

Northwest Forest Plan Interagency Monitoring, 15-Year Report
Socioeconomic Status and Trends
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Objective

The social and economic monitoring program assembles existing data to determine the status and trends in social and economic well-being in the NWFP area. Three key social and economic issues include: 1) the role and quantity of federal timber in the market; (2) federal agency obligations to communities near federal timberlands; and (3) the role forests play, especially federal forests, in local and regional economies. The program tracks demographic data as well as data on agency expenditures and several forest-related resources to display potential trends. The data are not suitable for a statistically valid cause-and-effect analysis linking trends in socioeconomic well-being to natural resource management activities on federal lands.

Methods

Existing social, economic, and federal agency data are used to assess the status and trends in socioeconomic well-being in the NWFP area. Data for population, ethnicity, unemployment, employment, and personal income are charted. Data on quantifiable resource management activities on federal forest lands that contribute to social and economic well-being are also tracked. These include timber, special forest products, grazing, minerals, and recreation. Of all the above attributes that contribute to socioeconomic well-being, employment is one of the foundations. Employment instability can cause severe hardships on individuals and families, as well as distress in local and regional economies. Therefore, employment is weighted as a primary factor determining socioeconomic well-being within the NWFP area over the report period.

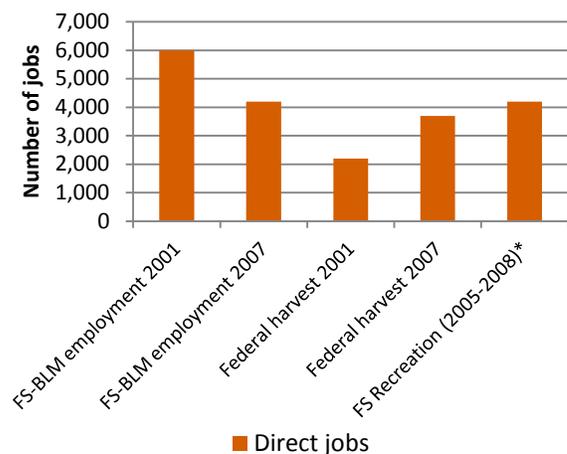
What Is New This Time

As part of the social and economic monitoring program, new research was conducted for the 10-year report to answer questions about predictable levels of timber and nontimber resources and changes experienced by local communities and economies. In March 2006, the Regional Interagency Executive Committee (RIEC) agreed upon new monitoring priorities and methodologies. At the same time, the RIEC developed a new socioeconomic monitoring question that replaced the questions posed for the 10-year report. The new question is: What is the status and trend of socioeconomic well-being? To answer this question, the RIEC specified periodic regional analysis of existing data.

Key Results

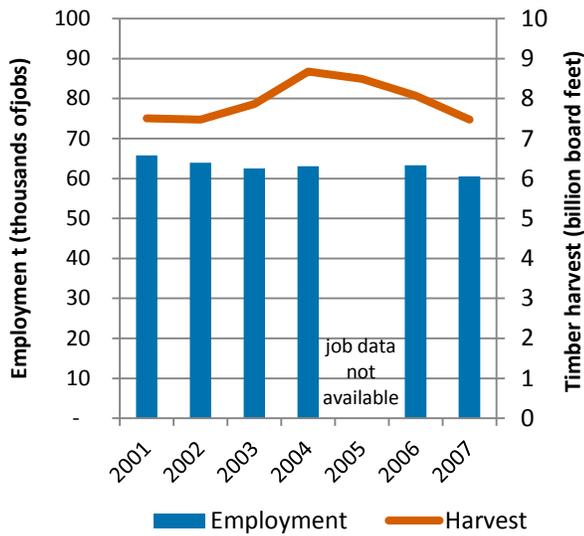
Employment associated with Forest Service and BLM programs contribute to socioeconomic well-being in the NWFP area. Agency employment, jobs supported by agency timber harvest and recreational activities are especially important. Between 2001 and 2007, overall agency employment declined, while agency timber-harvest-related employment increased (fig. 1). Data show that recreation-related employment was substantial during the same period.

