

Annual Performance Report

The Executive Priorities

The Executive Leadership Team of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service selected the FY 2004 performance measures included in the *Forest Service Performance and Accountability Report—Fiscal Year 2004* (P&AR). These measures, termed Executive Priorities, were identified as key performance measures aligned to the *USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2004-2008*.

To meet accelerated reporting timelines, the Forest Service used 9-month actual and 3-month estimated or projected accomplishments for the commitment associated with the performance measures in the Management's Discussion and Analysis section. These items were reported through various databases and consolidated for review and analysis by the Program and Budget Analysis Staff.

Meeting the Accelerated Congressional Timeline

The Forest Service developed a process that enables the agency to project annual accomplishments, prior to the close of the fiscal year, using existing data sources and tools.

For FY 2004, the Forest Service developed and tested a report that compared the planned accomplishments with the projected accomplishments in WorkPlan or other databases of record, such as the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) and the Infrastructure database (Infra). These reports were available for the field to use in validating accomplishment data for the Executive Priorities.

By July 23, 2004, all field units recorded actual performance numbers for the first 9 months of the fiscal year in WorkPlan¹ or other data sources of record. In early August, the Washington Office pulled the field units' data for the first 9-month accomplishments to consolidate the data and make reports available by unit and Executive Priority for validation.

In late August, the field units provided their 3-month estimates, providing explanations for all accomplishments that deviated more than 5 percent above or below the planned FY 2004 numbers. The regional offices summarized their units' data. Each regional forester certified that performance information for the first 9 months and the year-end projections for the Executive Priorities had been validated, with supporting documentation available upon request.

¹ Roads data will be recorded in WorkPlan for the 9-month actual performance, but full-year actual performance will be recorded in the Roads Analysis Report (RAR).

Finally, in mid-September, Washington Office Program Staffs completed their review, validation, and analysis of the FY 2004 projected performance information. The *12-month actual performance data will be available in mid-December 2004*, as field units update WorkPlan and the other data sources to reflect the actual accomplishments for FY 2004.

Planned Actions and Schedule for Achieving an Unmet Executive Priority

For every Executive Priority whose projected FY 2004 performance was unmet or exceeded, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-11 requires the agency to develop planned remedial actions and a schedule for these actions. The actions and schedule, which will occur in FY 2005, will be addressed in the FY 2005 performance budget.

OMB's direction states that a description of the actions being taken, and the accompanying schedule, may be omitted for an unachieved performance measure where external factors, such as a natural disaster, were the sole cause for nonachievement and the agency lacks the capacity or authority to affect these factors or entities. There have been instances in the past several years where catastrophic wildland fires affected the Forest Service's capacity to accomplish its targets. This has not been the case in FY 2004.

Also, the Forest Service may conclude that it is not practical or feasible to report accomplishments for a performance measure. In this case, the agency may choose to discontinue or adjust the Executive Priority for the future.

Performance Measures Matter

Over the past year, the Forest Service Executive Leadership Team determined priorities to help focus agency programs on the most critical issues requiring concentrated effort. The team focused these priorities into a common strategic direction embodied in the Strategic Plan. This new plan addresses the four greatest threats to conservation—growing fire danger due to the buildup of hazardous fuels; the spread of invasive species; loss of open space; and unmanaged recreation, particularly use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs). These four threats increasingly keep the Forest Service from delivering clean air, abundant water, and healthy habitat. The plan addresses these threats through six strategic goals, with performance measures and 2008 targets to meet these goals.

The PA&R uses the new Strategic Plan as the foundation for its performance reporting, with a strong emphasis on accountability. The agency's executive leadership has worked to develop Executive Priorities to further help the Forest Service address those issues of greatest concern. These Executive Priorities were adopted as national commitments with targets allocated to the regions. In addition, the allocated commitments and targets formed a key part of the performance expectations for the Forest Service's Senior Executive Service performance evaluations and agreements. These measures support the agency's new Strategic Plan, as well as the President's Management Agenda for Budget and Performance Integration.

The FY 2004 P&AR gauges how the Forest Service is meeting the targets set by its new Strategic Plan, and reflected, in part, in the USDA Strategic Plan. The results reported here will be used by the agency to make any needed corrections and adjustments to stay on its planned course.

The goals and measures of the Strategic Plan, the annual performance budget proposal and program direction, and a continued focus on the measures in this P&AR all help approximately 32,000 employees create and deliver the programs and services on the ground at the local level. They help employees fulfill the mission mandates for research and assistance to other Federal entities, States, and private landowners, as well as the stewardship responsibilities for the millions of acres of magnificent forest and rangeland resources entrusted to the Forest Service.

Goal 1: Reduce the Risk of Catastrophic Wildfire

Strategic Outcome

Reduced risk to communities and the environment from catastrophic wildland fire.

In FY 2004, the Forest Service minimized the harmful effects of wildland fires to communities and natural resources by reducing the flammability of hazardous fuels in forests, woodlands, shrublands, and grasslands. To accomplish this, the agency sought landscape-scale improvements in hazardous fuels by prioritizing vegetative treatments across national forests for Condition Classes 2 and 3 in Priority Fire Regimes (1, 2, and 3).

In addition to hazardous fuels reduction, these treatments may have also included:

- Invasive species mitigation.
- Insect and disease prevention or control.
- Watershed improvement.
- Fish and wildlife enhancement.
- Range betterment.
- Stand density management.

For information on condition classes and fire regimes, or on approaches to reducing risk from wildland fire, refer to: *A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment: 10-Year Comprehensive Wildland Fire Strategy* (Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture, 2001).

Achieving the outcome of this goal requires focusing on the following objectives:

Strategic Objective: Improve the health of National Forest System (NFS) lands that have the greatest potential for catastrophic wildland fire.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Number of acres of hazardous fuels treated with Direct Hazardous Fuels (FN) dollars that are in the wildland-urban interface (WUI)	1,016,759	1,294,598	127%
Number of acres of hazardous fuels treated with Other (FNOTH) dollars that are in the WUI	292,720	313,770	107%
Percent of acres of hazardous fuels treated that are in the WUI that are identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the National Fire Plan (NFP) 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and Implementation Plan	100%	100%	100%
Number of acres treated with Direct Hazardous Fuels (FN) dollars that are in Condition Classes 2 or 3 in Fire Regimes 1, 2, or 3 outside the WUI	590,876	398,319	67%
Number of acres treated with Other (FNOTH) dollars that are in Condition Classes 2 or 3 in Fire Regimes 1, 2, or 3 outside the WUI	317,084	253,114	80%
Percent of acres of hazardous fuels treated that are in Condition Class 2 or 3 in Fire Regimes 1, 2, or 3 outside the WUI that are identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the NFP 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and Implementation Plan	100%	100%	100%
Number of acres brought into stewardship contracts	90,000 ²	29,711	New Baseline

Strategies, Resources, and Underlying Factors

Hazardous Fuels Reduction

The Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program oversees the first six performance measures listed above.

Hazardous fuels reduction, funded with direct Hazardous Fuels (FN) dollars, was accomplished in the WUI, or outside the WUI, in Condition Classes 2 or 3 and in the Fire Regimes 1, 2, or 3 through two activities: prescribed fire and mechanical thinning. Prescribed fires are conducted primarily in the spring, with additional activity in the late fall. Mechanical thinning is used throughout the field season.

Each Forest Service region developed an integrated 5-year strategy for restoring fire-dependent ecosystems, the compilation of which serves as a framework to implement meaningful change at the landscape scale. The national strategy is to integrate the Forest Service programs to achieve the collective goal for FY 2004. As such, the regional strategies are not limited to the Hazardous Fuels Reduction program, but also address ways in which NFS programs—Forest Products, Wildlife, and Vegetation Management—contribute to ecosystem restoration.

² Planned performance for this measure was adjusted to 55,000 acres based on mid-year reviews, but the correction was not made to the master database for performance reporting data. As a new measure, the projected results will serve as a new baseline.

A standardized interagency tool, Fire Regimen Condition Class (FRCC), determines the degree of departure from natural vegetation and disturbance regimes. Assessing FRCC for an area guides management objectives and helps set priorities for treatments.

Allowing naturally ignited wildland fires to reduce hazardous fuels depends on weather, drought, and the fire season. If the fire season is severe, as it has been with drought conditions in the past few years, it may not be possible to use wildland fires as a treatment option because of the higher risk of escaped fires. If the Western United States experiences favorable weather conditions throughout the summer, however, it will be possible to meet or exceed the target.

For fuels reduction activities funded with Direct Hazardous Fuels dollars—

Results within the WUI were projected at **1,294,598 acres**, or **127 percent** of the planned amount.

Results outside the WUI, in Condition Classes 2 or 3 and in the Fire Regimes 1, 2, or 3, were projected at **398,319 acres**, or **67 percent** of the planned amount.

Nonnatural factors can also contribute to the success of the program. Litigation and appeal of National Forest Fire Management Plans and individual hazardous fuels treatment projects may impede the agency's ability to complete planned projects.

Hazardous fuels reduction not funded with direct Hazardous Fuels (FNOTH) dollars is accomplished within the WUI or outside the WUI in Condition Classes 2 or 3 and in the Fire Regimes 1, 2, or 3 using activities such as timber sales, wildlife habitat restoration, watershed improvements, and noxious weed treatments. Stewardship contracting allows the Forest Service to support local communities, exchanging needed services for material removed from the treatment area. The agency is evaluating methods of identifying the larger benefits of strategically treating selected areas to achieve a wider area of "protected" acres. This effort will be quantified in future performance and accountability reports.

These projects also depend on weather conditions and ultimately on the severity of the fire season. In recent years, the transfer of program funds to fire suppression caused the postponement of many of these activities.

Appeals and litigation also have been significant factors in delaying or stopping these types of projects. The new Categorical Exclusion and other tools should expedite completion of projects and aid the Forest Service in achieving or exceeding the planned FY 2004 targets.

For fuels reduction activities not funded with Direct Hazardous Fuels dollars—

Results in the WUI were projected at **313,770 acres**, or **107 percent** of the planned amount.

Results outside the WUI, but in Condition Classes 2 or 3 and in the Fire Regimes 1, 2, or 3 were projected at **253,114 acres**, or **80 percent** of the planned amount.

All hazardous fuels treatments within the WUI or within Condition Class 2 or 3 and Fire Regime 1, 2, or 3 outside of the WUI are, by definition, high priority as stated in the NFP 10-Year Plan. These projects account for more than 90 percent of the total hazardous fuels accomplishment. More than 75 percent of the total acres treated are within the WUI, while an additional 15 percent are high-priority, non-WUI acres. The remaining acres of accomplishment are located outside the WUI in Condition Class 2 or 3, Fire Regime 4 or 5, and account for less than 10 percent of the total treatment acres. These acres are not high priority and are treated based on need and opportunity at the discretion of the management unit.

Stewardship Contracts

The number of acres brought into stewardship contracts in FY 2004 was projected at **29,711 acres**, and is a new baseline for coming years.

The Forest Service measured the number of acres brought into stewardship contracting as the number of contract or agreement-awarded acres. This measure gauges how effective the Forest Service has been in meeting the agency's goal of reducing the risk from catastrophic wildland fire by improving the health of the Nation's forests and grasslands.

Stewardship contracting is a relatively new tool available for widespread use within the Forest Service. Due to this limited history, no trend data are available.

The following factors affect stewardship contracts:

- Appeals and litigation of planned and/or approved projects.
- Reallocation of resources and personnel for emergency wildfire suppression.
- Increasing demands on the agency's human and financial resources and the resulting reduced ability to work with and through other jurisdictions and stakeholder groups.

Strategic Objective: Assist 2,500 communities and those non-NFS lands most at risk with developing and implementing hazardous fuels reduction and fire prevention plans and programs.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Percent of communities at risk with completed and current fire management plans or risk assessments	NA	No specific measurement protocol in FY 2004	NA
Number of acres covered by partnership agreements.	NA	125,000	New Baseline

Strategies, Resources, and Underlying Factors

Communities at Risk and Partnership Agreements

No national commitment and no specific measurement protocol were established for FY 2004. The State Fire Assistance Program is responsible for the percent of “communities at risk with completed and current fire management plans or risk assessments” and the number of “acres covered by partnership agreements.”

State governments coordinate the “communities at risk” measure, but the information is not available to the Forest Service at this time. The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) is working to provide a baseline this year.

Research and Development’s Results in Reducing the Risk of Catastrophic Wildfire

Forest Service scientists released maps of the WUI and communities in proximity to it for the lower 48 States. This is the first consistent representation of the WUI, as defined in the Federal Register, across the Nation, enabling analysis at the national, State, or local levels. Maps are available at <http://silvis.forest.wisc.edu/Library/WUILibrary.asp>.

