Outputs and Services

Introduction

Outputs and services are not only the results of Forest Plan implementation, but they also show our customers that we are accountable for doing what we say we will do. The Forest Plan is our contract with the public, and by fulfilling that contract we strive to build and maintain public trust, understanding, and collaboration with the Forest and our activities.

2007 Accomplishments

Forest accomplishments are directly addressed in the monitoring items covered below.

Monitoring and Evaluation

FOREST PLAN MONITORING FOR OUTPUTS AND SERVICES

The 2006 Forest Plan includes one monitoring question for Outputs and Services on page IV-6:

1. How close are projected outputs and services to actual, including revenues returned to the U.S. Treasury, payments in lieu of taxes and monetary returns to State & local governments?

This monitoring question is derived from the NFMA requirement to compare how close we come to providing the outputs and services to the public that we project in our Forest Plan. There are a number of different ways to assess or report outputs and services generated by the Forest. This report will focus on the following indicators:

- 1) Target accomplishments that address program implementation in the Forest Plan,
- 2) Attainment or movement toward Forest Plan measurable objectives in resource areas such as vegetation, roads, trails, fire, wildlife, timber, and minerals; and
- 3) Payments to local counties, including PILT and stabilized/25 percent funds.

Monitoring Ouestion 1. How close are projected outputs and services to actual?

Target Accomplishment Comparison

The first method used to compare projected and actual outputs and services is to look at the target accomplishments for FY 2007. Table OS-1 displays target accomplishments that were given to the Forest, the amount we planned to do, the amount we actually accomplished, and the difference between the original target and what we accomplished. The accomplishments are related directly or indirectly to Forest Plan goals, objectives, or desired conditions. They do not cover everything we do as a Forest, but rather those items that were assigned a specific target by the Forest Service. Other accomplishments are noted in the resource sections of this report.

Table OS-1. Comparison of Target, Planned, and Actual Accomplishments for FY 2007

Resource or Program Area	Accomplishment Description	Target Amount	Planned Amount	Actual Amount	Actual Difference from Target
Air Quality	Number of energy facility applications processed that exceeded prescribed timeframes		0	1	+1
Air Quality	Number of special use applications for energy-related facilities completed within prescribed timeframes	0	0	1	+1
Aquatic Habitat	Acres of inland lake habitat enhancement	20	38	38	+18
Aquatic Habitat	Acres of inland stream habitat enhancement	10	10	10	0
Botanical Resources	Highest priority acres treated annually for noxious weeds and invasive plants on NFS lands	130	130	168	+38
Heritage	Number of priority heritage assets managed to standard	32	32	32	0
Facilities	Number of FA&O facilities maintained to standard	56	56	76	+20
Fire	Acres treated reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire	400	400	450	+50
Lands	Acres of land adjustments to conserve the integrity of undeveloped lands and habitat quality	176	176	176	0
Lands	Miles of land ownership boundary maintained to standard	0	10	11	+11
Lands	Miles of land ownership boundary marked to standard	0	2	1	+1
Lands/Sp. Uses	No. of land use authorizations administered to standard	75	75	104	+29
Lands/Sp. Uses	Number of land use proposals and applications processed	7	25	37	+30
Lands/Sp. Uses	Number of rights of way acquired to provide public access	1	1	1	0
Minerals	Number of new saleables contracts, free-use permits, and mineral collection sites and community use pits opened	0	0	2	+2
Minerals	Number of geologic resources and hazards managed	3	3	3	0
Minerals	Number of energy-mineral proposals processed within prescribed timeframes		0	4	+4
Minerals	Number of energy-mineral proposals processed or pending outside of prescribed timeframes		0	1	+1
Minerals	Number of oil, gas or geothermal operations administered	0	59	61	+61
Minerals	Number of oil, gas or geothermal leases processed	0	4	4	+4
Minerals	Number of other energy leaseables actions	0	1	1	+1
Range	Acres of grazing allotments managed to standard	4,500	4.500	4,500	0
Range	Number of grazing allotments with new NEPA decisions	5	4	5	0
Range	Acres of rangeland vegetation improved	200	200	200	0
Roads	Miles of road decommissioned	2	7	7	+5
Roads	Miles of high clearance system roads improved	1	1	1	0
Roads	Miles of high clearance system roads maintained	60	73	73	+13
Roads	Miles of passenger car system roads improved	1	1	2	+1
Roads	Miles of passenger car system roads maintained	370	546	546	+176
Recreation	Acres of NFS lands covered by a motor vehicle use map	919,049	0	919,128	+79
Recreation	No. of interpretive/conservation ed. plans implemented	1	1	1	0
Recreation	Number of recreation site capacities operated to standard	1,418,052	1,418,052	1,418,052	0
Recreation	Number of recreation sites maintained to standard	156	156	219	+63
Recreation	Miles of system trail improved to standard	10	10	10	0
Recreation	Miles of system trail maintained to standard	220	220	220	0
Recreation	No. of recreation special uses administered to standard	28	28	19	-9
Soil and Water	Acres of soil and water resources improved	20	20	20	0
T&E Species	No. of T&E species with recovery actions accomplished	0	0	3	+3
Timber	Volume (CCF) of regular timber sold	14,250	10,500	17,504	+3,254
Vegetation	Acres of forest vegetation established	300	569	1,030	+730
Vegetation	Acres of forest vegetation improved	50	71	103	+53
Wildlife	Acres of T&E species habitat enhancement	100	100	30	-70
Wildlife/Fish	Number of information and education products/events	0	15	15	+15
Wildlife et al.	Acres of inventory data collected or acquired to standard	44,600	33,200	44,600*	0

