

## C. Organizational Effectiveness

### Sub-Issue 1. Economics

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires the forest to:

- There is a need to document costs associated with carrying out the planned management prescriptions, as compared with the costs estimated in the Forest Plan (36 CFR 219.12(k)(3)). Evaluate radical deviations between planned and budgeted.

## Budgets

Funds allocated to the NFGT have been reduced and have affected the rate of implementation of projects envisioned in the *Plan*. The following table reflects budgets received during FY 2002 and 2003. These tables do not reflect budgets designed in the *Plan* versus allocations since some funds/programs were merged over the years. Table 11 reflects monies as they were actually received. No comparison between the *Plan* versus actual was made due to difficulties in making the comparisons.

**Table 15.** Budget Allocations

FUND CODE	DESCRIPTION	ALLOCATION RECEIVED FY 2002	ALLOCATION RECEIVED FY 2003
CMFC	Facilities, Capital Improvements and Maintenance	1,243,821	995,854
CMII	Infrastructure Improvement, Capital Improvement and Maintenance	182,000	85,228
CMRD	Roads, Capital Improvements and Maintenance	2,243,959	1,888,095
CMTL	Trails, Capital Improvements and Maintenance	334,889	149,037
CWFS	Cooperative Work – Other	600,000	494,000
CWKV	Cooperative Knutson Vandenburg	2,176,161	1,448,000
EXEX	Land Exchange	0	308,000
FDCL	Fee Demo Collection Support	26,000	40,000
FDDS	Fee Demo Site Specific	135,000	200,000
FEFR	Recreation Fee Collection	1,000	500.00
GBGB	Gifts and Bequests	1,381	1,400
HTAE	Federal Highway Administration Expense	11,200	11,000
HTRP	Federal Highway Public Roads	0	20,000
LALW	Land Acquisition Management	33,572	40,738
NFEX	NF System Reimbursable	100,000	85,000
NFCC	Condition Class.	0	146,262
NFIM	Inventory and Monitoring	683,936	600,988
NFLE	Law Enforcement	94,015	
NFLM	Landownership Management -Real Estate Management/Landline Location	517,199	346,692

<b>FUND CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>ALLOCATION RECEIVED FY 2002</b>	<b>ALLOCATION RECEIVED FY 2003</b>
NFMG	Minerals and Geology Management	465,432	389,356
NFPN	Land Management Planning	133,076	120,985
NFRG	Range Management	198,318	179,642
NFRW	Recreation Management -Recreation/Cultural Resources/Wilderness	975,003	822,163
NFTM	Timber Management	2,291,860	1,507,276
NFWF	Wildlife, Fish and Rare Plants	1,088,097	741,661
NFVW	Vegetation and Watershed Management	647,274	472,901
NFSA	SCSEP	0	430,894
QMOM	Operations and Maintenance of Quarters	3,000	2,000
RCRC	Resource Conservation & Development	5,000	0
RIRI	Need description here.	800.00	2,100
RTRT	Reforestation Trust Fund	48,351	216,106
SSSS	Timber Salvage Sales	33,000	33,000
SPEA	Economic Action Program	13,700	10,000
SPS4	Forest Health SPB Suppression	25,000	25,000
SPUF	Urban/Community Forestry	16,600	0
TPPS	Timber Sales/Timber Pipeline	353,500	298,027
TRTR	Roads and Trails	84,176	223,216
WFEX	Wildland Fire External Reimbursable	660,000	0
WFHF	Hazardous Fuels/Reduction	945,360	847,798
WFPR	Wildland Fire Preparedness	1,818,458	1,131,116
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>18,190,138</b>	<b>\$14,314,035</b>

## **Workforce**

### **Species or Issue: *Permanent Employees.***

**Findings:** The NFGT employed 168 full-time employees (FTEs) during FY 2002 and 172 in FY 2003, while one permanent part-time employee was employed in the S.O. during 2002 and 2003. Two Western Operations Center (WOC) employees were stationed at the S.O. during 2002 and 2003.