Researchers completed flight-testing the newly developed FireMapper thermal-imaging radiometer technology. In one of its first tactical applications, FireMapper provided critical fire-spread intelligence to the southern California interagency fire operations center during the October 2003 fire emergency in southern California. FireMapper uses new night-vision technology to measure thermal radiation from spot fires and intense flaming fronts alike. Resulting data provided a detailed and synoptic view of fire spread that has not previously been available. Fire managers and researchers use FireMapper to improve fire suppression operations, fire-fighting safety, and our understanding of the behavior and impacts of wildland fire.

Research scientists developed a computer model to aid the public in protecting their property from wildfire in the WUI areas. The model helps to evaluate landscaping choices, such as retaining native vegetation, providing privacy, conserving water, and saving energy, while providing options for fire safety.

Forest Service scientists developed predictive tools (<http://www.firelab.org>) that assess the effects of fuel and restoration treatments on buildings and structures; fish, wildlife, and threatened and endangered species habitat; air quality; carbon sequestration balances and dynamics; water resources and hydrological processes; and invasive species populations. Target audiences include fuels management specialists, resource specialists, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning team leaders, and line officers in the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior; community leaders; and educators.

Research scientists developed the FERGI (Fire enhanced runoff and gully initiation) model to determine where treatments can be useful and where they may not be. The model predicts changes in runoff and erosion given the topography, soils, fire severity, weather, and proposed treatments. This new source of information will help managers understand the costs, benefits, and alternatives of fuel and restoration treatments. A Web-based application is in development.

Forest Service researchers provided post-fire mitigation and restoration assistance to the White Mountain Apache Tribe that helped them restore riparian wetlands and sources of plants used by the Tribe for religious and medicinal purposes. Research scientists provided extensive training and synthesis of science on the effects of fire on watershed processes and native fishes and aquatic habitats. Research scientists also provided models of aquatic systems response to changing fire regimes at scales relevant to management.

Forest Service scientists, cooperators, and managers from the Bitterroot National Forest gathered and mapped information about the complex interrelationships that exist between the natural resources of the Bitterroot Front and the local community residents who live and work in this area. This information is being used to select fuel treatment sites and methods in a manner that achieves fuel reduction goals in ways that are sensitive to local community values.

A team of Forest Service scientists and staff from S&PF analyzed several millions dollars worth of NFP grants intended to stimulate utilization and marketing of small diameter woody biomass. Economic Action Program managers are using the study results to adjust their funding strategies and better focus their efforts to enhance the utilization and marketing of small-diameter woody biomass in the future.

Researchers provided critical information to fire managers regarding evacuations and fire strategies in western Montana and southern California using aircraft-borne remote sensing instruments. Scientists used maps of fire perimeters based on satellite data in conjunction with fire behavior prediction models to estimate fire spread under various weather scenarios in Montana.

Changes in Smoke Management Regulations

In 2004, the Air Resource Management Program of the Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Region worked closely with the State of Colorado to revise the State's smoke management regulation (CO-Regulation 9) to provide more flexibility for using prescribed fire as a management tool. One highlight of this effort was the State's adoption of a Forest Service proposal to allow the use of air curtain destructors (ACDs) to burn clean wood waste from hazardous fuel reduction projects. ACDs offer a more environmentally friendly alternative to the currently approved method of open pile burning.

ACDs introduce controlled, high velocity air across the upper portion of an enclosed combustion chamber containing clean wood waste. The powerful curtain of air traps unburned particles under the curtain in the high temperature zone. This reduces the number of escaping particulates, resulting in a cleaner burn with less air pollution emissions.

Pile burning on Colorado's Front Range and near other sensitive communities in the wildland-urban interface has become more restricted recently due to air pollution concerns and other issues such as fire escape risk. ACD use is expected to provide greatly expanded opportunities for wood waste combustion, reduce air pollution emissions, allow the option for outsourcing of wood waste disposal operations, further mitigate pile burn escape risks, and demonstrate to the public that the Forest Service is using every tool it has to reduce hazardous fuels while protecting air quality.

For more information on the Forest Services' Air Resource Management Program, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/aq/natarm/r2/r2home.html>.

Computer Software Helps Homeowners Assess Threat from Wildfires

Millions of homes are at risk from wildland fires each fire season. The Center for Urban Forest Research at the Pacific Southwest Research Station announced the development of a new software application that helps residents in urban-wildland interface zones to protect their property from wildfire. The software is designed to guide residents in evaluating landscaping placement and management options to make fire safety choices, as well as enhance the beauty of their property, retain native vegetation, provide privacy, conserve water, and saving energy.

This program provides a computer model that enables residents (users) to visually place their home on their lot and interactively add, remove, grow, and prune vegetation. They can then evaluate changing risk of their home burning as an indicator bar on the monitor turns from green (low risk) to yellow (moderate risk) to red (high risk) in response to varying amounts of radiant heat on the house. Research conducted at the National Institute of Standards and Technology provided the fire behavior principles behind the software.

The fire module is currently being coupled with a similar energy assessment module (EnergyWise) and water model (WaterWise) to estimate the effects of vegetation placement on storm-water runoff, landscape water use, and energy use. The fire module portion of the software is available for use at <http://www.ecosmart.gov>.

For more information on the Center for Urban Forest Research, visit <http://wcufr.ucdavis.edu>

Model to Evaluate Tradeoffs in Management of Postfire Runoff and Erosion

Large wildfires can profoundly influence mountain watersheds, leading to increased erosion, debris torrents, and negative effects on water quality and sensitive species. Postfire Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) focuses considerable effort to mitigate these events, but controversy exists about its effectiveness and expense.

Scientists at the Rocky Mountain Research Station's laboratory in Boise, ID, have developed new information to help managers understand the costs and benefits of and alternative methods to BAER. A new model called the Fire Enhanced Runoff and Gully Initiation (FERGI) Model predicts changes in runoff and erosion for specific topography, soils, fire severity, weather, and proposed treatments. In application, FERGI enables managers to determine where treatments may or may not be useful. A Web-based application is in development.

In fiscal years 2003 and 2004, Rocky Mountain Research Station scientists worked with the Boise National Forest to analyze data from three wildfires that took place in Idaho. Using information supported by FERGI, the scientists decided to forgo contour-felled log treatments over much of the area because marginal benefits could not be justified. Decisions like this can save literally millions of dollars by enabling managers to focus on work that supports more resilient aquatic systems. Subsequent thunderstorms produced massive debris flows leaving no obvious watershed treatments to choose from, underscoring the utility of FERGI and its effectiveness in this decisionmaking process.

To learn more about fire and aquatic ecosystems, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/boise/teams/fisheries/fire/firehome.htm>



Evaluating burned hill slopes common in BAER analysis. Research has led to new models that allow managers to more effectively prioritize limited resources.

Goal 2: Reduce the Impacts From Invasive Species

Strategic Outcome

Fewer impacts from invasive species due to healthier forests and grasslands.

Invasive species—particularly insects, pathogens, plants, and aquatic pests—pose a long-term risk to the health of the Nation’s forests and grasslands by interfering with natural and managed ecosystems, degrading wildlife habitat, reducing the sustainable production of natural resource-based goods and services, and increasing the susceptibility of ecosystems to other disturbances, such as fire and flood.

Economic impacts to forests and grasslands from invasive species exceed \$4 billion per year, without considering the “cost” of environmental consequences, such as loss of native plants and animals in large areas.

Achieving the outcome of this goal requires focusing on the following objectives:

Strategic Objective: Improve the effectiveness of treating selected invasive species on the Nation’s forests and grasslands.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Noxious Weeds Acres Treated	67,438	85,081	126%
Number of acres treated for selected invasives species	1,046,482	1,046,482	100%

Strategies, Resources, and Underlying Factors

Invasive Species

An important component of the Forest Service invasive species program is to interrupt the increasing trend and begin to reduce the impacts and spread of invasive species across all forests and rangelands.

To address the invasive species threat to our native ecosystems, the economy, and human health, the agency developed a *National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Invasive Species Management* that will guide Forest Service invasive species work through four program elements: prevention, early detection and rapid response, control and management, and rehabilitation and restoration.

The Forest Service will align the following program objectives to the invasive species strategy:

- Work jointly with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to prevent, detect, and promptly eradicate new introductions of invasive species into terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, including nonnative insects and pathogens of forests and trees of America.
- Manage populations of established invasive species using prevention, suppression, and restoration tactics to reduce impacts and restore ecosystems.
- Involve partners in developing a nationally consistent risk-modeling approach that enhances the use of risk maps at national, State, regional, and local scales.
- Implement risk-based detection surveys to identify forest vulnerability to invasive species based on availability of susceptible hosts, suitable environmental conditions for invasion, and likely movement pathways of invasive species.
- Cooperate with other Federal, State, tribal, and nongovernmental partners in conservation education efforts that increase public awareness of invasive species and encourage support and participation in management actions.

The following factors outside the control of the Forest Service might affect progress:

- Increasing demands on the agency's human and financial resources and the resulting reduced ability to work with and through other jurisdictions and stakeholder groups.
- Accelerated susceptibility and mortality of forest trees from drought, insects, and pathogens.
- Introduction of new species of insects, pathogens, and invasive plants into the United States.
- Legal and regulatory constraints limiting the full range of plant, animal, insect, and disease management treatments.

Acres Treated for Noxious Weeds

On NFS lands, noxious weeds:

- Weaken natural and managed ecosystems.
- Degrade wildlife habitat.
- Reduce the sustainable production of natural resource-based goods and services.
- Increase the susceptibility of ecosystems to other disturbances, such as fire and flood.

Regarding invasive plants, the FY 2004 national commitment for noxious weed control was increased by approximately 11 percent over FY 2003. FY 2004 results were projected at **85,081 acres** treated, for **126 percent** of the planned acres.

Since invasive plants know no boundaries, noxious weeds impact State and private forests in the same way they impact national forests and grasslands.

The FY 2004 national allocation for invasive species was doubled over FY 2003, contributing to the agency meeting this target.

Acres Treated for Selected Invasive Species

The Forest Health Protection (FHP) staff is responsible for measuring the percent of acres treated for selected invasive species (gypsy moth and white pine blister rust) on all forested lands, including NFS and cooperative lands.

FHP seeks to achieve the following intended outcomes:

- Implement and support actions to detect and prevent introduction of invasive species into recently disturbed ecosystems, such as those affected by high-intensity wild-land fires.
- Eradicate new infestations of highly damaging invasive species (Asian longhorned beetle, sudden oak death (SOD), and emerald ash borer).
- Manage populations of established targeted invasive species using prevention, suppression, and restoration tactics to reduce impacts and restore ecosystems.
- Develop and test better methods to prevent, detect, control, and monitor invasive species and implement these techniques to restore forest and range ecosystems.

To achieve the intended outcomes, FHP is implementing comprehensive, collaborative plans to manage gypsy moth, hemlock wooly adelgid, and invasive plants. These strategies include activities to prevent, eradicate, and suppress spread of the pests, as well as projects to restore damaged forest lands.

FHP fully funded the gypsy moth program including the “Slow the Spread” program. Results for FY 2004 were projected at **1,046,482 acres** treated, or **100 percent** of the planned acres.

In addition to the Forest Service invasive species strategy, the agency completed specific strategies to deal with invasive plants, SOD, and white pine blister rust. These strategies are at different stages of implementation. For example, efforts in managing the white

pine blister rust have focused on development of resistant stock and intensive management of plantations. The availability of resistant material will enable the Forest Service to implement restoration activities on acres impacted by this pest.

Treatment activities for newly introduced invasive species, such as SOD and emerald ash borer, are not yet well developed. For these species, survey and monitoring programs have been implemented. For example, the agency conducts surveys for SOD in 37 States. Pests are eradicated where new infestations are detected, such as the eradication effort of SOD in Oregon on 60 acres.

Effective treatments and strategies are in place for gypsy moth and some of the invasive plants. The agency reports acres treated for these selected invasive species. The strategies include prevention, eradication, slow-the-spread, and restoration of impacted ecosystems.

Implementing one or more elements of the strategy depends on the extent and spread of the pest population, drought, wildfire, and other environmental conditions. Treatments are then planned and prioritized to achieve the most effective and efficient outcomes.

For some invasive plant species and hemlock woolly adelgid, biological control agents are being developed and tested; the effectiveness of these agents is not yet proven. Thus, treated acres are not reported. In other cases, treatments may not be implemented because of collapse of the pest population, wildfires, or litigation and other administrative priorities. For new introductions of pests, limited knowledge of the biology and mode of the spread of the invasive species may prevent the agency from implementing an effective treatment.

To assess overall program effectiveness, the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) will be used in conjunction with the FY 2006 program development process.

Research and Development's Results in Reducing the Impact of Invasive Species

SOD could have global economic implications for forests, horticultural, and agricultural industries. Because of the large number of susceptible host species, many of which are popular ornamental plants shipped internationally from production nurseries, there is a great potential to spread the pathogen. Forest Service researchers and cooperators identified the cause of the disease, provided national insight to tree species affected or at risk, served as the basis for national and international regulatory policy, and delivered possible management and control options. The Forest Service is continuing to provide support to existing (and potential) management actions and regulatory policy as the potential range of the SOD expands.