Evaluation, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Target Accomplishment Comparison

As seen in Table OS-1, the Forest met or exceeded target accomplishments in 42 of 44 (95%) program or resource areas in Fiscal Year 2007. Targets were exceeded in 27 or the 44 areas. The two areas where targets were not met were: 1) recreation special uses administered to standard, and 2) acres of T&E species habitat enhancement.

The shortfall in administering recreation special uses was primarily due to a decrease in recreation funding that did not allow the Forest to hire as many seasonal recreation employees as we have in the past. This funding deficiency was felt in other aspects of recreation management as well. For example, even though we met the reduced target of 230 trail miles maintained, this amount was not as large as in years past and did not meet the Forest Plan objective of 425 trail miles maintained on an average annual basis. Similarly, the recreation sites maintained to standard target is somewhat misleading in that shortfalls in funding also resulted in some sites not being maintained as well as they were in the past, or in the closing of some sites because they could not be maintained or operated on a continual basis with our available personnel.

The shortfall in T&E species habitat enhancement was primarily due to conflicts in program work scheduling and prioritization at the district level.

Recommendations: Continue to apply for sufficient recreation funding to meet Forest needs and objectives. Improve work scheduling and prioritization so that districts have a clear picture of what work needs to be done when.

Forest Plan Objective Progress

Another way to look at Forest outputs and services is to examine how they may have contributed to measurable objectives in the Forest Plan. Table OS-2 describes these Forest Plan objectives and any contributions that were made to achieving them in FY 2007.

Table OS-2. Progress toward Measurable Forest Plan Objectives in Fiscal Year 2007

Resource or Program Area	Forest Plan Objective	FY07 Progress Toward Objective
Fire	FM09 - Over the next 10 years use prescribed fire on 10,000 to 30,000	Roughly 450 acres were
Management	acres. Emphasize use in areas to reduce hazardous fuels and fire risk	treated with prescribed
	to property or investments, and/or in areas to maintain, restore, or	fire in FY07.
	enhance wildlife habitat or other ecosystem components.	
Vegetation	VE02 - Maintain or create age class diversity on suitable timberlands	An estimated 167 acres
	to provide for sustainable timber production and a variety of structure	were treated with even-
	and wildlife habitat. Treat an estimated 20,000 to 40,000 acres over	aged harvest in FY07 to
	the next decade to move toward desired age class conditions.	move toward desired age
		class conditions.
Vegetation	VE03 - Treat an estimated 4,000 to 12,000 acres over the next decade	An estimated 30 acres
	on lands not suited for timber production to help restore ecosystems	were treated in FY07 to
	and enhance wildlife habitat.	help restore ecosystems
		or enhance habitat.

