

The Terrestrial Condition Framework (TCF)

National Forest Systems



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Project Cost: \$ 60,000 for GIS support

Accomplishments: The TCF assessment will be completed in FY13 to fill gaps in the Watershed Condition Framework. Together, the two systems will provide a basis for prioritizing ecosystem restoration needs.

Internal Partners: National Office, Regional Office, and National Forest staff groups, including Range Management, Watershed, Soils, Wildlife, Forest Management, Research & Development; and, the Remote Sensing Applications Center.

Project Objectives: The Terrestrial Condition Framework (TCF) is being developed to assess terrestrial ecosystem conditions through a process that is objective and consistent for all National Forests.

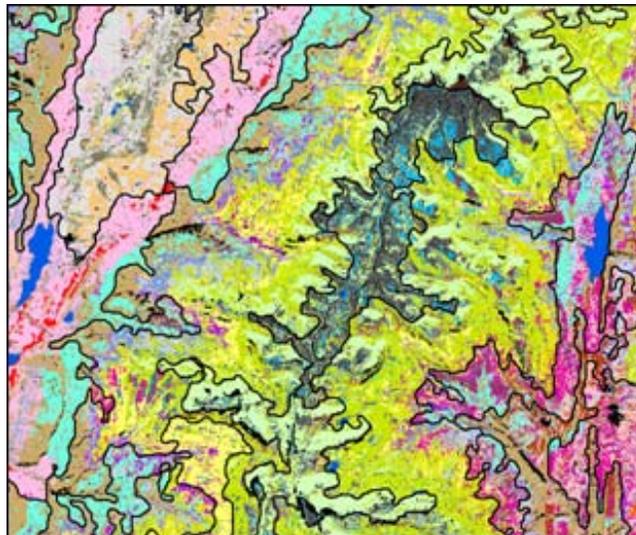
Ecosystem and watershed restoration are goals for National Forest lands. The Forest Service is using the Watershed Condition Framework (WCF) to assess conditions affecting water quality, quantity, and aquatic life. The TCF is being developed as a parallel framework to assess terrestrial conditions, processes, and stressors. Factors that affect composition and structure of vegetation are of particular interest in the TCF.

The process for developing the TCF includes:

- Assembling a nationally consistent set of key indicators of terrestrial conditions using available information.
- Deriving landscape-scale analysis units from spatial information on vegetation, elevation, aspect, and geology.
- Developing data attribute summaries for landscape-scale analysis units.
- Engaging local experts in validation of analysis units and assessment results.

Results of the TCF assessment will contribute to identifying locations where ecosystem restoration activities are needed, and evaluating the relative priority of restoration needs.

In the future, the TCF and WCF systems will be used together to help achieve cost efficiencies by integrating restoration activities in areas where both aquatic and terrestrial conditions are priorities.



Landscape-scale analysis units overlain on vegetation data for the Manti-La Sal National Forest, Utah