### **Species or Issue: *Temporary and Term Employees.***

**Findings:** The NFGT recorded employment of the following types of employees during FY 2002-2003.

- Five Term employees were employed in FY 2002 and seven in FY 2003;
- Two SCEP (Coop) students, three temporary employees and three stay-in-school students were on the rolls during this period.

People working in different types of employment status are actively involved in helping the NFGT accomplish its natural resource goals each year. Annual reports provide information about each program and document the number of hours worked in different resource categories with appraised values to the forest. These reports are on file in the Supervisor's office in Lufkin. Each program is briefly described in the following text.

***Senior Community Service Employee Program (SCSEP).***

The primary purpose of the SCSEP program is to:

- ❖ Provide, foster, and promote subsidized, useful part-time community service employment for low-income persons, who are 55 years of age or older.
- ❖ To the extent feasible, assist and promote the transition or direct placement of program enrollees into unsubsidized employment. The Department of Labor is the Grant Administrator and funding source for the program. The Forest Service operates its program through an Interagency Agreement that is re-negotiated annually.

Many of our resources receive direct and substantial benefits from employees enrolled in the SCSEP program.

***Hosted Program.***

During FY 2002, five hosts worked at the Red Hills Lake Recreation Area on the Sabine NF. They accomplished the following:

- ❖ Painted bathrooms and made small repairs;
- ❖ Fixed and painted picnic tables;
- ❖ Mowed and weeded around the swimming area;
- ❖ Bathrooms were kept clean and stocked;
- ❖ Performed compliance checks and swimming area hazards were corrected;
- ❖ Assisted the Boy Scouts in installing pedestal grills;
- ❖ Contacted the local sheriff's department for emergencies; and

- ❖ Performed good host assistance by giving directions to local sight-seeing areas, hunting spots, Laundromats and stores.

In addition, these hosts improved fish habitat within the lake by assisting during work days to sink cedar tress in the lake, fed the fish and assisted with the fish feeder, made the fish information board known to those who camped and fished at the recreation area, and documented activities and use with photographs.

***Volunteers.***

Volunteers are also a very important asset to the NFGT in accomplishing annual programs of work.

**Evaluation:** The NFGT has shown an increase in personnel due to the inability to meet targets with the workforce on board in previous years. An effort has been made to replace many of the positions that were left vacant by attrition, resignations and transfers. While budgets continue to remain flat, some hiring is necessary.

The forest was heavily dependent on the SCSEP, Host and Volunteer Programs to accomplish their work (especially in the recreation program.) With the possibility that the SCSEP program may not be available in the very near future, an effort is being made to try to find other means of accomplishing targets (including adding positions in the recreation program.)

***Species or Issue: Rural Development Program.***

**Findings:** In FY 2002, a Rural Development Grant for \$10,000 was awarded to the Deep East Texas Economic Development Association to complete a Deep East Texas Tourism Enhancement Campaign. The campaign

was a 12-county effort designed to foster economic development through tourism and travel.

A Rural Development Grant for \$10,000 was also given to the Pineywoods Rural Conservation and Development in FY 2003. The grant was for completion of a pine straw education program including a video, brochure, web-site, and a 5-to-6 page extension publication. The education products are geared to help the landowner understand the benefits of pine straw production on the farm, for potential balers to understand what it takes to start this business, and for homeowners to understand the benefits of pine straw use.

**Evaluation:** The unit will continue to have an active Rural Development Grant Program to stimulate economic development in counties within 100 miles of the NFGT.

## Sub-Issue 2. Evaluating New Information

The following is a list of the NFMA elements for this sub-issue:

- Identify emerging issues, concerns and opportunities that need to be addressed (36 CFR 219.7(f)).
- Determine when changes in RPA, policies, or other direction would have significant effects on Forest Plans (36 CFR 219.10(g)).
- Determine if conditions or demands in the area covered by the Plan have changed significantly (36 CFR 219/10(g)).
- Evaluate the effects of National Forest management on land, resources, and communities adjacent to or near the National Forest; and the effects upon

National Forest management activities on nearby lands managed by other Federal, State or local government agencies (36 CFR 219.7(f)).