Resource or Program Area	Forest Plan Objective	FY07 Progress Toward Objective	
T&E Species	TE30 - Provide a continuous supply of suitable roost trees by maintaining a minimum of 50 percent of each primary range on NFS lands in any combination of mid successional (40-79 years), mid to late successional (80-120 years), and late-successional (>120 years) age classes.	Because of Forest Plan Standards (TE23-TE25, TE33, TE35, TE36), no reduction in bat roost trees occurred in FY07.	
Wildlife and Fish	WF07 - Reduce aquatic habitat fragmentation associated with the Forest transportation system by correcting 30-50 passage barriers, according to aquatic priorities, over the next 10 years. Correct existing passage problems with bridges, open bottom arches, or other structures that restore or simulate channel conditions that facilitate upstream and downstream passage of aquatic organisms, or remove barriers when roads are decommissioned or closed.	No passage barriers were corrected in FY07, but barrier inventories were conducted and projects were identified that should correct barriers in the near future.	
Wildlife and Fish	WF08 - Actively restore aquatic and riparian habitat conditions in 30-50 miles of stream over the next 10 years. Activities that restore or improve the natural structure and function of channel and riparian conditions may include the installation of instream structures, large woody debris loading, riparian fencing, riparian planting, and bank and channel stabilization.	An estimated 1 mile of aquatic and riparian habitat was restored and improved by fencing a tributary of Big Run in the Big Run Allotment.	
Wildlife and Fish	WF09 - Maintain at least 50,000 acres of mid-late and late successional (>80 years old) mixed mesophytic and cove forest to meet habitat needs for cerulean warbler, a Management Indicator Species. (Current >80 year old mixed mesophytic and cove forest is estimated at around 320,000 acres.)	Although roughly 680 acres of timber harvest occurred in FY07, it had no measurable effect on our ability to continue to meet this objective.	
Wildlife and Fish	WF10 - Maintain at least 150,000 acres of 50-150 year old oak and pine-oak forest in MPs 3.0 and 6.1 to meet habitat needs for wild turkey, a Management Indicator Species. (Current 50-150 year old oak forest is estimated at around 220,000 acres.)	No measurable loss of 50-150 year old oak forest occurred in FY07. There was likely a slight increase in these age classes due to natural aging/succession.	
Wildlife and Fish	WF11 - Maintain at least 20,000 acres of mid-late and late successional (>80 years old) spruce forest to provide optimum habitat for West Virginia northern flying squirrel, a Management Indicator Species. The long-term objective is to increase mid-late and late successional spruce forest to at least 40,000 acres. (Current >80 year old spruce forest is estimated at around 38,000 acres.)	No measurable loss of >80 year old spruce forest occurred in FY07. There was likely a slight increase in these age classes due to natural aging/succession.	
Wildlife and Fish	WF12 – Maintain at least 560 miles of coldwater stream habitat capable of supporting wild, naturally producing brook trout, a Management Indicator Species.	There were no known reductions in coldwater stream habitat in FY07.	
Recreation	RC04 - Provide an annual average of 75 miles of Trail Maintenance/Reconstruction in Wilderness, and 350 miles in non-wilderness areas.	An estimated 230 miles of trail were maintained/reconstructed in FY07: 150 miles in wilderness, 80 miles in other areas.	
Recreation	RC27 - Develop a Forest-wide trail management plan to establish trail classes, permitted uses, construction, reconstruction, and maintenance priorities.	Forest trail management planning was initiated in FY07 and will continue in FY08.	
Timber	TR03 - Make available 25 to 105 million cubic feet of timber for the decade, which will contribute to Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ).	1.43 million cubic feet of timber were made available in FY07.	