Scientists developed a new tool to predict which species are most likely to cause ecological and economic damage. This tool, based on an Australian/New Zealand Weed Risk Assessment protocol, provides a reliable, documented, and scientifically based method of assessing potential impacts of exotic species on natural and agricultural ecosystems. It provides agencies and managers with a basis for setting priorities for control and prevention. It is being used by the State of Hawaii to develop outreach programs to the horticultural industry to reduce sale of potentially invasive species.

Forest Service scientists provided their understanding of bark beetle-fungal interactions in a recent publication of *Science*. Their findings will improve the ability to accurately assess the risk of Southern pine beetle leading to improved on-the-ground management decisions. Scientists also developed improved detection strategies for the banded elm bark beetle, a recently detected exotic bark beetle.

The hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) threatens to destroy hemlock ecosystems in the eastern United States and no effective control measures have been developed. Forest Service scientists recently released the Chinese lady beetle, *Scymnus sinuanodulus*, in Pennsylvania and Southern Appalachia in an effort to biologically control HWA. Agents such as lady beetles are the most promising approach to controlling HWA.

Forest Service led the attack on the new invasive pest, Emerald Ash Borer, providing methods for detection, control, quarantine, and eradication to protect the Nation's forests with minimal disruption to international trade.

Researchers developed a national strategic logic model for invasive species research that illustrates linkages between Forest Service goals and outputs. The model identified output and outcome performance measures that are specific, measurable, accountable, results-oriented, and time-bound. The model also provided a framework for the development of the Forest Service *National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Invasive Species* and was an exhibit for Forest Service Research performance and accountability in OMB's assessment tool, PART.

The Emerald Ash Borer “Creates” Valuable Products

The emerald ash borer (EAB), an exotic woodboring beetle, has killed more than 6 million ash trees in Michigan, Canada, and parts of Ohio, Indiana, and Maryland. Damage is estimated at \$10 million and climbing. State, Federal, and international governments are implementing quarantine on EAB infested wood, in an effort to halt the spread of EAB.

In southeastern Michigan, the Forest Service, the Michigan Department of Agriculture, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources are cooperating to contain the EAB. Healthy and infested ash trees are being removed in a “fire break” zone around the infested area. Millions of infested and healthy ash trees will be removed. As these trees are removed, they are felled, chipped, and either burned or sent to landfills.

Although the beetles kill ash trees by cutting off their water supply, most of the material in the trees is not damaged and can be used for value-added products. These products include flooring, cabinets, furniture, and implement handles. Most material currently being landfilled or burned can be recycled into value-added products. Removal and disposal costs are reduced by recycling this material.

The Forest Service Economic Action Program and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources are working with the Southeastern Michigan Resource Conservation and Development Council to demonstrate how recycled infested ash trees can be turned into value-added products.

For more information on Region 9 activities, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9>.

This 32-inch diameter ash log will be processed into lumber and railroad ties. EAB galleries can be seen on the log’s surface.



Thwarting Invasive Species in the Monongahela National Forest

Monongahela National Forest employees and volunteers removed hundreds of pounds of garlic mustard in June and July 2004 in an effort to slow the spread of a noxious weed invader.

One mustard “pull” was conducted on 1¹/₃ miles of decommissioned road. When Forest Service geologist Linda Tracy discovered an entire length of road with a vigorous stand of the invasive plant, she contacted a State agency to alert them of her find. Working on steep slopes over the course of 3 days, just less than 5 acres of garlic mustard were pulled and carefully bagged. This amounted to 115 plastic garbage bags, each weighing about 35 pounds, or a total of 2 tons of material.

Approximately 180 person-hours were spent pulling and bagging garlic mustard. The bags were then hauled down the mountain by hand or on crude sleds. Great care was taken to avoid ripping the heavy-duty plastic bags, which could have loosed any ripe seeds and led to another infestation.

Another significant pull occurred in the virgin spruce area of Gaudineer Knob. Although the patch pulled was only about 1/10 acre in size, it was growing in an ecologically sensitive area. A third pull cleared about 5 acres of the invasive plant. Before the “pull,” parts of the cleared area were estimated at 90-percent mustard coverage.

As demonstrated here, invasive species will spread and ultimately alter ecosystem functionality by pushing out and replacing native vegetation, causing loss of biodiversity. As noted under the Chief’s four threats, these invasives require immediate attention. To put the situation into context, our country spends approximately \$138 billion per year in total economic damages and control costs.

To learn more about Monongahela National Forest activities, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/mnf>.

Goal 3: Provide Outdoor Recreational Opportunities

Strategic Outcome

High-quality outdoor recreational opportunities exist on the National Forests and Grasslands

The Forest Service continued to provide high-quality recreational experiences for the American public, especially in the national forests near the growing urban centers. To provide benefits for all recreation users, the Forest Service maintained public access to its facilities, roads, and trails, and acquired new rights-of-way (ROWs) for public access to NFS lands.

Achieving the outcome of this goal requires focusing on the following objectives:

Strategic Objective: Improve public access to NFS land and water and provide opportunities for outdoor health-enhancing activities.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Miles of trail maintained to standard	19,630	22,657	115%
Percent of trail maintained to standard	15%	17%	115%
Number of facilities maintained to standard	15,465	19,743	128%
Percent of facilities maintained to standard	38.5%	49.2%	128%
Number of ROW acquired to provide public access	244	215	88%
Miles of road maintained to standard (high-clearance and passenger) ³	54,800	64,866	118%
Percent of road maintained to standard (high-clearance and passenger)	18%	22%	118%

Strategies, Resources, and Underlying Factors

Trails Maintained to Standard

The agency projected **22,657 miles** of trail maintained to standard, or **115 percent** accomplishment. This is **17 percent** of the total miles of trail.

Roads Maintained to Standard

The National Forest Road System is one of the foundations for the achievement of the agency's strategic plan and goals. The road system provides access for public use, man-

³ This performance measure will not be found, as worded, in the Forest Service Strategic Plan 2004-2008. It is most closely related to *Performance Measure 3.1.b: The 3-year average of fatalities on the passenger car network* because the condition of the road surface is related to the likelihood of fatalities.

agement activities, and protection of NFS lands. The Forest Service Manual (FSM) provides direction for maintenance planning and responsibilities, requiring development of comprehensive annual maintenance plans using available resources for the highest priorities.

Servicewide appropriations for road maintenance have been less than annual maintenance needs for many years. On a year-to-year basis, deferred maintenance backlogs have increased while the amount of roads maintained in accordance with applicable standards has decreased. As expected, these trends continued in FY 2004. Consequently, much of the road system is in poor condition and continues to deteriorate, affecting resources, resource programs, and public recreation.

In FY 2004, the agency achievements were projected at **64,866 miles** of roads maintained to standard, for **118 percent** of the planned target. While this planned accomplishment was met, it is for only 18 percent of the total miles of road on NFS lands.

Facilities Maintained to Standard

Those facilities maintained to standard have a Facility Condition Index (FCI) rating of .10 or less, which equates to buildings that would be considered in good and fair condition. A total of 40,100 buildings are used to calculate percent to standard.

The Forest Service facilities program maintains buildings, developed recreation sites, dams, and other facilities. These facilities provide the work environment for approximately 32,000 employees and have the capacity to serve the recreation needs of nearly 2.1 million people at one time. More than half of these facilities have exceeded their design life and are more than 40 years old.

Annual maintenance includes work performed to preserve the serviceability of a facility, such as preventive maintenance, repairs, and replacement of damaged or worn out components. It includes work needed to meet laws, regulations, codes, best management practices, and other applicable standards, as long as the original intent or purpose of the facility remains unchanged. Annual maintenance also includes demolition, dismantling, and disposing of unneeded facilities. Proper maintenance is essential to providing efficient public service and maintaining the value of the Government's infrastructure investment.

Maintenance that is not performed as needed or scheduled is defined as *deferred maintenance*. Deferred maintenance causes deterioration of facility performance, increased repair costs, and a decrease in facility value. Forest Service facilities currently have a deferred maintenance backlog of approximately \$400 million. Annual maintenance costs are estimated at \$75 million.

To meet this challenge, the Forest Service has taken the following actions:

- Developed a warehouse view in the Infra for the regions to review progress on a monthly basis.
- Improved the definition of the standard across all units because it was not consistently interpreted.
- Removed deferred maintenance figures from Infra on completed projects.

To make significantly more progress, the Forest Service must also take the following actions:

- Monitor performance in monthly conference calls with regional engineering staff.
- Update or populate deferred maintenance and replacement value figures in Infra to complete the FCI calculation.
- Monitor expenditures and Infra data to identify if regions are making progress or lagging behind.

Typically, each wildfire season affects units across the Forest Service, impeding the agency's ability to perform current condition surveys and update and revise replacement value data in Infra.

For FY 2004, the agency's accomplishments were projected at **19,743 facilities** maintained to standard, achieving **128 percent** of the planned number.

Acquiring Road and Trail Rights-of-Way

ROW support effective public service by providing appropriate access to NFS lands for the public's use and enjoyment. Legal ROW enable needed maintenance and improvements to the road and trail system to address health and safety, resource degradation, and fire issues. Secure ROW enhance the ability to improve and protect watersheds and habitat, sustaining viable populations of desired species. Timely acquisition of needed ROW is a primary objective for successful management of NFS lands.

To accomplish these objectives, the agency proposed to take the following actions:

- Develop a long-term strategy for acquiring priority ROW.
- Continue to improve the skill base of realty staff to facilitate economical case processing.

For FY 2004, the Forest Service acquired a projected **215 ROW**, or **88 percent** of the planned number.

The following significant underlying factors outside the control of the Forest Service affected progress toward this long-term goal in FY 2004:

- Increasing relocation of the public into the rural landscape.
- Increasing unwillingness by private and non-Federal governmental entities to grant access, particularly through non-Federal lands within the urban interface.
- Increasing cost of agency efforts and cost pool assessments.

Strategic Objective: Improve the management of OHV use to protect natural resources, promote safety of all users, and minimize conflicts among various uses through the collaborative development and implementation of locally based travel management plans.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Percent of NFS lands covered by travel management implementation plans	NA	No specific measurement protocol in FY 2004	NA

Travel Management Plans

The Travel Management Planning strategy has progressed more slowly than anticipated. No national commitment and no specific measurement protocol were established in FY 2004. A firm schedule will be established in FY 2005.

Research and Development's Results in Providing Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

Forest Service researchers synthesized a previously unorganized body of knowledge to develop fundamental principles providing the theoretical and conceptual foundation for recreation ecology and its management impacts.

Scientists and Alaska cooperators surveyed nonresident recreational anglers for information needed to plan for management of the Situk River. Analysis from this survey enabled creation of management alternatives across multiple land classifications and State and Federal jurisdictions.

Researchers and cooperating Federal agencies published *Outdoor Recreation for 21st Century America*, an assessment of public demand for recreational opportunities on the Nation's forests and other natural lands. This research formed the basis for the recreation analyses in the *National Report on Sustainable Forests—2003*, the RPA Forest and Rangelands Assessment, national forest plan updates, State comprehensive outdoor

recreation plans, and a number of private organizations' strategic plans. Information is available at <http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends>.

Scientists cooperated with national and regional recreation managers to complete a 5-year study of recreational use on all national forests. The National Visitor Use Monitoring system was developed for monitoring of national forest recreation, employing innovative national-to-ground level sampling strategies and statistical estimation procedures to provide reliable measures of the recreation benefits being provided by the national forests. More information can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/reports/>.

Forest Service and university scientists jointly completed the first national assessment of the status of the National Wilderness Preservation System and its associated values. This broad-scale assessment employed the latest technology for using regional and nationwide spatial data to examine the social values, economic uses, and natural conditions of the wilderness system within a landscape context. This work was part of the RPA Forest and Rangeland Assessment and will be published as a book entitled *The Multiple Values of Wilderness*.

Forest Service scientists examined the management and use of OHV on the national forests in California. Results of this research are now available for use by OHV managers, community members, and OHV groups and organizations.

Scientists completed a study of the recreation fee demonstration program for a southeastern forest. Findings highlighted ways to strengthen the program through a greater focus on customer service and by targeting the expenditure of fee revenues.

Enhancing the South Fork Salmon River Fishing Experience

During the summer Chinook salmon fishing season, thousands of anglers gather along the South Fork Salmon River and the adjacent road on the Boise and Payette National Forests. A unique partnership between the two forests, Valley County Idaho Sheriff's Department, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the Nez Perce Tribe, and Southwest Idaho Resource Advisory Committee has improved fishing access and reduced resource damage to enhance recreational opportunities for anglers.