Fig. 1 – Employment supported by agency programs in NWFP area



* Survey data were collected on National Forests during 2005-2008. No comparable data are available for the BLM.

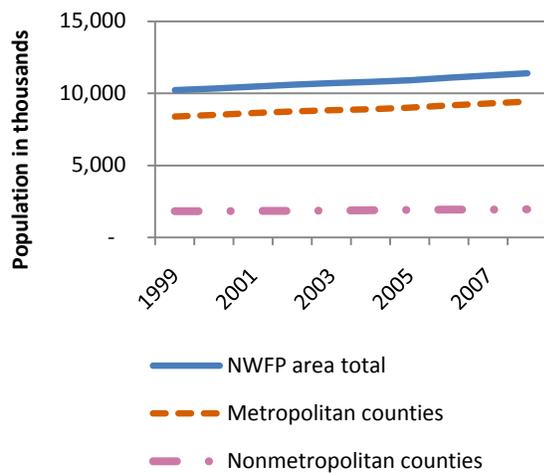
Fig. 2 – Timber-related employment and timber harvest in the NWFP area on all ownerships (2001-2007)



percent of PSQ. Between 2001 and 2007, the percentage of timber harvested on federal lands compared to total harvest on all ownerships increased from 2 to 6 percent.

Population size is often an indicator of economic diversity. Most people in the NWFP area live in counties that the U.S. Department of Labor describes as metropolitan. These counties contain core urban areas of 50,000 or more population. In the past decade, the population of counties that fall into the nonmetropolitan category has increased

Fig. 4 – Metropolitan and nonmetropolitan population change in NWFP area counties (1999-2008)



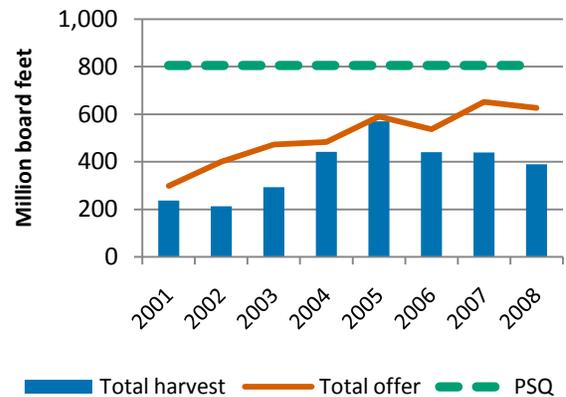
Next Steps and Recommendations

A management review of the social and economic monitoring program is proposed to determine if any changes to monitoring protocols are warranted.

Timber harvest and related employment have been key issues in forest policy discussions since the early 1970s. Total employment in the wood products processing industries, including secondary wood manufacturing and logging, has a history of increasing and decreasing in the NWFP area. Between 2001 and 2007, total employment in the wood processing industries declined overall by nine percent (fig. 2). Timber employment is closely related to timber harvest. From 2001 to 2004, timber harvest levels rose. By 2007, timber harvest declined back to 2001 levels. This decline in harvest can be attributed in part to reductions in timber harvest on nonfederal lands.

Between 2001 and 2008, timber offered for sale on federal lands more than doubled, and timber harvest in 2008 was nearly double that of 2001 (fig. 3). In 2008, timber offered for sale was slightly over 75 percent of probable sale quantity (PSQ), and timber harvest was slightly below 50

Fig. 3 – Total timber offered for sale, timber harvest and probable sale quantity (PSQ) on federal lands (2001-2008)



more slowly than those that fall into the metropolitan category (fig. 4). Nonmetropolitan counties are less diverse economically and more strongly tied to the wood products industry. Most of the timber harvested in the NWFP area comes from nonmetropolitan counties. Although forest products manufacturing employment is about equally split between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties, it accounts for roughly 10 percent of total employment in nonmetropolitan counties and only 1 percent in metropolitan counties. The effects of changes in timber harvest and wood-products-related employment on well-being are likely more pronounced in nonmetropolitan counties.