## *Emerging Issues*

### Columbia Recovery Search

When the Space Shuttle Columbia broke apart and fell across East Texas and western Louisiana on February 1, 2003, a three-month long search for Columbia Shuttle material began. After this national tragedy occurred, President Bush issued an emergency declaration for the two states and federal and state agencies deployed teams to the disaster area to assist local fire, law enforcement and emergency management authorities. The U.S. and Texas Forest Services managed Incident Command Posts and conducted the day-to-day search operations.

There were many hazards for all searchers. Ground crews slogged through mud, dense vegetation, rocky areas, faced wild hogs, snakes, and other vermin while dealing with ever-changing weather. Divers had to deal with the murky waters of East Texas lakes, along with forests underwater.

Another tragedy occurred during these operations. A Bell helicopter crashed and two members of the air search crew died while searching for debris over the Angelina NF. Three other crew members were injured.

A press release issued May 5, 2003, by the Federal Emergency Management Agency stated that the overwhelming response of the people of East Texas and western Louisiana and the skill with which they responded in the hours, days and weeks after the incident did not go unnoticed.

Officials from NASA, the Department of Agriculture and U.S. Forest Service visited the areas and spent time with community leaders and search crews in all of the operations thanking everyone for their help.

Below are some published facts about the incident:

- Search personnel recovered more than 82,500 pieces of shuttle debris equaling a total weight of 84,800 pounds, or almost 40 percent of the total dry weight of the shuttle.
- Ground, water and air searches combined covered more than 2.28 million acres.
- Water operations successfully identified more than 3,100 targets and covered 23 square miles. More than 16,500 ground search personnel and their support personnel searched an unprecedented 680,748 acres.
- Total man-hours utilized in the recovery effort amounted to approximately 1.5 million.
- More than 130 federal, state and local agencies participated in the recovery effort.
- Approximately 25,000 personnel took part in the operation.
- The operation was supported by more than 270 organizations including businesses and volunteer groups.

Below is a map that depicts states where support personnel came from early during recovery efforts. It does not show totals for the entire three-month period.

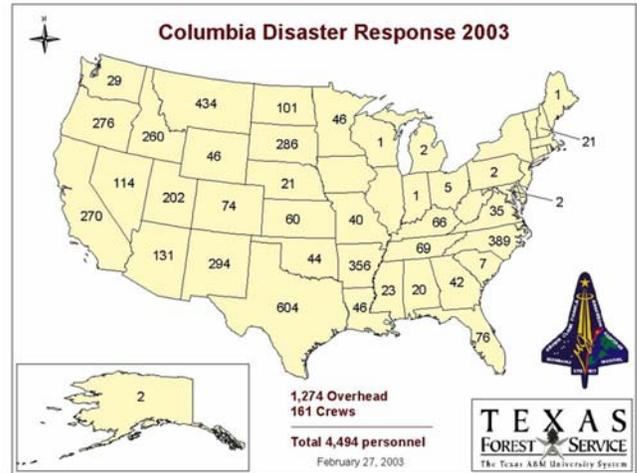


Figure 25. Number of people assisting from each state.

Since U.S. Forest Service resources were heavily involved in the painstaking search efforts, many planned accomplishments were affected.

### Natural Resource Information System (NRIS)

The Forest Service launched a significant undertaking: setting agency-wide standards for collecting, storing, managing, and using natural resource information. NRIS was designed by field employees for their use to meet basic resource information needs for national forests and regions and at a broader ecological region scales. The following provides information about this system.

