



Government Performance Results Act (GPRA), BLM/FS/NRCS Strategic Plans, and the Interagency Strategy for Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration and Management

The intent of the GPRA is to provide for the establishment of strategic planning and performance measurement to improve the confidence of the American people in the capability of the Federal Government, by systematically holding Federal agencies accountable for achieving program results. This involves the development of agency strategic plans which contain a comprehensive mission statement, general goals and objectives, and a description of how goals and objectives are to be achieved.

The GPRA also requires development and submission of performance plans and reports. Established performance goals are to be expressed in an objective, measurable form, along with describing the processes, skills, technology, human, financial, and other resources required. Performance indicators are to be used in measuring or assessing relevant outputs, service levels, and outcomes, providing a basis for comparing actual program results with established performance goals.

Tiering from the DOI and USDA (Natural Resources and Environment) strategies, the BLM, FS, and NRCS have developed strategic plans according to the above criteria. All three plans represent an integration of agency programs, requiring new ways of evaluating progress across social, economic, and natural resource systems. Each plan illustrates a renewed focus on results, quality service, and customer satisfaction. In order to improve accountability with stakeholders and the American public, effective articulation of program goals and performance is necessary. Linked to strategic goals, and the more specific objectives tied to those goals, performance is measured in terms of **outputs** (*activities or efforts*, tabulated or recorded in quantitative or qualitative manner) and **outcomes** (the *results* of an activity compared to its intended purpose).

Upon examination of the 3 agency's strategic plans, common themes emerge beginning with the mission statements and extending through the goals and objectives. Paramount is the focus on a healthy, diverse, and productive land base, both public and private, the essence of which is sustainable systems for present and future generations. Woven throughout is the relationship of people and the land - one of interdependence and harmony. Illustrated is recognition of the importance of strong collaborative partnerships in the creation of a shared vision for natural resource conservation. Expectations involve working effectively and efficiently to provide multiple benefits for people within the capabilities of ecosystems. Agencies are actively seeking ways to leverage interests and resources, sharing skills and information. Budgets and processes are becoming aligned with missions. Management initiatives reflect the direction of the National Performance Review (NPR) under Reinvention which emphasizes a back to basics approach, cutting red tape, putting customers first, and empowering employees to get results.

The Interagency Strategy for Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration and Management outlines one approach the BLM, FS, and NRCS are employing to achieve the desired outcomes stated in the agency's goals and objectives. It is founded on the recognition that environmental and economic well-being is

dependent on sustaining these systems. Because these systems often pass through or are shared by numerous landowners, a collaborative approach applied at the ground level is necessary for success. It is a common sense approach, promoting a common language, in an effort to create a shared vision. Focus is on identifying those opportunities where there is a high probability for positive change with a reasonable investment. It is designed to compliment and blend with ongoing efforts in all three agencies, advancing consistency and efficiency. Most importantly, this approach is designed to target and address the major barrier to achieving healthy riparian systems - the polarity created by strongly held values and interests.

A diverse network of people are advancing the goals of **achieving riparian restoration through collaboration and reducing process**. They act as a catalyst to encourage relationships, build trust, and create a common vision, serving a broad, internal and external customer base. The extensive outreach and interaction is helping to increase understanding and foster agreement while providing opportunities for integrating knowledge and sharing expertise.

Outputs are illustrated through accomplishments in three major areas:

- training and information sharing
- consulting and advisory services
- review and evaluation services

Outcomes, or the results of the activities accomplished, are expressed in terms of the steps necessary for implementing management practices that ensure restoration and maintenance of riparian health:

People of diverse values coming together and reaching agreement through:

- establishment and use of common terms and definitions
- focusing on physical function as a common first step for riparian assessment
- recognizing the importance of considering riparian areas in a watershed context
- understanding the attributes that constitute sustainable riparian systems

The ultimate outcome will be a measure of the physical and biological indicators of riparian health, in both a spacial and temporal context. In the interim, it is important to evaluate the manner and extent to which a program is achieving intended objectives. It is an ongoing effort to assess the effectiveness of the outputs in meeting the aligned goals of this approach and those outlined in BLM/FS/NRCS strategic plans.