Critical actions taken by the partnership include constructing stairways to the river to ease erosion problems caused by angler-created trails, creating and designating specific parking areas away from streambanks, adding trash bins and sanitation facilities, and prohibiting overnight camping. Because glass containers often break and become a safety hazard, the improved fishing conditions also restricted possession and storage of glass containers in the river corridor. These changes have increased public safety and enhanced access for emergency vehicles and residents of the nearby community of Yellow Pine.

The forest representatives and their partners also created a facility where anglers could obtain information about fishing and camping areas, and posted signs outlining safety measures appropriate use of the area for the purpose of protecting anglers and reducing resource damage.

With resources provided by the project's partners, further improvements to access, parking, and camping opportunities are planned. Measures taken by this partnership has helped the Forest Service provide enhanced recreational opportunities for constituents.

For more information on the Boise National Forest, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/boise>.



An angler's prize—a Chinook Salmon.

Wayne National Forest's Wheelin' Sportsmen

Ohio's Wayne National Forest hosted the first "Wheelin' Sportsmen Fishing Day" on April 9, 2004. The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) partnered with the Wayne National Forest to host a fishing event designed to introduce the public to the new accessible boardwalk at Lake Vesuvius. The Wheelin' Sportsmen group is an outreach program established by the NWTf to provide physically challenged individuals with opportunities to participate in outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting, bird watching, and other sports.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife stocked the lake with approximately 1,300 rainbow and golden trout. Miranda Cremeans, a local teenager actively involved with the project since its planning stage, was given the honor of releasing the first fish.

This outing brought together family and friends to enjoy the beautiful day outdoors. Even Smokey Bear visited, reminding everyone of the importance of fire prevention. NWTf furnished food, and the Ohio University Southern Nature Center provided drinks for participants. Over the course of the day, almost 400 people attended Fishing Day.

Although originally planned as a one-time event, the first Wheelin' Sportsmen Fishing Day was so successful that it will become an annual occurrence.

For more information on the eastern region, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9>.



The new boardwalk on Lake Vesuvius enables visitors of all ages and abilities to try their hand at fishing.

Cultural Celebration in Perry County, Tennessee

Perry County Family Trees is a recreational event that celebrates family history and cultural heritage in Tennessee. This event was inspired by the linkage of forests and rivers to the area's early settlers and features local music and utilitarian arts talent. The concept for this cultural celebration was developed by the Buffalo-Duck River Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council, partnering with local communities, the Tennessee Arts Commission, and the Forest Service's Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area. A partnership grant from the Forest Service and the National Endowment for the Arts funded the June 2004 activities that included folk plant workshops, Native American pow wows, bluegrass and gospel music concerts, and heritage exhibits. More than 3,000 people attended these activities in a county with a population of 7,700.

This newly created tourist destination has boosted the economies of local communities, enabling towns in Perry County to improve their downtown areas, fund a chamber of commerce, preserve historic sites, and develop tourism-based businesses. The success of this program has provided recreation and enhanced community arts and music programs. This partnership also fosters economic viability, making a significant positive impact in this rural area.

For more information on the Southern Region's activities, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8>.

Goal 4: Help Meet Energy Resource Needs

Strategic Outcome

Consider opportunities for energy development and the supporting infrastructure on forests and grasslands to help meet the Nation's energy needs.

A specific strategy is currently being developed to address this strategic goal and objectives within the context of the Forest Service's multiple use mandate. The new strategy will be implemented within the 2004 to 2008 Strategic Plan window.

The strategic objectives are:

Strategic Objective: Work with other agencies to identify and designate corridors for energy facilities, improve the efficiency of processing permit applications, and establish appropriate land tenure (including transferability clauses) in easements and other authorizations to provide for long-term project viability.

Strategic Objective: Stimulate commercial use of small-diameter trees from NFS lands for biomass energy.

Research and Development's Results in Helping Meet Energy Resource Needs

Forest Service researchers released the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) BioSum computer model, demonstrating the potential use of fire hazard reduction treatments to meet energy needs. It was specifically designed to address policy issues, such as the effectiveness of a transportation subsidy for woody biomass, and could be used to compare the effectiveness of this type of subsidy versus a subsidy on the production of electricity generated from biomass (including agricultural or municipal wastes).

Researchers developed a Life-Cycle Assessment Model of the use of wildland biomass for electrical generation. The model analyzes the costs, benefits, and environmental impacts associated with alternative policy scenarios for directing low-value woody biomass obtained from hazardous fuels treatments into energy applications.

For the Department of Energy's Biomass Vision, research scientists developed the Fuel Treatment Evaluator, a Web-based tool to help assess the biomass potential from forests. The tool allows users to identify and prioritize hazardous fuel reduction opportunities in forests based on their departure from historic natural fire regimes, their need for thinning, and their proximity to the WUI.

Research evaluation of a new biomass bundling machine indicates biomass bundling can be a cost-effective forest management tool. Biomass bundling reduces fire risk, avoids prescribed fire limitations, improves storage life of residues, and improves the recovery of biomass for utilization.

In northern Minnesota, researchers provided technical and logistic support to two public utilities commissions implementing a large-scale biomass project. The project, using hybrid poplar as a renewable and sustainable supply of green energy, has the potential to provide 35 megawatts of renewable power, more than \$700 million in gross revenues (and the creation and retention of more than 170 jobs) for 20 years to Hibbing and Virginia, MN.

Olguin's Sawmill Retrofits For Small Diameter Materials

Olguin's, Inc., in Taos, NM, operated as a large diameter sawmill from 1964 to 2003. In August 2003, the Carson National Forest awarded Olguin's two Economic Action grants totaling \$114,000. These grants helped update the company's business marketing plan and procure equipment to expand its capability for producing value-added products from small diameter trees. The equipment enabled the company to diversify its existing set of products—traditional vigas, latillas, fuel wood, and rough lumber—and add five new product lines—including posts, poles, and finished lumber and mouldings—that all use small diameter trees and reduce fire risk to communities. By July 2004, Olguin's had produced 10,000 posts and poles. The planer/molder enabled the mill to produce finished dimensional lumber for the first time. Olguin's is one of the few mills in the State capable of producing finished lumber.

The mill works in partnership with 10 suppliers that remove material from hazardous fuel projects in communities adjacent to the Carson and Santa Fe National Forests. The Economic Action grants also contribute to a sustainable economy in an area that has long been economically depressed. The mill added 2 new employees in 2004 and provides 11 jobs.

For more information on the Carson National Forest, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson>.



Mill workers remove bark from small-diameter trees.



Olguin's, Inc., welcoming committee.

Wood Chips Have the Power

What does a business do with woody material removed for the purpose of reducing hazardous fuels? One solution—use wood chips for energy. The Forest Service’s State and Private Forestry Technology Marketing Unit is partnering with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) through the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and one of its subcontractors, Community Power Corporation, to demonstrate the BioMax 15, a state-of-the-art, transportable, and environmentally friendly biopower system that uses forest residues to produce electricity and heat suitable for small enterprises, rural homes, and schools.

Two businesses in New Mexico and one school in Colorado fired up modular biopower systems in 2004 that use wood chips from forest restoration activities to produce electricity and heat for their facilities.

Small, modular biopower technology holds tremendous opportunities for offsetting some local energy needs, using low-value forest thinnings and as an “in-the-woods” processing operation capable of grid connection. Although biopower technology is still in the precommercial phase, these projects are important in the efforts to reduce the risk from catastrophic wildland fire and help meet energy resource needs locally.

For more information on the Forest Service’s State and Private Forestry Technology Marketing Unit, please visit <http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/tmu/welcome.htm>.



Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth congratulates partner Walt Robb of Community Power Corporation on successfully getting several “BioMax 15” sites up and running in 2004 to use wood chipped from hazardous fuel materials removed from the wildland-urban interface.

Conservation Silviculture: Management of Koa Forests in Hawaii

Working in partnership with The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii and Kamehameha Schools, Forest Service scientists have developed new insights into the silviculture of koa (*Acacia koa*). Koa is one of the world's most valuable woods for high-end furniture and accessories, and contribute tens of millions of dollars to Hawaii's economy.

Following a disturbance, such as fire or substrate scarification (breaking of the ground surface), koa regenerates prolifically from long-lived seeds in the soil. Where seedlings are protected from grazing, the result is a dense stand of young koa trees with an understory of alien grasses. Thinning and grass control enhance the survival and growth of koa, leading to more valuable trees and improved conditions for native plants.

By demonstrating benefits to private landowners that sound forest management is both economically and ecologically rewarding, they are encouraged to grow and maintain valuable trees and native plants for economic gain and ecosystem health. These long-term benefits will provide incentive to slow the conversion of privately held forested lands to suburban development and pastures. Ultimately, maintaining these ecologically sound forests will result in landscape-scale conservation for forests in the State of Hawaii, the home of one-third of the Nation's threatened and endangered species.

To learn more about Hawaii's resources through the Pacific Southwest Research Station, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/psw>.



Koa trees, indigenous to the Hawaiian Islands, are a valuable resource for this State. Photo courtesy of Jack Jeffrey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Goal 5: Improve Watershed Condition

Strategic Outcome

Fully functional and productive watersheds

Many Americans depend on NFS watersheds for their public water supplies at home and while enjoying outdoor recreation as they visit the national forests and grasslands.

Sustaining functional watershed conditions over time maintains the productive capacity of the Nation's land and water.

In FY 2004, the Forest Service worked toward achieving the desired ecological conditions of the Nation's watersheds through enhancements to stream, lake, and terrestrial habitat, as well as completing over 100 watershed assessments for future enhancements of these habitats. The agency also provided technical, educational, and planning assistance through State forestry agency partners, thus ensuring the long-term management of important private forest resource areas.

Achieving the outcome of this goal requires focusing on the following objectives:

Strategic Objective: Assess and restore high-priority watersheds and maintain riparian habitat in these watersheds.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Watershed assessments completed	122	130	107%
Acres of nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) land under approved stewardship management plans	1,618,000	1,618,000	100%

Strategies, Resources, and Underlying Factors

Watershed Assessments Completed

Assessments evaluate current land and resource conditions at, or above, the watershed scale. The Forest Service uses assessments to increase the knowledge base of the agency for subsequent decisionmaking at the forest plan level and project level.

Watershed-scale assessments help identify and prioritize projects to implement forest plans, resulting in improved and protected watershed conditions, ecological conditions that sustain viable populations, and restored and maintained forest and grassland ecosystems. Assessments consider information on ecosystem function, vegetation structure, ecosystem capabilities, and the limits to sustained production, and thus improve the agency's capability to provide sustainable levels of uses, values, products, and services.

The agency continued the transition toward meeting its long-term goal of a shorter watershed assessment cycle by projecting completion of **130** high-priority watershed **assessments**.

The timeliness of watershed assessments affects forest plan revision and amendment efforts and projects. The planning efforts may also be affected by possible reductions in the scope and analysis associated with the assessments.

To accomplish these objectives, the Forest Service will take the following actions:

- Continue transition to a shorter watershed assessment cycle to meet forest plan development and plan implementation.
- Improve the capacity to provide the scientific and technological information needed to address the agency's priorities in assessing watershed conditions.
- Digitally store, characterize, and display the current hydrologic and associated watershed conditions of five field hydrologic unit watersheds within a corporate database.
- Implement and track watershed restoration and improvement activities in an integrated and financially efficient manner to achieve desired conditions.

Nonindustrial Private Forest Land (NIPF) under Approved Stewardship Management Plans

The Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) provides technical, educational, and planning assistance through State forestry agency partners to NIPF owners to encourage and enable the active long-term forest management of important private forest resource areas. The primary focus of the FSP is the development of comprehensive, multiresource management plans that provide landowners with the information they need to manage their forests for a variety of products and services.

The FSP is shifting from its historic delivery of assistance to landowners on a first-come, first-served basis to a more strategic or focused approach that directs assistance to affect targeted forest resource areas. The program is also investing in the development of spatial assessment tools to enable partner forest agencies to track accomplishments in terms of forest resource outcomes through time, and to strategically focus program assistance in the future.

In FY 2004, actual results were **1,618,000 acres** of NIPF under approved stewardship management plans, or **100 percent** of the planned acres. This performance information reflects actual results due to the States' June 30 – July 1 fiscal year.

Strategic Objective: Restore and maintain native and desired nonnative plant and animal species diversity in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and reduce the rate of species endangerment by contributing to species recovery.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Acres of terrestrial habitat enhanced to achieve desired ecological conditions	232,350	217,999	94%
Miles of stream habitat enhanced to achieve desired ecological conditions	1,860	1,797	97%
Acres of lake habitat enhanced to achieve desired ecological conditions	10,953	14,771	135%

Strategies, Resources, and Underlying Factors

Enhancement of Terrestrial, Lake, and Stream Habitats

The enhancement of terrestrial habitat includes actions to restore, recover, and maintain habitat and ecosystem conditions necessary for healthy populations of wildlife. Providing appropriate ecological conditions for these species is integral to meeting the agency mission and its legal requirements to provide for plant and animal community diversity, species recovery, and to avoid new listings of threatened or sensitive species. Improvements include, but are not limited to, maintaining early successional habitats, regenerating aspen and oaks, seeding to improve forage conditions, and developing water sources for wildlife in arid habitats.