Resource or Program Area	Forest Plan Objective	FY07 Progress Toward Objective
Timber	TR04 - Provide timber harvest, and related reforestation and timber stand improvement activities, to contribute toward the attainment of desired vegetation conditions. On suitable timber lands, harvest timber, other than by salvage, on an estimated 20,000 to 36,000 acres over the next 10 years.	An estimated 678 acres of timber were harvested in FY07.
Minerals	MG05 - Inventory abandoned mines and prepare restoration plans to address biological and physical resource concerns, chemical stability, and human health and safety.	No abandoned mines were inventoried in FY07 and no restoration plans were prepared.
Minerals	MG06 - Keep 70 to 80 percent of federally owned oil and gas available for exploration, development and production.	Availability remains at 74 percent of MNF lands.
Roads	RF03 - Over the next decade, decommission or reclaim at least 30 miles of roads that are no longer needed for achieving access management objectives. These can include system roads or old woods roads. Actions may range from full obliteration to administratively removing a road from the transportation system as long as it poses no resource impacts without additional rehabilitation efforts.	An estimated 7 miles of road decommissioning were documented in FY07.

Evaluation, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Plan Objectives Progress

Table OS-2 indicates that the progress made toward achieving Forest Plan objectives was highly variable in FY 2007. For objectives where we are trying to maintain certain habitat conditions (WF09-WF12), we were reasonably successful, although habitat conditions are innately variable and subject to influences beyond our management activities. For objectives that require active treatments, such as prescribed burning or road decommissioning, the results were mixed.

For instance, the fact that we only accomplished 450 acres of prescribed burning when our tenyear objective is 10,000 to 30,000 acres would indicate that we are already well behind our production curve. However, the fire program is in transition, and those 450 acres represent a 50 percent increase over any annual burning the Forest has done in the past. Also, the Five Year Plan for the Forest shows a dramatic increase for burn acres in the near future. This increase, if realized, would put us back on track to achieve Objective FM09.

Conversely, the 7 miles of road decommissioning seemingly puts us well ahead of the annual average needed to meet the ten-year objective of at least 30 miles. However, decommissioning can be very expensive and highly dependent on funding. Although many opportunities exist, the Forest averages only 1-2 miles of decommissioning a year, primarily due to funding constraints. We will need to increase funding levels to achieve Objective RF03 over ten years.

This variability in our capacity to achieve objectives is one of the main reasons why we monitor our progress. By tracking results, we can shift management priorities or emphasis over time to provide more resources to objectives where we have more to do. In certain instances, monitoring may also show us where we need to lower or raise our objective expectations.

Other monitoring may sound an alarm for public expectations. For example, the shortfall in miles of maintained trails may indicate that we need one or more of the following: 1) procure

more maintenance funding, 2) find innovative ways to do maintenance, 3) reduce the amount of trail miles open to the public for safe and enjoyable use, or 4) revise the Forest Plan objective.

Recommendations: Continue to monitor progress toward achieving Forest Plan objectives. Use monitoring results to make needed adjustments in Forest management and projections.

Revenues Returned to Treasury, PILT, and 25% Fund/Stabilized Payments

The relationship between counties and the Forest Service is an important one, in part because of revenue outputs that the counties receive from the federal government. These economic benefits are primarily linked to two specific funding sources: 25 Percent Fund/Stabilized Payments, and Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILT). Each payment source is described below.

25 Percent Fund and Stabilized Payments – These payments are made to the State of West Virginia for redistribution to counties in proportion to the number of acres of National Forest System land within each county. These payments are limited to use for schools and roads by the Twenty Five Percent Fund Act of May 23, 1908, except that Public Law 89-207 (4/28/65), which established the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area, authorized their use for schools, roads, and county government in counties containing NRA lands (Grant and Pendleton). West Virginia Code 20-3-17 and 20-3-17a allocate these funds 80 percent for schools and 20 percent for roads in all counties except Grant and Pendleton, where 65 percent is allocated for schools and 35 percent for general county purposes (none for roads).

The original 25 Percent Fund was made up of 25 percent of National Forest receipts resulting from timber, livestock grazing, recreation, land uses, and mineral operations. Timber sale receipts include the value of roads constructed by timber purchasers, and deposits for sale area betterment under provisions of the Knutson-Vandenburg (KV) Act of 1930. Beginning in fiscal year (FY) 1993, payments for receipts from federal minerals were made directly by the Minerals Management Service (National Energy Bill of 1992). Payments made by the Minerals Management Service are not included in Table SO-7 but are discussed under Cumulative Effects.