- ✓ NRIS is a set of databases that contain resource information needed to support the business of managing national forests and grasslands.
- ✓ It holds data on vegetation, soil and geology, air and water, animal life and the social and economic data that described the people side of business.

- ✓ It also has an analytical tool to connect tabular data to maps, and join various data sources for specialized analysis.

The NRIS mission is to support on-the-ground work by implementing standards for data collection and management, analysis, interpretation, and reporting. It establishes a common set of basic data and data standards in a common computing environment. Once fully operational, the system can provide agency employees, our partners, and the public with access to data used for natural resource decision making.

The NFGT is continuing its efforts to populate the following NRIS databases (as they become available for use.)

- ✓ Air
- ✓ Fauna
- ✓ FSVeg
- ✓ Human Dimensions
- ✓ PDR
- ✓ Terra
- ✓ Tools
- ✓ Water

## ***New Laws/Rules/Regulations***

### **Healthy Forests – An Initiative for Wildfire Prevention and Stronger Communities.**

President Bush determined that the American people, their property, and our environment, particularly the forests and rangelands of the west, are threatened by catastrophic fires and environmental degradation. He recognized that:

- The nation had experienced the worst fire seasons in modern history;

- That catastrophic fires were caused by deteriorating forest and rangeland health;
- These deteriorated forest and rangeland conditions significantly affect people, property and ecosystem health; and
- Enhanced measures were needed to restore forest and rangeland health to reduce the risk of these catastrophic wildfires.

On August 22, 2002, President Bush released his Healthy Forests Initiative. This program will implement core components of the National Fire Plan's 10-year Comprehensive Strategy and Implementation Plan. This plan, adopted by federal agencies and western governors, in collaboration with county commissioners, state foresters, and tribal officials, calls for more active forest and rangeland management. It establishes a framework for protecting communities and the environment through local collaboration on thinning, planned burns and forest restoration projects.

The website

[http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/documents/HealthyForests\\_Pres\\_Policy%20A6\\_v2.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/documents/HealthyForests_Pres_Policy%20A6_v2.pdf)

contains the text of the initiative.

The Boswell Creek Watershed Healthy Forest Initiative Project is one of the national pilot projects selected to implement the President's Initiative. The watershed encompasses about 8,650 acres of national forest land located on the Sam Houston NF. The project's purposes are to change the potential fire behavior in the national forest and to reduce the southern pine beetle hazard. Scoping for the project began May 9, 2003 and there are plans to finalize the project in FY 2004. More information will be provided in next year's report.

For more information on the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 and the Healthy Forests Initiative, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/hfi/> or <http://www.doi.gov/hfi/newhfi/>

### **Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.**

This Act (P.L. 108-148), contains a variety of provisions to expedite hazardous fuel reduction and forest-restoration projects on specific types of federal lands that are at risk of wildland fire or insect and disease epidemics. The act helps rural communities, states, tribes, and landowners restore healthy forest and rangeland conditions on state, tribal, and private lands.

The numerous provisions of the Act are shown in the Interim Field Guide found at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/hfi/field-guide/>

### **Monitoring Guidance for Healthy Forest Initiative Categorical Exclusions (for hazardous fuels reduction and post-fire rehabilitation).**

On May 20, 2003 the agency published guidance for monitoring the use of two specific categorical exclusions developed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Fire Plan (NFP), and Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI). The document describes the need for these categorical exclusions, addresses why monitoring of their use and impacts should be conducted, and sets out a series of steps that federal agencies within the Department of Agriculture and the Interior will take to evaluate whether the categorical exclusions are being used appropriately and achieving their stated objectives with minimal environmental

impacts. The guidance recommends that the monitoring outlined be conducted for a period of three years, beginning in Fiscal Year 2004, with a final summary report to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to be prepared in the fourth year.

