

FOREST PLAN

MONITORING REPORT

Fiscal Year 1997



**Pike and San Isabel National Forests
Cimarron and Comanche
National Grasslands**

This Monitoring Report assesses implementation of the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Pike and San Isabel National Forests and the Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands (the PSICC Forest Plan), which was approved in September, 1984. Monitoring requirements for PSICC are listed in Chapter IV of the Plan. The items listed therein are reviewed in this report.

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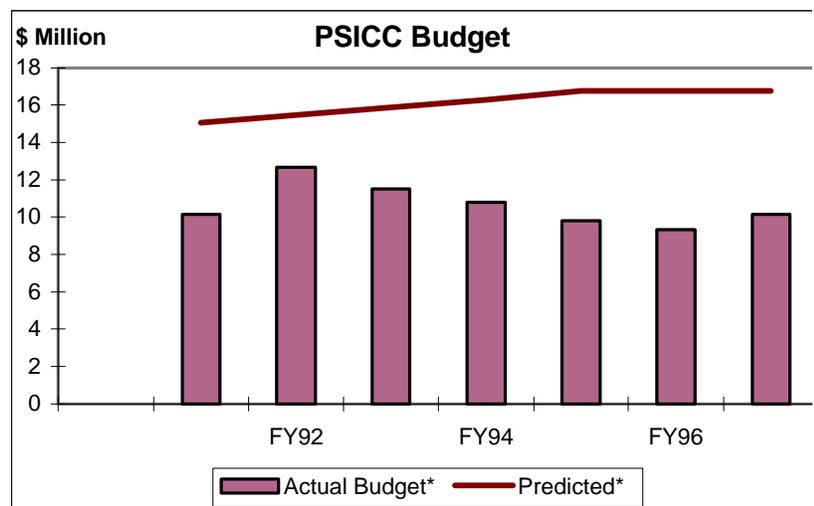
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INTRODUCTION

PSICC includes 2.8 million acres of public lands, consisting of the Pike National Forest, San Isabel National Forest, Comanche National Grassland, and Cimarron National Grassland. These units are located in central and southeastern Colorado, and in southwestern Kansas. Management of PSICC is highly complex because its units span a variety of ecosystems, social settings, and economic spheres. Additionally, management of PSICC must be integrated with the needs of two state governments and 17 counties.

The PSICC Forest Plan was developed with a focus on the needs of the resources being managed and the desires of the various publics being served. Predicted rates of accomplishment were assumed to be commensurate with the needs identified. As is apparent in many of the following

sections, implementation has not kept pace with predicted rates. The accompanying chart shows a comparison of predicted budgets with funds actually received for National Forest operations and construction. The discrepancy is striking, and future projections are not expected to show improvement. *The budget figures in the chart exclude fire and trust fund dollars, because they are extremely variable and are outside of the constrained budget for National Forest operations and maintenance.



PSICC has worked hard to compensate for declining budgets by aggressively forming partnerships with others who are interested in the management of public lands, and by managing its workforce to minimize permanent salary obligations. But even with these efforts, for the most part it is simply impossible to operate at the levels envisioned in the Forest Plan without additional funding. The Plan's goals are being pursued, but specific objectives are not being achieved at the expected rate.

A note on terminology: Various charts appear in the following pages. The following terms variously appear in the legends of those charts:

Objective - Forest Plan objective

Prediction - Predicted in EIS associated with Forest Plan

AUM - Animal Unit Month, describes grazing outputs (1AUM=1cow for 1month).

FY97 - the federal Fiscal Year is from October 1, 1996 - September 30, 1997

MRVD - Thousand Recreation Visitor-Days, used to describe visitation (1 day = 12 hrs).

MPAOT - Thousand Persons At One Time, used to describe campground capacity.

(1 campsite = 5 paot's).

MMBF - Million Board-Feet, used for describing timber program outputs

(1 Board Foot = a square 1 foot x 1foot x 1inch).

A note on data gaps: Some of the charts on the following pages may appear to indicate no outputs where some would be expected. These are typically data gaps, caused by changing reporting procedures which complicated the compilation of data for this report.

PHYSICAL COMPONENTS

Soil and Water Resources

The soil resource program is concerned with the development of technical soils information for resource management and planning to manage soils for sustained productivity as specifically identified in the National Forest Management Act (NFMA). Most planned activities related to Forest Plan implementation require the direct application of interpretative information to provide advice regarding the soil resource and its response to use and management. The monitoring of the soil resource program can be divided into three major functions, which are 1. soil inventory, 2. soil and water improvement, and 3. soil monitoring.

Soil Inventory

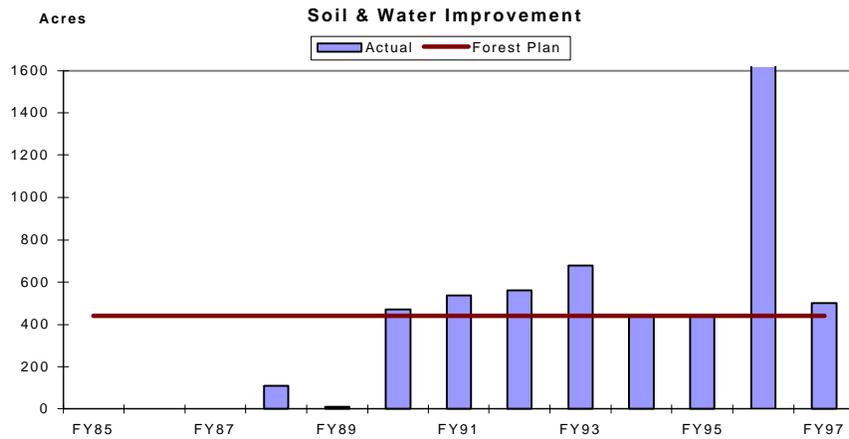
Soil inventory is recognized as a prerequisite to land management planning and implementation. Baseline data collection is a fundamental requirement to support the resource management mandates identified in NFMA and the Forest Plan. Modern soil inventories use an integrated approach to describe and map biotic and abiotic features consisting of geology, landforms, climate, vegetation, and soils. Soil surveys for the PSICC have been made by the Forest Service in cooperation with other federal and state agencies. There are a total of 8 major survey areas on the PSICC. Each area differs in quality of mapping, interpretations available and status. Three of the survey areas have modern published surveys. During the past five years the PSICC has completed the remaining mapping and draft manuscripts and interpretations for the remaining five survey areas. The status of each survey area is given below.

Soil and Water Improvement Program

The future use of our Federal lands depends upon the protection and maintenance of our soil and water resources. Improving the conditions of watersheds is important for maintaining the long term health of our forests and grasslands. The PSICC Forest Plan direction includes improvement of 440 treated or 1200 affected acres each year. The graph below represents the treated acres. The PSICC have implemented over 400 soil and water improvement projects since the signing of the current Forest Plan in 1984. These improvements have led to more than 6000 acres of treated or improved land. In addition, burned area treatments have resulted in an additional 7000 acres of treated lands. The goals of the program are to identify watershed condition, prescribe and implement land treatments and in some cases to modify land management to:

1. protect life and property
2. protect and improve water quality consistent with the Clean Water Act
3. reduce damaging erosion and sedimentation
4. improve species habitat
5. increase long term soil productivity
6. ensure long term health and sustainability of watersheds given the variety of demands

These goals are met through a variety of treatments and recommendations for land use management. Over the past 10 years projects have emphasized improvement of watersheds and stream systems that are exceeding state and federal water quality thresholds and standards for sedimentation. Although, the PSICC is making progress on restoration of degraded watersheds, we still have many areas to complete and new demands for restoration occur as land use demands increase



Burned Area Rehabilitation

In 1996 there were three project fires that were approved for emergency rehabilitation funding. The rehabilitation of these fires was in addition to the Forest Plan level of watershed improvement. Approximately 7000 acres were treated on the three fires in 1996-1997. The treatments included revegetation, overland flow reduction and reduction of sediment transport. The largest of the three fires was the Buffalo Creek Fire. This 12,000 acres fire area will be monitored for several years to determine the needs of additional treatments to reduce potential losses to downstream water quality.