In October of 2000 the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination (SRSCS) Act was passed. The SRSCS Act offered counties the option of receiving the traditional 25 percent payment based on revenue, or taking a "stabilized" annual payment based on the highest three years of payments for the years 1986 through 1999. The SRSCS Act was intended as a short-term (over ten years) measure to help counties dependent on Forest Service linked revenue while they diversified their local economies. In West Virginia, eight of the 10 counties with Forest lands opted to take the stabilized payment, beginning in FY2001. These counties are Grant, Greenbrier, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Preston, Randolph, Tucker and Webster. Thus, the following table represents a mix of payment plans, based on county decisions. The amounts for Barbour and Nicholas Counties are from 2006, as 2007 25 Percent Fund figures were not available.

The 25 Percent Fund/Stabilized Payments are also made for Hampshire, Hardy, Pendleton, and Monroe Counties for lands located in West Virginia within the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. These payments are not included in Table OS-3.

Table OS-3. 25% Fund/Stabilized Payments to Counties from Monongahela NF Revenues

County	MNF Land Acres	25%/Stabilized Payments
Barbour*	11	\$24
Grant	20,001	\$43,498
Greenbrier	108,139	\$220,620
Nicholas*	23,540	\$53,125
Pendleton	82,331	\$131,801
Pocahontas	310,188	\$672,115
Preston	3,897	\$8,527
Randolph	203,754	\$438,434
Tucker	101,467	\$216,087
Webster	65,800	\$143,446
Totals	919,128	\$1,927,677

^{*}Payment amounts are from 2006, as 2007 figures were not available.

On September 30, 2006 the SRSCS authorization ended, as the funding for the SRSCS Act had essentially run out for its final five years. The last payment under this authorization was made in December of 2006. On May 25, 2007, however, President Bush signed into law P.L. 110-28, the Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act of 2007. This Act contained a provision that provided for payments under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 for FY 2007 and extended provisions of Title II and Title III of the Act for one more year.

Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) – These payments are paid to the State of West Virginia for redistribution to the local governments of counties containing any of several specific types of federal lands, including National Forests. Counties receive payments in proportion to the amount of acreage of National Forest land within each county. These payments are made under the provisions of the Payments in Lieu of Taxes Act of 1976 (PL-94-565). The rate of payment is established for "entitlement acres" (lands on tax rolls at time of acquisition). PILT payments can be used for any governmental purpose. Table OS-4 shows the PILT payments made to counties from Monongahela National Forest revenues in FY 2007.

Table OS-4. 2007 PILT Payments to Counties from Monongahela NF Revenues

County	MNF Entitlement Acres	MNF PILT Payment
Barbour	11	\$16
Grant	20,001	\$17,886
Greenbrier	108,139	\$134,792
Nicholas	23,540	\$33,967
Pendleton	82,331	\$77,636
Pocahontas	310,188	\$382,858
Preston	3,897	\$5,623
Randolph	203,754	\$251,790
Tucker	101,467	\$125,601
Webster	65,800	\$81,161
Totals	919,128	\$1,111,330

Additional payments are also made for a period of five years for lands acquired for National Forest Wildernesses. Many counties in West Virginia, including several with Monongahela National Forest land, receive additional PILT payments for lands administered by the National Park Service, the Corps of Engineers, or the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The actual amount of PILT payments in any year is subject to adequate Congressional appropriation of funds. Although the payments are authorized to increase over time, funds have not been appropriated to fully fund the authorized amounts in recent years.

Table OS-5 shows the combined amount of 25 Percent Fund/Stabilized and PILT payments in 2007 for West Virginia counties with Monongahela NF federal lands.

Table OS-5. Forest-related 25 Percent Fund/Stabilized Payments and Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) to Counties

County	MNF Land Acres	PILT Payments	25%/Stabilized Payments	Total Payments
Barbour*	11	\$16	\$24	\$40
Grant	20,001	\$17,886	\$43,498	\$61,384
Greenbrier	108,139	\$134,792	\$220,620	\$355,412
Nicholas*	23,540	\$33,967	\$53,125	\$87,092
Pendleton	82,331	\$77,636	\$131,801	\$209,437
Pocahontas	310,188	\$382,858	\$672,115	\$1,054,973
Preston	3,897	\$5,623	\$8,527	\$14,150
Randolph	203,754	\$251,790	\$438,434	\$690,224
Tucker	101,467	\$125,601	\$216,087	\$341,688
Webster	65,800	\$81,161	\$143,446	\$224,607
Totals	919,128	\$1,111,330	\$1,874,528	\$3,039,007

^{*25%} Fund amounts for these counties are from 2006, as 2007 figures were not available.