### **Monitoring for Forest Management Unit Scale Sustainability: The Local Unit Criteria and Indicators Development (LUCID) Test.**

A report issued in October 2002 summarizes the highlights of the LUCID test and the recommendations for implementation. It presents the results of six pilot tests of a forest management unit-monitoring program. The LUCID test was designed as a field-validated proof of concept, for a systems approach to forest monitoring based on sustainability goals. The report was peer reviewed by internal and external scientists to ensure it used the best available science.

The report received endorsement of the Forest Supervisors involved in the pilot tests. The LUCID project is being implemented by several National Forests in various stages of the forest plan revision process. The LUCID tests will also be used in developing national monitoring policy. The methodology and approach described in the report are available for field application with technical support from the Inventory and Monitoring Institute.

For further information, see <http://www.fs.fed.us/institute/lucid/>.

### **National Forest System Land and Resources Management Planning; Proposed Rules**

The Forest Service proposed changes to the Planning Rule adopted November 9, 2002 in a Federal Register Notice dated December 6, 2002. These proposed changes are a result of a review conducted by Forest Service personnel at the direction of the Office of the Secretary. The review affirmed much of the 2000 rule and the underlying concepts of sustainability, monitoring, evaluation, collaboration, and use of science. Although the 2000 rule was intended to simplify and streamline the development and amendment of land and resource management plans, the review concluded that the 2000 rule is neither straightforward nor easy to implement. The review also found that it did not clarify the programmatic nature of land and resource management planning. This newly proposed rule is intended to improve upon the 2000 rule by providing a planning process, which is more readily understood, is within the agency's capability to implement, is within anticipated budgets and staffing levels, and recognizes the programmatic nature of planning. Comments were to be received in writing by March 6, 2003.

In another Federal Register Notice published March 5, 2003, notice was given that the public comment period for the proposed rule was being extended to April 7, 2003.

At the time this report was written, a Final Rule had not been published. Further information will be provided during the next reporting period.

For more information, see the web site at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/index.htm>.

### **Notice, Comment and Appeal Procedures for National Forest System Projects and Activities**

On June 4, 2003 a Final Rule was published in the Federal Register, which revises the procedures established for the administrative appeals process. The final rule changes the procedures to clarify and reduce the complexity of certain provisions, to improve efficiency of processing appeals, to encourage early and effective public participation in the environmental analysis of projects and activities, and to ensure consistency with the provisions of the statutory authority. Changes also address emergency situations; notice and comment procedures and time periods; substantive comments; who may appeal; Deciding Officers; content of appeal; and the formal disposition process. The Final Rule was published in Vol. 68, No. 107 and can be viewed on the web at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/applit/include/s/finalappregs03.pdf>.

### **Sierra Club v. Veneman, No. L-85-69-CA (E.D. Tex. July 25, 2003)**

On July 29, 2003 the U.S. District for the Eastern District in Texas dissolved an October 1999 preliminary injunction and a 1988 permanent injunction that restricted management for RCW habitat on the National Forests in Texas (NFT). A Final Judgment, issued September 30, 2003 dismissing the National Forest Management Act claims, ended this eighteen year old lawsuit.

The case was originally filed as *Sierra Club v. Lyng*, 964 F. Supp. 1260, 1278 (E.D. Tex. 1988) and was brought by the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society and the Texas Committee for Natural Resources (TCONR) in a challenge to southern pine beetle control as it affects wilderness and

the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. Over time, Plaintiff TCONR added claims and the case developed two separate tracks - Endangered Species Act and National Forest Management Act - on which Plaintiffs challenged management of the NFT. On both tracks, the litigation was distinguished by repeated trips from the district court to the Fifth Circuit and back. The circuit court several times reversed and remanded government losses in the district court.

In the ESA portion of the case, most of the litigation involved efforts to obtain the appropriate, Administrative Procedure Act, “arbitrary and capricious” review by the district court of a “plan” for RCW management that the district court ordered in 1988. The Fifth Circuit directed the district court in its appropriate standard of review.