Soil Monitoring

Soil quality monitoring provides the resource manager with information regarding the effects of land management decisions and activities on the soil resource. Forest Plans and federal regulations provide the long-term management objectives for monitoring. Forest Plan standards and guidelines represent management actions essential to protect and

enhance National Forest and Grassland resources. Monitoring of Forest Plans must provide for:

1. Documentation of the measured prescriptions and effects.
2. A description of the actions, effects, or resources to be measured; frequency of measurements, expected precision and reliability of the monitoring process, and the time when the evaluation will be reported.
3. Documentation of costs

In Region 2 Soil Quality Standards have been established to provide threshold values for documenting significant reduction of soil productivity potential. These threshold values serve as early warning signals to indicate when further alteration of soil properties would significantly change or impair the productivity of the soil. Past monitoring efforts on the PSICC have typically involved visual assessments of contract provisions and mitigation designed to reduce degradation of soil and water resources. These include the monitoring of projects such as timber sales, recreational areas, roads and trails, and facility construction. More detailed quantitative soil monitoring is being conducted on selected resources issues. These included specific impacts of management such as soil erosional losses associated with prescribed burning, compaction on grazing units, sedimentation from road systems, and burned area sediment transport. Future monitoring activities will include both qualitative monitoring of projects and more detailed studies of specific management uses and issues on the PSICC.

Air Resources

In response to requirements in the Clean Air Act, in 1994 PSICC initiated a long-term monitoring program to develop baseline data for evaluating air quality-related values in wilderness areas. High-elevation lake chemistry is being monitored annually at various locations in the Mount Evans, Holy Cross, and Sangre de Cristo wilderness areas. Visibility is being monitored for the Mount Evans wilderness, and a camera was installed in 1997 to monitor visibility in the Collegiate Peaks wilderness. The data collected via these efforts will be used not only for evaluating current relationships between air quality and wilderness values, but also for reviewing any future projects proposed by others involving significant air emissions that may affect PSICC's airsheds. Several years of data will be needed before firm conclusions can be made.

Mineral Resources

Minerals management has focused primarily on two areas. (1) Energy Minerals – Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands have the majority of the leasing, exploration, development, and production activities. There has been renewed leasing interest along the Front Range. San Carlos and Pikes Peak Districts now have areas under lease in the Wet Mountains south of Canon City and the Rampart Range northwest of Colorado Springs. An exploratory well has been drilled on private land adjacent to the Forest south of Canon City. Seismic and other geophysical and geochemical exploration has taken place. (2) Locatable Minerals – South Park, Leadville, and Salida Districts have the majority of activity. Small commercial operations such as gold placering and mining for amazonite and smokey quartz crystals make up the majority of operations. No

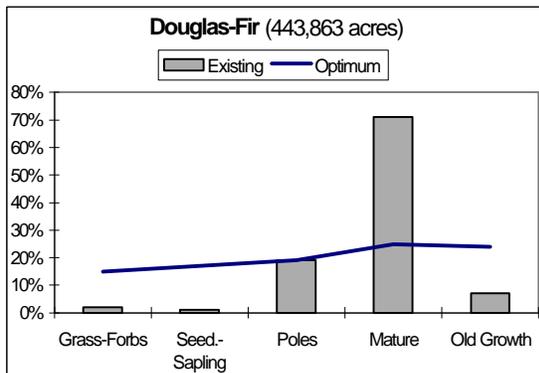
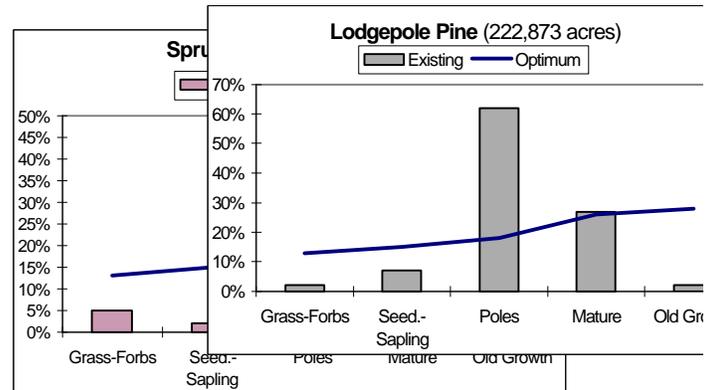
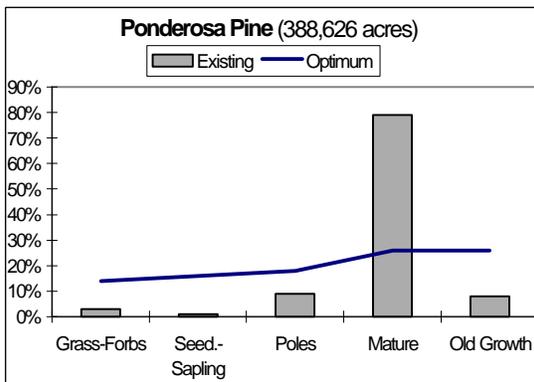
major or moderate exploration, development, or production operations have taken place. Recreational mining activities such as panning, dredging, and rockhounding are increasing slightly.

BIOLOGICAL COMPONENTS

Wildlife, Fisheries & Plant Resources

Accomplishment of joint wildlife objectives – Forest Service personnel meet regularly with the Colorado Division of Wildlife regarding wildlife objectives and opportunities for projects that will help achieve shared objectives. Various partners are also included where their resources could be made available for pursuit of mutual objectives. The main areas addressed to date have dealt with big game, particularly bighorn sheep and elk. The best example of agencies working together for wildlife is the DOW’s Habitat Partnership Program (HPP). Each HPP Committee includes representatives from DOW, FS, BLM, Landowners & Sportsmen’s groups who meet to solve big game and forage conflicts on public and private lands. There are 5 HPP committees on the PSICC.

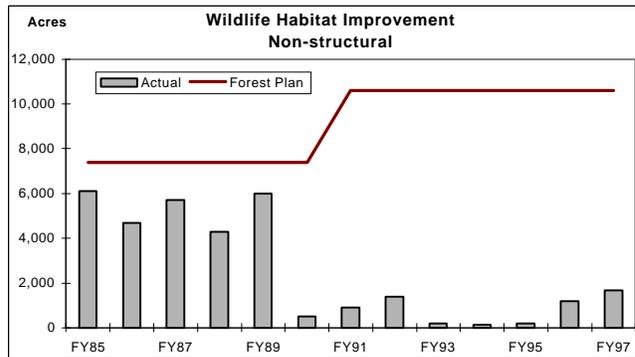
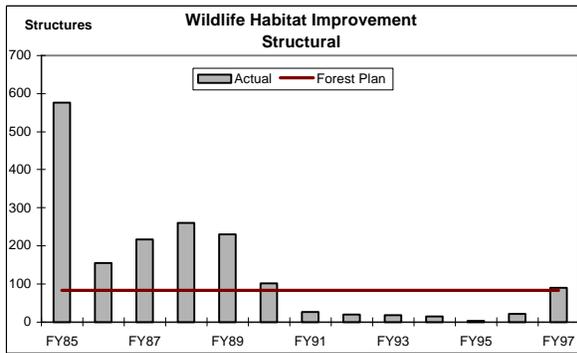
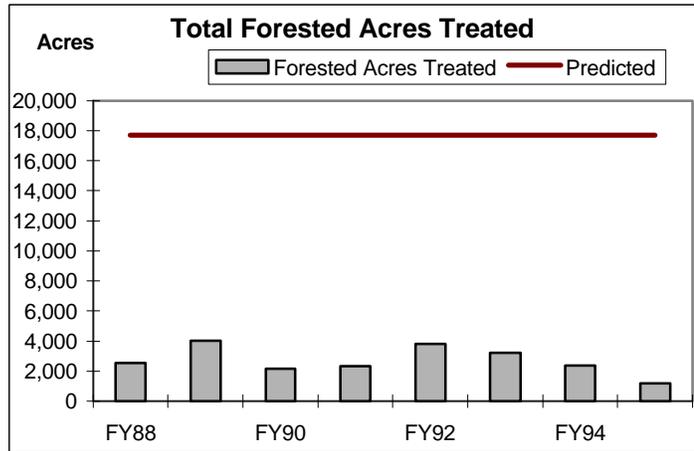
Wildlife Habitat Diversity - Analyses made during development of the Forest Plan compared existing diversity of forested lands with an optimum mix of ages that would support a wide variety of wildlife species. The results for PSICC’s major forested stands except aspen are shown below.



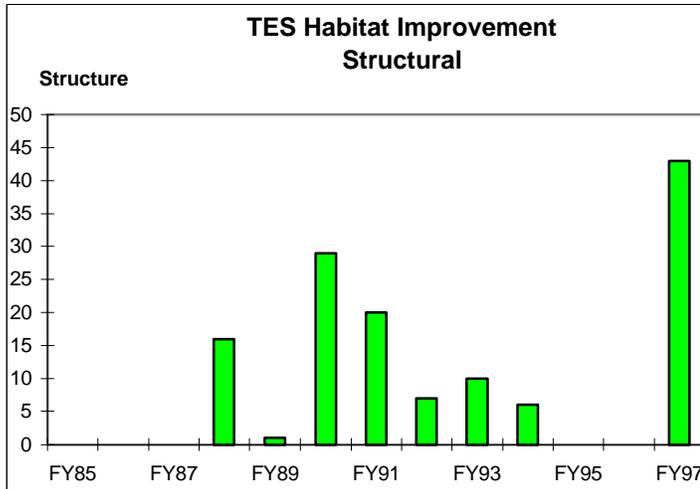
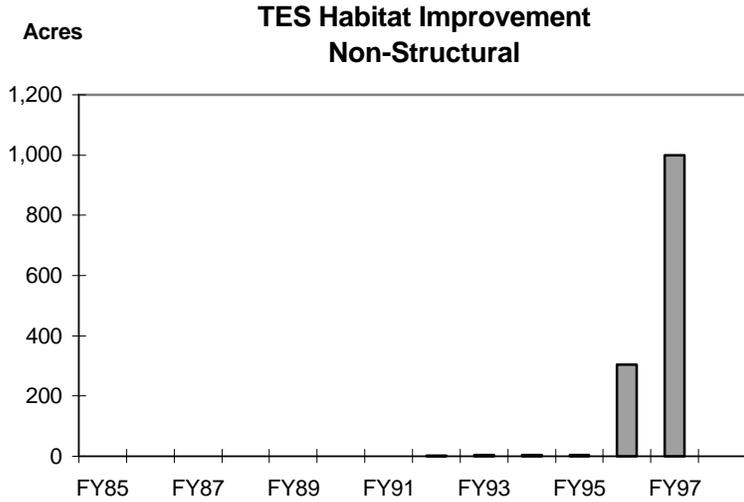
The conclusion drawn at the time was that an imbalance existed, with relatively young stands and old growth being underrepresented. Consequently, one intention of the Plan was to focus timber harvest in overrepresented structural stages and produce a forest having a more optimal mix of habitat characteristics. However, as discussed under Timber Resources and as shown in the accompanying chart, the rate of treatment of forested acres by all types of projects that modify habitat has not kept pace with predictions. Less than 2% of PSICC's timber stands have been treated by one method or another since the Plan was approved. (See also the table on acres treated in the Appendix to this report.) The net effect is that the situation in 1984 has not appreciably changed. In addition, the relatively low level of treatments is contributing to the growing risk of catastrophic wildfires.

Habitat Modification and Improvement

– Until recently, the wildlife habitat modification and improvement program has been declining. This was due to a combination of factors: (1) *Shift of emphasis to mapping, inventory and landscape planning* - Financial resources were diverted into inventory, Ecosystem Management planning and monitoring efforts to gain a better understanding of PSICC's habitat, particularly its riparian areas. With the shift to Ecosystem planning, better wildlife decisions can be made at the landscape level. The new information obtained will support better project designs in the future. (2) *Declining budgets* - Funding had decreased to the point that few projects could be financed. Partners have now become an important source of funding for projects, although more partnership money is available than PSICC funds can match and utilize. The amount of project work has nonetheless begun to increase in recent years. On the Forest, a key source of funding comes from other programs seeking expertise to mitigate adverse effects.

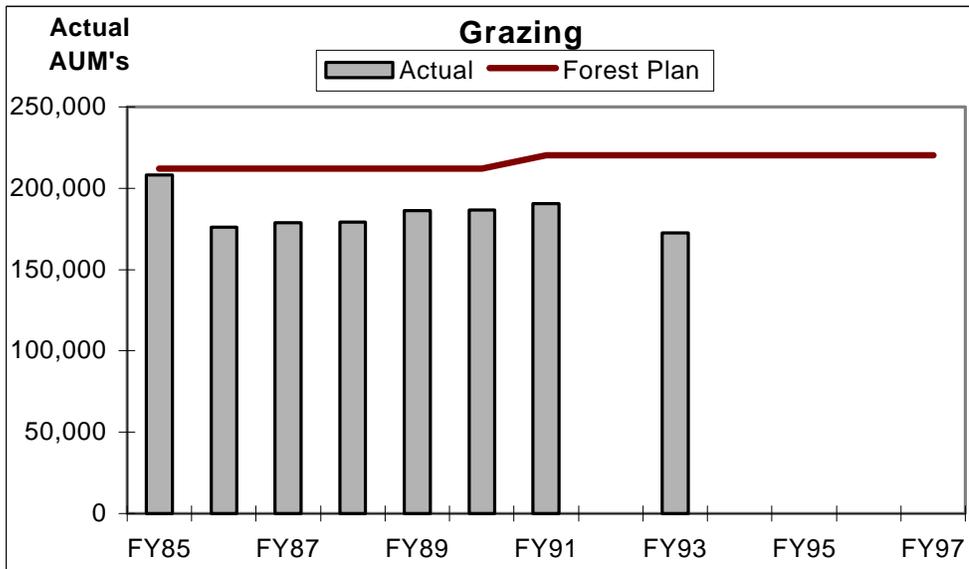


Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive species - Project work to date in this area has primarily involved habitat improvement to support reintroduction of the Colorado Greenback cutthroat trout and the Peregrine falcon. In cooperation with the Division of Wildlife, the Colorado Natural Heritage program and volunteers, inventory and monitoring are occurring on many animals and plants on public and private lands.

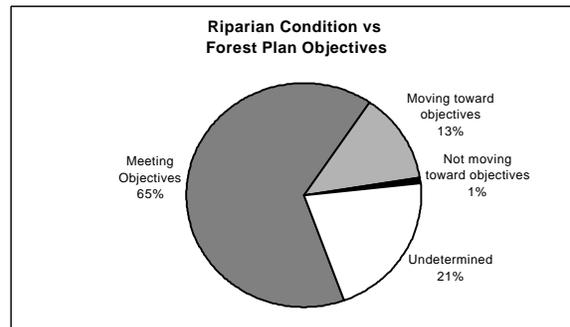
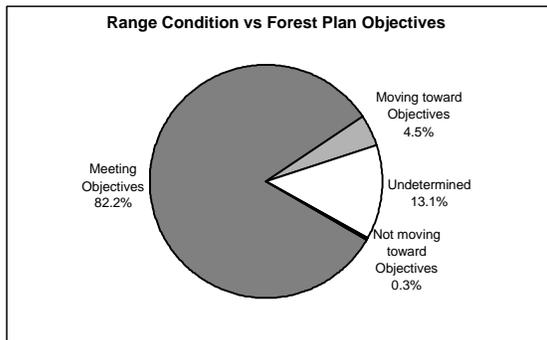


Range Condition and Use

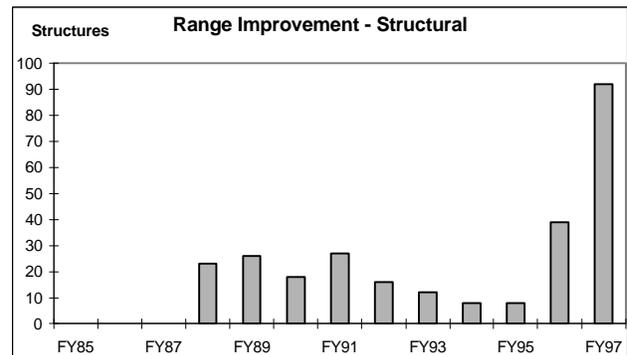
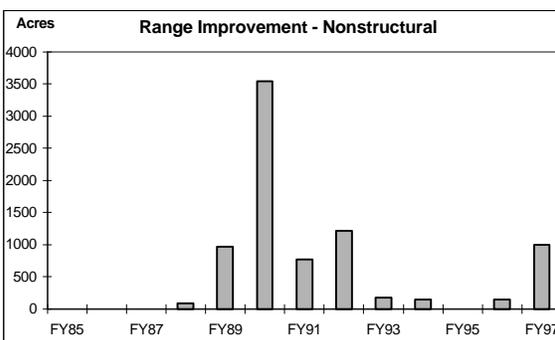
The bulk of PSICC's grazing program—in terms of AUM's--occurs on the Comanche and Cimarron National Grasslands. As shown in the chart below, grazing levels have been relatively stable in recent years.



Annual monitoring indicates that range and riparian conditions are generally meeting or moving toward Forest Plan objectives, as shown in the charts below:



A history of range improvement work is shown below. Nonstructural activities typically involve planting and prescribed burning. Structural improvements typically include stock ponds and fence construction.

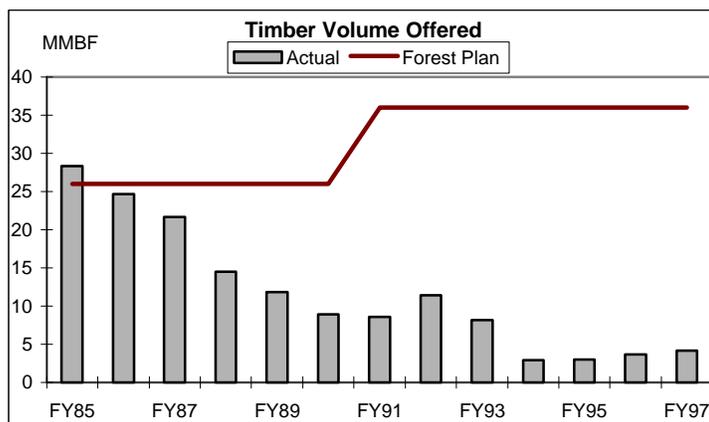


Allotment Management Planning - In a agreement with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer, PSICC and other National Forests in Colorado have established schedules for updating allotment management plans. PSICC’s schedule focuses on the Grasslands in the first few years.

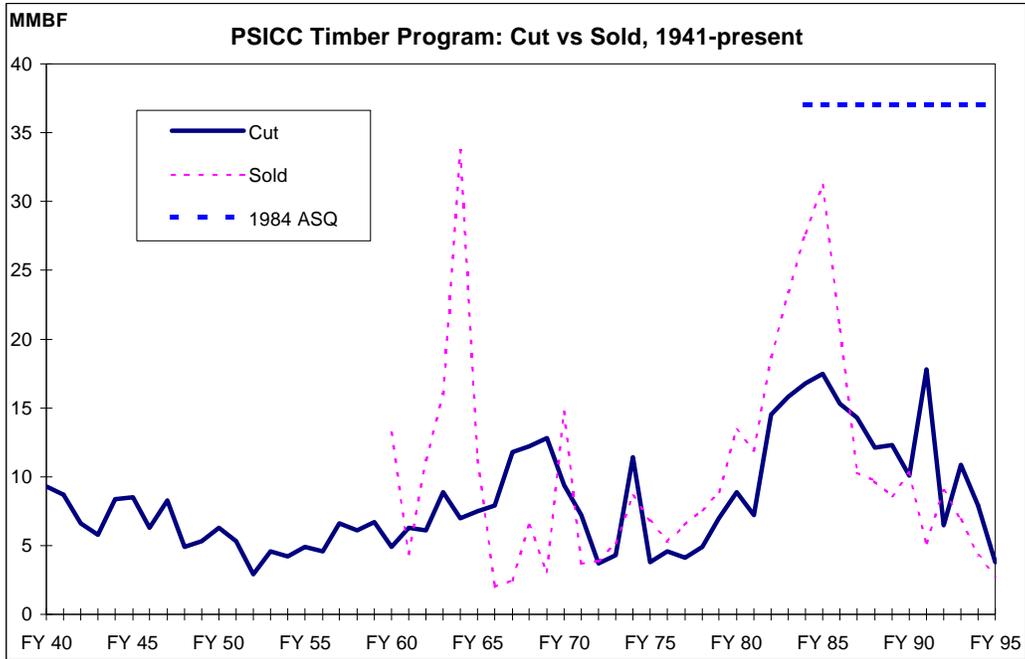
Allotments on the Grasslands are managed as grazing associations, such that a grazing permit for an association covers a large number of allotments. Allotments associated with the Kim Grazing Association, located on the Comanche National Grassland, have been reviewed and a decision on management has been made. Analysis supporting this work has provided valuable new information on conditions found in the allotments. Key findings: (1) range condition is generally meeting Forest Plan objectives—a situation largely attributable to relatively moderate stocking rates; (2) riparian areas generally do not meet Forest Plan objectives and require modified management to restore them to desired levels; and (3) while certain resource conditions—such as in riparian areas--are needing work, the overall framework established by the Forest Plan appears to be suitable to the area. Major land allocations are appropriate. Some modification of Forest Plan standards and guidelines may be in order to address certain habitat-related issues, but otherwise the Forest Plan appears to be working reasonably well in that area.

Forest Condition and Use

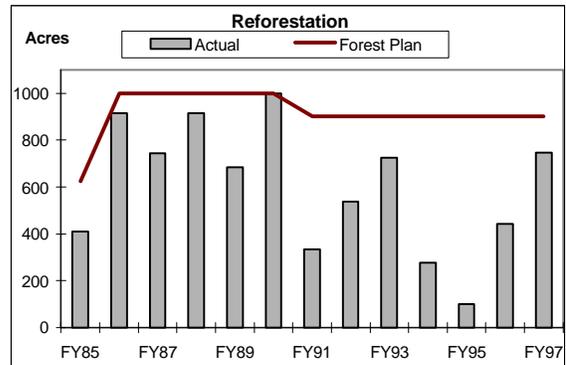
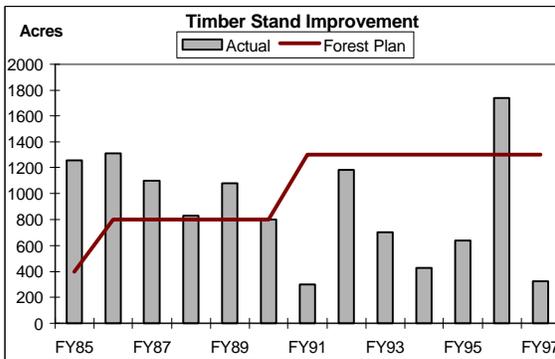
The 1984 Forest Plan established an allowable sale quantity of 37 million board-feet, with timber offer targets gradually approaching that level over time as progressively more acres were put under management. In 1984, much of the timber sold was being used for fuel wood in response to high energy prices. But eventually energy prices dropped, and so did the demand for fuel wood. In addition, the economics of harvesting timber on PSICC were such that, once the below-cost issue began affecting policy, funding for the PSICC commercial timber program was curtailed to a level well below plan projections. By FY94, the timber program had declined to historically low levels, with the bulk of volume harvested still being sold for fuel wood.



The net effect of this reduction is that PSICC is not keeping pace with the rate of growth taking place in its forests, with accompanying increases in risk of insect and disease attacks as well as ominous fuels buildup. A situation of increasing severity is emerging, particularly along the Front Range on the Pike National Forest. Steps are being taken to (1) resurrect a more active timber program, and (2) seek possible markets for the types of smaller-sized wood products whose removal would best benefit forest health. Regarding another facet of this situation, see also the discussion under Wildlife Habitat Diversity above and fuel treatment below.



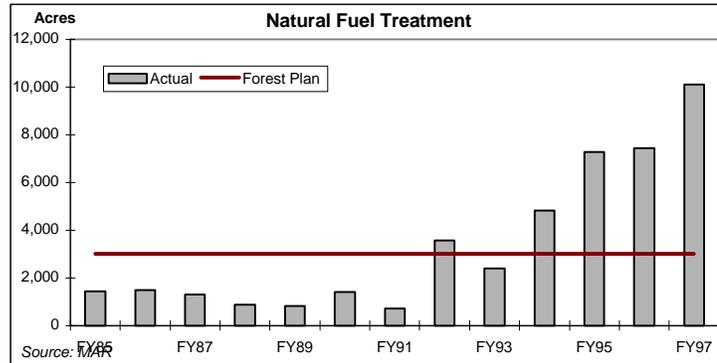
Reforestation and timber stand improvement activities have also shown a decline, as shown below. This is a necessary relationship because funds for such activities are primarily obtained from timber sale revenues.



Acres harvested by cutting method are tabulated in the Appendix. All methods employed have been consistent with the Forest Plan.

Fuel Treatment

Treatment of fuels has increased dramatically in recent years. This is in response to the growing recognition that fire suppression throughout the century has resulted in significant fuels accumulations that increase the risk of catastrophic fires. Fuel treatment activity levels are thus increasing in an attempt to deal with this.

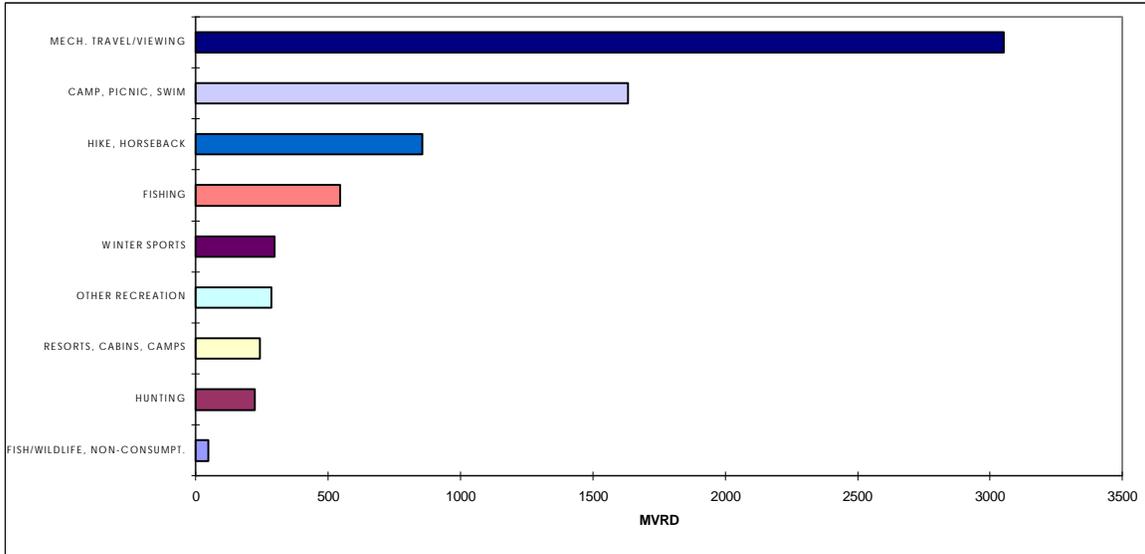


In May 1996 the Buffalo Creek fire burned over 10,000 acres of forested land on the South Platte District. The fire was in Ponderosa Pine-Douglas fir. The fire was wind-driven and did most of its burning in a single afternoon, destroying six homes. At many other locations throughout the front range, a fire of similar configuration could have destroyed hundreds of homes. The fire serves as a reminder of the growing need for projects that will reduce fuel levels and lessen the potential for catastrophic wildfires all along the front range. In order to meet the needs of forest health, wildland fire risk, firefighter and public safety, the Red Zone Strategy was developed. The Forest is working collaboratively with other agencies and local communities to start treating the areas of high development and highest risk for insect outbreaks, disease or wildland fire.

SOCIAL COMPONENTS

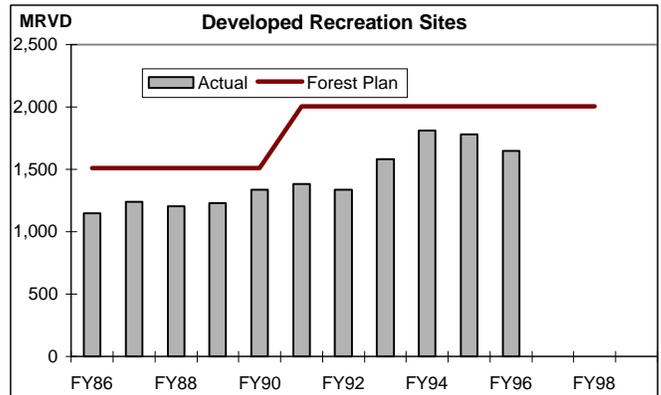
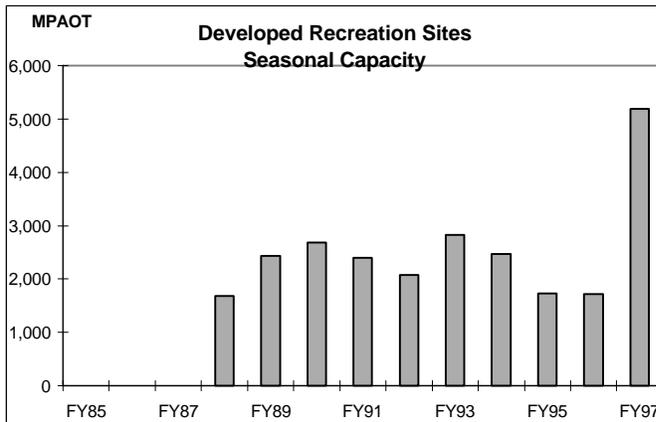
Recreation

PSICC has one of the heaviest recreation workloads in Region Two. Much of this stems from PSICC being located so close to the Denver, Colorado Springs and Pueblo metropolitan areas. The leading type of recreation is related to driving for pleasure, whether in automobiles on highways or by using off-highway vehicles on lower-standard routes.



Developed Recreation

A significant portion of recreation visits occur at developed facilities, particularly campgrounds. These facilities used to be operated primarily by Forest Service personnel, but PSICC recently placed all of its fee-collection facilities under concessionaire management.

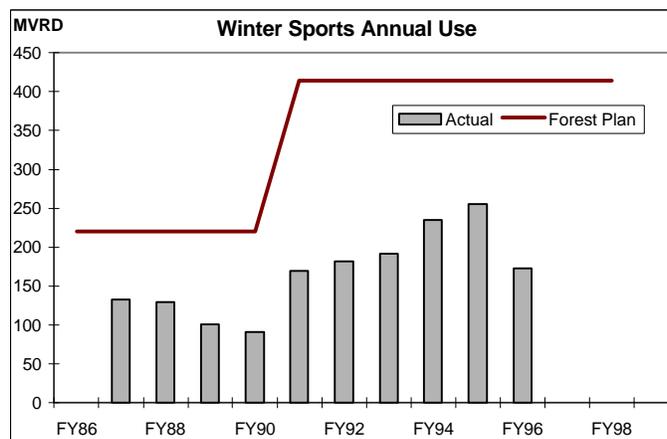


Recreation Facilities Backlog - PSICC has a strong recreation component to its overall program. It is also “urban” in character because more than 2 million people live within easy weekend driving distance. Many of the developed campgrounds were built in the 1960’s and are significantly deteriorating over time. Operation and maintenance dollars have not kept pace with this deterioration, creating an increasing backlog of work needed.. The following inventory of maintenance backlog needs was made in FY94:

RECREATION FACILITIES BACKLOG	EST. COST
Health and Safety - costs needed for facility repair and reconstruction and resource treatment needed to comply with health and safety standards	6,530,500
Resource Protection - costs for resource treatment needs including vegetation treatment, soil & surface treatment, and cultural resource site protection & mitigation	9,527,564
Work Needed to Avoid Closing Sites - costs for facility repair and reconstruction and resource treatment needed to keep a site open in compliance with planned management standards	4,982,797
Site Work Needed to Return to or Continue a User Fee System - This category includes costs for facility repair and reconstruction and resource treatment needed to meet standards required for user fees	599,003
Facility Elimination - costs to remove facilities and restore the previously occupied area to a condition which meets planned management. standards	3,356,815
Other Backlog Needs - Recreation facility backlog costs not included in the previous five categories.	10,098,533
Trail Maintenance & Reconstruction – Restoration, repair, and Resource treatment are needed to return trails to planned management standards. These tasks are in addition to recurrent maintenance requirements.	4,210,828
Total Backlog Cost	41,306,040

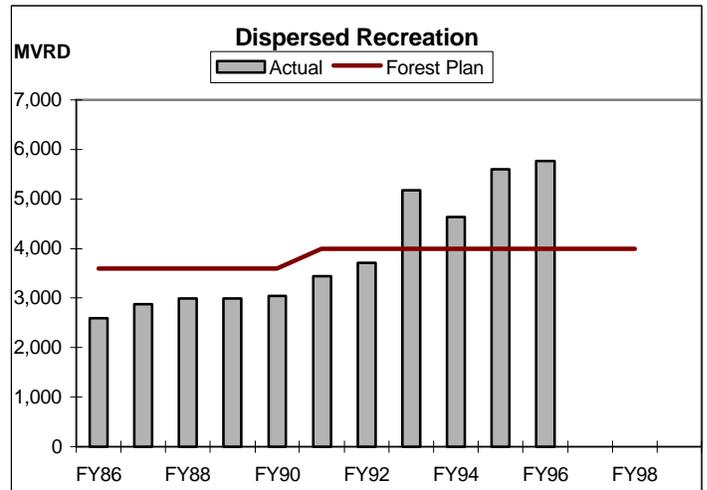
Winter Sports

PSICC has three operating ski areas: Ski Cooper, Cuchara Valley, and Monarch Resort. Three areas which were in operation when the Plan was approved are now in various stages of being closed down: Pikes Peak (which has been reclaimed); Geneva Basin (which is mostly reclaimed) and Conquistador (which recently decided to terminate its permit and begin reclamation). Quail Mountain, southwest of Leadville, was identified as a possible ski area development, but a facility has not been established. The current capacity for downhill skiing appears to be greater than the demand at most of the areas.



Dispersed Recreation

Dispersed Recreation includes all of the activities that occur outside of developed facilities. Because of its proximity to the Denver and Colorado Springs metropolitan areas, PSICC receives a large amount of dispersed recreation use. This constitutes the largest share of total recreation use. In recent years visitor levels have exceeded projections made while the current Plan was being developed. Not long after the Plan was approved, PSICC recognized that travel management issues were beginning to emerge, and it took steps to deal with the situation by implementing the White Arrow Program, which limited motorized travel to designated routes.

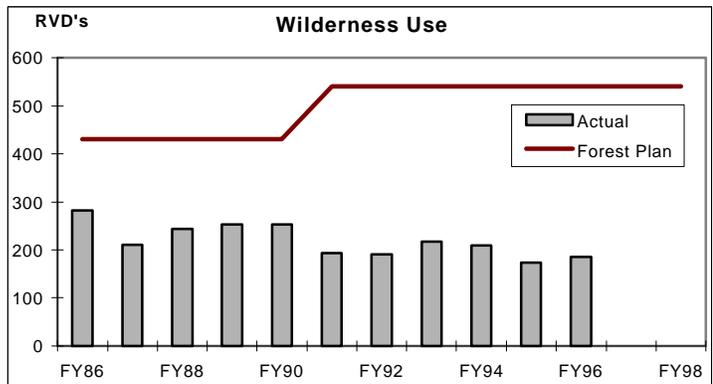


Wilderness Recommendations - Four Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) and one Further Planning Area (FPA) were reviewed during development of the Forest Plan and suitability findings were made in the Record of Decision. The following chart shows the current status of those areas.

<u>Area</u>	<u>Found Suitable?</u>	<u>Wilderness Today?</u>
Buffalo Peaks WSA	Portions	Yes
Greenhorn Mountain WSA	Yes	Yes
Spanish Peaks WSA	No	No; still WSA
Sangre de Cristo WSA	Portions	Yes
Lost Creek Addition FPA	No recommendation made	Yes

Recreation Capacity Study - PSICC completed a Forest-wide study of recreation capacity. The study was initiated in 1993 in response to concerns that certain areas, particularly in wilderness, were being unacceptably impacted by increasing numbers of visitors.

Ironically, even though wilderness use has not been increasing, impacts to wilderness were becoming more problematic due to a concentration of use in certain areas. Routes for climbing the peaks over 14,000 feet have become particularly popular and are receiving heavy use. With three newly designated wilderness areas, very high public use on most of the forest, and an increasing number of



applications for outfitter-guide permits, PSICC set out to analyze visitation and impact levels in comparison to Forest Plan direction. A moratorium on new outfitter-guide permits went into effect

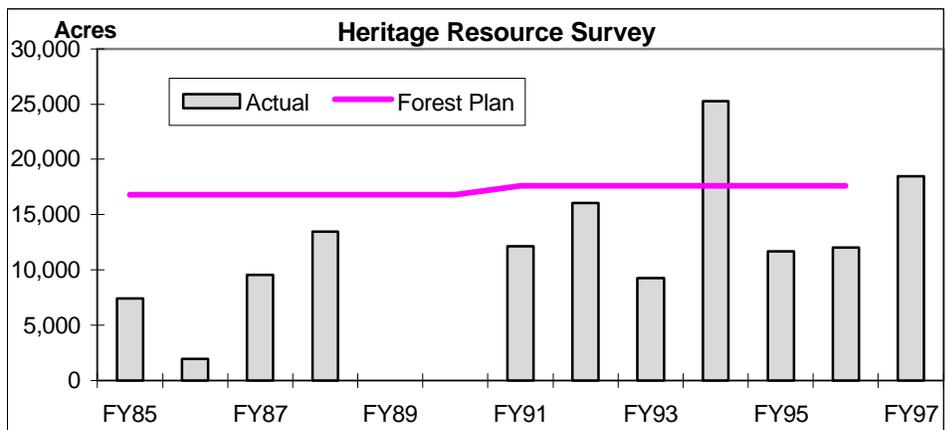
pending completion of the study. In 1995 the study was completed, with the finding that many areas were at or exceeding capacity. In the highest overuse areas, outfitter-guide permits were cut back, while in other areas no new permits were allowed. Many steps are being taken to reduce public use in those problem areas as well. As a followup to the study, selected high use areas are being monitored and managed more strictly. Capacity refinements and use adjustments are being made as time and priorities allow.

A secondary result of the study were the observations that (1) management area direction in portions of some wildernesses was mismatched with current uses, and (2) certain standards and guidelines had become out-of-date with current theory regarding management of dispersed uses. These topics are discussed further under “Potential Amendments” later in this report.

Heritage Resources

The heritage resources management program has operated in two primary arenas: (1) *Cultural resources compliance inventory and sites recording* -

areas where ground-disturbing projects are being planned are inventoried for cultural sites; and discovered sites are recorded and evaluated. In the mid- and late- 1980's the bulk of this work was done to support timber sales and vegetation treatment projects on the mountain districts. In more recent years the focus has been on inventory of grazing



allotments (primarily on the Grasslands), and on large prescribed fire projects designed by the fuels, wildlife, and range programs. Also, the heritage staff has been focusing on inventory of the Picket Wire Canyonlands, a special management area with an extremely high density of archeological sites, and on Pikes Peak, a National Historic Landmark. In FY97, a total of 255 previously unrecorded cultural properties (sites) were recorded; In the three year period 1995-1997, 979 properties were recorded.

(2) *Protection, interpretation and public outreach* - This portion of the program focuses on the management of known heritage properties, including protection and repair of significant sites, and public use and involvement including interpretation, volunteerism, and partnerships. On the Grassland units, the focus has been the Santa Fe Trail and the resources of the Picket Wire Canyonlands, while on the mountain districts the emphasis has been on repair and interpretation of historic cabins and historic railroad related sites. The Heritage and Recreation staff have implemented a historic cabin rental program to renovate significant historic cabins for public use. In FY97, additional emphasis was placed on monitoring significant archeological and historic properties to guard against deterioration; 138 sites were monitored in FY97. Thirty-three sites were interpreted, either by on-site interpretive signs and panels, or by inclusion in brochures, or by guided tour. The heritage staff completed six Passport In Time (PIT) projects for the national

volunteer program including 3 on the grasslands and 3 on the mountain districts. Through Passports and other volunteer projects, the Forest and Grasslands were able to engage over 100 volunteers to recording and repairing heritage sites, accomplishing work that the Forest Service would not have been able to accomplish using appropriated funds.

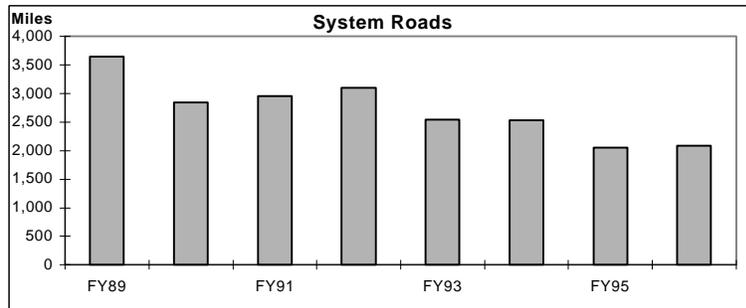
<i>Activity</i>	<i>FY94</i>	<i>FY95</i>	<i>FY96</i>
Heritage Sites Interpreted	10	18	10
Heritage Interpretive Products		9	
Public Participation		12	
Number of Properties	277	525	
Heritage Sites Preserved	10		45
Heritage Sites Evaluated and Protected	28	475	173
Evaluations		450	
Resource Facilitation		85	
Acres Surveyed	25,285	11,676	12,025

Visual Quality Objectives

Visual quality objectives are being maintained. Activities having the potential to adversely affect VQO's have been designed to avoid such effects.

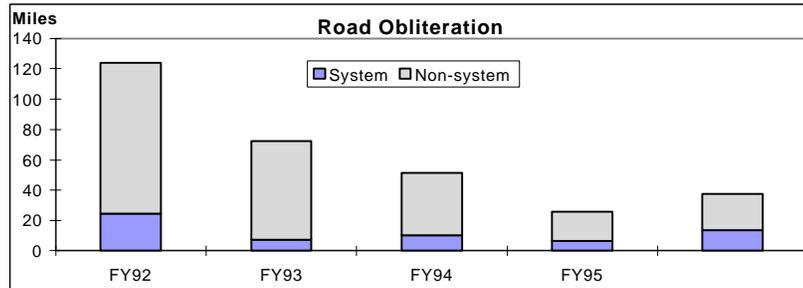
Transportation & Travel Management

The chart to the right shows total miles of roads identified as system roads that are available for public use. This use can vary from full use by the public with vehicles, to administrative use only by the Forest Service and designated permittees, to walk in use by the public on roads that are closed to vehicle use.



The general decrease in mileage over the time frame shown can be attributed to the following: a) roads have been removed from the system because a decision has been made that they're no longer needed for management purposes; b) more accurate inventories have shown that some mileages estimated for roads were in error.

Special road obliteration funding was allocated in FY92/93 to do high priority road obliteration work in degraded watersheds. From FY94 to the present, there has



been no special road obliteration funding so road obliteration work had to be financed out of the regular program funding. With decreasing budgets the total roads obliterated have decreased also. Note: there are numerous other roads identified for obliteration whenever funding becomes available.

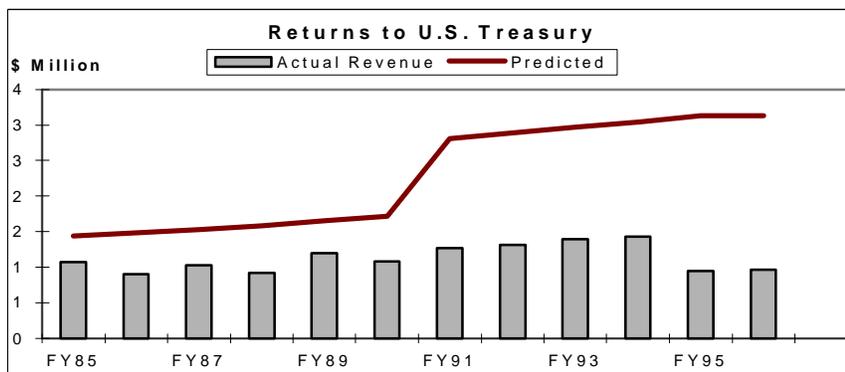
ECONOMIC COMPONENTS

Capital Investments

The Capital Investment Program (CIP) consist of two parts, one funded at the Regional level, and one funded at the Forest level. CIP used to be primarily for roads for general purpose, timber, and recreation use prior to about FY92. After FY92 the emphasis shifted somewhat to include developed recreation areas and trail construction/reconstruction in addition to roads. The Forest part of the CIP has been funded in the \$250,000-\$500,000 range over the years since 1991. The Regional CIP has been funded in the \$700,000 to \$2,300,000 range, with the lowest funding in 1996 and the highest in 1992. As stated previously, the emphasis has shifted from roads in the early 90's to developed recreation areas in the late 90's.

Returns to U.S. Treasury

A wide range of activities generate revenues for the U.S. Treasury. These include special use permits (ski areas, roads, water lines, power lines, outfitter-guides, recreation residences, etc.), grazing permits, fuel wood permits, Christmas tree permits, transplant sales, and timber sales, among others. Revenues from oil and gas leases are not shown in the accompanying chart, but are included in the Appendix of this report.



Payments to Counties

In most cases, 25% of the revenues paid into the U.S. Treasury are returned to the counties within which the revenue-generating activities occurred. The flow of these funds to Counties is shown below. The most dramatic change occurred on the Cimarron National Grassland in 1987, when a number of oil and gas leases reverted to the United States. Revenues from those leases have declined in recent years as production has declined.

25 % Fund Payments To Counties By Proclaimed Units Nominal Year Dollars

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	FY85	FY86	FY87	FY88	FY89	FY90
Pike NF	115,898	103,787	105,173	92,751	127,780	122,124
San Isabel NF	123,019	107,703	130,414	119,698	149,169	127,901
Comanche NG	145,707	103,185	72,730	45,236	47,240	64,605
Cimarron NG	77,852	39,027	4,240,391	3,028,349	1,514,045	1,007,529
PSICC Total	462,476	353,702	4,548,709	3,286,035	1,838,234	1,322,159

	FY91	FY92	FY93	FY94	FY95	FY96
Pike NF	134,263	117,394	157,919	162,181	91,038	94,520
San Isabel NF	149,236	172,006	152,076	175,534	134,596	142,053
Comanche NG	111,347	106,777	106,463	59,587	117,975	221,394
Cimarron NG	541,837	428,047	737,839	785,574	503,049	627,538
PSICC Total	936,683	824,224	1,154,297	1,182,876	846,657	1,085,505

Unit Costs and Efficiency – The PSICC as a unit has made tremendous progress toward improving customer service and reducing costs. Efficiencies have been gained through increased inter-agency cooperation and increased work with partners and volunteers.

Unit Costs are extremely variable on a large diverse unit such as the PSICC. Average unit costs tend to oversimplify the complexity of natural resource and ecosystem management work. Since they don't accurately portray effectiveness, unit costs have not been summarized in recent years. It is possible to do so by dividing outputs by either program or project costs. Unit costs have limited utility in Forest Plan monitoring due to (1) the complexities of the budget allocation process, and (2) the custom nature of most projects. Unit costs may be of some value in relating programs on different National Forests, but are less useful within an individual unit.

AMENDMENTS TO THE FOREST PLAN

Existing Amendments

Existing amendments to the Forest Plan are shown in the table below. For several years following approval of the Plan, it was thought that changes in the timber harvest schedule had to be reflected as amendments. When court decisions clarifying the purposes of Forest Plans eventually established that this practice was not required, amendments of this nature were discontinued.

<i>Amendment No.</i>	<i>Date Approved</i>	<i>Summary</i>
1	9/23/85	Clarified intent of Plan implementation schedules (Appendices A, C & D) prepared as part of annual Forest Plan of Work. Rescinded by Amend. No. 9
2	7/24/87	Corrected omission and indicated that bridge construction and reconstruction activities under Management Activity L16 - L18 (Local Road Construction and Reconstruction) are included.
3	7/24/87	Revised boundary of the Comanche Lesser Prairie Chicken Habitat Zoological Area (designated a Colorado Natural Area February 13, 1987), Comanche National Grassland.
4	7/24/87	Included in the Forest Plan assessment of suitability and capability of Quail Mountain for proposed ski area development (Note: Amendment No. 4 Rescinded 10/5/87).
5	7/24/87	Incorporated in the Forest Plan, modified stipulations and supplements contained in FSM 2800 5/86 R-2 Supp. No. 25 for leases and permits issued on National Forest System lands.
6	7/24/87	Replaced fire management standards and guidelines with Regional fire management requirements that had been changed to provide greater flexibility to land managers.
7	7/24/87	Corrected a Forest Plan Map error to more accurately reflect Management Area Prescription application and changed acreage totals in Management Area Summary Table.
8	7/24/87	Corrected information in Forest Plan Appendix B; fuelwood products are not a part of the Allowable Sale Quantity.
9	7/24/87	
10	7/24/87	Assigned Management Area Prescription 1D (Provides For Utility Corridors) for certain lands within the Comanche National Grassland and changed Management Area Summary Table III-3 to show a change in the acreage of four Management Areas.
11	8/20/87	Replaced Appendix A (the Ten-Year Timber Sale Schedule) and established a three year schedule of planned vegetation treatment projects.

12	10/5/87	Replaced Appendix C (the Ten-Year Road Construction and Reconstruction Schedule) and established a three-year schedule of planned road construction/reconstruction projects.
13	12/9/88	Recommended establishment of the 373 acre Hoosier Ridge Research Natural Area, South Park District.
14	12/9/88	Assigned Management Area Prescriptions 2B and 4B to 10,290 acres of the Cimarron River corridor, Cimarron National Grassland.
15		
16	1/3/89	Established 3-Year Timber Sale and Road Construction/Reconstruction Schedules (revised Appendices A & C). (FSM 1920, R-2 Supp. No.8, 3/86) (FSH 1909.12, R-2 Supp. No.1, 8/88).
17	1/3/89	Assigned Management Area Prescription 5B to Babcock Hole, San Carlos District (9,021 acres).
18	1/3/89	Assigned Management Area Prescription 1D to Methodist Mountain, Salida District (53 acres).
19	3/2/89	Assigned Management Area Prescription 5B (Emphasis on Big Game Winter Range) in the Dry Union Gulch area, Leadville Ranger District. Change from a 7D Prescription (5,114 acres).
20	12/6/89	Replaced 3-Year Timber Sale and Road Construction/Reconstruction Schedules (revised Appendices A & C). (FSM 1920, R-2 Supp. No.8, 3/86) (FSH 1909.12, R-2 Supp. No. 1, 8/88).
21	6/11/90	Established Scenic Highway of Legends as a Scenic Byway on the San Carlos Ranger District. Incorporated new management direction for Scenic Byways in the Plan.
22	10/4/90	Replaced 3-Year Timber Sale and Road Construction/Reconstruction Schedules (revised Appendices A & C).
23	2/12/92	Oil & Gas Leasing - Incorporated decision made 2/92 to consent to oil and gas leasing. See EIS and ROD.
24	4/9/92	Added Picket Wire Canyonlands per PL 101-501. Also established management area direction.
25	9/21/94	Revised Forest Plan map to establish a utility corridor for the Divide Power Line between Divide and Lake George.

Potential Amendments/Need for Change

Wilderness - Congress has established certain additional wilderness areas on PSICC in the years since the Forest Plan was approved. (See the discussion under Dispersed Recreation.) The Forest Plan's Record of Decision identified certain lands as suitable for wilderness and the Plan's map was accordingly drawn to reflect that finding. When additional wilderness was actually established, the final configurations did not always match the pattern shown on the Plan's map. For this reason, some changes to the Plan's map are needed. In addition, one outcome of the recreation capacity study (see the discussion under Dispersed Recreation) was the conclusion that

the pattern of management prescriptions in certain areas was not consistent with sustainable levels of use. This has led to a modification of outfitter guide permits. In certain instances, however, Forest Plan standards and guidelines are still not being met. An amendment to the Forest Plan is underway to address both this situation and the establishment of new wilderness areas in 1993.

Wildfire Hazard - The Buffalo Creek fire (see Fuels Treatment, Soil and Water) served as a reminder that forested lands are becoming more and more susceptible to catastrophic fires. As reviewed earlier in this report (see Wildlife Habitat Diversity and Forest Condition and Use), the activity that historically had the greatest effect on this situation—timber harvest--has greatly declined in recent years. The net effect is that forested areas throughout the mountains are becoming more susceptible to catastrophic wildfires and are not meeting desired conditions identified in the Forest Plan.

This situation is not unique to PSICC--it is widespread throughout the National Forests. Because of this, increased funding is anticipated to help work on the situation. Fuels treatment projects have already increased in recent years in an attempt to address the situation, but much more work—embracing a variety of types of projects—is needed. Many years of effort will be involved. Not only are steady-state levels of treatment significantly above those of recent years, but a significant backlog also exists. To help ensure that projects are designed to produce the most effective results, the Forest Plan is being modified to (1) clarify the desired condition of forested lands, (2) establish priorities for the types of areas where treatment would produce the most beneficial results, and (3) modify Forest Direction regarding wildfire suppression to provide greater flexibility in responding to wildfire situations.

Travel Management - A pervasive issue on most National Forests is travel management. In FY97 PSICC began an assessment to gain a clearer understanding of the topic. Preliminary indications are that a significant part of the issue has more to do with the administration of travel rather than broader land allocation aspects. Where administrative aspects predominate, solutions are best achieved through administrative solutions rather than through the Forest Plan. Upon completion of the assessment, a better picture will be available and PSICC will have a better grasp of the situation.

Note: The appropriations bill for fiscal year 1998 included a prohibition against initiating new Forest Plan revisions until the Forest Service's planning regulations have been revised.. Amendments to Forest Plans do not fall under the prohibition. Accordingly, PSICC is reviewing a variety of situations to determine which, if any, issues could merit preparation of Plan amendments to hasten the rate of change. Based on preliminary review, situations beyond those listed above that might lend themselves to pre-revision amendment include the following: management area allocations focused on refining Recreation Opportunity Spectrum designations, establishment of Research Natural Areas, determination of Wild and Scenic River eligibilities, incorporation of newer biodiversity concepts into Forest management direction, and consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on threatened and endangered species designated since the current Forest Plan was approved.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Are the Forest Plan's goals and objectives being met? Most of PSICC's goals are being pursued to some degree, but in most cases not at the rate envisioned in 1984. The ambitiousness of the overall program has proven to exceed the funding levels made available.

Are the Plan standards and guidelines being followed? Decision documents being signed by responsible officials are certifying that projects are being designed to be consistent with the Forest Plan.

CERTIFICATION

The Forest Plan, as currently written, is sufficient to guide implementation for the next year. There are several improvements that can be made to the Forest Plan, but they are not required to meet the Plan's goals and objectives.

/S/ John J. Hill
for

4/30/98

Rick D. Cables
FOREST SUPERVISOR

Date

APPENDIX