

RAC PROJECT REPORT
RED RIVER ECOSYSTEM ANALYSIS AT THE WATERSHED SCALE (EAWS)
FY 2003

An EAWS was completed for the Red River watershed in April 2003. The Red River EAWS characterizes the human, aquatic, riparian, and terrestrial features, conditions, processes, and interactions within the watershed. The purpose of the EAWS is to help us understand the system prior to management activities. It is a stage-setting process that will aid in subsequent decision making processes, including project- and Forest-level planning. The Red River EAWS identifies opportunities for management and makes recommendations for improving landscape structure and composition in the drainage. It prioritizes activities and projects to move the Red River watershed towards a more ecologically sustainable condition.



Red River is approximately 103,348 acres in size. Red River is a tributary to the South Fork of the Clearwater River. Red River is considered a stronghold for the four listed fish species, Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout. The unique aquatic potential of the watershed makes it an important ecosystem to restore as there has been a large amount of past activity in this watershed (e.g., harvest, road building, mining).

The RAC contributed \$38,400 towards funding a Fisheries Biologist to aid in the aquatic analysis for the Red River EAWS. One of the products from this effort is a robust watershed improvement package that describes recommendations to improve the area streams and riparian areas.

The Forest is currently working on the Red Pines project, a fuel hazard reduction project being analyzed under an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The purpose and need for this project was directly derived from the EAWS. The current and historic condition descriptions needed in the EIS will come from the EAWS. The watershed improvement package, mentioned above, needed to meet Forest Plan requirements for upward trend, came directly from the EAWS. This has greatly facilitated the Red Pines analysis. An EIS typically requires a minimum of 18 months to complete. The Red Pines EIS will be completed in a years' time, mostly due to having a substantial amount of the needed information readily available in the EAWS.