In FY 2004, terrestrial habitat restored or enhanced on NFS lands was projected at **217,999 acres**, or **94 percent** of the acres planned for the year.

A significant portion of these acres also contributed to improved forest health conditions and reduced risks of catastrophic wildfires. With better integration of wildlife specialists into the analysis of hazardous fuels, the Forest Service can now also meet wildlife objectives during those treatments.

Also benefiting wildlife objectives are the anticipated 2,000 partnerships that form an integral part of this program.

Several factors affect the success of the wildlife habitat management program. Support to other program activities requires the skilled services of journey-level biologists, leaving them with less time to spend in core wildlife habitat management activities. Redirection of funds to wildfire suppression, along with reassignment of personnel into suppression activities, has caused an erosion of partnerships and program accomplishments. Salary and cost pool assessment increases have reduced the amount of funds available to accomplish on-the-ground improvements. These improvements will largely be accomplished with funding other than from Wildlife and Fisheries Management.

In FY 2004, the Forest Service projected that it restored or enhanced **14,771 acres** of lake habitat and **1,797 miles** of stream habitat, or **135 percent** and **97 percent**, respectively.

Lake habitat was restored or enhanced to desired ecological condition by taking the following actions:

- Adding spawning gravel, structural habitat, liming, and fertilization to improve and maintain productivity for both warmwater fish (e.g., bass and bluegill) and coldwater fish (e.g., trout and salmon).
- Attracting the interest and support of many small rural communities located near national forest lakes, resulting in the support of volunteer efforts and matching funds from local angling groups, nearby communities, and businesses.

Stream habitat was restored or enhanced to desired ecological condition by taking the following actions:

- Connecting fragmented habitats at human-made barriers.
- Restoring habitat parameters and functional processes to a normal range of variability for the channel type using watershed restoration techniques.
- Reducing sediment input and streambank erosion through structural and nonstructural in-stream, riparian, and upland treatments.
- Restoring riparian habitat functions for natural recruitment of large wood.
- Creating pools within streams to provide hiding cover and increased spawning gravel for fish.

Several factors have combined to reduce the success of the fisheries and the aquatic staff at meeting national commitments. Program staffing and funding have remained flat, or declined, over the past 5 years while program costs have increased. The challenge of eradicating aquatic invasive species while protecting and restoring native species has increased the complexity and cost of projects throughout the Nation.

In recent years, the need to transfer budgeted funds from the wildlife and fish habitat management programs into wildfire suppression and the diversion of aquatic staff and contracting specialists from stream and lake project work during the summer months into fire suppression tasks have resulted in a reduction of achievements in relation to planned accomplishments.

Project planning also has become increasingly complex. The Land Management Plan (LMP) revision schedule and work required to comply with Section 7 of the Endangered

Species Act to support other programs (i.e., biological assessments and consultation) require the skilled services of journey-level biologists who are then not available for habitat enhancement activities. The transfer of resources to support the suppression of wildfires, hazardous fuels reduction, and land management planning will likely increase and persist at high levels throughout the decade.

A comprehensive fisheries and watershed program review was completed during FYs 2003 and 2004. The review team recommended 39 action items to strengthen aquatic program performance and accountability. Among those items was a recommendation to conduct a national assessment of fisheries and watershed staffing and professional development needs to better align the workforce with current needs. In addition, programmatic consultations were completed in two regions that will facilitate completion of watershed restoration planning activities.

Research and Development's Results in Improving Watershed Condition

Wetlands are a major source of dissolved organic carbon and other elements. Forest Service scientists studied the movement of carbon, compounds, and other elements from terrestrial to aquatic zones in watersheds with significant wetland acreage. This research established basic values for carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorous that forest managers will use to develop methods for evaluating watershed conditions.

Research scientists developed a model to assess the potential of streams to support selected species of salmon and trout to help managers identify which watersheds are highest priority for restoration.

Scientists developed standardized forest carbon stock tables and guidelines to predict carbon storage and dynamics in forest systems, providing a basis for consistent estimation of the quantity of carbon sequestered, and the emissions reduced, by different forestry activities. This work contributes to the Department of Energy's 1605(b) Voluntary Greenhouse Gas Accounting Rules and Guidelines program, and, in the future, may be used to determine carbon credits. Scientists, policymakers, and land managers will use these data and models to mitigate potential climate change effects and help quantify the added value that carbon credits can bring to traditional forestry.

Sedimentation from soil erosion degrades water systems and sites. To improve the effectiveness of mitigation treatments and provide management options for sedimentation, the Forest Service developed Web-based modeling tools to determine management options. These modeling tools were used more than 45,000 times during FY 2004 via the Web.

Conserving Wetlands After Wildfires

In June 2002, the Rodeo-Chediski wildfire, the largest in Arizona history, burned hundreds of thousands of acres of White Mountain Apache tribal lands. Postfire stabilization efforts initially focused on protecting life and property in the tribal villages that lie downstream from the fire, but attention soon turned to the dozens of springs, wet meadows, and sinkhole lakes that dot the scorched landscape. These wetlands retain runoff; recharge groundwater; provide habitat for turkey, deer, frogs, and medicinal plants; and have cultural significance. Many local tribal members were gravely concerned about the effects of the fire to these places.

Rocky Mountain Research Station scientists in Flagstaff, AZ, developed a technique to reverse the wetlands degradation process by placing rock riffle formations within the carved channels to encourage the deposition and retention of fine sediments, which in turn speeds the growth of wetland plants, such as sedges and bulrushes. Although the rock formations mimic natural streambed features, the enormous scale of modern wildfires causes incisions to occur too quickly and over too large an area for the natural recovery processes to stabilize the streams. Replacing these formations and removing structures, such as culverts, that encourage scour rather than deposition can speed the recovery of streams and prevent wetlands from being lost.

For more information concerning watersheds and riparian ecosystems in Flagstaff, AZ, visit www.rmrs.nau.edu/lab/4302.



This photo demonstrates the recognition of adverse effects of post-fire flood flows in important wetlands and how restoration technology can be applied to conserve wetlands that are ecologically critical and culturally significant to Native Americans.

Off-Highway Vehicle-Ravaged Landscape Transformed

The Lefthand Canyon Restoration Project is located on the Boulder Ranger District of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests. The Forest Service, Colorado State Parks Trails Program, Wildland Restoration Volunteers, Trailridge Runners, Walsh Environmental, and Northern Colorado Trail riders banded together to transform a landscape ravaged by off-highway vehicles into an ecologically restored watershed and recreation area.

The partnership used \$250,000 in grants to post travel routes, provide visitor information, and staff on-the-ground management. Soil stabilization and runoff control measures were installed.

One of the group's greatest accomplishments was the restoration of a 4-acre meadow, once a barren and rutted wasteland, into an aesthetically pleasing, higher quality wildlife habitat. Although only 4 acres were restored, the restorative effects cover an area twice that size. The Forest Service is developing a long-term plan for using and restoring the entire area. The goal of the plan is to manage the area for recreation while maintaining a healthy watershed.

This restoration project is designed to combine management practices that protect newly restored areas and prevent further damage to the Lefthand watershed, which provides water to 15,000 people in the Lefthand Water District.

For more information on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/arnf>.

Lime Creek Prescribed Fire on the Boise and Sawtooth National Forests

As part of the Lime Creek prescribed burn project, fire managers on the Mountain Home and Fairfield Ranger Districts and Boise and Sawtooth National Forests burned nearly 2,700 acres in October 2003 to enhance aspen growth. Aspen is critical to many Idaho ecosystems because it provides nesting for 13 species of cavity-nesting birds on the Boise and Sawtooth National Forests, big game forage, aspen buds for grouse, species diversity, fall scenery, and fire-resistant vegetation during part of the tree's life cycle.

The Lime Creek project, a series of prescribed fires to be carried out on 9,000 acres over 4 to 6 years, burned more than 1,750 acres in 2002 during the project's first phase. Because the project treats aspen stands over a large landscape and will help improve big game summer range, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation has contributed \$10,000 towards the next phase of Lime Creek burning to help support aerial ignition.

"We have lost about 60 percent of the aspen acres in this area, as Douglas fir, sagebrush, and other species have encroached," said Forest Service fuels planner Bill Powlishen. "Many of the aspen stands in this area are not regenerating, and once aspen disappears, it can take centuries to be restored."

For more information on prescribed burns in Region 4, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/boise>.



Low humidity, warm temperatures, and generally dry conditions created the right mix to rejuvenate the aspen stands.



A Ruffed Grouse—one of the many species benefiting from the Lime Creek prescribed fire.

Goal 6: Conduct Mission-Related Work To Support the Agency's Goals

Strategic Outcome

Productive and efficient agency programs support the mission of the Forest Service

The Forest Service provides direction for natural resource stewardship through direct land management practices, indirect management under partnership agreements, and research and development programs. The agency also provides many goods and services—such as recreational opportunities, clean water, and wood products—to the American people. The agency consistently strives to maintain the organizational structure and capacity to deliver the necessary mission-related work.

Achieving the outcome of this goal requires focusing on the following objectives:

Strategic Objective: Provide current resource data, monitoring, and research information in a timely manner.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Percent of the Nation for which FIA information is accessible to external customers	NA	76%	New Baseline

Strategies, Resources, and Underlying Factors

Forest Inventory and Analysis Data Accessible to External Customers

The Research and Development (R&D) Deputy Area is responsible for the percent of the Nation's forested lands for which FIA information is accessible by external customers.

During congressional hearings in April 1999, Alaska and the Hawaiian Islands were exempted from the annualized inventory because they required special approaches, costing \$21 million a year for Alaska alone under the existing system. Consequently, in the early years of FIA, these areas were excluded from the "percent of Nation" calculation. However, many believed these areas should be included to more accurately reflect the area of United States inventoried under new funding, regardless of approach. In FY 2004, the Forest Service adjusted the calculation and included a table in the FIA annual report to reflect both calculations—the 48 States or the entire Nation.

In FY 2003, the Forest Service made FIA data accessible for 40 of the 48-State base (not including Alaska and Hawaii), providing a 100-percent accomplishment of the planned amount. But in FY 2004, with the implementation of the four new States, FIA data is now available for external customers in 44 States, which is **76 percent** of the

Nation's (now including Alaska and Hawaii) forested lands. This will serve as a new baseline for FY 2005.

Forest Service FIA data was accessible for external customers for 53 percent of the Nation in FY 2001 and 62 percent in FY 2002.

To store and process the annualized inventory data, FIA completed the development of the National Information Management System (NIMS). R&D also provides the FIA annual business report with a full accounting of program funding and accomplishments, including the number of peer-reviewed and other publications produced.

R&D compiles and disseminates information on a wide array of ecological attributes, while continuing to serve traditional customers who require timely information on forest resources. Keeping this information current is one of the chief interests of FIA customers.

FIA objectives include providing annual updates for all forested lands sampled as part of the annual inventory and producing complete analytical reports for each State. A total of \$56,653,000 in Forest Service funding was made available in FY 2004 for the FIA program. These funds were combined with approximately \$10 million in partner contributions, primarily States and other Federal land managers, to provide more than 400 employee-years of effort.

The FIA program consists of a remote sensing phase (sampling forest plots at approximately 1 plot per 6,000 acres) and a subsample of forest plots measured for a broader suite of forest ecosystem indicators (enhanced samples). The program seeks to implement an annual FIA program that measures at least 10 percent of forest plots per year in the Western United States and 15 percent in the East, as well as 20 percent of the enhanced sample locations in all States. Annual compilations of the most recent information will be provided along with full reporting at 5-year intervals. FIA is not currently fully funded to achieve its goal of annualized inventory in all 50 States, Puerto Rico, and the Trust Territories as mandated by law and agreed to by the agency.

In severe fire seasons, the redirection of funding to emergency fire suppression activities forces the Forest Service to suspend many nonfire work activities. This suspension can affect the number of people available for fieldwork and cause delays in annualized implementation in all States. To achieve full implementation of annualized inventory at current funding levels, FIA will consider the use of single-person crews where safety issues can be resolved, relying more heavily on remote sensing options where potentially reduced data detail and quality will not compromise the integrity of the results. FIA may also lengthen the remeasurement cycle on its field samples. One-person crews may not be feasible in the West because of terrain and access issues.

Strategic Objective: Meet Federal financial management standards and integrate budget with performance.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Extent to which performance data are current and complete	NA	86%	New Baseline

Strategies, Resources, and Underlying Factors

Extent to which Performance Data are Current and Complete

This measure is the percent of regions/stations/area providing certification forms to the Program and Budget Analysis Staff, certifying that their unit’s accomplishment data is current and complete. For FY 2004, accomplishment for this performance measure was 86 percent and will serve as a baseline for the future.