The impact to the NFT has been tremendous. Virtually one-third of the NFT was subject to the 1988 injunction that required the Forest Service to undertake specific management actions, some of which the Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined would doom the persistence of RCW habitat in the long run. The 1999 preliminary injunction enjoined compliance with the 1988 injunction, so that the Forest Service could not carry out even those actions that most experts consider vital to maintain the bird. Evidence has indicated that the preliminary injunction has been a likely factor in the decrease in RCW group size on the NFT.

Since the ruling, the NFT has been permitted to make plans to manage the forests for the endangered RCW in accordance with the *1996 Forest Land and Resource Management Plan*, which includes

standards and guidelines based on the best available science for RCW management.

### **Revised Red-cockaded Woodpecker Recovery Plan**

During January 2003, a Second Revision of the Recovery Plan for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) was approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Recovery Plan outlines the actions that, to the best of current understanding, are necessary to recover RCW.

A team of NFGT biologists and planning specialists will compare the *Plan's* direction for RCW management to the conditions in the USFWS Revised Recovery Plan and identify specific direction that should be updated. Implementation will be accomplished through incorporation of management guidelines into the *Plan* through a Forest Plan Amendment scheduled to begin in FY 2004.

The Revised Recovery Plan can be found at <http://endangered.fws.gov/>.

### **Roadless Area Conservation Rule**

On June 9, 2003, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman informed the public that the U.S. Department of Agriculture would retain the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule) that protects millions of acres of critical watersheds, wildlife habitat and unique ecosystems while the U.S. Department of Justice also announced that the State of Alaska agreed to settle its legal challenge to the application of the Jan. 12, 2001 Roadless Rule.

A proposed amendment to the rule was published for public comment and the Final Rule and Record of Decision, with applicability to the Tongass National

Forest in Alaska, was published in the Federal Register on December 30, 2003.

A total of nine lawsuits involving seven states were filed challenging the Roadless Rule, some of which are still pending.

Four areas on the Sam Houston NF are affected by this Rule. They are the areas known as Big Woods, Little Lake Creek, Winters Bayou, and Big Creek. The Roadless Rule that applies to the areas located on the Sam Houston NF includes those that:

1) Prohibits new road construction and reconstruction in inventoried roadless areas on National Forest System lands, except:

- To protect health and safety in cases of an imminent threat of flood, fire, or other catastrophic event that, without intervention, would cause the loss of life or property.
- To conduct environmental clean up required by federal law.
- To allow for reserved or outstanding rights provided for by statute or treaty.
- To prevent irreparable resource damage by an existing road.
- To rectify existing hazardous road conditions.
- Where a road is part of a Federal Aid Highway project.
- Where a road is needed in conjunction with the continuation, extension, or renewal of a mineral lease on lands that are under lease, or for new leases issued immediately upon expiration of an existing lease.

2) Prohibits cutting, sale, and removal of timber in inventoried roadless areas, except:

- For the cutting, sale, or removal of generally small diameter trees which maintains or improves roadless characteristics and:
  - To improve habitat for threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species, or
  - To maintain or restore ecosystem composition and structure, such as reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire effects.
- When incidental to the accomplishment of a management activity not otherwise prohibited by this rule.
- For personal or administrative use.
- Where roadless characteristics have been substantially altered in a portion of an inventoried roadless area due to the construction of a classified road and subsequent timber harvest occurring after the area was designated an inventoried roadless area and prior to the publication date of this rule.

An Interim Directive issued reserved to the Chief of the Forest Service the decision authority over some road construction and reconstruction in roadless and unroaded areas.

A Chronology of Events containing additional information and copies of pertinent documents can all be found at <http://roadless.fs.fed.us/xdocuments.shtml>.

