible assessment and analysis of the Clavey River watershed. In 2000, CREP was chosen as a pilot project by the California Resources Agency to test the effectiveness of applying technical information from the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project. The CREP has recently received a significant grant from CalFed to conduct the watershed analysis.

This strategy recommends developing a structured process to evaluate, prioritize and implement partnership opportunities like those described above. These are particularly beneficial for the Stanislaus given its limited financial and personnel resources.

Benefits

The Forest's partnership strategy is expected to:

- reduce costs,
- avoid duplication of activities,
- replace Forest budget expenses with third party contributions, and
- leverage Forest appropriations to maximize the effectiveness of dollars spent.

Implementation Challenges

Several challenges are likely in implementing the Forest's partnership strategy, including:

- identifying motivated partnership opportunities,
- managing partnership relationships, and
- shifting Forest employees' perspectives from 'doing' to 'facilitating' work.

Action Plan

- Identify candidates for partnership development within programs and with individuals.
- Continually evaluate and enhance the Forest's partnership strategy.

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The next generation enjoying the forest

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Middle fork of the Stanislaus River watershed area