Evaluation, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Payments to Counties

At over \$3,000,000, it is easy to see why these combined payments are so important to local counties where per capita income levels are among the lowest in the nation. Payments will continue, but how they may change cannot be predicted with a high degree of accuracy.

The total 25 Percent Fund/Stabilized Payments to the 10 counties within the Forest region approached two million dollars in FY 2007. These payments have been relatively steady since 2001, the year after the SRSCS Act of 2000, although they have risen slightly due to new lands acquired in federal ownership. However, 2007 is the last year scheduled for P.L. 106-393 Stabilized Payments. As of this writing, it appears that all counties who receive payments will be reverting back to the 25 Percent Fund in FY 2008.

If the counties that have chosen Stabilized Payments return to the 25 Percent Fund, the amounts they receive would shift to 25 percent of the annual revenues generated by the Forest. Based on recent history, Forest revenues have fluctuated greatly, depending primarily on how much timber

is produced. Projected timber production in FY 2008 would be higher than in many preceding years; however, it would not be as high as the average of the highest three years between 1986 and 1999, on which the Stabilized Payments for P.L. 106-393 were based. Therefore, it is likely that the payments to counties under the 25 Percent Fund in FY 2008 will be less than they were from the mix of 25 Percent Fund/Stabilized Payments in FY 2007.

PILT payments to counties were a little over \$1,100,000 in FY 2007. Based on payments received over the last 20 years, it is expected that PILT payments may continue to show modest increases over the next decade. However, the actual amount of PILT payments in any given year is subject to Congressional appropriation of funds. Although the payments are authorized to increase over time, funds have not been appropriated to fully fund the authorized amounts in recent years.

In addition to the funds shown in Table OS-5, counties would also receive a percentage of the Forest's oil and gas federal lease rents and royalties from the U.S. Treasury. Current revenue levels are not available. However, revenue levels from 1987 to 2003 averaged about \$600,000 a year. Levels can fluctuate widely, depending on a number of factors, but have stayed within a range of around \$280,000 to \$1,160,000 on an annual basis.

Forest revenues are also expected from recreation, livestock grazing, and special use fees. Recreation use is predicted to increase at a modest but steady rate in the coming years, so revenues are expected to increase as well, though they are relatively small compared to average timber and gas revenues. Livestock grazing is predicted to remain roughly the same in the near future, but we cannot predict how the fees for grazing may change. Special uses cover a wide variety of activities, some of which are long term, and some of which are short term or temporary. These uses may continue to increase in the future, but they have not been a major revenue producer in the past.

Payments from all of theses sources go through the State of West Virginia for distribution to counties. Thus, there are other factors that may cumulatively affect the amount of funds that counties receive from the federal government, including:

- State distribution of 25 Percent Fund/Stabilized Payments and PILT funds,
- Congressional changes to PILT funds authorization and appropriation,
- Additional lands acquired by the federal government within the Forest region counties,
- Funding from other federal land sources within the counties, such as the George Washington National Forest in Pendleton County, or the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Tucker County.

Additional sources of federal revenue that cumulatively affect counties that receive payments from Monongahela NF revenues come from cost-share agreements for road and fire management, and taxes paid by federal employees. These revenue sources typically do not change much from year to year.

Recommendations: It is recommended that we drop the payments portion of the Outputs and Services monitoring item in future monitoring reports because: 1) there are no projected payments to counties in the Forest Plan to use for comparison, 2) the mix of 25 Percent Fund and

Stabilized Payments has made the link from Forest revenues to county payments difficult to discern, much less compare, and 3) payments from any source can be (and have been) influenced by Congressional or State decisions that are outside of our control and independent of our outputs. Therefore, these payments are not really a good indicator of comparing outputs and services related to Forest Plan implementation.

To clarify the intent and scope of this monitoring question, it is recommended that the wording is changed to say: *How close are outputs and services projected in Forest Plan implementation to actual outputs and services?*