In the past, these data were collected through manual input of performance data by individual units into standardized reporting spreadsheets for submission to the Washington Office. The spreadsheets were collected, consolidated, and validated at the regional level. Beginning in FY 2003, to ensure data integrity and their review by leadership, certification of the data by the regional forester was required before submission to the Washington Office. This certification states, “Information as reported has been validated and supporting documentation is available upon request.”

During FY 2004, the Forest Service has been converting to a more systematic process in which most performance data will be collected through the WorkPlan program, which tracks project management, day-to-day operations, and fiscal data at the unit level. The agency anticipates that this new process of routinely collecting performance data will yield more accurate and timely performance data to leaders at every organizational level, while providing an information base to match costs with outputs. For those reporting areas where the performance data reside in an automated system other than WorkPlan, the agency is working with system owners to extract needed information directly into reporting worksheets rather than requiring manual input.

Concerns include: potential unforeseen technical glitches in WorkPlan as data fields are populated; and possible interoperability issues as WorkPlan is integrated with other systems. Because the national headquarters historically collected performance information only in July and October from every unit, it is likely that some units relied on institutional memory and informal records to complete the data call. The agency anticipates that by using WorkPlan to integrate data collection into normal operations, the data received will be more accurate and complete. In addition, the agency anticipate that direct links to other data sets will reduce human errors from re-entering data into the reporting system.

Strategic Objective: Maintain the environmental, social, and economic benefits of forests and grasslands by reducing their conversion to other uses.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Acres of land adjustments to conserve the integrity of undeveloped lands and habitat quality. This measure is the sum of the following three measures:	699,461	640,481	92%
• Acres adjusted to conserve the integrity of undeveloped lands and habitat quality	341,536	54,896	16%
• Acres acquired to conserve the integrity of undeveloped lands and habitat quality	57,925	50,954	88%
• Acres protected by the Forest Legacy Program (FLP) to conserve the integrity of undeveloped lands and habitat quality	300,000	534,632	178%

Strategies, Resources, and Underlying Factors

Acres of Land Adjustments

Land consolidation through acquisition or exchange enables the agency to better manage Federal lands within, or adjacent to, NFS administrative boundaries. Securing land through acquisition or exchange helps reduce future management costs; responds to urban and community needs; addresses fragmentation; promotes conservation; and improves aquatic, forest, and rangeland ecosystems.

Many areas within or immediately adjacent to existing national forests contain important resources that, if acquired, will help the agency meet critical objectives related to public outdoor recreation opportunities, critical wildlife habitat, and wilderness or other congressionally designated areas. Acquisition of inholdings can substantially reduce boundary management costs and reduce the impacts associated with converting use of adjacent lands, such as trespass and resource degradation or fragmentation.

Over the next several years, key opportunities are expected for exchange or purchase of lands from industry and other private landholders for the national forests. Many areas within or immediately adjacent to existing national forests contain important resources. These purchases will also improve management efficiency and decrease property management administration costs.

To accomplish the above objective, the Forest Service planned the following actions:

- Conduct land adjustments to protect the public benefits that are provided by private forests and conserve contiguous forest areas.
- Conduct statewide planning, working collaboratively with other Federal, State, and local governments to develop a land-adjustment strategy that meets the strategic goals and objectives of the Forest Service, as well as these other entities.

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- Identify opportunities for acquiring properties at highest risk for conversion of use and habitat degradation and that can provide access for public acquisition.
 - Consider acquiring less-than-fee interests (conservation easements) when fee ownership is not needed to meet agency goals.
 - Continue to improve the skill base of realty staff to facilitate economical case processing.

The Forest Service adjusted (exchanged) a projected **54,896 acres** for **16 percent** of planned acres in FY 2004. There were **50,954 acres** acquired in FY 2004, for **88 percent** of planned acres.

Several factors outside the control of the Forest Service affected its progress in FY 2004, including the following challenges:

- Intermingling of non-NFS lands, and the increase in the subsequent parcelization of these lands.
- Funding transfers to cover firefighting expenditures.
- Increasing cost of agency efforts and cost pool assessments.

On State and private lands, the Forest Service's FLP conserves environmentally important forests threatened by conversion to nonforest uses through the acquisition of land or interests in land. The program operates on a willing buyer-willing seller basis and is a nonregulatory, incentive-based private forest land conservation program. This ensures that both traditional uses of private lands and the public values of America's forest resources are protected for future generations.

Acquisitions are based on a project-selection process that uses national criteria to assess critical resource values, development threats, unique environmental features, traditional forest uses, potential leverage of non-Federal funds, and the history of ongoing efforts. The Forest Service, together with the States, prioritizes potential acquisitions into a national FLP project list for Administration approval. The program requires cost-share participation and leverages Federal investments to accelerate accomplishments.

The FLP protected **534,632 acres** in FY 2004. This significant increase over the planned acres is due to the closing of one large project that received 3 years of funding—the Maine West Branch project, which protected 329,000 acres. Results for FY 2004 were **178 percent** of the planned acres.

In acquisition process, there may be a lag of 18 to 24 months between FLP project selection and successful acquisition, making reporting difficult to calculate against a planned number of acres. This lag is caused not only by the usual real estate transaction

process, but also an average 12-month delay between project selection (through the agency and State process) and the confirmation of funding through the appropriations cycle.

For this reason, FLP accomplishment targets are based on a formula that tracks past performance and applies those results to predict the next year's target. In addition, due to the willing buyer-willing seller nature of FLP projects, a transaction may not be accomplished. The FLP has emphasized a readiness factor to increase the due diligence that a project undergoes before it is proposed for Federal funding, and thus reduce uncertainty, but some landowner circumstances and decisions are beyond the agency's control and can result in expected accomplishments failing to come to fruition.

The total accomplishment for acres of land adjustments in FY 2004 was **589,528 acres**, or **84 percent** of the planned acres.

Strategic Objective: Develop and maintain the processes and systems to provide and analyze scientific and technical information to address agency priorities.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Number of LMP revisions completed	14	12	86%
Percent of LMP revisions completed	11%	9%	86%
Proportion of data within information systems that are current to standard	NA	No specific measurement protocol in FY 2004	NA
Number of forest plan monitoring reports completed	105	112	106%
Percent of forest plan monitoring reports completed	88%	94%	106%

Strategies, Resources, and Underlying Factors

Development or Revision of Land and Resource Management Plans

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires that each unit of the NFS have a LMP that may be amended, as appropriate, but formally revised every 10 to 15 years to address changing conditions related to natural resources, management goals, and public use. Designed to improve the agency's knowledge base, LMPs document the results of forestwide analyses and decisionmaking.

Results are accomplished when a revision is completed, based on the Chief's National LMP Revision Schedule. This schedule identifies a timetable for the revision of all existing national forest, grassland, prairie, and other NFS unit LMPs.

Revisions were projected at **12 LMPs** or **86 percent** of those scheduled for *completion* in FY 2004, in accordance with the Chief's National Revision Schedule.

Performance numbers for FY 2004 have decreased because of a reduction in the budget for Land Management Planning. The reduction has a direct influence on the length of time it takes to complete a revision, thereby reducing the number of completed plans.

To develop or revise LMPs, the Forest Service:

- Continues to emphasize that all LMP revisions are to be completed within the timeframe in the Chief's National Revision Schedule.
- Ensures that the Chief's National Revision Schedule is appropriate, given funding and resource information availability.
- Revises planning regulations. Regulations at 36 CFR 219 for the development, amendment, and revision of NFS LMPs are being revised. The revised regulations are expected to make substantial changes to forest, grassland, and prairie planning procedures to expedite the planning process.

Factors affecting the agency's progress in FY 2004 included the following challenges:

- The increasing amount of the agency's budget spent on planning, analysis, resolution of challenges, and congressional earmarks.
- The average amount of time to get from project initiation to project completion under the 1982 Planning Rule.
- Uncertainty associated with publication of the New Planning Rule and its effect on transition requirements for revisions under way.

Proportion of Data within Information Systems That Are Current to Standard

No national commitment and no specific measurement protocol for this performance measure were established for FY 2004. A team is continuing to work through definitions and how this measure may be operationalized in the future.

Forest Plan Monitoring Reports

The Forest Service's monitoring and evaluation activities provide information that supports improving watershed conditions; providing ecological conditions to sustain viable populations of fish, wildlife, and plant species; and restoring forest and grassland ecosystems. The program focuses on identifying changing conditions over time and monitoring the implementation, effectiveness, and validity of forest plans. This monitoring information

improves the agency's capability to provide sustainable levels of uses, values, products, and services; provides valuable information on the effectiveness of management activities; and leads to suggestions for cost-effective improvements.

Completed forest plan monitoring reports were projected for **112 forests**, which is **106 percent** of the planned number.

In FY 2004, 105 NFS units were targeted to initiate a monitoring plan. Undercutting this accomplishment, however, is a decrease in monitoring effectiveness because of a lower number of activities monitored on each forest. Individual forest plans do not specify the number of monitoring activities that must occur. As a result, the total number of monitoring *activities* may actually be less than in the past, but still provide the same level of accomplishment for this measure. In effect, the number of monitoring activities has decreased even as the forests continue to produce the same number of monitoring reports.

To accomplish monitoring and evaluation activities and improve the future capabilities of national forests and grasslands, the Forest Service:

- Identified, conducted, and distributed research that enables better management of national forests and grasslands.
- Identified minimum monitoring requirements associated with resource conditions, objectives, and standards in forest plans.
- Continued to establish baseline and long-term trends for an expanded suite of nationally significant monitoring indicators of forest and rangeland health.
- Conducted several thousand survey days of national visitor use monitoring.

The factors affecting the agency's progress in FY 2004 include the following challenges:

- Increased costs associated with monitoring and evaluation.
- Uncertainty over future monitoring and evaluation requirements contained in the New Planning Rule.

Research and Development's Results in Contributing to Mission-Related Work

The Forest Service led a multiagency effort to produce the *National Report on Sustainable Forests—2003*, providing analysis of the condition of forests in the United States using the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management. This report identifies data gaps and offers recommendations for the state-of-the-art analyses needed for sustainable forest management. The report and its supporting document,

Data Report—A Supplement to the National Report on Sustainable Forests – 2003 are available online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/research/sustain/>.

For more information on the Montreal Process and sustainable forest management, visit <http://www.mpci.org>.)

Forest Service researchers reached out to small business owners in an effort to promote the local use of small diameter lumber, removing it from fire-prone forests. Cooperating with Evergreen Magazine, the Forest Service hosted a series of entrepreneur workshops and tours in January and March of 2004, with approximately 20 small business owners and industry associations from the West in attendance.

Research scientists designed several treatments to inhibit common mold fungi on cellulose-based building materials.

Eastern Region Reaches Out in Detroit, Michigan

The Forest Service's Eastern Region expanded its community outreach efforts this fiscal year with a commencement meeting to introduce a new urban connections partnership with the city of Detroit. Objectives for this new urban partnership between the Forest Service and the urban communities of Detroit, MI, included outreach and recruitment strategies for urban youth to expose them to higher education opportunities in natural sciences, the availability of community workshops to teach new skills, and the promotion of the newly formed Summer Reading Program in which approximately 1,600 city youth participated in the first year.

Urban Connections Program Manager Daryl Pridgen provided the program details and contact information. As a student at Wayne State Community College and a Student Conservation Association Diversity Program Intern with the Forest Service, DeAndre Oliver served as an example of the many opportunities available through this urban partnership. Oliver was a liaison between Urban Connections and three Michigan National Forests (Ottawa, Hiawatha, and Huron-Manistee) this summer. This type of liaison experience, coupled with higher education, will give urban youth and typically underrepresented students an opportunity to consider a career in the natural sciences field.

For more information on other Eastern Region activities, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9>.



(L to R) Shirley Parker, Lurine Carter, and Daryl Pridgen are the primary facilitators for the Forest Service Urban Connections partnership in Detroit, Michigan.

Flames Improve Habitat for Endangered Mountain Plover

Employees of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland, along with other fire personnel, burned 5,500 acres in April 2004. The purpose of this prescribed burn was to improve the nesting habitat of the mountain plover, a threatened bird species. The Colorado Division of Wildlife contributed a portion of the funding to the effort, and U.S. Geological Survey biologist Fritz Knopf conducted the plover-response monitoring. This project also safely reintroduced fire into the short grass prairie ecosystem.

For more information on Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest activities, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/arnf>.



Mountain plover guarding nest. Photo by Fritz Knopf.

Telling Fire Stories: Conservation Education in Northern Arizona

In 2004, fire was the theme for several Forest Service conservation education efforts in northern Arizona. Public understanding is critical to the effective management of wildland fire and fuels treatments.