### **Vegetation Management EIS**

In September 2002, an amendment to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Vegetation Management in the Coastal Plain/Piedmont was issued, which simultaneously amended the *National Forests and Grasslands in Texas 1996 Forest Land and Resource Management Plan*. This Non-significant Amendment #4 provides direction for the preparation of site-specific Biological Evaluations (BEs) including inventory requirements for Proposed, Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive (PETS) species for the NFGT to make the process of conducting BEs more efficient and consistent throughout the Southern Region of the Forest Service. Further information about the amendment can be found at:

[http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/planning/vmeis/FinalVMEIS/ROD\\_Coastal\\_skm102502.pdf](http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/planning/vmeis/FinalVMEIS/ROD_Coastal_skm102502.pdf)

### ***Publications of Interest***

#### **Forest-Scale Roads Analysis**

In response to a Road Management Policy directive, in 2002 the NFGT completed forest-scale roads analyses for the Sabine and Davy Crockett NFs. These roads analyses will help each unit implement the *Plan* by identifying road management issues, concerns, and opportunities. The analyses were broad in scale and based on the existing transportation system, existing *Plan* resource allocations and direction, and current budget trends. These become guides for more site-specific project-scale analyses to help officials make better decisions on all new construction, reconstruction and decommissioning activities. These Roads Analysis Reports (RAPS) can be viewed on the NFGT website [www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/texas](http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/texas). Analyses for the Angelina and Sam Houston NFs, and the Caddo/LBJ NGs should all be available in FY 2004.

### **Report of the Forest Service**

In May 2003, a report was published highlighting the challenges and accomplishments of the USDA Forest Service during FY 2002. This is a report on the state of the forests in the United States of America and the indicators of national progress toward the goal of sustainable forest management. It provides information to improve public dialog and decisionmaking on what outcomes are desired and what actions are needed to move the nation toward this goal. It also establishes a baseline for future measurement of progress. The indicators used reflect many of the environmental, social, and economic concerns of the American public regarding forests. While the report presents data primarily at a national or regional scale, it also provides a valuable context for related efforts to use the indicators to measure progress at such other geographic and/or political scales as eco-regions, States, watersheds, and communities.

The report is divided into major sections and can be viewed or downloaded by visiting the following website <http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/report/2002/appendix-f.shtml>

#### **The Process Predicament - How Statutory, Regulatory and Administrative Factors Affect National Forest Management.**

The Forest Service operates within a statutory, regulatory, and administrative framework that has kept the agency from effectively addressing rapid declines in forest health. This same framework impedes nearly every other aspect of multiple-use management as well. Three problems areas stand out:

1. Excessive analysis;
2. Ineffective public involvement; and
3. Management inefficiencies.

- Wildfires and forest health.
- Non-native invasive insects and pathogens.
- Invasive plant species.
- Outbreaks of native insects.
- Changing ecological processes.

Shortly after being named to lead the Forest Service, Chief Dale Bosworth appointed a team of Forest Service employees to explore whether national forest management is indeed mired in process. The team reviewed the statutory and regulatory framework for national forest management and examined the agency's internal processes for forest planning and decisionmaking, based on past reports, relevant past and ongoing studies and case examples. In February 2002, the team presented its findings to Chief Bosworth. The June 2002 report is based on those findings. It makes no recommendations – its purpose is simply to set forth the problem. Hopefully, this report will open a dialogue between the agency and interested publics to improve management efficiency while managing our natural resources within the spirit of the law.

For further information, see the web site at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/documents/forest-health-update2003.pdf>.

### **2003 National Report on Sustainable Forests.**

Information about this topic will be published in the FY 2004 M&E Report. This October 2003 national report provides information on the state of the U.S. Forests and the indicators of national progress towards the goal of sustainable forest management. This report will be available on the web at the following address:

<http://fia.fs.fed.us/rpa.htm> .

For a complete copy of the report and its appendices, go to the following web site:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/documents/Process-Predicament.pdf>.

### **America's Forests 2003 Health Update.**

In May 2003, the USDA Forest Service (involving State and Private Forestry and Forest Health Protection) produced a report that provides a summary of current forest ecosystem health issues in America's forests. Five general areas of concern are addressed. They are: