



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Oregon State Office

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Portland, Oregon 97208



In Reply Refer to:

8202 (OR-933)

APR 30 2008

Memorandum

To: National Service First Coordinator
Attn: Jennifer Eberlien

From:  Edward W. Shepard 
State Director, Oregon/Washington

Subject: Service First 2007 Award Nomination

It is my pleasure to nominate the Aquatic and Riparian Effectiveness Monitoring Program (AREMP) for the Fiscal Year 2007 National Interagency Service First Award.

The U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management have successfully implemented a watershed condition monitoring program that has resulted in substantial savings and operational efficiency since 2001. Currently, the program focus is to evaluate the success of the Northwest Forest Plan's Aquatic Conservation Strategy.

Please accept the attached nomination that highlights the success of the AREMP in shared watershed condition monitoring in Oregon/Washington.

Attachment

cc: OR-933 (Kim Titus, Chris Moyer)

Forest Service, Region 6, RPM (Steve Lanigan, Shawne Mohoric, Lisa Freedman)



Aquatic and Riparian Effectiveness Monitoring Program
Steve Lanigan – Team Leader
USFS Region 6/BLM Oregon State Office

Service First 2007 Award Nomination

The Aquatic and Riparian Effectiveness Monitoring Program (AREMP or the monitoring program) is a Service First program that fulfills the USDA Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) monitoring component of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy of the Northwest Forest Plan, a management strategy applied to 24 million acres of federal land in the Pacific Northwest (including the National Park Service (NPS)). The monitoring program assesses the condition of aquatic, riparian, and upslope ecosystems; develops ecosystem management decision-support models to refine indicator interpretation; provides information for adaptive management by analyzing trends in watershed condition and identifying elements that result in poor watershed condition; and provides a framework for adaptive monitoring at the regional scale. In addition, our program will provide watershed condition assessments as land management plans evolve.

By using a Service First approach, our monitoring program results in substantial savings and operational efficiency for the FS and BLM and lets us use the “best of both worlds” to get things done.

- One program meets the regional monitoring needs of both agencies.
- Total costs are greatly reduced (to about half of what the FS and BLM would each have to pay if each agency had a separate monitoring program).
 - Agencies only need to fund personnel for one program.
 - There’s only one set of overhead costs associated with building space and other fixed costs.
- Both agencies provide program funding and our staff is a mixture of BLM and FS personnel.
- We send outreach notices through both BLM and FS recruiters to ensure a diverse candidate pool.
- Our safety program, which is recognized as one of the best in the region/state office, is a combination of FS and BLM safety policies and programs.
- We utilize both BLM and FS national agreements to hire Student Conservation Association interns.
- We converted a BLM Student Career Employment Program (SCEP) into a permanent FS position, and are now working to convert a FS SCEP into a BLM permanent position.



A major strength of our program is that USFS and BLM specialists from local units work together to help develop and refine watershed condition assessment models for each aquatic province

within the Plan area. The models benefit from their on-the-ground knowledge and the specialists gain “ownership” in the final product. Researchers from the Pacific Northwest Research Station and other state and federal agency specialists also participate in these efforts, adding to the rigor and credibility of the models.

BLM and FS data are both used to construct the watershed condition models to ensure seamless coverage of the Plan area. In some cases, one data set covers all federal lands. For example vegetation seral state and canopy cover data come from the Interagency Mapping and Assessment Project (IMAP - a partnership among BLM, FS, state agencies, and private non-profits), which uses satellite images to model changes in vegetation throughout Oregon, Washington, and NW California. We also use FS and BLM agency specific GIS data, such as road location and density, grazing allotments, off-road vehicle trails, and fire (areas burned and fire intensity). AREMP crews collect in-channel reach data each year to assess channel morphology, fish habitat and biological condition of randomly selected streams on federal lands throughout the Plan area.

In-channel monitoring results and watershed condition updates are posted yearly at <http://www.reo.gov/monitoring/>, providing “one-stop shopping” for anyone wishing to use the data for analyses at a local level. Every five years a major analysis of data is completed. Our ten-year assessment (examining 250 watersheds) of watershed condition is posted at http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/publications/pnw_gtr647/) and our fifteen-year assessment of about 1400 watersheds will be completed in 2009. Both BLM and FS use these results to determine if they are meeting the objectives of the Plan’s Aquatic Conservation Strategy. The models are also being modified by FS units to use local data for determining fish sustainability and identifying key watersheds during the Forest Plan revision process.

We also completed and are making available to FS and BLM field units a landslide risk assessment tool, based on topology, roads, and vegetation that can be used for local project planning. We’re helping BLM and FS water quality specialists validate a shade model based on IMAP by collecting stream shade data during our sampling season. This model is being proposed as a tool to determine if we are meeting state water quality standards. Our program is also conducting a pilot protocol for detecting invasive plants and animals at all the stream reaches we sample during the summer.

While it’s sometimes challenging to work with two different budget and personnel hiring systems, the overall benefits to both agencies prove that our Service First program saves money and results in efficiencies that neither agency could accomplish on its own.



Aquatic and Riparian Effectiveness Monitoring Program summer field crew members jump for joy at working for the best Service First Program in the Nation!