Kaibab National Forest representatives visited classes in Williams, AZ, in spring 2004 and delivered programs from their newly developed curriculum that is both age-appropriate and aligned with State academic standards. Kindergartners learned about “Good Fires, Bad Fires” while fifth-graders experienced “What It Takes To Be a Wildland Firefighter.” High school students gained insight into the “Science of Firefighting.”

The Coconino National Forest Conservation Educator teamed up with a Student Conservation Association Fire Educator in summer 2004 to reach out to youth groups. Northern Arizona University’s (NAU’s) Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals in Flagstaff hosted “Summer Scholars” for Native American students and teachers from middle and high schools in the Four Corners region. Outings hosted by the Fire Education team included visiting the site of a 1977 wildfire and lookout tower. Discussions included the “Story of the Radio Fire,” fire behavior triangles, and prescribed fire. The conservation professionals also shared educational presentations with NAU’s Junior Forester Academy and a summer youth camp.

To learn more about fire danger on the Kaibab National Forest, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/kai>.



Jackie Denk of the Kaibab National Forest enlists interest from Williams, Arizona, third graders.



Sharon Waltrip, a Forest Service employee, demonstrates the fire triangle to Williams, Arizona, students.

Other Executive Priorities

NEPA Decisions for Grazing Allotments

One of the Forest Service's Executive Priorities is not a performance measure in the Strategic Plan. It is an Executive Priority, however, because the agency is committed to delivering NEPA-based grazing allotment decisions in accordance with the schedule provided to Congress in response to Public Law 104-19, Section 504. Since it reflects a high level of accountability to Congress and our stakeholders, it is reported in this P&AR. Guidelines to streamline the process of allotment planning, NEPA work, and the final decisionmaking were revised and released to the field March 2004.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Grazing allotments analyzed with decisions signed (NEPA)	368	472	128%

Strategies, Resources, and Underlying Factors

For FY 2004, the Forest Service planned NEPA analysis for 368 allotments, with a final decision on grazing allotment management. The accomplishment was projected to be **472 signed decisions**, which was **128 percent** of the target.

Program Assessment Rating Tool

OMB's Recommendations and Forest Service's Actions Taken in FY 2004

OMB is assessing the effectiveness of Federal programs using the PART. Agencies complete these prior to budget formulation so FY 2006 PART assessments are actually completed in FY 2004.

The following section lists OMB recommendations, Forest Service actions toward resolving those recommendations, and milestones for the future.

Invasive Species Strategy—FY 2006

OMB conducted a PART on the Forest Service's Invasive Species Strategy across three deputy areas—NFS, R&D, and State and Private Forestry (S&PF). OMB's findings for this assessment were rated as "Results Not Demonstrated" for this newly created strategy.

OMB determined that the Forest Service did incorporate the complex issue of invasive species into its Strategic Plan, with a supporting national strategy and implementation plan to address this issue. But the Forest Service did not articulate whether a scientific or policy basis was used to:

- Determine if the selected species measured, i.e., gypsy moth, is a valid subset by which to measure the total invasive species population and impacts.
- Include species within the plant kingdom, particularly Division Magnoliophyta (the flowering plants).
- Provide for the measurement of the environmental and economic effects of treatments.

Recommendations and Actions

Recommendation	Action Taken and Milestones
<i>Need to develop national programmatic priorities</i>	<p>The Strategic Plan addressed invasive species nationwide through Goal 2.</p> <p>The Forest Service will integrate invasive species efforts across USDA to minimize redundancy and maximize financial effectiveness by February 15, 2005.</p> <p>The Forest Service National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Invasive Species Management provided the means to use limited resources at all organizational levels to prioritize problem areas, collaborate on the solutions, and improve the accountability for the results. The agency will begin implementation of the national strategy at the field, regional, and national levels by March 31, 2005.</p>

Recommendation	Action Taken and Milestones
<i>Need to develop meaningful outcome-based performance measures</i>	<p>The national strategy defined four program elements for the Invasive Species Program: Prevention; Early Detection and Rapid Response; Control and Management; Rehabilitation and Restoration.</p> <p>By March 31, 2005, the Forest Service will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the scientific or policy basis that will be applied to evaluate whether a selected species measured is a valid subset to measure the total invasive species population and their impacts. • Develop an outcome-based measurement of species within the plant kingdom, particularly Division Magnoliophyta. • Develop measurements of the environmental or economic effects of treatments (efficiency measures). • Improve the capability to measure performance-based effectiveness within each program element of the National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Invasive Species Management and to better address OMB recommendations.
<i>Need to provide complete financial obligation and expenditure data to be evaluated accurately</i>	<p>Grantees (States and localities) will establish their own program priorities and meet the criteria for effective financial management by March 31, 2005.</p>

Forest Legacy Program—FY 2005

The FLP was designed to identify and protect environmentally important private forest lands that are threatened by conversion to nonforest uses. Land is acquired to protect important scenic, cultural, fish, wildlife, and recreation resources; riparian areas; and other ecological values using conservation easements and full fee purchase. Both purchase and donation are used to acquire forest land meeting FLP purposes from willing sellers or donors only.

Recommendations and Actions

Recommendation	Action Taken and Milestones
<i>Need to develop national programmatic priorities</i>	<p>The Forest Service initiated an effectiveness study in November 2003 to assess progress FLP has made in meeting the broad array of various State goals over the last 10 years. The milestone date for completion is December 1, 2004.</p> <p>States establish priorities in the State Assessment of Need (AON) Plans. Each AON follows national program guidelines and provides focus on areas for protection based on local analysis of the threats for conversion to nonforest users while supporting long-term program goals with specific emphasis on critical watershed stabilization and protection.</p> <p>The agency initiated development of FLP focus on private forestry to prioritize watersheds nationwide requiring support. Milestone date is January 30, 2005.</p>
<i>Need to develop meaningful outcome based performance measures</i>	<p>Goal 6 of the Strategic Plan included the performance measure: "Acres of land adjustments to conserve the integrity of undeveloped lands and habitat quality."</p> <p>This measure is also one of the Forest Service Executive Priorities and a key performance measure in FY 2004 for Senior Executives and supervisory GS-14s and GS-15s.</p> <p>The agency will implement output, outcome, demand, and efficiency measures in the Performance Accountability System (PAS), with a milestone date of January 30, 2006.</p>
<i>Need to provide complete financial obligation and expenditure data to be evaluated accurately</i>	<p>The FY 2004 financial audit of Forest Service will assess whether the agency met this recommendation.</p> <p>The Forest Service developed an appraisal and appraisal review policy and service.</p> <p>States approve projects based on selection criteria established in their AONs, and then projects are funded and obligations tracked on a State, regional, and national level.</p>

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Acres of land adjustments to conserve the integrity of undeveloped lands and habitat quality. This measure is the sum of the following three measures:	699,461	640,481	92%
Acres adjusted to conserve the integrity of undeveloped lands and habitat quality	341,536	54,896	16%
Acres acquired to conserve the integrity of undeveloped lands and habitat quality	57,925	50,954	88%
Acres protected by the FLP to conserve the integrity of undeveloped lands and habitat quality	300,000	534,632	178%

As a result of the PARTs for FLP and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) Program, which follows, the Forest Service adapted its Executive Priorities for performance reporting.

FLP underwent a PART reassessment during FY 2004 for the FY 2006 budget cycle. All changes proposed to the program were accepted by OMB, particularly new efficiency measures, with a resulting programmatic assessment (score) improvement.

Land Acquisition—FY 2005

The L&WCF Program acquires lands that meet certain criteria, including:

- Enhance goods and services.
- Protect and improve the quality of renewable and historic, cultural, and natural resources.
- Provide recreation.
- Improve administrative efficiency and effectiveness of NFS lands.

The L&WCF program is commonly implemented through partnerships between the Forest Service and other governments, private landowners, and nongovernmental organizations. Guidance in the Forest Service Directive System reflects preference for projects that are characterized by local support and input from other resource areas within the agency.

Recommendations and Actions

Recommendation	Action Taken and Milestones
<i>Need to establish either annual performance measures or how the addition of land acquisitions advances in a measurable way to agency strategic plan milestones</i>	<p>The Strategic Plan included an annual performance measure that links to the performance of the Land Acquisition Program: “Acres of land adjustments to conserve the integrity of undeveloped lands and habitat quality.”</p> <p>This measure is also one of the Forest Service Executive Priorities and a key performance measure in FY 2004 for Senior Executives and supervisory GS-14s and GS-15s.</p>
<i>The program needs to meet its annual acquisition targets</i>	<p>In FY 2002, the program acquired only 63 percent of the planned amount of acreage due to transfer of program funds (wildland fires). In FY 2003, the program acquired 75,476 acres for 114 percent accomplishment.</p> <p>In FY 2004, the planned amount of acres transferred was 57,925. By September 30, 2004, the projected total for the year is 50,954 acres.</p>
<i>Need to implement L&WCF program unit cost comparisons as an efficiency measure and explore other potentially beneficial measures</i>	<p>The LAPS program is under use on the regional level.</p> <p>An efficiency measure—cost per acre acquired—will be implemented for the Land Acquisition Program in PAS, with a milestone date of September 30, 2005.</p> <p>Currently cost information is not collected for individual projects. Tracking by project will require additional tools not yet developed.</p>

Wildland Fire Management—FY 2004

The Forest Service faces the challenge of managing wildland fire within its natural place on the Nation’s landscape, while reducing the risk of catastrophic loss to the Nation’s rural communities and watersheds. The Wildland Fire Management Program consists of five major activities: fire preparedness, fire suppression, hazardous fuels reduction, burned area rehabilitation, and State and community fire assistance.

This program underwent a PART assessment in 2002, as part of the Forest Service’s FY 2004 budget formulation process, with an overall rating of “*Results Not Demonstrated.*” Specifically, while the program had a clear purpose and design, it contained deficiencies in strategic planning, financial management, and performance evaluation. OMB’s findings and the Forest Service’s remedial actions are listed below.

Recommendations and Actions

Recommendation	Action Taken and Milestones
<i>Develop a real time obligation system to improve the accountability of firefighting costs and accuracy of wildland fire obligations</i>	<p>Forest Service now requires fiscal staff at fire incidents to enter accrual data into the Federal Financial Information System within 72 hours after the start of the incident and update the information at least every 24 hours.</p> <p>Also, the agency continues to test an automated incident accrual entry system to further increase the timeliness of incident accrual reporting, ensuring obligations are tracked efficiently and accurately. Testing occurred during summer 2003 and 2004 fire incidents. Milestone date was September 30, 2004, milestone.</p>
<i>Improve accountability for firefighting costs</i>	<p>In 2003, the Forest Service issued the Chief’s Incident Accountability Report Action Plan. The plan created standard suppression cost review teams and assigned accountability and due dates to implement initiatives designed reduce suppression costs.</p> <p>The agency will continue ongoing implementation of strategies to minimize costs without compromising safety.</p> <p>The Fire and Aviation Management Staff issued an Operating Action Plan for 2003 and 2004, assigning accountability for suppression costs to line officers.</p>
<i>Ensure that States pay their fair share of firefighting costs</i>	<p>Some progress was made in Region 5, as the agency continued to work with the NASF to determine and refine criteria regarding fair share. An interagency group, working with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group and State, and local governments, is charged with developing cost responsibility matrices. Milestone date was September 30.</p>

Recommendation	Action Taken and Milestones
<i>Develop a new fire preparedness model that focuses on efficient allocation of available resources</i>	<p>The agency is collaborating with Department of the Interior on the development of the new preparedness model—FirePlan.</p> <p>Expected completion dates:</p> <p>Phase 1A of FPA was September 30, 2004.</p> <p>Phase 1B of FPA is December 30, 2004.</p> <p>Phase 1C of FPA is March 30, 2005.</p> <p>Phase 2 of FPA is September 30, 2008.</p>
<i>Establish project criteria consistent with the 10-Year Implementation Strategy to ensure that hazardous fuel reduction funds are targeted as effectively as possible to reduce risks to communities in the WUI</i>	<p>The Forest Service and the Department of the Interior are developing a national protocol to ensure that fuel reduction projects are strategically placed on the landscape to better mitigate the effects of catastrophic fires. Agencies are also developing a common performance measure to better measure the area influenced by fuel reduction activities.</p>

Through the budget-development process for FY 2006, the Wildland Fire Management Program underwent a PART reassessment in April 2004. The reassessment demonstrated that, based on the recommendations from the 2 years earlier, changes had occurred in the Wildland Fire Management Program, including:

- Developed new performance measures in the Strategic Plan, which are linked to the 10-year Comprehensive Strategy and Implementation Plan.
- Established hazardous fuels reduction goals that provide the key linkage to the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.

As a result of the PART for the Wildland Fire Management Program, the Forest Service adapted its Executive Priorities for performance reporting.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Number of acres of hazardous fuels treated with Direct Hazardous Fuels dollars that are in the WUI	1,016,759	1,294,598	127%
Number of acres of hazardous fuels treated with Other (NOT Direct Hazardous Fuels) dollars that are in the WUI	292,720	313,770	107%
Percent of acres of hazardous fuels treated that are in the WUI that are identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the NFP 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and Implementation Plan	100%	100%	100%
Number of acres treated with Direct Hazardous Fuels dollars that are in Condition Classes 2 or 3 in Fire Regimes 1, 2, or 3 outside the WUI	590,876	398,319	67%
Number of acres treated with Other (NOT Direct Hazardous Fuels) dollars that are in Condition Classes 2 or 3 in Fire Regimes 1, 2, or 3 outside the WUI	317,084	253,114	80%
Percent of acres of hazardous fuels treated that are in Condition Class 2 or 3 in Fire Regimes 1, 2, or 3 outside the WUI that are identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the NFP 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and Implementation Plan	100%	100%	100%
Number of acres brought into stewardship contracts	90,000 ⁴	29,711	New Baseline

⁴Planned performance for this measure was adjusted to 55,000 acres based on mid-year reviews, but the correction was not made to the master database for performance reporting data. As a new measure, the projected results will serve as a new baseline.

National Forest Capital Improvement and Maintenance—FY 2004

The purpose of the Capital Improvement and Maintenance Program is to improve, maintain, and operate facilities, roads, trails, and infrastructures to facilitate recreation, research, fire, administrative, and other uses on Forest Service lands.

Recommendations and Actions

Recommendation	Action Taken and Milestones
<i>Establish a more coherent prioritization process</i>	<p>Beginning with the FY 2006 projects, the agency will use a national screening criteria to select the projects and to highlight the connection between project proposals and the strategic goals. The criteria will be reflected in the agency priority project lists with emphasis on reducing the deferred maintenance backlog and facility rehabilitation.</p> <p>To ensure that projects can be initiated immediately upon receipt of funding, the agency will define the business practices and critical milestones used to screen projects prior to their inclusion in the proposal to Congress. Milestone date is January 15, 2005.</p>
<i>Improve annual performance measures</i>	<p>The agency will implement new measures—demand, efficiency, output and outcome—for each business activity in PAS. Milestone date is November 1, 2004.</p> <p>The Executive Leadership Team will use these performance measures to base programmatic allocation decisions in accomplishing the strategic goals. Milestone date is April 15, 2005.</p>
<i>Increase incentives aimed at decommissioning obsolete and underutilized infrastructure</i>	<p>The Forest Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed Facility Master Plans (FMP) for every unit to identify future use of all buildings. Buildings that are unneeded or cannot be maintained in the future will be identified for disposal.• Completed Road Analysis Process (RAP) to identify road standards, roads to close or decommission, and future road needs for all national forests.• Completed Recreation Site Facility Master Plans (RSFMP) for Region 8. Other regions are nearing completion. These plans enable the Forest Service to build and retain only the number of developed sites that can be sustained. Decisions to abandon sites and change capital improvement priorities based on this effort are ongoing.• Began reviewing long-term solutions toward infrastructure reduction and cost offsets using temporary conveyance authority. The agency will select FY 2005 pilot conveyance projects by June 15, 2005, if authorization for pilot program is continued.• Provided monthly infrastructure data reports to the field units, which have been implemented as an accountability tool. The agency will continue to improve data quality.

Recommendation	Action Taken and Milestones
<i>Financial Management still needs improvement as the Forest Service has had difficulty collecting timely, reliable, and complete financial data on its physical assets</i>	<p>The Forest Service shared monthly reports of Infrastructure data with field units as an accountability item. The agency will continue to improve data quality.</p> <p>WorkPlan enhancement will collect accomplishments for 9-month actual and 3-month estimated FY 2004 performance.</p>
<i>The program has significant deferred maintenance backlog (estimated at \$13 billion) and the Forest Service has been unable to demonstrate that it can maintain its current infrastructure needs</i>	<p>The Forest Service slowed the growth of the deferred maintenance backlog through conveyance authorities and the infrastructure planning documents—FMP, RAP, RSFMP.</p> <p>Through the FMP, RAP, and RSFMP processes, the Forest Service continues to identify for decommissioning any infrastructure that no longer contributes to the accomplishment of its mission.</p> <p>The agency uses RSFMP to prioritize facilities for closure, when resources are not available to operate that facility to standard.</p>

As a result of the PART for the C&IM Program, the Forest Service adapted its Executive Priorities for performance reporting.

Performance Measure	Planned	Projected	Result
Miles of trail maintained to standard	19,630	22,657	115%
Percent of trail maintained to standard	15%	17%	115%
Number of facilities maintained to standard	15,465	19,743	128%
Percent of facilities maintained to standard	38.5%	49.2%	128%
Number of ROW acquired to provide public access	244	215	88%
Miles of road maintained to standard (high-clearance and passenger)	54,800	64,866	118%
Percent of road maintained to standard (high-clearance and passenger)	18%	22%	118%

Program Evaluations

The following definitions are used by USDA and the Forest Service in their followup to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) recommendations.

Definitions	
Audit Followup	A process used to ensure prompt and responsive action is taken once management decision has been reached on recommendations contained in final audit reports.
DC	A disallowed cost is a questioned cost that management sustains or agrees is not chargeable to the Government.
FTBU	Funds to be put to better use (FTBU) are funds that OIG has recommended could be used more efficiently if management took the following actions to implement and complete the recommendation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reductions in outlays.• A deobligation of funds from programs or operations.• A withdrawal of interest subsidy costs on loans or loan guarantees, insurance, or bonds.• Costs not incurred by implementing recommended improvements related to the operations of the establishment, a contractor, or grantee.• An avoidance of unnecessary expenditures noted in preaward reviews of contract or grant agreements.• Any other savings, which are specifically identified.
Management Decision	Management's evaluation of the audit findings and recommendations and the issuance of a final decision by management concerning its response to the findings and recommendations, including necessary actions and an estimated completion date.
Outstanding Audits or Audit Recommendations	Audits and audit recommendations remaining unresolved 1 year or more past the management decision date. Reportable Audit Audits with management decision but without final action 1 or more years past the management decision date.
Reportable Audit	Audits with management decision but without final action 1 or more years past the management decision date.

Outstanding OIG Audits

The Forest Service continues to make progress towards closing its outstanding OIG audits. During FY 2004, the agency was successful in closing 14 outstanding audits. Twelve of the closed audits were carryovers from FY 2003. Many of the audits were old. Currently, there are 21 outstanding audits, representing 129 open audit recommendations. Note that 81 of the 129 open audit recommendations were added to the inventory in 2004. See below for a listing of the outstanding audits and the status regarding their closure.

Explanations for OIG Audits Behind Schedule				
Audit Number	Audit Title	Date Issued	Estimated Completion Date	FTBU (\$)
Pending system development, implementation, or enhancement				
08001-1-HQ	Forest Service's Implementation of the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA)	6/28/2000	3/31/05	—
08401-1-FM	FY 2002 Financial Statement Audit	1/9/2003	06/30/05	—
Pending issuance of policy/guidance				
08001-2-HQ	Review of Forest Service Security Over Aircraft and Aircraft Facilities	3/29/2002	04/30/05	—
08002-2-SF	Valuation of Lands Acquired in Congressionally Designated Areas	11/28/2000	12/31/04	—
08003-2-SF	Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Land Adjustment Program	8/5/1998	12/31/04	27,900,000
08099-6-SF	Security Over USDA IT Resources	3/27/2001	03/31/05	—
08099-42-AT	FY 1992 Financial Statement Audit	11/16/1993	10/29/04	—
08401-12-AT	FY 2001 Financial Statement Audit	8/12/2002	12/31/04	—
08601-27-SF	National Land Ownership Adjustment Team	3/28/2002	12/31/04	—
08601-30-SF	Review of Security Over Explosives/Munitions Magazines located within the NFS	3/31/2003	12/31/04	—
08801-3-AT	Real and Personal Property Issues	5/18/2001	12/31/04	—
08801-6-SF	Forest Service Land Adjustment Program San Bernardino National Forest and South Zone	1/19/2000	12/31/04	—
Pending receipt and/or processing of final action documentation				
08003-5-SF	Land Acquisition and Urban Lot Management	12/15/2000	12/31/04	10,329,300
08401-4-AT	FY 1995 Financial Statement Audit	5/18/2001	12/31/04	—
08401-7-AT	FY 1997 Financial Statement Audit	5/18/2001	12/31/04	—
08401-11-AT	FY 2000 Financial Statement Audit	5/4/2001	12/31/04	—
08601-1-AT	Hazardous Waste at Active and Abandoned Mines	9/15/1996	10/29/04	—
08601-25-SF	Working Capital Fund Enterprise Program	8/29/2001	6/30/05	2,600,000
08801-2-TE	Forest Service Assistance Agreements with Nonprofit Organizations	9/24/1998	12/31/04	1,314,422
50099-13-AT	Oversight and Security of Biological Agents at Laboratories Operated by USDA	3/29/2003	12/31/04	—
Pending contract appeal				
08017-11-KC	Omni Development Corporation Claim to Department of Agriculture	7/11/2002	6/30/05	2,049,653

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks

The following are the planned actions to address management challenges and program risks identified by OIG.

Department-wide Challenge	Planned Actions for Addressing the Challenges
<p><i>Financial Management— Improvements Made but Additional Actions Still Needed</i></p>	<p>The Forest Service will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate material weaknesses/reportable conditions and obtain an unqualified opinion on the FY 2004 and FY 2005 Financial Statements.
<p>President's Management Agenda</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate Financial Management Improvement Process to standardize and centralize the Forest Service's Budget and Finance (B&F) processes through a business process reengineering. • Migrate the redesigned B&F processes to the centralized Albuquerque Service Center (ASC) in Albuquerque, NM, beginning January 2005. • Publish all remaining financial management policy and procedures updates by June 30, 2005. • Continue focus on data quality improvement, the resolution of abnormal balances, and verification of general ledger account relationships at the Treasury Symbol level.
<p><i>A Strong Internal Control Structure is Paramount to the Delivery of Forest Service Programs</i></p>	<p>The Forest Service will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a national schedule of internal program reviews for FY 2005 and 2006 that ensures high-priority agency-wide issues are addressed.
<p>USDA Strategic Objective 5.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct comprehensive risk assessment for Forest Service programs and develop plans to address identified risks. • Provide consolidated report of review findings to Forest Service management by July 31, 2005 and 2006, and develop process to monitor actions to address "significant" review findings. • Conduct annual reviews/analyses to ensure funding is spent as intended for higher priority agency programs (e.g., NFP, fire rehabilitation program). • Continue making progress towards implementing the agency-wide, comprehensive, PAS; thereby, improving implementation of GPRA in the Forest Service. • Develop procedures within the existing acquisition management review process to readily address new, higher priority, issues identified via internal and external reviews/audits in the "Procurement" and "Grants and Agreements" arena.

Other Assessments and Reviews

Risk Assessment of Pesticide Toxicology

The Forest Service uses pesticide risk assessments to provide an estimate of the potential exposure and chance of resulting injury (considering human health and impact on other nontarget species) from a proposed pesticide use. This permits an informed, scientifically defensible basis for decisionmaking as to which chemical control to select, as well as the most favorable conditions of use.

In FY 2004, 15 risk assessments were finalized or near completion.

These were either new efforts or updates of earlier assessments and were primarily in support of the gypsy moth and the Region 6 Invasive Plants Control Programs. For the gypsy moth, four chemical agents and two biocontrol agents were assessed, and seven herbicides were assessed for the Region 6 programs. These efforts also supported risk reduction efforts from forest fires.

Risk assessment projects on-going into FY 2005 include:

- Finalizing the borax fungicide risk assessment.
- Continuing assessment of ethoxylated nonyl phenol surfactants.

Two planned risk assessments are imidoclorprid (insecticide for hemlock woolly adelgid) and oxyfluorfen herbicide.

A risk assessment workshop will be offered in Mesa, AZ, for FHP staff and other interested parties in November 2004.

Go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/pesticide/risk.shtml> for more information on pesticide risk assessments.

To read regional and national reports on pesticide usage, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/pesticide/reports.shtml>.

Hazardous Fuels and Restoration of Fire-adapted Ecosystems

USDA is evaluating the integration of the Forest Service's Hazardous Fuels Program with other vegetation management programs on national forest lands through a national integrated review on implementation of regions' 5-year strategies for hazardous fuels and restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems. As of September 30, preliminary findings were in review.

The Government Accountability Office is auditing USDA programs on the uses of biomass. While not directly evaluating USDA's hazardous fuel treatment programs, the use of woody biomass (Job # 360489) as a raw material for energy or forest product production is a guiding principle of the 10-year Comprehensive Strategy, a focus of the President's Healthy Forest Initiative. This audit is in progress and has an estimated completion date of May 30, 2005.

