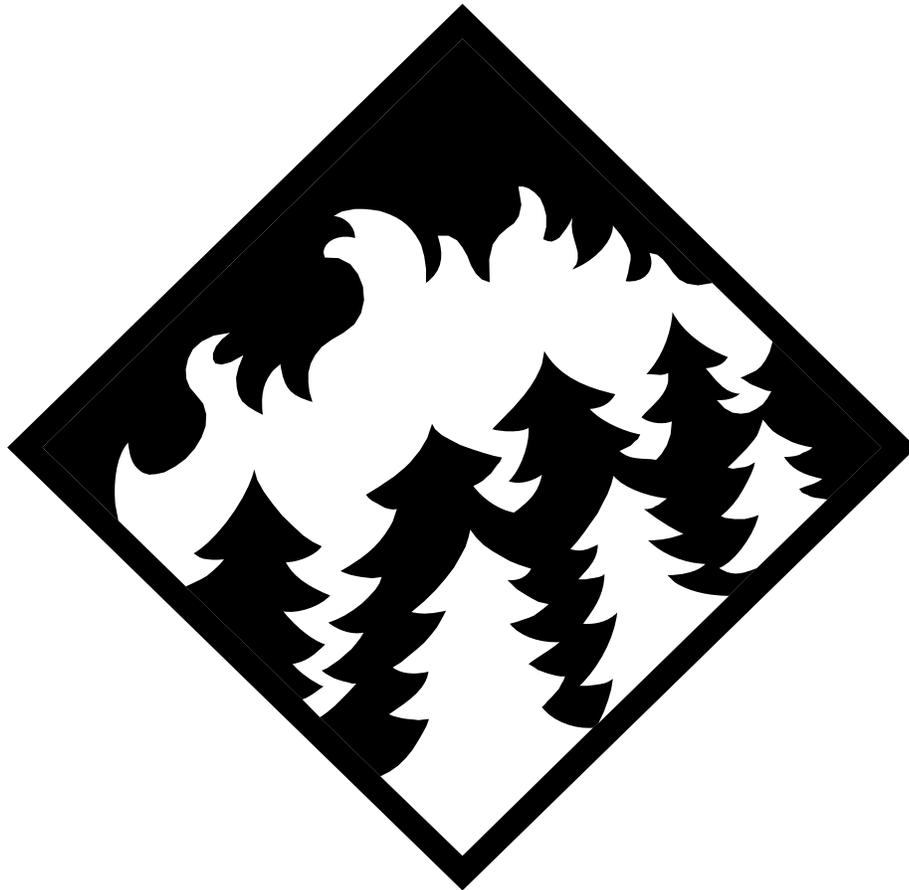


**2007 Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report
National Forests
In Florida**



2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

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2007 ANNUAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT National Forests in Florida

Abstract

Monitoring, evaluation, and research are the heart of adaptive management and are the quality control mechanisms for the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests in Florida (Forest Plan). The National Forest Management Act planning regulations specify that "at intervals established in the Forest Plan, implementation shall be evaluated on a sample basis to determine how well objectives have been met and how closely management standards have been applied. Based on this evaluation, the interdisciplinary team shall recommend to the Forest Supervisor such changes in management direction, revisions, or amendments to the Forest Plan as are deemed necessary." Monitoring elements covered in this report are listed in Chapter 5 of the Forest Plan. Monitoring Tasks are listed under Appendix E of the Forest Plan.

Certification Statement

I have evaluated the monitoring results and recommendations in this Report. I have directed that the Action Plans developed to respond to these recommendations be implemented, unless new information or changed resource conditions warrant otherwise. I have considered funding requirements in the budget necessary to implement these actions.

With these completed changes, the Forest Plan is sufficient to guide forest management for the next fiscal year, unless ongoing monitoring and evaluation identify further need for change. Any amendments or revisions to the Forest Plan will be made using the appropriate NEPA procedures.

This report is approved:

Susan Matthews
SUSAN JEHEBER-MATTHEWS
Forest Supervisor

09/25/2008
Date

Table of Contents

Summary	7
Introduction.....	10
Detailed Monitoring and Evaluation Results and Findings	11
Ecosystem Condition, Health, and Sustainability.....	11
1.1 Monitoring Question: Is the health of natural forest communities being maintained or improved?	11
1.2 Monitoring Question: What are the habitat conditions of the major habitat associations?	41
1.3 Monitoring Question: Are we maintaining RCW populations on the National Forests in Florida?.....	41
1.4 Monitoring Question: What are the effects of the reduced foraging standards on the Apalachicola National Forest? QUESTION REMOVED BY AMENDMENT #3	43
1.5 Monitoring Questions: What are the population trends of scrub jay? How is management affecting scrub jay? How many acres are suitable for scrub jay?	44
1.6 Monitoring Questions: Are we maintaining viable populations of PETS animal species and habitats to support them?.....	45
1.7 Monitoring Question: Are we maintaining viable populations of PETS plant species and habitats to support them?.....	60
1.8 Monitoring Question: What is the burn interval of upland pine acres? In what months have upland pine been burned?	61
1.9 Monitoring Question: How many miles of firelines were plowed for prescribed fire and wildfires? How many miles were restored?	63
1.10 Monitoring Question: How much off-site slash pine has been restored to other types?	64
1.11 Monitoring Question: Are we collecting data on understory structure?.....	64
1.12 Monitoring Question: How many acres have been offered for thinning?	64
1.13 Monitoring Question: How much off-site sand pine has been restored, and to what other types?	65
1.14 Monitoring Question: On how many acres have we initiated uneven-aged management harvests? Is the group selection method producing the anticipated desired conditions in the longleaf pine ecosystem and what are the effects of group selection harvest in longleaf pine?.....	65
1.15 Monitoring Question: How many acres have we initiated irregular shelterwood harvest? Is the irregular shelterwood method producing the anticipated desired conditions in the slash pine forest?.....	66
1.16 Monitoring Question: How many acres of sand pine have had a regeneration harvest?	66
1.17 Monitoring Question: What is the size and distribution of openings in sand pine?.....	66
1.18 Monitoring Question: Have old-growth stands been designated in each community type?.....	69

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

1.19 Monitoring Question: Have land purchases and exchanges met the objectives established in the Forest Plan?..... 70

1.20 Monitoring Question: Are aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems being impaired by acid deposition? Is water quality being maintained? 71

1.21 Monitoring Question: Is air quality being maintained? 71

1.22 Monitoring Question: Which water bodies were fertilized?..... 73

1.23 Monitoring Question: Has soil disturbance been minimized in preparing longleaf and slash pine sites for tree regeneration? 74

1.24 Monitoring Question: What are the effects of cattle grazing on vegetation? QUESTION REMOVED BY AMENDMENT #2 74

Sustainable Multiple Forest and Range Benefits 74

2.1 Monitoring Question: What percent of each type of recreation site (at least 1 swimming, 1 hiking, 1 fishing) is accessible? (Level 3 and above) 74

2.2 Monitoring Question: Are developed recreation facilities providing Meaningful Measures (MM) standards for safety, cleanliness, and service? Do they reflect quality and customer service?..... 76

2.3 Monitoring Question: What system of trails has been designated on the ground, and are they maintained at appropriate levels?..... 76

2.4 Monitoring Question: How many miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail have been certified for public use? 77

2.5 Monitoring Question: Have rivers been recommended as wild and scenic, and what is their status?..... 78

2.6 Monitoring Question: Have wilderness opportunities been increased and has Clear Lake been recommended for wilderness status?..... 79

2.7 Monitoring Question: Has wilderness character been protected?..... 79

2.8 Monitoring Question: Has Natural Area wilderness study area been recommended for release? 79

2.9 Monitoring Question: Is the access process having the desired effect of protecting the resources?..... 80

2.10 Monitoring Question: Are heritage resource sites being evaluated and protected?..... 84

2.11 Monitoring Question: Are the scenic resources being protected, enhanced, and where necessary, restored?..... 85

2.12 Monitoring Question: Do forest visitors understand Forest Service practices and do they value and respect the resource being interpreted? QUESTION REMOVED BY AMENDMENT #2 85

2.13 Monitoring Question: How are we contributing to the socioeconomic well-being?..... 85

2.14 Monitoring Question: How much of each “special forest product” did we give permits to be collected and in what locations? 86

2.15 Monitoring Question: How much timber was offered for sale? 87

2.16 Monitoring Question: Are special use permits in compliance and if not, what actions are taken?..... 88

2.17 Monitoring Question: How many miles of roads have been converted to another use or otherwise closed? 88

Organizational Effectiveness 90

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

3.1 Monitoring Question: Are people satisfied with service from the National Forests in Florida? QUESTION REMOVED BY AMENDMENT #2 90

3.2 Monitoring Questions: How much public participation do we have? Have partnerships been strengthened? QUESTION REMOVED BY AMENDMENT #290

3.3 Monitoring Question: Did we do what we said we would?..... 90

III. Evaluation of Outcomes on the Land..... 91

 Major Findings and Evaluation:..... 91

IV. M & E Action Plan 95

 1.0 Actions Not requiring Forest Plan Amendment or Revision: 95

 2.0 Actions Requiring Amendment or Revision of the Forest Plan: 97

Appendix A: Interdisciplinary Team Members 100

Summary

Implementation of the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests in Florida (Forest Plan) began in June 1999. This report documents the results of monitoring how well goals and objectives of the Forest Plan have been met and how closely management standards have been applied in FY 2007 (October 2006-September 2007), the seventh full year of implementation.

Monitoring elements covered in this report are listed in Chapter 5 of the Forest Plan. Specific monitoring questions are identified and directly linked to Forest Plan goals, desired future conditions, objectives, standards, guidelines and specific regulatory requirements. Every goal, objective, standard and guideline cannot be monitored. Relevancy to issues, compliance with legal and agency policy, scientific credibility, administrative feasibility, budget considerations, and impact on work force all influence monitoring priorities.

Major Findings:

Based on the expected annual average of outcomes for the planning period, most of the monitoring items reflect expected outcomes and are progressing at the rate necessary to achieve the desired conditions, goals, and objectives of the Plan within the 10-year planning period. There are some areas where monitoring indicates follow-up action is needed.

Vegetation Management

Based on the expected annual average of outcomes for the planning period, the vegetation management program through timber harvests needs some follow-up action. The table below summarizes the situation concerning timber harvest objectives and accomplishments through fiscal year 2007.

It is expected that some of the vegetation management objectives cannot be attained under current and anticipated budgets and conflicts with other forest priorities. Priorities need to be established for those treatments that are critical to TE&S habitat restoration and overall forest health.

Detailed discussion can be found under monitoring questions 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.17, and 2.15.

Cumulative Objectives and Accomplishments, FY 2000-2007

Clearcutting Sand Pine for Scrub Jay Habitat	
2000-2007 Objective (Acres)	32,000
Accomplishment (Acres)	20,087
Difference (Acres)	-11,913
Thinning Over-stocked Pine Stands	
2000-2007 Objective (Acres)	41,600
Accomplishment (Acres)	12,985
Difference (Acres)	-28,615
Uneven-aged Group Selection Regeneration Harvest	
2000-2007 Objective (Acres)	26,000
Accomplishment (Acres)	2,810
Difference (Acres)	-23,190

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Irregular Shelterwood Regeneration Harvest	
2000-2007 Objective (Acres)	1,504
Accomplishment (Acres)	0
Difference (Acres)	-1,504
Longleaf Restoration removing off-site slash pine	
2000-2007 Objective (Acres)	9,440
Accomplishment (Acres)	5,229
Difference (Acres)	-4,211
Removing Slash Pine from Longleaf Stands	
2000-2007 Objective (Acres)	6,400
Accomplishment (Acres)	986
Difference (Acres)	-5,414
Allowable Sale Quantity	
2000-2007 Objective (Million Cubic Feet)	82.4
Accomplishment (Million Cubic Feet)	54.1
Difference (Million Cubic Feet)	-27.7

Prescribed Burning and Integrated Fuels Management

Based on the upland pine Management Area 7.1 of 504,583 acres, 76% of this type was burned in the last 3 years (2005, 2006, 2007). In FY 2007, 141,731 acres were burned which is slightly below the average objective of 168,000 acres. Of the FY 2007 acres, 62% of these acres were burned in the winter months, 38% of these acres were burned between March 15 and September 30, and 32% of these acres were burned between May 1 and July 31. Once again, the forests had a significant lack of rainfall and experienced drought conditions for the months of April, May and June.

Use of fire in the longleaf pine wiregrass ecosystem continues to be integral to the restoration of these systems and to recovery of the red-cockaded woodpecker. Both winter and growing season burns are being used in these recovery efforts. Internal and external dialogue continues on the application and use of fire for these objectives.

There is a need to treat more acres mechanically to enhance burning opportunities on the Osceola National Forest in areas with high fuel concentrations. This can be accomplished through the use of specialized equipment to create defensible fire lines especially near private property.

In addition, a greater emphasis on integrated fuels treatment is called for. An example is the use of utilizing woody biomass to achieve Forest Plan objectives.

Detailed discussion can be found under monitoring questions 1.8.

Management Indicator and Proposed, Endangered, Threatened and Sensitive Species

Management Indicator Species (MIS) are selected during Forest Planning to indicate effects of management activities. In general, most populations of MIS for which we have adequate monitoring data are either stable or increasing. Two exceptions to this are the northern bobwhite quail and the sand skink. In the case of the bobwhite, population decline is a problem throughout the southeast related to the loss of grassland ecosystems. The Upland Ecosystem Restoration Project; a multi-agency partnership is working to restore these ecosystems. In the case of the sand skink, the difficulty of monitoring the species keeps us from accurately assessing the health

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

of the population. Our best course of action is to protect all known and potential habitat, which is what we attempt to do.

All Monitoring Reports since 2001 have indicated that there was a need to re-evaluate the list of MIS. Some of the current MIS are difficult to monitor and may have limited utility to indicate effects of management activities. With limited funds and personnel available for monitoring, the Forest needs to be able to develop a cause and effect relationship between major management activities and species that can be efficiently monitored. The 2008 Planning Rule has removed the requirement to include MIS species. These species will continue to be reported until the Forest Plan is modified to incorporate direction from the new Planning Rule.

Proposed, Endangered and Threatened (PET) species are listed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Endangered Species Act requires us to consider the impacts of all federal actions on these species, and to conserve all populations to the extent possible. Sensitive (S) species are designated by the Forest Service, and receive this designation because of their local and/or global rarity. They receive additional consideration during all Forest Service actions, and we are committed to maintaining viable populations of all these species. This monitoring report shows that all PETS species for which we, or a partner organization, are capable of collecting population or occurrence data continue to maintain viable populations.

Detailed discussion can be found under monitoring questions 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, and 1.6.

Route Designation Process

During 2007, the Ocala National Forest implemented designated motorized routes in the former "restricted areas" and completed an environmental assessment in December 2007 for designating routes in the rest of the forest (the sand pine scrub). The Apalachicola National Forest completed its forest-wide motorized route designation process, and an Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice was issued in September 2007. The Osceola NF also completed the route designation process in 2007. Preliminary monitoring of areas previously designated on the Ocala and Osceola National Forests indicate generally good compliance, but monitoring of full implementation Forest-wide has not yet been completed.

Detailed discussion can be found under monitoring question 2.9.

Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers

Recommendations for the four rivers studied in the Revised Forest Plan, as well as the recommendation for Clear Lake Wilderness Study Area to be designated as wilderness, were not carried forward in FY2007. Legislative EISs for wilderness designation or wild and scenic river designation are not carried forward without support from the state's congressional delegation and a commitment to introduce a bill into Congress. Florida's congressional delegation should be contacted for support of a wilderness bill in Florida.

Detailed discussion can be found under monitoring questions 2.6 and 2.7.

Introduction

Monitoring is the quality control mechanism for the Forest Plan. Monitoring elements covered in this report are listed in Chapter 5 of the Forest Plan. The report contains results and findings structured under three major headings: (I) Ecosystem Condition, Health, and Sustainability; (II) Sustainable Multiple Forest and Range Benefits; and (III) Organizational Effectiveness. Under each of these headings, Forest Plan goals, objectives, or standards and guidelines that apply are listed along with the monitoring questions, items to measures, and results.

This report also presents a Monitoring and Evaluation “Action Plan” that outlines actions to be taken in response to the results of monitoring. No single monitoring item or parameter automatically triggers a change in Forest Plan direction. An interdisciplinary, holistic approach is used to evaluate information and decide what changes are needed.

Detailed Monitoring and Evaluation Results and Findings

Ecosystem Condition, Health, and Sustainability

Forest Plan Goals:

- Maintain or, where necessary, restore ecosystem composition, structure, and function within the natural range of variability in all ecosystems, with emphasis on longleaf pine-wiregrass, sand pine-oak scrub, pine flatwoods, hardwood/cypress, oak hammock ecosystems, and other imperiled specialized communities.
- Manage floodplains, groundwater, lakes, riparian areas, springs, streams, and wetlands to protect or enhance their individual values and ecological functions.
- Conserve and protect important elements of diversity such as endangered and threatened species habitat, declining natural communities, and uncommon biological, ecological, or geological sites.
- Manage for habitat conditions to recover and sustain viable populations of all native species, with special emphasis on rare species.

1.1 Monitoring Question: Is the health of natural forest communities being maintained or improved?

Item to Measure: Management indicators (Refer to Tables 5-2 and 5.3 in Forest Plan)

Plants

Results: The monitoring strategy in the Forest Plan prescribes that this item be reported on a five-year frequency in order to discern significant trends in the indicators and management activities. Information on Threatened and Endangered plants which are also MIS species are reported in this section.

Until 2007, data collected for this section was based on randomly located plots. This approach was determined to be impractical due to the cost required to establish sufficient plots to evaluate the effects of management if no management is occurring on many of the plots.

Together, the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), Forest Service and Dr. Doria Gordon of The Nature Conservancy developed methods for monitoring eight federally threatened and endangered plants on Apalachicola and ONFs (Table 1). This monitoring methodology was designed to provide the USFS with a cost effective method of tracking the presence, status, and population trends of Florida bonamia (*Bonamia grandiflora*), scrub buckwheat (*Eriogonum longifolium* var. *gnaphalifolium*), Lewton's milkwort (*Polygala lewtonii*), and Britton's beargrass (*Nolina brittoniana*) on the Ocala National Forest (ONF), and Harper's beauty (*Harperocallis flava*), white birds-in-a-nest (*Macbridea alba*), Godfrey's butterwort (*Pinguicula ionantha*), and Florida skullcap (*Scutellaria floridana*) on the Apalachicola National Forest (ANF). The focus on

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

listed species rather than on Management Indicator Species (MIS) is because the revised Planning Rule no longer requires MIS and the Forest Plan will be amended to reflect this change.

FNAI aided the USFS with monitoring and survey for new populations of seven of these species in the spring and summer of 2007 (Britton's beargrass was dropped at the request of USFS staff). All data collected were incorporated into the FNAI Rare Species Conservation Database in the form of Element Occurrences (EOs). A total of 77 EOs were either updated or generated from data collected during this survey. It is expected that this will be the first of a yearly monitoring effort.

Table 1. Target species

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	FNAI RANK	FAMILY	LOCATION
<i>Bonamia grandiflora</i>	Florida bonamia	G3/S3	Convolvulaceae	ONF
<i>Eriogonum longifolium</i> var. <i>gnaphalifolium</i>	Scrub Buckwheat	G4T3/S3	Polygonaceae	ONF
<i>Harperocallis flava</i>	Harper's beauty	G1/S1	Tofieldiaceae (Liliaceae)	ANF
<i>Macbridea alba</i>	White-birds-in-a-nest	G2/S2	Lamiaceae	ANF
<i>Nolina brittoniana</i>	Britton's beargrass	G2/S2	Agavaceae	ONF
<i>Pinguicula ionantha</i>	Godfrey's butterwort	G2/S2	Lentibulariaceae	ANF
<i>Polygala lewtonii</i>	Lewton's milkwort	G3/S3	Polygalaceae	ONF
<i>Scutellaria floridana</i>	Florida skullcap	G1/S1	Lamiaceae	ANF

METHODS

Field Methods

FNAI staff surveyed portions of the ANF and the ONF for seven rare plant species (Table 1). Field surveys were conducted to update known Element Occurrences, to visit rare plant point locations provided by the USFS, and to find new populations not previously known. Most survey sites were identified by the Forest Service prior to actual fieldwork. Additional areas of potential habitat were identified with the aid of 2004 DOQQ aerial imagery. Field work began in March 2007 and continued through July 2007 in USFS compartments receiving active management, either prescribed fire (ANF) or timber clearcutting (ONF). GPS points and population data were recorded and transformed into shape files. Data collected on all extant rare plant populations included location, phenology, condition, size, habitat characteristics, and natural community type following the Guide to the Natural Communities of Florida.

Data Analysis

All data were later entered as Element Occurrence Records (EORs) into the FNAI Rare Species Conservation Database, either as modifications to existing EORs or as new EORs in cases where new populations were found. Isolated plants are represented as points; larger clusters as polygons based on GPS data points taken in the field. Negative data points, i.e., locations where no plants were found, were recorded at locations where USFS staff had previously observed plants, at locations for existing EORs in the FNAI database, and in areas targeted to search for new populations. Most negative data points represent efforts to locate target species in an expanded search area.

Explanation of Element Occurrences

An Element Occurrence (EO) was generated around each discrete population of these species. For definition purposes, a discrete population (which may include a number of localized subpopulations) is considered to be a population separated from all other populations of the same species by at least 1 km. (This is the standard separation distance set by NatureServe Methodology). There were instances in the existing FNAI database where separate EOs had been mapped even though their separation was less than 1 km (i.e. mapping had been done using an out-of-date mapping convention). These EOs were either 1) merged into a single new EO with several separate (point or polygon) source features, or 2) reclassified as separate sub-EOs (subpopulations) of a new "parent" EO. The decision as to which method to use was often based solely on the ease of implementation. Both methods are used in the FNAI database to represent EOs comprised of multiple parts, which typically involve complex survey histories. Where parent and sub-EO relationships have been established, the primary data reside in the sub-EOs (i.e. the parent serves mostly as an organizational entity).

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Florida Bonamia (*Bonamia grandiflora*)

Florida bonamia is a rare plant endemic to scrub ridges of the central Florida peninsula. The FNAI rank for Florida bonamia is G3/S3, meaning this species is rare, restricted or otherwise vulnerable to extinction within its global (G) and state (S) range. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lists Florida bonamia as threatened.

Florida bonamia grows in a scrub community composed of evergreen shrubs, with or without a canopy of pines and is found on dry, infertile, sandy ridges. The signature scrub species – scrub oaks, Florida rosemary, and sand pine – are common to scrubs throughout the state. Sand pine scrub in the peninsula is thought to burn naturally at intervals between 20 and 80 years. Florida bonamia frequently grows in openings between the scrub oaks and sand pines. This species is found throughout the Lake Wales Ridge, but is most abundant in the ONF where it occurs in 93 stands. Periodic low intensity fires can improve habitat while stimulating flowering, seed set and germination in Florida bonamia.

Several monitoring objectives were developed for Florida bonamia (Table 2). Systematic surveys focused on previously recorded populations (according to USFS data) within or near timber stands clearcut during the past four years to better evaluate the effects of management. Approximately 33 stands were surveyed for Florida bonamia by driving or walking the perimeter and then walking two or more transects across the stand. A GPS unit was used to develop a polygon boundary around extensive populations. Contracted time was insufficient to complete the specified 100 stands per year.

Table 2. Methodology designed for monitoring of Florida bonamia.

Quantitative Objective 1: Frequency of Florida bonamia on stand edges does not decrease >20% from 2006 levels within appropriate habitat at ONF.

Monitoring methods: Annually survey (by vehicle or on foot) the edges of 100 stands within appropriate habitat recording presence/absence of *Bonamia*. The 100 stands should be randomly chosen each year.

Quantitative Objective 2: Determine whether distance from ORV use roads negatively affects *Bonamia* density and whether it recovers when roads are closed.

Monitoring methods: Follow the survival of selected and marked plants on the edges of ORV roads (open and closed roads) paired with plants nearby in interior habitat. In total 100 plants will be followed (5 roads X 2 road types X 5 replicates/road X 2 paired plants). Each plant will be permanently GPS'd with a GPS whose accuracy is less than 1 m to ensure return to the same plant. Interior plants could be flagged if not visible from the road; plants on roads should not be flagged. Annually each plant will be visited and survival recorded. Additionally, a 2 m X 10 m belt transect will be established centered on the focal plant and recruitment will be evaluated within. The number of seedlings recruited within the belt transect is recorded. Interior plants need to be at least 10 m from the road into natural vegetation (but can and likely will be found in gap openings).

Results

Florida bonamia seems to be widespread in the survey area. Plants were found mainly along roadsides and edges of timber stands with mature sand pine (*Pinus clausa*). Some of the largest populations were observed under mature sand pines where the shrubs had been heavily thinned following the previous clearcutting. Clearcut timber stands with unburned logging slash appeared to have fewer Florida bonamia seedlings than those stands burned after cutting. Population sizes ranged from solitary plants to more than 500 individuals. Most points contained fewer than 10 plants.

Negative data

Negative GPS data (Florida bonamia not found) were gathered at nearly 140 points. Florida bonamia was generally not found in the interior of stands with abundant logging slash. Many of the negative data points (clustered in three locations) represent targeted stands where this plant had not been previously recorded. Florida bonamia was not relocated in two stands with USFS population points.

Evaluation

Survey the stand perimeter and include two to three transects across the stands since many plants were found in the interior. The 33 stands surveyed should be revisited in about 10 years or halfway through the stand rotation. Monitoring should focus on plants in the interior of the stands to better understand their persistence as the canopy matures. Initiate Quantitative Objective 2 to evaluate the effects of ATV's on Florida Bonamia.

Scrub Buckwheat (*Eriogonum longifolium* var. *gnaphalifolium*)

A central Florida endemic, scrub buckwheat occupies sandhill and yellow sand scrub habitat. FNAI ranks scrub buckwheat as G4T3/S3, meaning the species is apparently secure within its global (G) range. This particular subspecies is rare, restricted or otherwise vulnerable to extinction across its global and state (S) ranges. The USFWS lists scrub buckwheat as threatened.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

FNAI shows 92 records of occurrences in eight counties from Putnam County south to Highlands County. The USFS has documented this plant in 54 stands. Scrub buckwheat occurs on yellow sand scrub, a community composed of evergreen shrubs and scrub hickory (*Carya floridana*) and is also found on dry, infertile, sandy ridges.

Two monitoring objectives were developed for scrub buckwheat (Table 3). FNAI monitored seven populations of scrub buckwheat from their database as well as 12 locations provided by the USFS. A GPS unit was used in the field to develop a polygon boundary around extensive populations.

Table 3. Methodology designed for monitoring scrub buckwheat.

Quantitative Objective 1: The number of populations (EOs) of scrub buckwheat across ONF remains within 80% of known locations until 2020.

Monitoring methods: Visit 20% of populations each year and document presence/absence. Each population should be visited every fifth year.

Quantitative Objective 2: A change in the number of flowering stems of > 50% will trigger a closer look unless that change is an increase one year post-fire.

Monitoring methods: At each population visited in a given year under Objective 1, a count of the number of flowering stems observed should be made.

Results

Scrub buckwheat was limited to small populations and not found in many previously known locations. It was generally observed along stand edges and in recent clearcuts, with plants occasionally persisting under mature sand pine. Population sizes for scrub buckwheat ranged from one to about 100 plants, generally occurring as clusters of several plants in close proximity.

Negative data

Scrub buckwheat was not relocated at the locations of four previously recorded EORs or at 10 data points provided by USFS. Negative GPS data were gathered at 19 points total including previously known locations and areas in between.

Evaluation

Populations of scrub buckwheat not relocated during this effort should be resurveyed after management actions (i.e., clearcutting). Status, habitat conditions, and management for this species should be evaluated after all populations have been monitored.

Harper's Beauty (*Harperocallis flava*)

Harper's beauty is one of the rarest species in Florida, an extremely narrow endemic found primarily on the ANF in Franklin and Liberty counties, with one recent population located on a St Joe parcel in Bay County. FNAI currently ranks Harper's beauty as G1/S1, indicating that it is considered critically imperiled throughout its global (G) and state (S) range. It is listed as endangered by the USFWS. The historical range and past population numbers of this lily are relatively unknown. In contrast to many endangered plant species, whose ranges have been dramatically reduced and whose populations have declined in size and number, the discovery of Harper's beauty late in the last century suggests that it has always been a very local endemic.

A component of the longleaf pine-wiregrass community, Harper's beauty is typically found in seepage bogs or on the upper mid-slope of transition zones between longleaf pine ridges and

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

cypress swamps or stringers. Occasionally this lily is found along savanna edges bordering stringers or creeks in sparse wiregrass. It grows most prolifically in places where there is little competing vegetation. Soil moisture may be less limiting for this species than competition from other plants.

Approximately 30+ natural sites have been documented, mostly during the last 5-6 years of intensive species-specific surveys. The relative importance of these Forest Service populations for species conservation is enormous. Occurrences extend across twelve compartments. A number of populations are in a precarious seven-mile roadside stretch between Wilma and Sumatra on Hwy 65.

Two monitoring objectives were developed for Harper's beauty (Table 4). Only surveys for new populations of Harper's beauty were conducted. Considerable areas were systematically surveyed to identify potential habitat and, specifically, to locate new occurrences. The survey was conducted in 10 compartments prescribed burned within the past two years. A GPS unit was used in the field to develop a polygon boundary around extensive populations.

Table 4. Methodology designed for monitoring Harper's beauty.

Quantitative Objective 1: The number of compartments that contain Harper's beauty across ANF remains within 90% of known locations until 2020.

Monitoring methods: Visit every compartment where Harper's beauty occurs AND management has occurred (i.e., prescribed fire, timbering, etc.) and document presence/absence in known locations within the compartment.

Quantitative Objective 2: If the qualitative ocular estimate of density in any unit changes (decreases or increases by at least one category) actively look for any coincident activities with a potential impact.

Monitoring methods: In each compartment a qualitative ocular estimate of the density of Harper's beauty plants should be made in each population. After thorough examination of the population by walking through each compartment a density estimate should be assigned. Density categories are as follows: 1-10 plants, 11-50 plants, 51-100 plants, 101-1000 plants, 1001-10,000 plants, and >10,001 plants. Photographs should be taken of all density categories to help calibrate different surveyors and improve consistency. A GPS should be used to mark the boundaries of populations or pictures drawn describing where the populations are within the compartments.

Results

Abnormally dry springtime conditions prevailed during the primary bloom time/season for Harper's beauty. Lower than average field data (numbers of plants, number of flowers, etc.) may reflect significant monthly rainfall deficits in 2007 and an ongoing, six-year drought. This species may also require additional time to recover from prescribed fires. Plants were least common in areas that had burned within the preceding 12-month period. Field counts were typically higher in compartments that were burn-free for two or more growing seasons. Fire is clearly an important tool for controlling woody plant growth that would otherwise crowd or shade out Harper's beauty.

Potential habitat for Harper's beauty was identified and surveyed but yielded no new populations. Survey areas primarily included savannas, seepage slopes and pitcherplant bogs, with special attention paid to transition areas around shrub zones. Harper's beauty was relocated at many previously known locations. Population sizes for Harper's beauty ranged from individual flowering plants to hundreds of flowering plants. Most points contained fewer than 50 plants. The best estimate for total population size within the survey area is 600-800 individuals.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Negative data

Negative GPS data collected at 75 points are condensed into five search areas. Two previously documented populations were not relocated. All other negative data GPS points represent likely habitat that was searched but where no plants were found.

Evaluation

Monitor selected populations of Harper's beauty for several years post burn to develop a clearer understanding of population dynamics and prescribed fire.

White Birds-in-a-nest (*Macbridea alba*)

White-birds-in-a-nest is a rare Florida endemic plant narrowly restricted to four central panhandle counties. FNAI currently ranks white-birds-in-a-nest as G2/S2, indicating that it is imperiled throughout its global (G) and state (S) range. It is listed as threatened by the USFWS. FNAI's database contains 66 occurrence records, 41 of which are found on the ANF. The forest contains the most vigorous populations, with the largest numbers of individuals. Populations extend from the Post Office Bay area to the forest's southern boundary in 12 compartments.

White-birds-in-a-nest is found in patches in wet to mesic pine flatwoods and is quite conspicuous and unmistakable when in flower. This mint most commonly grows along the upper portion of ecotones between pine flatwoods and swamps, wetland stringers, seepage bogs, savanna edges, or seepage zones. It is also sparingly observed on drier sites with longleaf pine and runner oaks, as well as along associated roadsides.

Two monitoring objectives were developed for white birds-in-a-nest (Table 5). Monitoring was conducted in nine compartments following prescribed fire. A GPS was used to develop polygons around extensive populations.

Table 5. Methodology designed for monitoring white birds-in-a-nest.

Quantitative Objective 1: The number of populations (EOs) of white-birds-in-a-nest across ANF remains within 90% of known locations until 2020.

Monitoring methods: Visit every population of white-birds-in-a-nest within compartments where management has occurred (i.e., prescribed fire, timbering, etc.) and document presence/absence in each population.

Quantitative Objective 2: If the qualitative ocular estimate of density in any population changes (decreases or increases by at least one category) actively look for any coincident activities with a potential impact.

Monitoring methods: In each population a qualitative ocular estimate of the density of white-birds-in-a-nest plants should be made. After thorough examination of the population a density estimate should be assigned. Density categories are as follows: 1-10 plants, 11-50 plants, 51-100 plants, 101-1000 plants, 1001-10,000 plants, and >10,001 plants. Photographs should be taken of all density categories to help calibrate different surveyors and improve consistency. A GPS should be used to mark the boundaries of populations or pictures drawn describing where the populations are within the compartments.

Results

Abnormally dry springtime conditions prevailed during the primary bloom season. Plants appeared to delay flowering by several weeks. Also, many aborted blooms were observed, appearing as dried, light brown, unexpanded flower buds. Drought stress resulted in widespread wilting and plants were in a generally poor condition, especially on sloping sandhill ecotones.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

With reduced flowering, vegetative plants were considerably more difficult to locate in the field. Data may therefore reflect lower numbers of plants than actually exist.

Population sizes for white-birds-in-a-nest ranged from individual vegetative plants to hundreds of flowering plants. Most points contained fewer than 50 plants. The best estimate for total population size within the survey area is 600-800 individuals.

Negative data

Negative GPS data was collected at 20 points within known locations and appropriate habitat for white birds-in-a-nest. This species was not relocated at four previously recorded EOs and at eight data points provided by USFS.

Evaluation

Revisit the negative data locations (EOs and data points) next season to evaluate if drought conditions played a role in the absence of the species

Godfrey's Butterwort (*Pinguicula ionantha*)

Godfrey's butterwort is a very narrow endemic species known from 64 occurrences in five central Florida panhandle counties, with most sites having very few individuals. As a group, butterworts are among Florida's rarest plants and Godfrey's butterwort is the rarest of these carnivorous species. FNAI currently ranks Godfrey's Butterwort as G2/S2, indicating that it is imperiled throughout its global (G) and state (S) range. It is listed as threatened by the USFWS. Fifty ARD occurrences extend from north of the Post Office Bay area to the district's southern boundary in 21 compartments. Disjunct northern Godfrey's butterwort sites are also documented. It is likely there are more EORs that have not been placed in the database.

Godfrey's butterwort inhabits open seepage slopes, bogs, transition zones between flatwoods and cypress stringers, depressions in wet pine flatwoods, and savanna edges with sparse wiregrass, often occurring in shallow standing water. This butterwort is also observed along cypress or gum ponds or stringers, and roadside ditches.

Two monitoring objectives were developed for Godfrey's butterwort (Table 6). Monitoring occurred in two compartments and field surveys took place in seven other compartments. A GPS unit was used in the field to develop a polygon boundary around extensive populations.

Table 6. Methodology designed for monitoring Godfrey's butterwort.

Quantitative Objective 1: The number of populations (EOs) of Godfrey's butterwort across ANF remains within 80% of known locations until 2020.

Monitoring methods: Visit 30% of populations each year and document presence/absence. Each population should be visited every third year.

Quantitative Objective 2: If the qualitative ocular estimate of density in any population changes (decreases or increases by at least one category) actively look for any coincident activities with a potential impact.

Monitoring methods: At each population visited in a given year under Objective 1, a qualitative ocular estimate of the density of Godfrey's butterwort plants should be made in each population. After thorough examination of the population by walking through each population a density estimate should be assigned. Density categories are as follows: 1-10 plants, 11-50 plants, 51-100 plants, 101-1000 plants, 1001-10,000 plants, and >10,001 plants. Photographs should be taken of all density categories to help calibrate different surveyors and improve consistency.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Results

More than 170 GPS points were taken for Godfrey’s butterwort. Thirteen polygons were drawn around extensive clusters of points for this species. Population sizes ranged from fewer than five individual plants and occupying an area of less than one square meter to more than 450 plants scattered across an area of fewer than 0.5 acres.

Additional plants were located well beyond the March-April survey window while surveying for the remaining three rare plant species on ANF. Drought stress was observed as early as late May, when the leaves of Godfrey’s butterwort began turning brown along the edges and rosette diameter appeared to decline in size. Godfrey’s butterwort was often found under encroaching hardwood shrubs that have invaded the herbaceous habitat. This species often occurs in exposed soil along small game trails through savanna/seepage bogs.

Negative data

Some areas within the targeted USFS compartments yielded no plants even though appropriate habitat existed. Negative GPS data collected largely represent areas between known occurrences where additional plants were not observed. A few negative points represent novel locations that do not support Godfrey’s butterwort. There were no USFS points that were not relocated in this effort.

Evaluation

It appears that the biggest threat to this species is habitat loss due to encroaching shrub growth. The USFS should continue to push prescribed fire into the ecotone.

Lewton’s Milkwort (*Polygala lewtonii*)

Lewton’s milkwort is an endemic species to central Florida ridges. There are 36 occurrence records from six central Florida counties, beginning in Marion County south to Highlands County FNAI ranks Lewton’s milkwort as G3/S3, meaning this species is rare, restricted or otherwise vulnerable to extinction within its global (G) and state (S) range. The plant is listed as endangered by the USFWS. Ten stands on the ONF contain documented Lewton’s milkwort.

Lewton’s milkwort occurs on scrub and sandhill in ONF. Scrub is composed of evergreen shrubs, with or without a canopy of pines, and is found on dry, infertile, sandy ridges. The signature scrub species – scrub oaks, Florida rosemary, and sand pine – are common. Sandhill is characterized as a forest of widely spaced pine trees with a sparse midstory of deciduous oaks and a moderate to dense groundcover of grasses, herbs and low shrubs.

Field methods to monitor Lewtons’ milkwort were developed prior to field work (Table 7). At the request of USFS, FNAI focused survey efforts on the Hugh’s Island population (monitoring Objectives 1 and 2) and only visited 18 other sites (data locations provided by USFS). A GPS unit was used in the field to develop a polygon boundary around extensive populations.

Table 7. Methodology designed for monitoring Lewton’s milkwort.

<p>Hugh’s Island population</p> <p><u>Quantitative Objective 1:</u> Area occupied by the Hugh’s Island populations of Lewton’s milkwort north and south of FR 10 does not decrease by >20% over any two year period.</p> <p><u>Monitoring methods:</u> Annually GPS the perimeter of the populations at Hugh’s Island north and south of the FR 10.</p> <p><u>Quantitative Objective 2:</u> If the qualitative ocular estimate of density in either of the two Hugh’s Island populations decreases by at least one category actively look for any coincident activities with potential impacts.</p>
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2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Monitoring methods: A qualitative ocular estimate of the density of Lewton's milkwort plants should be made in each of the north and south populations. After thorough examination of the population by walking through and around each population a density estimate should be assigned. Density categories are as follows: 1-10 plants, 11-50 plants, 51-100 plants, 101-1000 plants, 1001-10,000 plants, and >10,001 plants. Photographs should be taken of all density categories to help calibrate different surveyors and improve consistency.

Other Lewton's polygala locations

Quantitative Objective 3: By 2020, recover Lewton's polygala outside Hugh's Island to at least 50 individuals in at least 10 locations.

Monitoring methods: Annually visit and census all known locations of Lewton's milkwort. In the 10 most suitable locations management activities (prescribed fire, hand clearing, etc.) should be performed to encourage reproduction and plant recruitment. If the number of plants counted decreases by > 10% in any of the recovery locations, current management is re-evaluated and fire management is triggered.

Results

The Hugh's Island population is remarkably large and vigorous. Replanting longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) have allowed the Lewton's milkwort population to increase in numbers. Bare ground created by the planting furrows has provided a place for Lewton's polygala seedling establishment.

Lewton's milkwort was relocated at eight of the 18 previously recorded USFS data points outside of Hugh's Island. All were small, isolated populations consisting of fewer than 25 plants and occurring mostly along firebreaks or sand roads. These populations were not vigorous and some could have been overlooked due to their small size and lack of flowers.

Negative data

Lewton's milkwort was not relocated at 10 of the 18 previously recorded data points outside of Hugh's Island. Negative GPS data was collected at 37 points within known locations and appropriate habitat for Lewton's milkwort. Most of the 37 points were in the east side of Hugh's Island.

Evaluation

The sandhill at Hugh's Island should be burned on a one to three year cycle. Frequent prescribed fire is critical to maintaining openings in the dense herbaceous groundcover and could aid in the expansion of Lewton's milkwort. The Hugh's Island population should be monitored the year following burning--this is a modification of Quantitative Objective 1 which states annual monitoring.

All remaining unsurveyed populations should be visited next season. The eight confirmed populations outside Hugh's Island are good candidates for population recovery described under Quantitative Objective 3. The 10 populations not found this year should be resurveyed following management actions.

Florida Skullcap (*Scutellaria floridana*)

Scutellaria floridana is a very narrow endemic found in a restricted range in three Florida Panhandle counties. FNAI ranks Florida skullcap as G1/S1, indicating that it is considered critically imperiled throughout its global (G) and state (S) range. The USFWS lists this species as endangered. Of the total 23 known occurrences, 16 occur on the ARD. Populations are few and disjunct across fourteen ARD compartments.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Florida skullcap is most commonly found in grassy seepage bog communities on gentle slopes at the edges of forested/ shrubby wetlands or in savannas near the edges of included wetlands such as bay stringers. This mint is also observed in the ecotones between mesic flatwoods and swamps or grassy margins of wetland stringers.

Two monitoring objectives were developed for Florida skullcap (Table 8). Survey sites included three prescribed burned compartments. Additional survey areas of potential habitat were identified with the aid of 2004 DOQQ aerial imagery. A GPS was used to develop polygons around extensive populations.

Table 8. Methodology designed for monitoring Florida skullcap.

Quantitative Objective 1: The number of compartments that contain Florida skullcap across ANF remains within 90% of known locations until 2020.

Monitoring methods: Visit every compartment where Florida skullcap occurs AND management has occurred (i.e., prescribed fire, timbering, etc.) and document presence/absence in known locations within the compartment.

Quantitative Objective 2: If the qualitative ocular estimate of density in any unit changes (decreases or increases by at least one category) actively look for any coincident activities with a potential impact.

Monitoring methods: In each compartment a qualitative ocular estimate of the density of Florida skullcap plants should be made in each population. After thorough examination of the population by walking through each compartment a density estimate should be assigned. Density categories are as follows: 1-10 plants, 11-50 plants, 51-100 plants, 101-1000 plants, 1001-10,000 plants, and >10,001 plants. Photographs should be taken of all density categories to help calibrate different surveyors and improve consistency. A GPS unit should be used to mark the boundaries of populations or pictures drawn describing where the populations are within the compartments.

Results

Data collected at nearly 200 points indicate a range in population size from a few scattered individuals to as many as 1,200 flowering plants. Florida skullcap was extremely variable in its flowering, often found in leaf, fruit and flower within the same area. Density estimates are therefore likely to be underestimates because vegetative plants are difficult to discern in the field.

Negative data

Negative GPS data was collected at 34 points within known locations and appropriate habitat for Florida skullcap. Most of these negative data points were collected between known populations. Florida skullcap was not relocated at five previously recorded data points provided by USFS, possibly due to the variable flowering of this species during this year.

Evaluation

Continue annually with the monitoring methods developed.

ELEMENT OCCURRENCES

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

A total of 48 new and 29 updated element occurrence records resulted from this survey.

Table 9. New and updated element occurrences generated as a result of this survey. Parent EOs not included in these totals.

Species	Updated EOs	New EOs
<i>Bonamia grandiflora</i>	1	9
<i>Eriogonum longifolium</i> var. <i>gnaphalifolium</i>	6	1
<i>Harperocallis flava</i>	4	5
<i>Macbridea alba</i>	10	10
<i>Nolina brittoniana</i>	--	--
<i>Pinguicula ionantha</i>	5	12
<i>Polygala lewtonii</i>	1	5
<i>Scutellaria floridana</i>	2	6

DISCUSSION

New population data obtained for most of the target species, together with the monitoring data, will serve as a foundation for future rare plant monitoring. It is expected that this will be the first of a yearly monitoring effort.

Active fire management appears to benefit the four rare species surveyed at ANF. In this limited survey, all four appear to be flourishing in appropriate habitat. Aggressively pushing prescribed fire further down slope toward invading shrubs in the wet prairie ecotone would further benefit several of these species. However, poorly understood recovery intervals for Harper’s beauty following prescribed burning should be further evaluated. White birds-in-a-nest and Harper’s beauty seem to have suffered under the record drought conditions present during the survey period.

The three rare species at ONF were only partially surveyed. The Hugh’s Island population of Lewton’s polygala is flourishing under current management practices. Florida bonamia is widespread and numerous in the areas surveyed and seems to respond positively to management activities which open up the tree canopy. However, the populations of Lewton’s polygala outside of Hugh’s Island and scrub buckwheat appear to be declining under current management practices.

Only a fraction of each target species populations were visited in 2007 as defined by quantitative objectives and monitoring methodologies and further limited by contract length. These data can serve as baseline information only for the populations visited. As the monitoring proceeds (with baseline data collected for the remaining populations and all populations monitored on scheduled intervals) population trends, status, and responses to management practices can be evaluated.

OTHER MIS SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Wiregrass (*Aristida beyrichiana*)

Results: Wiregrass is distributed over all three of the National Forests in Florida and is a dominant or co-dominant of a number of communities. Many of the wiregrass-dominated communities on the National Forests are in relatively good ecological conditions. This indicates they have not been significantly impacted by mechanical disturbance and fire has entered frequently enough to prevent significant encroachment by woody plants. However, a significant amount of the wiregrass communities were converted in the past to pine plantations, or mechanically disturbed in other ways. In other cases woody shrubs, hardwood trees, and species

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

of pine not native to these communities, such as slash pine or sand pine, encroached into wiregrass habitat.

Evaluation: The greatest threat to wiregrass is inability to meet, or approach, the objective of burning on an average three-year rotation. Other significant threats include the use of mechanized equipment in the suppression of fires and the use of vehicles off established roads and trails.

Toothache Grass (*Ctenium aromaticum*)

Results: Toothache Grass, much like wiregrass, is a long-lived perennial bunchgrass that is sensitive to mechanical disturbance and heavily dependent on fire. It is found in mesic to poorly drained flatwoods, wet savannahs, and ecotones between pinelands and wetlands. Like wiregrass, it is not considered to be imperiled, but is an important indicator of the ecological health of the communities of which it is a component. Such communities are known to support many rare plant and animals species and healthy examples are becoming especially rare. The range of Toothache grass includes all five districts of the National Forests in Florida, making it a useful management indicator on all districts.

Evaluation: The greatest threats are inability to meet, or approach, the objective of burning on an average three-year rotation. Other significant threats include the use of mechanized equipment in the suppression of fires and the use of vehicles off established roads and trails.

Sand Live Oak (*Quercus geminata*)

Results: Sand live oak was selected as an indicator of the oak dome communities that occur as inclusions within the longleaf pine islands on the Ocala National Forest, that is, the communities referred to as longleaf pine/turkey oak/wiregrass sandhill communities that occur within the scrub communities of the Ocala NF. There was concern that efforts to maintain and in some cases restore these longleaf pine islands would overlook the oak domes, which historically have been and continue to be important inclusions.

Evaluation: While sand live oak occurs on all five districts of the National Forests in Florida and in other communities as well as the oak domes, it is regarded as a management indicator only on the two districts of the ONF. It may, however, encroach into the longleaf pine/wiregrass communities if the fire return interval is too long. In this case, excessive encroachment by sand live oak would indicate ecological degradation.

Curtiss Dropseed (*Sporobolus curtissii*)

Results: Curtiss Dropseed is a component of the mesic to poorly drained longleaf pine flatwoods. It has been observed on four of the five districts of the National Forests in Florida. Curtiss dropseed is usually a co-dominant species in the groundcover, with such species as wiregrass and saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*). It is a long-lived perennial bunch grass that depends heavily on fire and is sensitive to mechanical disturbance. It is distributed widely enough to be of value as a management indicator on a considerable portion of the National Forests in Florida. Curtiss dropseed is ranked G3 by the Nature Conservancy and is proposed for inclusion on the next revision of the Region 9 Sensitive Species List.

Evaluation: The greatest threats are inability to meet, or approach, the objective of burning on an average three-year rotation. Other significant threats include the use of mechanized equipment in the suppression of fires and the use of vehicles off established roads and trails.

Florida Dropseed (*Sporobolus floridanus*)

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Results: Florida dropseed is a component of the mesic to poorly drained longleaf pine flatwoods communities, flatwoods depressions, wet savannahs, and ecotones between pine flatwoods and wetlands. It is known to occur on both districts of the Apalachicola NF and on the Osceola Ranger District. It may potentially occur on the Ocala NF, but there are no known records of occurrence. It is a long-lived perennial bunch grass, heavily dependent on fire and sensitive to mechanical disturbance.

Evaluation: The greatest threats are inability to meet, or approach, the objective of burning on an average three-year rotation. Other significant threats include the use of mechanized equipment in the suppression of fires and the use of vehicles off established roads and trails.

Pineywoods Dropseed (*Sporobolus junceus*)

Results: Pineywoods dropseed is known from both districts of the ANF and both districts of the ONF. There is some potential of occurrence on the better drained areas of the ONF but there are no records of occurrence on that forest.

Pineywoods dropseed is not considered imperiled, but the sandhill community that supports it is ranged G2G3. The species distribution is broad enough on the forest for it to serve as a management indicator on the sandhill communities over much of the National Forests in Florida.

Evaluation: The greatest threats are inability to meet, or approach, the objective of burning on an average three-year rotation. Other significant threats include the use of mechanized equipment in the suppression of fires and the use of vehicles off established roads and trails.

Xyris stricta

Results: *Xyris stricta*, an obligate wetland species, is a component of the groundcover of the cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*) domes and strands. It is known from both districts of the ANF and from the ONational Forest.

The structures of the communities in which *Xyris stricta* occurs are dependent on relatively frequent fire to maintain a graminoid-dominated groundcover with little midstory development. *Xyris stricta* is thought to serve as a good indicator of the ecological health of these fire dependent wetlands.

Evaluation: According to the Forest Plan, cypress dominated wetland communities are not suitable for timber harvest. For this reason, there should be few impacts by forest service projects to these communities. The greatest threat is the lack of fire entering frequently enough to maintain community structure and composition. Another threat is the use of mechanized equipment in the suppression of fire.

Wildlife and Fish

Southern Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus l. leucocephalus*)

Results: Bald eagles currently nest along the St. John's River on and near the Ocala National Forest and in several locations on the Apalachicola National Forest and serve as an indicator of bottomland forest, floodplain swamp, and lake/pond habitat. In 2007, a new nest was located on the Osceola National Forest, just west of Ocean Pond. Table 10 shows monitoring results for bald eagle pairs on the National Forests in Florida.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Table 10.
Number of Bald Eagle Pairs
National Forests in Florida

Year	Apalachicola. NF	Osceola NF	Ocala NF
1992	1	0	20
1993	0	0	31
1994	0	0	37
1995	0	0	40
1996	0	0	32
1997	2	0	23
1998	2	0	54
1999	0	0	47
2000	0	0	48
2001	1	0	54
2002	1	0	49
2003	2	0	55
2004-05	5	0	49
2005-06	6	0	50
2006-07	5	1	49

In 2006-2007, bald eagles on the Ocala National Forest produced 66 downy young. From these, 61 fledglings were successfully produced. Chicks documented to survive to 8 to 11 weeks are assumed fledged, based on 93% (41 of 44) survival rate of 7-8 week-old chicks documented in: Wood, P. W. and M. W. Collopy, 1995. Population ecology of subadult southern bald eagles in Florida: post-fledging ecology, migration patterns, habitat use and survival (Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission Nongame Project NG87-026. Tallahassee, FL. 111pp.). The bald eagle population on the Ocala National Forest has been stable to increasing for more than 10 years, and the Apalachicola population is beginning to increase. We are especially excited to have a new nest on the Osceola NF.

Table11.
Active Nests/Fledglings
National Forests in Florida

Year	Apalachicola NF	Osceola NF	Lake George RD	Seminole RD
1992	0/0	0/0	19/22	1/1
1993	0/0	0/0	28/19	3/3
1994	0/0	0/0	35/38	2/5
1995	0/0	0/0	36/32	4/3
1996	0/0	0/0	30/32	2/1
1997	0/0	0/0	22/18	1/2
1998	0/0	0/0	47/41	7/3
1999	0/0	0/0	44/52	3/2
2000	0/0	0/0	43/49	5/5
2001	1/1	0/0	47/50	7/7
2002	1/2	0/0	44/47	7/8
2003	2/4	0/0	69/58	5/3
2004	2/3	0/0	47/31	6/5
2005	5/5	0/0	44/45	5/8

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Year	Apalachicola NF	Osceola NF	Lake George RD	Seminole RD
2006	6/3*	0/0	50/33**	
2007	5/no data	1/no data	50/61**	

*Due to time constraints, all 6 confirmed active nests could not be visited at the proper times to determine numbers of nestlings and fledglings. Three fledglings is therefore a conservative count.

**Due to an administrative consolidation, the data will now be reported for the Ocala National Forest instead of separately for the Lake George and Seminole Ranger Districts. In past years, data for nests within 6 miles of the National Forest boundary has been reported. This will no longer be done.

Evaluation: The desired outcome is a stable to increasing number of fledglings produced each year. Prior to 2005-2006, the trend was showing an increase. Number of fledglings is back up for the 2006-07 reporting period. The Ocala trend is confounded by the change in the reporting area. We will have to examine future year's counts to reestablish a trend, but we have no reason to think there is a problem with the Ocala bald eagle population. Because of recovery of bald eagle populations throughout the lower 48 United States, the species has recently been removed from the federal endangered species list by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Forests in Florida will continue to track the species as an MIS and as a Regional Forester's Sensitive Species.

Based on the reliable nesting and reproduction of eagles on the Apalachicola and Ocala National Forests, and the protection of hardwoods and cypress stands provided by forest-wide standard VG-8, viable populations of the eagle are expected to persist on the National Forests in Florida into the future.

Other bird species

Birds, with the exception of the bald eagle, are monitored primarily by the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes and by the R8Bird (off-road) point counts. Each BBS route is 25 miles long; typically along a minor paved road or a natural-surface forest road. Each route consists of 50 "stops", or sampling points ½ mile apart. One useful aspect of the BBS data is that it provides casual (or expert) birders a relative index of how likely it is they will see a particular species of bird along a typical forest roadside, since that's where these data are collected. Additionally, the National Forests in Florida are participating, along with other National Forests in the southeastern region, in the land bird conservation, monitoring, and inventory strategy nicknamed "R8 Bird". The R8Bird point counts began on the Ocala districts with 80 sampling points in 1997, on the Wakulla District with 30 points in 2001, and on the Apalachicola District (30 points) and Osceola in 2002 (30 points). In 2004, the Osceola added 5 points in the northern (Pinhook) portion of the Forest to represent that unique habitat type. Each point samples approximately 2 acres of habitat and points are at least 250 meters (820 feet) apart. Point locations were established based on the protocol outlined in *"The Southern National Forest's Migratory and Resident Landbird Conservation Strategy"* (USDA Forest Service, R-8, Fisheries, Wildlife, and Range Unit, June, 1996). In 2005 the Forest Service Regional Office contracted with Dr. Frank Thompson (North Central Forest Research Station) to analyze the R8Bird data collected to date. Preliminary results from that analysis will be reported for all bird species included in this Monitoring Report.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*)

Results: The bobwhite quail serves as an indicator species for sandhill and flatwoods communities on the National Forests in Florida. Call count routes in cooperation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and other monitoring methods are being used to develop information about trends for this species.

Because the FWC felt that the data was of marginal value, quail call count routes are no longer conducted universally on the National Forests in Florida. Quail will continue to be censused, along with all other bird species, on BBS routes and at the R8 Bird Point Count locations on all three National Forests.

Quail counts from all methods are generally very low but appear to be fundamentally stable on all forests (Table 12). The low densities appear to be in accord with the distribution maps for the area published by the BBS.

Table 12. National Forests in Florida Bobwhite Quail Counts Birds per Station

Year	Apalachicola RD: Call routes, R8Bird,BBS	Wakulla RD: Call routes, R8Bird, BBS	Osceola RD: Call routes, R8 Bird, BBS	Lake George RD: Call routes, Riverside (R8Bird), Ocala BBS	Seminole RD: Church Lake, Tomahawk, Paisley (R8Bird only)
1992	0.28, 0.08	0.54	No data, 0.02	0.2, 0.14	0.6, 2.4
1993	0.19, no data	0.19	0.24, 0	0.6, 0.1	0.9, <0.1
1994	0.18, no data	0.75	0.15, 0.10	<0.1, 0.1	0.7, 0.5
1995	0.23, 0.04	1.01	1.03, 0.08	0.9, 0.18	0.2, 0.3
1996	0.22, 0.12	0.21	0.46, no data	0.1, 0.14	1.0, 0.5
1997	0.33, 0.04	0.26	0.71, 0.08	0.1, 0.12, 0.25	0.8, 0.1, 0.8
1998	No data, 0.12	No data	0.98, 0.08	0.2, 0.06, 0.05	0.3, 0.5, 0.28
1999	No data, 0.22	No data	0.41, 0.18	0.5, 0.04, 0.13	0.9, 0.3, 0.08
2000	No data, 0.04	No data	0.08, no data	0.1, 0.14, 0.1	1.2, 1.1, 0.58
2001	No data, 0.01	No data, 0.97, 0.1	0.02, no data	No data, 0.38, 0.15	0.5, 0.9, 0.25
2002	No data, 0.08	No data, 0.1,0.1	0.0, 0.1,0.12	No data, 0.06, 0.05	0.45
2003	ND,0.47,0.06	ND,0.13,0.2	0.08,0.2,0.09	ND,0.0,0.11	0.0
2004	ND,0.03,0.1	ND,0,0.14	0.18,0,0.1	ND,0.3,0.1	0.2
2005	ND,0.07,0.09	ND,0.13,0.04	0.8,0.09,0.02	ND,0.4,0.1	0.6
2006	ND,0.2,0.05	ND,0.26,0.09	0.9,0.09,0.10	ND,0.33,0.10	0.35
2007	ND,0.2,0.06	ND,0.2,0.09	0.6,0.2,0.10	ND,0.8,0.10	1.0

In 2005 the Regional Office contracted with Dr. Frank Thompson (North Central Forest Research Station) to analyze the R8Bird data collected to date. The graphic below summarizes the Mean Abundance (per point) of Northern Bobwhite from 1997 through 2004 from Thompson's analysis (LaSorte, et al. 2007):

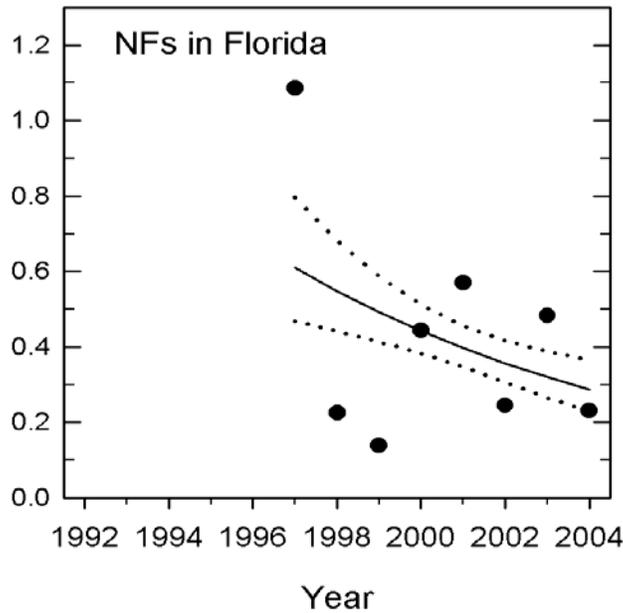


Figure 1. Northern bobwhite quail censused per R8 Bird sampling point (vertical axis), 1997 through 2004 on the National Forests in Florida.

Evaluation: The desired outcome is 7 or more coveys (groups of 6 – 20 birds) per 100 acres of suitable habitat with stable to increasing trend. This target was set in: *Hunter, C. et al. 2001. Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan for the South Atlantic Coastal Plain. American Bird Conservancy. 166pp.* Assuming 2 acres per point, and assuming that there is at least one non-calling bird for every call recorded, the counts range from 0 to 120 birds per 100 acres for all data collected from 1991-2007 (Table 3). Although it is not possible to directly extrapolate from numbers of individual birds seen or heard to numbers of coveys, it is safe to assume that in some areas, the Forests have good quail populations, and in others the population is low to non-existent. Low quail densities on the National Forests are a reflection of low densities statewide. The National Forests are an active partner in the Upland Ecosystem Restoration Project, a state-wide initiative that was established in 2006. This initiative will coordinate and promote habitat management for quail and other early successional species on private and public land and will hopefully reverse the downward population trend for quail and several other species. Through this partnership and partnership with the conservation group Quail Unlimited, the Forests have planned and funded quail management projects on all three Forests. Our data sources do not reflect consistent trends on the forests. BBS maps show a slight downward trend in those portions of the State that encompass the forest, but forest specific data does not appear to reflect any trends with any real certainty. Additional years of data collection at the R8 Bird sample points will give an improved idea of population trend in the future, and project area-specific monitoring projects will help to determine the efficacy of the land management treatments. The data analysis of LaSorte, et al. (2007) shown above as Figure 1 reflects a 10.2% annual decline in the species.

Pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), PIWO

Results: This species is sampled using the BBS routes and the R8 Land bird survey. The pileated is found in all seasons in Florida with primary habitats being mature and extensive forests. It occurs in both deep woods and swamps as well as in rather open and upland forests. It seems most numerous in river-bottom hardwoods. Consequently, this species was chosen as an MIS in the Forest Plan for swamp communities including bottomland forest and strand and dome

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

swamps. On the Ocala, the species also occurs in the longleaf pine and sand pine scrub communities.

Table 13.
National Forests in Florida BBS Routes
Pileated Woodpeckers Counted per Station

Year	Apalachicola	Osceola	Ocala
1992	0.08	0.14	0.04
1993	No data	0.14	0.04
1994	No data	0.14	0.04
1995	0.18	0.08	0.02
1996	0.08	No data	0
1997	0.32	0.12	0.06
1998	0.12	0.12	0
1999	0.12	0.12	0.02
2000	0.14	0.10	0.04
2001	0.22	No data	0.02
2002	0.13	0.11	0.04
2003	0.10	0.15	0.03
2004	0.12	0.14	0.03
2005	0.05	0.14	0.02
2006	0.07	0.14	0.03
2007	0.07	0.14	0.03

Additional pileated woodpecker monitoring has been developed from points established as part of the R8 Landbird Monitoring strategy (Table 14). From 1997 through 2001, 40 points each on the Ocala Districts (Lake George and Seminole) were monitored. In 2001, 30 points on the Wakulla District were added. In 2002, 30 points were added on the Apalachicola Ranger District and 30 were added on the Osceola NF, for a total of 170 points on the National Forests in Florida. Five more were added to the Osceola in 2004, for a grand total of 175 sampling points.

Table 14.
Pileated Woodpecker
R8 Landbird Monitoring - Birds per Point

Year	Apalachicola NF	Lake George RD	Seminole RD	Osceola NF
1997	No data	0.28	0.05	No data
1998	No data	0.18	0.28	No data
1999	No data	0.18	0.25	No data
2000	0.06	0.10	0.13	No data
2001	0.13	0.40	0.23	No data
2002	0.13	0.13	0.10	0.17
2003	0.2	0.17	0	0.03
2004	0.4	0.05	0.18	0.37
2005	0.52	0.125	0.2	0.34
2006	0.38	0.05	0.125	0.37
2007	0.30	0.08	0.05	0.43

Evaluation: The desired outcome is a stable to increasing trend. BBS trend data for the state indicate that this species has been stable to slightly increasing in Florida since 1966. Considered as a separate group, the National Forest BBS routes show a slightly declining trend. Data from the R8 Bird routes is still too limited to make any population trend inferences. The LaSorte, et al. (2007) data show a 7.5% annual population increase for the species, however:

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

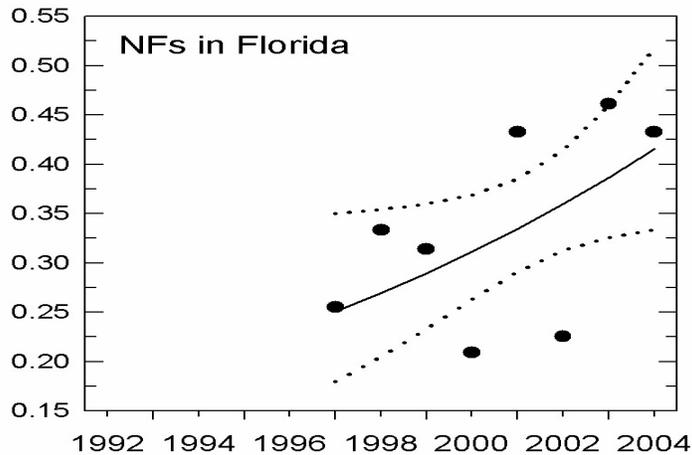


Figure 2. Pileated woodpeckers per R8 Bird sampling point (vertical axis) on the National Forests in Florida, 1997 through 2004.

Forest plan standards and guides (VG-8, VG10, VG-11, VG-12) exclude hardwood stands from management for timber production and will retain large pine trees across the landscape that will eventually become the large snags necessary for pileated woodpecker nesting habitat. Adherence to these standards is expected to retain viable and increasing populations of this woodpecker across the National Forests in Florida.

Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*), PROW

Results: Like the pileated woodpecker, this warbler’s key habitat requirements include swamps or bottomlands. Standing water and cavities in stumps, stub branches, or dead trees are necessary for nesting. The species is a secondary cavity nester; dependent on other species to excavate the cavities it uses for nesting. Because it is much smaller than the pileated woodpecker discussed above, it can nest in cavities in smaller trees; it will accept trees with a DBH as small as 6 inches (*P. Hamel, The Land Manager’s Guide to Birds of the South. The Nature Conservancy, 1992*). This species is a neotropical migrant, wintering south of the United States. It is one of the small number of warblers that breeds in Florida. It arrives in late March to mid-April and departs in mid-August to mid-September. Detections of this species are variable on the BBS routes for the National Forests in Florida. BBS trend maps show a downward trend in Florida, but trends on only the National Forest routes show more stability.

Table 15.
National Forests in Florida BBS Routes
Prothonotary Warblers Counted per Station

Year	Apalachicola	Osceola	Ocala
1992	0.46	0	No habitat on route
1993	No data	0.08	No habitat on route
1994	No data	0.06	No habitat on route
1995	0.58	0.04	No habitat on route
1996	0.56	No data	No habitat on route
1997	0.40	.04	No habitat on route
1998	0	0	No habitat on route
1999	0.56	0.04	No habitat on route
2000	0.46	0	No habitat on route

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

2001	0.34	No data	No habitat on route
2002	0.25	0.05	No habitat on route
2003	0.3	0.06	“ “
2004	0.4	0.05	“ “
2005	0.2	0.04	“ “
2006	0.25	0.05	“ “
2007	0.25	0.05	“ “

Analysis of the R8 Bird data by LaSorte, et al. (2007), however, shows a 21.9% annual decline (Figure 3). Continued monitoring of R8 Bird points in addition to the BBS routes should produce a better picture over time.

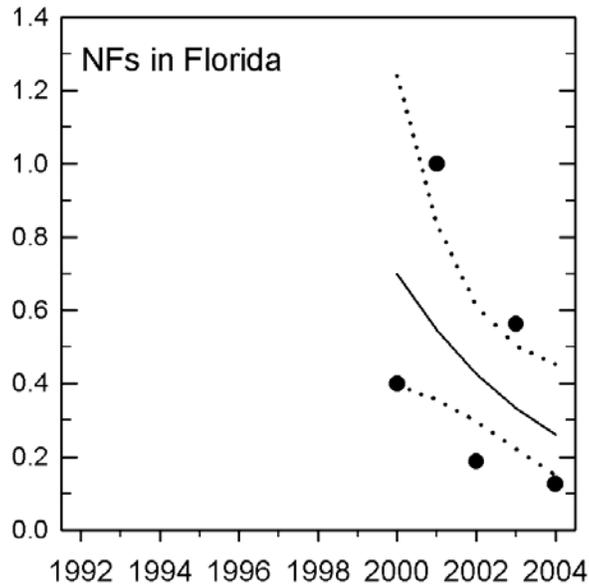


Figure 3. Numbers of Prothonotary warblers detected per R8 Bird sampling point (vertical axis), 2000 through 2004 on the National Forests in Florida.

Evaluation: The desired outcome is 15 or more pairs per 100 acres of suitable habitat with stable to increasing trend. This target is from: *Hunter, C. et al. 2001. Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan for the South Atlantic Coastal Plain. American Bird Conservancy. 166pp.* Data is highly variable, ranging from 0-29 pairs/100 acres (assuming 2 acres per point for data in Table 6).

Southeastern Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), AMKE

Results: The kestrel was selected as an MIS to monitor the health of early seral stage sandhill and scrubby flatwoods. Breeding bird survey route and R8 Bird point detections have so far been limited to the Ocala National Forest (Table 16).

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Table 16.
Southeastern Kestrels Counted per Point

Year	Ocala BBS	Lake George R8Bird	Seminole R8Bird
1992	0.04		
1993	0.02		
1994	0.04		
1995	0.02		
1996	0		
1997	0	0.08	0.13
1998	0.02	0.03	0.13
1999	0.02	0.03	0.13
2000	0.10	0.10	0.08
2001	0.04	0.10	0
2002	0.04	0	0
2003	0.02	0.03	0.08
2004	0.03	0.1	0.05
2005	0.12	0.08	0.03
2006	0.03	0.17	0.1
2007	0.03	0.05	0.03

Kestrel nest boxes are monitored for occupancy on the Lake George RD (Table 17). In 2002, time constraints prevented monitoring of all nest boxes. Thirty new kestrel nest boxes were installed on the Lake George District in 2002. Forty-seven kestrel boxes were built and installed in 2003, but a lack of staffing has prevented monitoring for kestrel occupancy since that time. Previous box checks have shown that 69% of the boxes were occupied by cavity nesting birds: 33% kestrel, 31% screech owl, and 5% great-crowned flycatcher.

Table 17.
Kestrel Nest Box Checks
Lake George RD

Year	Boxes Checked/ Used by Kestrel
1992	127/23
1993	118/16
1994	201/31
1995	154/36
1996	147/31
1997	0/No data
1998	72/33
1999	6/2
2000	77/30
2001	34/14
2002	1/1
2003	Not Checked
2004	“ “
2005	“ “
2006	“ “
2007	“ “

Evaluation: The desired outcome is a stable to increasing trend. The BBS trend maps show a decline for Florida, and that also appears to include the Ocala National Forest. Analysis of the R8

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Bird data by La Sorte, et al. (2007) indicates a 9.7% annual decline. Besides being cavity nesters, kestrels are open area hunters, so the emphasis on sand pine regeneration and placement of nest boxes should enable the southeastern kestrel to persist as a viable species on the Ocala National Forest.

Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), WITU

Results: This species is found on the National Forests in Florida during all seasons of the year. It is rare over much of the coastal plain, but common in bottomland habitats. It is also found in a variety of other habitats including upland hardwoods, mixed forests, and pine forests.

The BBS routes on the Apalachicola National Forest have not been recording significant numbers of turkeys. Turkeys are too wary of humans to be counted accurately using a point count method. Track count transects conducted in cooperation with the FWC have, however, detected turkeys at very low densities. Approximately 200 miles of road transects have been surveyed annually since 1993 for tracks on both ranger districts. FWC staff has developed the following track indices.

Table 18.
Wild Turkey Tracks/mile - Apalachicola National Forest

Year	Wakulla RD	Apalachicola RD
1993	0.17	0
1994	0.02	0
1995	0.10	0.30
1996	0.40	0.20
1997	0.30	0.30
1998	0.20	0.30
1999	0.36	0.25
2000	0.60	0.83
2001	0.17	0.17
2002	0.26	0.0
2003	0.57	0.09
2004	0.63	0.31
2005	No data	No data
2006	“	“
2007	“	“

Trends are rather obscure with such low densities, but this species appears to be stable on the Apalachicola National Forest. Due to personnel constraints, the FWC has been unable to collect track data since 2004.

The BBS route on the Osceola National Forest has not been recording any significant numbers of wild turkeys. As mentioned for the Apalachicola BBS, point counts are not a good method for sampling turkey populations. Thirty-five permanent plots for implementation of the R8 landbird monitoring strategy have been installed on the forest, but it is unlikely these samples will yield any good population information for the same reasons the BBS points do not yield good wild turkey population data. There are no track count indices for this area available from the FWC, although they are comfortable enough with the population that spring turkey hunting has been permitted since 1980. Forest Service personnel routinely report incidental sightings of both adult and juvenile birds but there is not yet any consistent data on this species for the Osceola National Forest.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

The Ocala National Forest monitors baited stations using the methods of: *Cobb, David. 1990. Survey Techniques for Wild Turkeys in Florida. Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Tallahassee, FL. 23pp.*

The Ocala National Forest has also been cooperating with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in determining trends from track counts of wild turkeys. Commission biologists have determined a notable upward trend in wild turkeys on the forest. This trend is reflected by the Commission's decision in 1997 to institute a limited area spring hunt on the Ocala National Forest for the first time. The Commission opened spring hunting across the entire forest in 2000.

Table 19.
Ocala National Forest - Turkey Monitoring Sites

Year	FFWCC Transects with Tracks	Lake George Bait Stations - % Active, birds seen per station
1991-92	24	
1992-93	23	
1993-94	31	55, 0.4
1994-95	84	38, 0.2
1995-96	59	56, 0.2
1996-97	105	43, 0.4
1997-98	142	74, 1.5
1998-99	132	72, 0.4
1999-00	129	54, 0.6
2000-01	134	44, 0.2
2001-02	108	46, 1.0
2002-03	98	67, 3.2
2003-04	68	ND
2004-05	144	ND
2005-06	128	33, 0.3
2006-07	198	ND

The FFWCC turkey track counts have represented a generally upward trend in the number of turkeys on the Ocala National Forest. The 2005-06 data shows a big drop, but one down year is not a cause for alarm. The permitted hunting trend in Table 20 shows Commission confidence in an increasing population trend sufficient to support sport hunting.

Table 20.
Ocala National Forest - Turkey Permits and Harvest

Year	Permits Issued/Harvest
1997-98	400/unknown
1998-99	400/unknown
1999-00	400/unknown
2000-01	1460/35
2001-02	1460/36
2002-03	1460/46
2003-04	1186/34
2004-05	1460/48
2005-06	1460/33
2006-07	1460/38

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluation: The desired outcome is a stable to increasing trend. The wild turkey is present and populations appear to be stable at low densities on both the Apalachicola and Osceola National Forests. Trends are upward on the Ocala National Forest, with population increases such that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission instituted sport hunting on the Ocala National Forest for the first time in 1997. State biologists have not expressed any reservations about viable populations of the turkey on any of the three National Forests in Florida.

Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*)

Results: The black bear once ranged across the state, but is now estimated to occupy only 27% of its former range. Five major populations have been identified including Eglin Air Force Base, the **Apalachicola, Osceola, and Ocala National Forests**, and Big Cypress Swamp.

The Ocala population area includes approximately 2.2 million acres of high quality bear habitat, of which approximately 384,000 acres are in National Forest ownership. The Fish and Wildlife Service noted that the State's 1994 estimate of 125 bears for the Ocala National Forest was too small. This finding appears to be supported by an additional study being conducted by the FWC in cooperation with the Ocala and the Florida Department of Transportation (FFWCC). This study, centered on State Route 40 where it passes through the Forest, reported 252 captures of 204 separate bears between May 1999 and December 31, 2002. Almost equal portions of the Seminole RD and Lake George RD are included in the study area. During the second 6 months of the study, 11 bears were captured in only 20 trap nights of effort. The study area encompasses less than 25% of the Ocala National Forest, and the study area's population was estimated to total between 70-186 individual bears during the summer of 1999. Radio telemetry data indicated that of more than 200 road crossings of S.R. 19 and S.R. 40, only one study animal was killed in a vehicle collision. This occurred on S.R. 40, the highest road kill area for bears in Florida. While the study area is predominantly sand pine-oak scrub habitat, bottomland forest habitat exemplified by the Ocklawaha River system is also desirable bear habitat. A total population estimate for the study area (25% of the Ocala National Forest) for 2003 was made. It reports an estimated population of 138 bears for a density of 2.6 bears/km² (approx. 1 bear/mi²). One bear per square mile is considered by most bear biologists to be a high density for this species in the southeast (SAMAB 1996).

Black bear monitoring has been ongoing on the Ocala National Forest in cooperation with Commission biologists for many years. Track count monitoring is being accomplished annually with the results shown in Table 21.

Table 21.
Black Bear Track Count Indices
Ocala National Forest

Year	Tracks/100 miles
1991-92	24
1992-93	26
1993-94	21
1994-95	39
1995-96	27
1996-96	33
1997-98	44
1998-99	31
1999-00	56
2000-01	67
2001-02	55

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Year	Tracks/100 miles
2002-03	50
2003-04	73
2004-05	96
2005-06	78
2006-07	87

Track counts are not accomplished on the Osceola, however much good information on the bear population is found in the US Fish and Wildlife Service report "Population Ecology of Black Bears in the Okefenokee-Osceola Ecosystem" (USFWS 2002). This cooperative (US Fish and Wildlife Service/Osceola National Forest/FWC/Georgia Department of Natural Resources) study encompassed two study areas, one each in Georgia and Florida. The Florida portion (approximately 100,000 ac) included the southwest portion of Pinhook Swamp, the western portion of Impassable Bay, and adjacent private timber company lands. Private lands predominated. Study personnel captured 79 individual bears in Florida from 1996-1999 and estimated a bear population of 90 – 114 animals at that time.

Six bear deaths were documented on the Florida study area over this period. One death (June, 1999) was a road-kill near Eddy Tower on FL Hwy 2, east of Forest Service lands in Pinhook Swamp. Three additional deaths were the result of poaching. By contrast, the Georgia study area incurred 70 bear deaths from 1995-1999. Legal hunting accounted for 57, poaching for 7 and only 2 were road-killed bears. Bear hunting is legal in Georgia but has been indefinitely suspended in Florida.

The FWC views the northern portion of the Osceola as a desirable area for translocation of "problem" bears from other parts of the state. A moratorium on these translocations was in effect from 1995-1999 so as not to interfere with the Okefenokee-Osceola bear study. Translocations have resumed however, and a new, more specific bear relocation policy has been developed out between FWC and the Forest Service.

Track counts are conducted on the Apalachicola National Forest in cooperation with Commission biologists (Table 22). As previously noted, the Apalachicola National Forest is one of the five major black bear population sites in the state. Due to personnel constraints, the FWC has been unable to collect track data on the ANF since 2004.

Table 22.
Black Bear Track Counts - Apalachicola National Forest
Tracks/100 miles

Year	Apalachicola RD	Wakulla RD
1993	2	3
1994	1	1
1995	1	1
1996	0	4
1997	12	4
1998	16	11
1999	14	19
2000	3	10
2001	2	15
2002	2	10
2003	2	35
2004	16	75
2005	No data	No data
2006	"	"

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Year	Apalachicola RD	Wakulla RD
2007	“	“

While an overall increasing trend appears to be occurring on the Apalachicola NF, FWC staff suggests that these counts should be interpreted with caution. Large annual variability can occur in these counts, and the low numbers of detected tracks constrain interpretation of this data.

Evaluation: The desired outcome is a stable or slightly increasing population trend, and a decrease in nuisance bear complaints. Track counts ranged from 0 to 4 per 100 miles on Apalachicola in 1991-96, and increased to 19 in 1999. Since then, they have fluctuated between 15 and 10 tracks per 100 miles. Track counts averaged 31 per 100 miles on Ocala in 1991-98, and increased to 56 and 67 in 1999 and 2000, respectively. For 2002-2003, the Ocala track count dropped off to 50 per 100 miles. The bear population on the Ocala NF was influenced by relocation of 44 nuisance bears from other areas in 1999-2001. From 1978 through 2004, the FWC received about 8,300 “complaint” calls about black bears. Fifty-seven percent (4,700) of these calls involved bears from the Ocala population. In 2006, the latest year for which FWC data is available, there were a total of 2,149 bear complaint calls statewide, so it is likely that about 1,200 of them were about Ocala bears. The Ocala National Forest is actively working with the FWC and with local citizens groups to educate the public about living with black bears. Educational materials have been produced and workshops and seminars are held on a regular basis. The Forest also participates in the annual Umatilla Bear Festival, a day-long event featuring educational booths, entertainment, crafts, and music, all with the purpose of educating the public about living with black bears. The Apalachicola National Forest is working with FWC and local interests in their area to develop a similar bear education festival in the Carrabelle, Florida area.

Commission biologists and National Forests in Florida personnel expect the black bear to maintain viable populations on all three National Forests. Total black bear numbers across the state, however, are likely to decline as development pressures erode the habitat base for this species on private lands. The National Forests in Florida will become even more important refuges for bear populations in the future.

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

Results: Commission and Forest Service biologists have been cooperatively monitoring this species for many years on all three forests. Track count transects are being used routinely to obtain indications of trends. Due to personnel constraints, the FWC has been unable to collect track data on the Apalachicola National Forest since 2004.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Table 23.
Track Count Monitoring – White-tailed Deer
Tracks/mile

Year	Apalachicola RD	Wakulla RD	Ocala NF	Osceola NF
1992	3.81	7.63	13.6	5.5
1993	2.80	5.72	13.5	4.5
1994	3.11	3.98	14.8	ND
1995	3.10	5.23	13.8	4.1
1996	3.84	4.91	15.4	4.4
1997	6.11	5.08	12.8	6.0
1998	4.90	8.80	10.8	2.5
1999	4.20	8.50	10.5	2.3
2000	3.6	7.4	11.7	4.4
2001	3.6	7.6	10.8	2.9
2002	2.7	9.0	9.6	9.4
2003	2.2	13.2	9.5	7.2
2004	2.2	7.8	ND	6.4
2005	NA	NA	11.1	8.3/3.1**
2006	ND	ND	10.5	12.5/6.2**
2007	ND	ND	NA	7.6/3.8**

NA = Not Available

ND = No Data

** = Still/Dog Hunt Areas

Although track densities are low, twelve years of data show a relatively stable trend for the Apalachicola and the Wakulla, a long term decreasing trend for the Ocala, and an erratic, but generally increasing trend on the Osceola. Commission data show a drop in hunter harvest on the Ocala that appears to parallel the decline in the track count index. Reasons for these declines are unknown at this time, but may be related to increased levels of OHV activity.

Evaluation: The desired outcome is a stable to slightly increasing trend. Deer have remained on the landscape across the decades at varying levels, and a viable population is assured on all three national forests.

Sand Skink (*Neoseps reynoldsi*)

The sand skink occurs only on the Ocala National Forest and adjacent central Florida scrub habitats with loose, sandy soils.

Results: Sand skink monitoring using cover boards or at the permanent study sites (Tables 16 and 17, below) has not been done since 2003 because of personnel constraints. Information reported here is based on data collections from previous years. Little is known about this species due to its fossorial habits. It is a difficult species to monitor, but there has been some success with detection using the cover board technique. Additionally, the forest biologist has maintained a database of incidental sightings of animals or sign since 1969. As a result of the Ocala NF's new access management planning, an intensive monitoring event was conducted on the Seminole RD in April, 2007. Approximately 10 biologists from the Forest Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida Wildlife Commission gathered to survey a large area of the District that has in the past and is expected to continue to receive significant OHV use (the area around Big Scrub Campground). No sand skinks were seen, but several of the "sine wave" tracks characteristic of sand skinks were noted, and we concluded that sand skinks were probably present in the area, but at very low densities.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

The current cover board sampling transects have been established in suitable habitat in several locations, each with a series of 20, 12" square boards laid on cleared, sandy soil. Detections show as definitive "sine wave" tracks under the boards, caused by the skink's "swimming motion". Tables 24 and 25 show the results of past monitoring. Cover boards are monitored in March and April annually, during the peak period of sand skink activity. There are 20 boards each at 3 sites including a scrub site on Seminole RD, an ecotonal longleaf site on the Lake George RD, and a longleaf plantation on the Lake George RD. All 3 sites have known sand skink populations. The plantation had the least activity with 7 detections, ecotonal longleaf was intermediate with 13, and the scrub site had the most, with 19. The Lake George RD longleaf site was used for density determinations in 2000. In 2002, a survey was done of the Pinycastle Bombing Range, and sand skinks were found in a new location there. The number of known sites increased from 8 in 1990 to 32 in 2002. The Ocala National Forest is the northern periphery of the sand skink's range. Population densities are lower here than in the rosemary scrub of the Lake Wales Ridge.

Table 24.
Sand Skink Cover Board Detections - Ocala National Forest
Active Boards or Buckets/Total Boards or Buckets

Year	Lake George RD	Seminole RD
1992	0/302	0/0
1993	0/0	0/300
1994	0/0	0/0
1995	35/567	0/0
1996	38/461	9/40
1997	5/256	2/200
1998	30/344	0/0
1999	0/0	0/0
2000	20/40	19/20
2001	17/40	16/20
2002	0/0	6/20
2003	1/20	0/0
2004	ND	ND
2005	ND	ND
2006	ND	ND
2007	ND	ND

Table 25.
Sand Skink Densities at Study Sites - Ocala National Forest

Year	Lake George RD	Seminole RD
1995	29/acre	No count
1996	14-24/acre	16/acre
1997	3/acre	No count
1998	31-111/acre	No count
2000	25-43/acre	68/acre
2001	No count	No count
2002	No count	No count
2003	No count	No count
2004	“ “	“ “
2005	“ “	“ “
2006	“ “	“ “
2007	“ “	“ “

Evaluation: The current monitoring program for sand skink has shown presence of the species in a variety of scrub habitats, but there does not seem to be any conclusive correlation of sand skink population trends and management practices. They require loose, sandy soils on partially open sites. Intuitively, any activities which compact the soil or allow the vegetation to become too thick (both above ground and below ground) would be detrimental to sand skinks. Because of the difficulty of monitoring this species, its utility as a management indicator needs to be reviewed. Irrespective of the species’ status as an MIS, it’s populations on the ONF should continue to be monitored.

Largemouth Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*)

Results: The majority of largemouth bass habitats of these National Forests are natural lakes, most of which are seepage lakes formed by solution depressions. Since these lakes have no significant surface inflow or discharge, water quality is influenced by precipitation and soil characteristics of the immediate watershed. These lakes are therefore very acid, poorly buffered, and low in nutrient concentrations and productivity. Excavated ponds, most of which were created to provide fill for highways, are managed for sport fishing on the Osceola and Apalachicola National Forests. If left unmanaged, these ponds would also be acidic, poorly buffered, and low in nutrient concentrations and productivity.

A largemouth bass monitoring program has been established on both types of water bodies to determine population trends and management effectiveness. These monitoring activities were designed to compare current conditions with a variety of available data. Lakes and ponds of the National Forests in Florida have been sampled with electrofishing equipment since the early 1980’s. Data collected from these samples are summarized and analyzed to document trends in relative abundance and occurrence of largemouth bass size-classes.

Evaluation: Trends indicated by these data suggest an acceptable level of harvestable and YOY largemouth bass occurrence and an increase in relative abundance in managed excavated ponds on the Apalachicola National Forest. There are no indications of significant adverse changes in the largemouth bass population characteristics of these ponds.

On the Osceola National Forest, the number of samples without largemouth bass is the area of greatest concern. Two of these lakes, North Deerhole and Warmouth, have not supported a

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

largemouth bass population during the course of this evaluation. The two lakes have been fertilized, but have not been treated with lime. One of the ponds, North Deerhole, is often the most acid lake sampled on the Osceola National Forest, commonly with a pH measurement of 3.9.

Again, on the Ocala National Forest, the number of samples without largemouth bass is the area of greatest concern. Largemouth bass populations have never been observed in two of these lakes, Gobbler and Lawbreaker. The two lakes are often the most acid lakes sampled on the Ocala National Forest. Both have recorded pH measurement of 3.9. During periods of low water levels, several lakes were observed to have no YOY largemouth bass, but samples during higher water did indicate bass reproduction.

High acidity is thought to have always been a characteristic of these water bodies, and the largemouth bass has of necessity adapted to these conditions. These lakes are among the most acidic in the United States, and although it has generally been accepted that fisheries are severely impacted below pH 5.0 and are nearly destroyed below pH 4.8, there has never been a documented fisheries loss to a Florida acidic lake. Fish populations of these acid lakes may be more tolerant to acid conditions than the northern fish communities.

Trends observed in these data and concerns for future impacts of acidic precipitation must therefore be given serious consideration. Guidelines in the Forest Plan may not offer an opportunity to engage in proactive management necessary to protect the viability of largemouth bass in the natural lakes of these forests.

1.2 Monitoring Question: What are the habitat conditions of the major habitat associations?

Item to Measure: Acres of each habitat association by major forest type age class

Results: This monitoring item is to be reported at five-year intervals according to the Forest Plan monitoring strategy. This information was first reported in the 2004 Five-Year Forest Plan Monitoring Report.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Provide habitat capability to support an increasing population of red-cockaded woodpeckers (RCWs). The 10-year population objectives are 500 active clusters on the Apalachicola habitat management area (HMA), 250 active clusters on the Wakulla HMA, 151 active clusters on the Osceola HMA, 32 active clusters on the Island HMA, and 12 active clusters on the Paisley HMA. The long-term objectives are 500 active clusters on the Apalachicola HMA, 506 active clusters on the Wakulla HMA, 457 active clusters on the Osceola HMA, 67 active clusters on the Island HMA and 81 active clusters on the Paisley HMA. The objective for the designated recovery populations (Apalachicola Ranger District and Osceola NF) is to have at least 250 breeding pairs fledging young annually. In unrecovered populations, recruitment clusters should equal approximately 10 percent of active clusters, depending on population demographics.

1.3 Monitoring Question: Are we maintaining RCW populations on the National Forests in Florida?

Item to Measure: Number of effective groups; number of active clusters, compartment group survey

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Results: All three forests are continuing their long-standing monitoring of red-cockaded woodpeckers.

Since 1994, the Osceola RCW population has increased from 45 clusters through a combination of artificial cavity installation, internal translocation, and prescribed burning. In 1999, the forest entered into a challenge cost share project with Tall Timbers Research station to update its RCW geographic information system (GIS) layer. Every known active and inactive cavity tree was precisely located with geographic positioning system (GPS) equipment. During 2000, extensive monitoring was accomplished in preparation for translocation, and it was found that eggs were laid at 57 clusters. One-hundred-three nestlings were banded that field season. One male and two female fledglings were translocated within the population to help increase the number of active clusters. Due to wildlife staff vacancies, complete monitoring of RCW cavity trees and cluster status was not accomplished between 2000 and 2002. In 2003, the Osceola accomplished a complete tree status check of all known RCW clusters and re-GPS'ed all known active and inactive cavity trees. The District has made great efforts to keep the data base up to date since that time. The District currently has 100 active clusters (July, 2008) and manages a total of 115 clusters.

The Apalachicola National Forest contains two populations; the Wakulla and Apalachicola. The latter is the only recovered population of the species with 489 known active clusters. The Apalachicola population annually provides fledglings for translocation to other populations in Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama to help enhance their recovery. In 2006, 333 nestlings were banded and 40 fledglings were translocated to other populations. The Apalachicola population has remained stable since the early 1990s.

The Wakulla population currently contains 130 known active clusters. Although this represents a decline of approximately 13% from the 150 active clusters known in 1995 and 30% from the 186 known in 1991, it represents an increase of 10 clusters over 2006. The reason for the long term decline is complicated, but is most likely due to a lack of large trees and regular burning in the flatwoods portion of the District. In the sandhills portion of the District, the population has been increasing. From a low of 2 clusters in 1993, the sandhills population has increased to 23 active clusters. In the early spring of 2004, the Forest worked with the USFWS RCW Recovery Coordinator to develop a more detailed Plan of Work that we hope will give us a better indication of what may be causing the decline. This population is not providing fledglings for the translocation effort.

The Ocala population is the smallest of the four populations on the National Forests in Florida. In 1996 they were down to 10 active clusters. By 2001 there were 30 active clusters. Nine clusters had single birds for at least part of the year, and 17 of 21 (81%) potential breeding pairs nested. A record high of 31 fledglings was produced, of which 13 were banded as nestlings. By contrast, in 2006, the Forest had 53 active clusters and 158 active cavity trees. This population has benefited significantly from translocations from the Apalachicola. Prescribed burning to improve habitat and artificial cavity installation and translocation are all being used to enhance this population. Table 26 shows the trends in active clusters of the four RCW populations on the National Forests in Florida.

Table 26.
Red-cockaded Woodpeckers – National Forests in Florida
Active Clusters

Year	Apalachicola RD	Wakulla RD	Osceola NF	Ocala NF
1991	503	186	44	12
1992	503	182	43	11
1993	494	150	43	13
1994	500	Incomplete	45	10
1995	504	150	51	15

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Year	Apalachicola RD	Wakulla RD	Osceola NF	Ocala NF
1996	504	154	53	10
1997	505	157	51	10
1998	505	125	Incomplete	13
1999	486	125	66	18
2000	486	138	Incomplete	22
2001	488	140	Incomplete	30
2002	486	140	Incomplete	29
2003	485	134	77	37
2004	473	137	84	44
2005	473	104	88	53
2006	489	120	91	53
2007	494	130	100	55

Evaluation: By 2009, the goal by HMA is 500 for Apalachicola, 250 for Wakulla, 151 for Osceola, 32 for Island (LG), and 12 for Paisley (Seminole).

The Apalachicola population is relatively stable, the Wakulla has shown a gradual decline, and the Osceola and Ocala populations are increasing. The steady increase since 1997 on the Ocala is in part due to translocations of young birds from the Apalachicola RD. The number of active clusters on the Ocala has nearly tripled since 1999, but non-paired birds occupy 30% of those clusters.

With the continued emphasis on prescribed burning, aggressive application of artificial nest structures, and our successful translocation program, the viability of the red-cockaded woodpecker is ensured on the National Forests in Florida.

1.4 Monitoring Question: What are the effects of the reduced foraging standards on the Apalachicola National Forest? QUESTION REMOVED BY AMENDMENT #3

Items to Measure: Cluster activity status, group size, nesting success, chicks reaching banding age, and number fledged per active group

Results: Although this question was removed, table 27 presents some of the demographic trend information for informational purposes.

Table 27. RCW population demographics, Apalachicola RD

Year	Potential Breeding Groups	Average Group Size	Nesting Success (Total Attempted/ Total Successful)	Chicks to Banding Age	Fledglings Per Group
1999	480	2.40	200/166	394	1.8
2000	486	2.57	155/112	321	2.3
2001	483	2.55	107/80	218	1.8
2002	480	ND	112/ND	234	ND
2003	480	2.46	109/72	206	2.1
2004	473	2.36	174/131	338	1.62
2005	474	2.53	169/123	331	2.04
2006	479	2.45	178/127	333	2.08
2007	494	2.64	181/140	329	1.94

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Forest Plan Objective:

- Maintain a dynamic system of at least 45,000 to 55,000 acres of habitat capable of supporting scrub jays on the Ocala NF. The 10-year population objective is 742 to 907 groups.

1.5 Monitoring Questions: What are the population trends of scrub jay? How is management affecting scrub jay? How many acres are suitable for scrub jay?

Items to Measure: Scrub jay population demographics, reproduction, dispersion, number of acres in 3-15 year age class in sand pine.

Results: The Florida scrub-jay is federally listed as threatened. It is found only in peninsular Florida, nesting in oak scrub or sand pine-oak scrub habitat. The Ocala is the only National Forest with this habitat type. The jay was selected as an indicator of healthy scrub, since this species nests only in early seral stage scrub. It is quite selective, being limited to open scrub habitats in sandy areas.

Because prescribed fire is so difficult to control in scrub, and because of smoke management issues, timber harvest is the primary management tool for maintaining scrub-jay habitat on the Ocala National Forest. Clear-cutting of mature sand pine regenerates the scrub habitat necessary for the jay. The resulting scrub is generally suitable for nesting for 10 - 12 years. By this time the scrub is typically overtopped by young sand pine, rendering the site unsuitable for the jays. A regular cycle of sand pine regeneration is being employed to maintain the jays across the scrub on the Ocala National Forest. At the end of FY 2000, there were 62,627 acres of sand pine scrub in the 3-15 year old age class. The latest data we have available (Spring, 2007) indicates that we currently have about 50,000 acres of 3-15 year old sand pine scrub on the Ocala, however scrub older than about 12 years does not receive significant FSJ use. The actual acreage of effective FSJ habitat (3 – 12 years old) is more like 35,000 acres.

Forest wide monitoring for numbers of clans (family groups) and individual birds has been done since 1994. The Ocala National Forest surveys approximately 25% of suitable habitat per year by playing a scrub jay call tape and recording number of birds seen per site. An experienced observer interprets the number of groups based on the birds' behavior. New records are added to the Active List and formerly recorded sites are moved to historical status based on survey results. Results are shown in Table 28. Demographic monitoring by Dr. Kay Franzreb of the Forest Service's Southern Research Station began in November 2000 and continued through 2005. It was taken over at that time by personnel from the Ocala National Forest.

Table 28.
Ocala National Forest Scrub Jays
Groups/birds

Year	Lake George RD	Seminole RD
1994	454/no count	245/no count
1995	460/1313	247/694
1996	466/1398	249/693
1997	468/1336	259/774
1998	473/893	272/799
1999	333/893	413/1050
2000	351/1020	412/1048
2001	384/1120	401/969
2002	421/1258	394/955

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

2003	425/1251	355/881
2004	426/1253	354/868
2005	790/2,136**	
2006	786/2,129	
2007	803/2,313	

**Due to an administrative consolidation, the 2 Districts will be reported as a single unit from 2005 forward.

Evaluation: In the ten years from 1994 to 2004 the number of groups increased from 707 to 780 (10%). Data from the 2005 and 2006 surveys show that the increase is continuing. Numbers for 2005 through 2007 show a very slight increase. The 10-year population objective in the Forest plan is to maintain a population between 742 to 907 groups. This objective is being met.

The viability of this species on the Ocala National Forest is insured through the application of sand pine regeneration, thereby creating the early seral stage scrub habitat necessary for scrub-jay occupation. The acres of sand pine scrub in the 3-15 year old age class is within the objective; however, there is concern about potential conflicts between the Forest Plan standard (VG-24) of maintaining 5% of suitable sand pine acres in age class 55-80 and the objective (Objective #9) to maintain 45,000 to 55,000 acres in scrub jay habitat.

An in-depth analysis was conducted on the Seminole Ranger District. Several scenarios were modeled using varying timber harvest rates and including scrub jay habitat in management areas unsuitable for commercial timber production. Given the 5% standard, scrub jay habitat on the Seminole Ranger District levels off at about 19,000 acres. Since the Seminole represents about 43% of the total scrub acres on the Ocala, the District would be expected to provide 43% of the suitable habitat objective, or 19,350 acres – slightly more than the acreage actually available. This scenario is based on the assumption that burning and other disturbances occur as planned in the areas unsuitable for timber production.

Forest Plan Goal 9, Manage for habitat conditions to recover and sustain viable populations of all native species, with special emphasis on rare species.

1.6 Monitoring Questions: Are we maintaining viable populations of PETS animal species and habitats to support them?

Item to Measure: Number of PETS animals or acres of suitable habitat

Results and Evaluation

Birds

Endangered

Mycteria americana/Wood Stork
Picoides borealis/Red-cockaded Woodpecker

Threatened

Aphelocoma coerulescens/Florida Scrub-Jay
Haliaeetus leucocephalus/Bald Eagle

Sensitive

Aimophila aestivalis/Bachman's Sparrow
Grus canadensis pratensis/Florida Sandhill Crane

Florida Scrub-jay, Bald Eagle and Red-cockaded Woodpecker are discussed previously in this report as Management Indicator Species.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Wood Storks are found predominantly in Florida. They nest north to the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia and on rare occasions in coastal South Carolina. During the non-breeding warmer months, they are fairly common over much of Florida. Primary nesting habitats are swamps, tall trees along lakeshores or thickets of trees or large shrubs, mainly near fresh water.

A wood stork rookery has been documented in the SW portion of the Osceola NF, south of I-10. The extended drought since 1998, however, has confounded efforts to determine trends for the species on the forest. On 4/15/04, it was found that this rookery had recently been reactivated, with 25 birds in residence. We do not yet have any data on active nests at this site. To our knowledge, this rookery was not active from 2005 - 2007. Nesting has yet to be documented on either the Ocala or Apalachicola NFs, although they show up in low numbers on the Apalachicola BBS routes.

Bachman's Sparrow populations have declined range wide in recent decades. It favors open pine stands with grasses and scattered shrubs, oaks, or other hardwoods. Maintenance of old growth longleaf with 20-25 foot spacing between trees, and thinning benefits this species as well as the red-cockaded woodpecker. Nesting requirements include dense herbaceous cover interspersed with, or bordered by, shrubs and trees. Forested areas burned between the months of April and August will benefit this bird, by stimulating an increase in herbaceous vegetation. Habitat management done under the auspices of the Upland Ecosystem Restoration Project (UERP), as discussed in the section on northern bobwhite quail will be a great benefit to Bachman's sparrow and other grassland species.

Data from the various BBS routes on the Apalachicola NF; the Ft. Gadsden BBS route, in the southwest corner, the Bloxham route in the north-central portion of the Forest, the Apalachicola route through the central and western portions of the Forest, and the Alligator Point route in the southeastern corner of the Forest all suggest slightly different trend information. Combining of the data shows that while the number of birds seen annually is quite variable, the trend from 1995 through 2005 is declining slightly, with numbers up again in 2006.

Table 29.
BBS Route summary, 1995 - 2005 for Bachman's Sparrow,
Apalachicola NF.

Year	Number of Birds
1995	31
1996	17
1997	22
1998	25
1999	38
2000	29
2001	17
2002	30
2003	17
2004	11
2005	10
2006	29
2007	31

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

The Apalachicola's data at the R8 Bird sampling points show the following for Bachman's sparrow:

Table 30.
Apalachicola NF
Bachman's Sparrow – R8 Bird Points

Year	Total Birds	Points Sampled	Birds/Point
2000	21	30	0.7
2001	43	30	1.43
2002	37	60	0.62
2003	62	60	1.03
2004	32	60	0.53
2005	59	60	0.98
2006	62	60	1.03
2007	44	60	0.73

The Osceola BBS route data suggests that this species is found in low numbers with a declining trend along the northern portion of the forest. R8Bird point data collected in 2002 and beyond will provide information to supplement the BBS data and provide a better indication of the status of the Bachman's sparrow on the Osceola National Forest.

Table 31.
BBS Route summary, 1995 - 2005 for Bachman's Sparrow,
Osceola NF.

Year	Number of Birds
1995	17
1996	0
1997	3
1998	2
1999	2
2000	15
2001	0
2002	20
2003	17
2004	8
2005	7
2006	7
2007	11

The Ocala BBS data are not applicable as an index for Bachman's sparrow because suitable habitat is not well represented on this route. R8Bird point data show Bachman's sparrow to be the second most common species in the Ocala National Forest's longleaf pine sandhills habitat. An average of 1.2 Bachman's sparrows per point were recorded from the 80 points monitored on the Ocala between 1997 and 2007. Assuming 2 acres per point, and assuming that for every

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

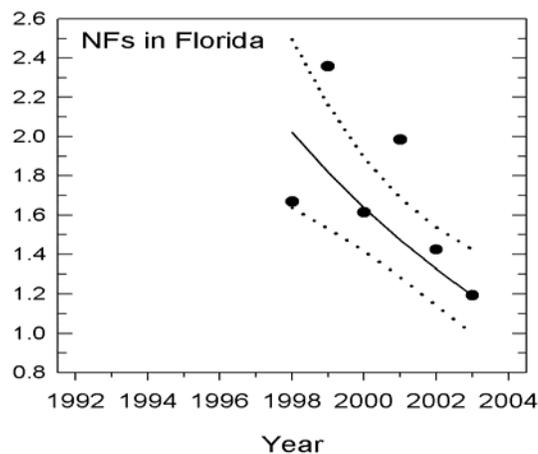
singing male heard or seen there is a non-singing female nearby, the population index averages 120 birds per 100 acres of suitable habitat.

Table 32.
Bachman's Sparrow at R8Bird Longleaf Points, Ocala National Forest
Birds Per Point

Year	Lake George RD	Seminole RD
	Riverside Island	Paisley Woods
1997	.85	1.5
1998	1.65	1.6
1999	2.15	2.45
2000	2.55	1.45
2001	2.9	1.1
2002	2.9	0.93
2003	1.5	0.7
2004	0.75	0.38
2005	1.0	0.7
2006	0.85	0.68
2007	1.1	0.98

Breeding Bird Surveys throughout the southeast indicate a stable to declining survey-wide trend (-2.0 percent average annual change from 1966-2004; 95% confidence intervals: -4.9 to +1.0 percent). The species is of concern because of a loss of fire-maintained habitats due to fire suppression and land-use conversion.

Population trends for the Bachman's sparrow were estimated in four physiographic areas and in six National Forests. Based on trend estimates and 90% confidence intervals where zero was excluded, there was evidence that the number of Bachman's sparrows remained consistent on National Forests in the Southern Region as a whole, increased on National Forests in one physiographic area, and increased in one and decreased in two individual National Forests, one of which was Florida (LaSorte, et al. 2007).



2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Figure 4. Bachman's sparrows per R8 Bird sample point, 1998 through 2004. LaSorte, et al. (2007)

Primary breeding habitat for the **Florida Sandhill Crane** is found in prairies with marsh areas and small ponds as well as open pine savannas with small pools or ponds. Wintering habitat is similar, but they may also be found in drier areas. They can be seen in cattle pastures and along the margins of fresh water. This crane is found throughout peninsular Florida in low densities during both breeding and wintering seasons and is commonly observed on the Ocala NF.

The BBS routes on the NFs in Florida have not been detecting this species. Potentially suitable habitat is found in the savannas on the western portion of the Apalachicola NF and the prairies on the Ocala NF. The Ocala R8Bird points near Lake Delancy in central Riverside Island record the Florida sandhill cranes every year. The extended drought has affected breeding habitats on National Forest lands.

Table 33.
Sandhill Crane at R8Bird Points - Ocala National Forest
Birds Counted

Year	Lake George RD Riverside Island
1997	2
1998	3
1999	6
2000	6
2001	7
2002	2
2003	2
2004	2
2005	3
2006	2
2007	4

Fish

Threatened

***Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*/Gulf Sturgeon**

Sensitive

***Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*/Atlantic Sturgeon (added to list effective 01/01/2002)**

***Alosa alabamae*/Alabama Shad (added to list effective 01/01/2002)**

***Ameiurus serracanthus*/Spotted bullhead (added to list effective 01/01/2002)**

***Cyprinella leedsii*/Bannerfin Shiner (dropped from list effective 01/01/2002)**

***Micropterus notius*/Suwannee Bass**

The Gulf Sturgeon is an anadromous fish which breeds in all the major rivers that empty into the eastern Gulf of Mexico. It is listed as a threatened species because of documented declines in population size in all rivers except the Suwannee River. It is likely that habitat degradation and lost of spawning areas are a major cause of the declines in gulf sturgeon populations. Dams on both the Apalachicola and Ochlockonee river systems prevent sturgeon from reaching historical spawning sites.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Forest Service ownership along the Apalachicola River is limited to approximately 7 miles of the east bank. This amounts to only about 2.9% of the 103 miles of the Apalachicola in the State of Florida. A 1999 survey of the river by USFWS found 321 gulf sturgeon in river reaches just below Jim Woodruff dam; well to the north of National Forest ownership, and no sturgeon as far south on the river as the National Forest ownership. Forest Service ownership on the Ochlockonee River is greater, and amounts to approximately 6 miles on both sides of the river and 25 miles on one side of the river. According to the USFWS, gulf sturgeon is only known from the Ochlockonee from Mack Landing south (to Ochlockonee Bay). That represents about 8 miles of one side Forest Service ownership and about ¼ mile of ownership on both sides. In a recent census (May 2004) they found 115 fish in this stretch of the river. Early in 2003, the US Fish and Wildlife Service designated these rivers, as well as river systems in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi as critical habitat. The Forest Service's relatively minor ownership of the banks and the application of Forest Plan Standards & Guides (VG-8, WA-1 through WA-7), Forest Service management activities are not expected to have any effect on this species. Monitoring and trend information on this subspecies will be obtained periodically from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Atlantic Sturgeon lives in the Atlantic Ocean from Florida to Labrador, Canada. The Atlantic sturgeon makes long migrations, moving south to Florida in the winter. It has been collected from the St. Johns River in Putnam County. It "may have bred in the St. Johns River drainage at one time, although this has never been proved. In any event, reproduction almost certainly does not occur there today" (*Gilbert, C. R. (ed.) 1992. Fishes. Volume II in Ashton, R. (series ed.) Rare and Endangered Biota of Florida. University Presses of Florida. Gainesville, FL 247pp.*).

The Ocala National Forest has ownership of about a quarter of the length of the western bank of the St. Johns River (including Lake George). Due to limited management activities in the zone of influence for the St. Johns River, and the application of Forest Plan Standards & Guides VG-8, WA-1 through WA-7, Forest Service management activities are not expected to have any effect on this species. Any monitoring and trend information available on this subspecies will be obtained from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This subspecies is a candidate for federal listing.

The Alabama Shad occurs in the Gulf of Mexico and enters drainages from the Suwannee River to the Mississippi River for spawning. Due to limited management activities in the zone of influence for the Apalachicola, Suwannee, and Ochlockonee Rivers, and the application of Forest Plan Standards & Guides VG-8, WA-1 through WA-7, Forest Service management activities are not expected to have any effect on this species. Any monitoring and trend information available on this species will be obtained from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The species is a candidate for federal listing. It was added to the revised Southern Regional Foresters Sensitive Species List effective January 1, 2002.

The Spotted Bullhead occurs in the lower drainages of the Apalachicola, Ochlockonee, and Suwannee River systems. In 1978 this species was listed as Rare by the Florida Committee on Rare and Endangered Plants and Animals, a committee of the Florida Academy of Sciences. In 1992 it was eliminated (*Gilbert, C. R. (ed.) 1992. Fishes. Volume II in Ashton, R. (series ed.) Rare and Endangered Biota of Florida. University Presses of Florida. Gainesville, FL 247pp.*). Others were not in agreement with this assessment, because ten years later, the species is a candidate for federal listing. It was added to the revised Southern Regional Foresters Sensitive Species List effective January 1, 2002. Due to limited management activities in the zone of influence for the Apalachicola, Suwannee, and Ochlockonee Rivers, and the application of Forest Plan Standards & Guides VG-8, WA-1 through WA-7, Forest Service management activities are not expected to have any effect on this species. Any monitoring and trend information available on this species will be obtained from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

The Bannerfin Shiner was dropped from the revised Southern Regional Foresters Sensitive Species List effective January 1, 2002.

The Suwannee Bass is restricted to the Suwannee and Ochlockonee Rivers systems of Florida and Georgia. It generally prefers more rapidly flowing water along rocky shoal areas, but is not restricted to these areas. It can be found in large springs and spring runs as evidenced by its presence in the spring fed lower reaches of the Santa Fe and Ichetucknee rivers, which are tributary to the Suwannee.

Reproduction, including nest construction, is similar to largemouth bass. Degradation of water quality or habitat in the Suwannee and Ochlockonee rivers could threaten this species. As with mussels, watershed impacts related to agriculture, urbanization, and water management outside National Forest lands will have the definitive impacts on this species.

Reptiles

Threatened

Alligator mississippiensis/American Alligator
Drymarchon corais couperii/Eastern Indigo Snake
Neoseps reynoldsi/Sand Skink

Sensitive

Gopherus polyphemus/Gopher Tortoise
Graptemys barbouri/Barbour's Map Turtle (dropped from list effective 01/01/2002)
Lampropeltis getulus goinii/Apalachicola King Snake
Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus/Florida Pine Snake
Pseudemys concinna suwanniensis/Suwannee Cooter Turtle
Sceloporus woodii/Florida Scrub Lizard
Stilosoma extenuatum/Short-tailed Snake

American alligators can be found in ditches, lakes, marshes, ponds, rivers, streams, and even brackish water. American alligators can occur in any wetland habitat. American alligator habitat exists on the Apalachicola, Ocala, and Osceola NFs. Breeding has been confirmed on the forests.

Historically, alligators were depleted from many parts of their range because of market hunting and loss of habitat, and 30 years ago many people believed this unique reptile would never recover. In 1967, the alligator was listed as an endangered species (under a law that preceded the Endangered Species Act of 1973), meaning it was considered in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. A combined effort by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state wildlife agencies in the South saved these unique animals. The Endangered Species Act prohibited alligator hunting, allowing the species to rebound in numbers in many areas where it had been depleted. As the alligator began to make a comeback, states established alligator population monitoring programs and used this information to ensure alligator numbers continued to increase. In 1987, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pronounced the American alligator fully recovered and consequently removed it from the list of endangered species. Although the American alligator is secure, some related animals, such as several species of crocodiles and caimans are still in trouble. For this reason, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has listed American alligators as "Threatened because of similarity of appearance", and still regulates the legal trade in alligator skins, or products made from them, in order to protect endangered species that have skin similar in appearance to alligators. The FWC permits alligator harvest in selected areas around the state, and the Ocala Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is the only area currently permitted on the National Forests in Florida. Records of alligator harvest are available from FWC (Table 34).

Table 34.
Alligator harvest, Ocala WMA

Year	Harvest Quota	Harvest
1997	5	4
1998	5	1
1999	5	3
2000	4	4
2001	ND	2
2002	ND	3
2003	ND	3
2004	4	2
2005	ND	2
2006	ND	3
2007	ND	4

The **Eastern Indigo Snake** is a large, docile, nonpoisonous snake growing to a maximum length of about 8 feet, making the longest native snake species in North America. This species is currently known to occur throughout Florida and in the coastal plain of Georgia. Historically, the range also included southern Alabama, southern Mississippi, and the extreme southeastern portion of South Carolina.

The indigo snake seems to be strongly associated with high, dry, well-drained sandy soils, closely paralleling the sandhill habitat preferred by the gopher tortoise. During warmer months, indigo snakes also frequent streams and swamps, and some occasionally are found in flatwoods. Gopher tortoise burrows and other subterranean cavities are commonly used as dens and for egg laying. Eastern indigo snake habitat exists on the Apalachicola, Ocala, and Osceola NFs. Local herpetologists feel that indigos are still present in low numbers on all three forests, but until 2005, no sign of the species had been found on any of the three Forests since a 1998 sighting on the Osceola. In January, 2005, a snake was observed by a Forest Service employee on a road through the scrub, and in February, 2005, a road killed snake was found in a scrub-longleaf ecotonal habitat. In April of 2007, two indigo snakes were seen in the area of a private home adjacent to the Forest near Lake Kerr. We are aware of no sampling method that would help us detect a species that occurs at such low densities, so we are reliant on incidental sightings reported by employees or other friends of the Forests. The Ocala Forest Biologist maintains a database of indigo snake sightings dating back to 1948. The decline of the species is attributed to a loss of habitat due to land uses such as construction, farming, forestry, pasture and to over collecting for the pet trade. The snake's large size and docile nature have made it much sought after as a pet. The negative effect of "Rattlesnake Roundups" on the indigo snake is unquantifiable, but researchers agree that it is real. Both indigo snakes and rattlesnakes utilize the burrows of gopher tortoises at certain times. Rattlesnake hunters often pour gasoline down these burrows to drive out the snakes. While some indigo snakes may be killed by this practice, the actual degree of impact on the population is unknown.

The **Sand Skink** is discussed in the Management Indicator Species section of this report.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

The **Gopher Tortoise** occurs in every Florida county, but is currently most numerous in southern Georgia and the northern and central portions of peninsular Florida. It has been documented on all three National Forests. This species requires well-drained loose soil for burrow construction, low-growing herbaceous forage, and open sunlit areas for nesting. The tortoise is primarily associated with longleaf pine sandhills, but is also found in sand pine scrub, dry prairies, pine flatwoods and mixed hardwood-pine communities. Old fields and roadside shoulders often support relatively high densities. Tortoises are found in relatively high densities on the Florida Gas pipeline right-of-way and in the Munson sandhills on the Apalachicola NF, the Olustee battlefield site on the Osceola NF and in the sand pine scrub on the Ocala NF. The latter forest probably has the highest numbers due to the greater extent of deep, well-drained sandy soils and the early seral stage habitat created by sand pine clearcuts.

There is currently no forest-wide trend information for any of the forests, but revised Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines provide for tortoise protection. Standards WL-10, 11 & 12 provide for burrow protection and safe movement of individuals away from possible harm from management activities. An amendment to the LMP is currently (07/08) being prepared that will bring Plan direction in line with the FWC's newly approved Gopher Tortoise Management Plan. The Forests are approved (by the FWC) recipient sites for gopher tortoises translocated from a variety of private land development sites. We have developed a translocation monitoring protocol to which potential applicants must adhere if they want to move tortoises to the forest. The Forests recently signed an MOU with the St. Joe Land Co. under which we will accept relocated tortoises from some St. Joe developments. The MOU also incorporates a research component.

The **Barbour's Map Turtle** was dropped from the revised Southern Regional Foresters Sensitive Species List effective January 1, 2002.

The **Apalachicola King Snake** has been confirmed in Franklin and Liberty counties. This snake lives primarily along wetland margins of bayheads, creek swamps, acid bogs, savannahs, roadside ditches, dwarf cypress stands, and evergreen shrub communities. Individuals occasionally wander into adjacent longleaf pine flatwoods. Little is known about the life history and ecology of this snake. Food probably consists of snakes, amphibians, eggs of ground-nesting birds and turtles, and rodents. There is no Forest Service data on population trends.

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory has confirmed **Florida Pine Snake** in counties that encompass portions of all three NFs in Florida. The statewide range of the snake extends from the Florida panhandle east across north Florida and south to Lake Okeechobee. Habitat includes longleaf pine – xerophytic oak woodlands, sand pine scrub, well-drained pine flatwoods and sandhill sites. There is little information on this species, but it has been described as being extremely fossorial. It particularly seeks out the tunnel systems of pocket gophers, and the burrows of gopher tortoises to a lesser extent. Prescribed fire is recommended as a habitat management tool to insure the survival of this species.

Gopher tortoise Standards WL-10, 11 & 12 as well as the Forest-wide objective to burn all burnable acres on a three-year average should enable the pine snake to persist on the forest. There is no forest wide population and trend data on this species.

The **Suwannee Cooter** is a river turtle. In Florida, the river cooters are restricted to rivers, spring runs, and associated backwaters and impoundments that drain into the Gulf of Mexico. They are herbivorous, feeding principally on aquatic vegetation. They rarely venture onto land except to nest -- a behavior that probably takes place within a relatively short distance of the water (hundreds of yards). Most nesting occurs from April through early August. *Pseudemys*

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

concinna suwanniensis is a subspecies found from the Tampa Bay region northwestward to the Apalachicola River, and has been confirmed in Leon, Wakulla, Franklin, and Liberty counties.

Threats to this species include over harvesting for human consumption as well as habitat degradation caused by impoundments, dredging, and pollution. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has established legal harvest limits for this species, which offers protections from excessive harvest. Current management standards (VG-8) in the forest plan direct that hardwood & cypress stands will not be managed for timber production. This offers habitat protection in those areas encompassed by National Forest ownership. Due to this protection, the cooter is low priority for monitoring and inventory. As with the Barbour's map turtle, we will rely on the latest information available from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Florida Natural Areas Inventory for species trend information.

The Florida Scrub Lizard is found on the Ocala NF with a few records adjacent to the northern and southern borders of the Ocala NF. It prefers open sandy areas bordering sand pine scrub and sandhill associations, and could be described as a forest edge species. Habitat loss is the biggest threat to the scrub lizard. Scrub-jay management and sand pine management as prescribed in the Forest Plan will sustain forest edge in sand pine habitats on the Ocala. There is no forest wide population and trend data on this species, though several studies have been done in the Ocala National Forest that determined scrub lizard population densities under varying habitat conditions. Not surprisingly, the highest population densities are found in areas of open sand pine scrub with a high degree of sandy edge habitat.

Little is known of the life history and ecology of the **Short-tailed Snake**. It is a burrower, seldom seen above ground except in the spring and fall (April and October). It is restricted chiefly to long-leaf pine – turkey oak associations, but is occasionally found in sand pine scrub. Its original range appears to include only the Ocala NF, which contains one of the largest remaining blocks of appropriate habitat. The Ocala Forest Biologist maintains records on short-tail snake observations. Her database has records dating from 1974, and the last record she has was April, 2004. Management Objectives and Standards and Guidelines for the red-cockaded woodpecker in the Forest Plan will also provide protection for this species. There is no forest wide population and trend data on this species.

Amphibians

Threatened

***Ambystoma cingulatum*/Flatwoods Salamander**

Sensitive

***Amphiuma pholeter*/One-toed Amphiuma (added to list effective 01/01/2002)**

***Desmognathus apalachicola*/Apalachicola Dusky Salamander (added 01/01/2002)**

***Notophthalmus perstriatus*/Striped Newt**

***Rana capito aesopus*/Florida Gopher Frog (dropped from list effective 01/01/2002)**

Adult **Flatwoods Salamanders** spend most of their lives in pine flatwoods-wiregrass uplands. Breeding takes place in isolated ephemeral ponds within the flatwoods-wiregrass matrix, typically open cypress or bay domes with well-established grassy vegetation in the water. The adults migrate to and from the breeding ponds, sometimes traveling over a mile from the pond. Adults have been observed crossing paved highways and dirt roads during migration. By analogy with similar species, the adults can be expected to spend the majority of their time underground, or at least under leaf litter. It is assumed that adults are dependent on the thick ground cover provided by fire maintained wiregrass communities, especially during breeding migrations. Optimum habitat is open, mesic woodlands of pine flatwoods maintained by frequent fires

The flatwoods salamander is found in the Apalachicola National Forest and in one compartment on the Osceola National Forest. The known breeding ponds on the Apalachicola National Forest

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

are in the Apalachicola Savannahs land-type association. The Apalachicola National Forest flatwoods salamander population is being studied in a cooperative project with the Forest, The Nature Conservancy, and the FWC as partners. Even though the principal investigator is hampered by dry weather (see discussion below), she has discovered a number of previously unknown potential breeding ponds. One concentration of flatwoods salamanders has virtually disappeared from the Forest, apparently as the result of heavy site preparation (chopping and bedding) in and around breeding ponds on nearby private land. They may have also suffered from mortality while crossing a highway between the breeding ponds and the Forest. No breeding ponds for the flatwoods salamander have been confirmed on the Ocala NF, which lacks suitable habitat.

There is some concern that prescribed burning may have a lower tendency to burn through temporary ponds than does natural wildfire. It is possible that failure to reduce the duff layer in ponds may slowly reduce reproductive habitat for flatwoods salamanders. Extensive surveys for the flatwoods salamander have only been possible occasionally since Florida's extended drought began in 1998, because most breeding ponds have been dry. Because the species has only been found in a single location on the Osceola NF there are viability concerns for that population. The metapopulation on the Apalachicola is secure, however. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is in the process of finalizing Critical Habitat designation for this species. Although this designation will provide additional protection for the flatwoods salamander, it won't require significant change in National Forest management.

The **One-toed Amphiuma** inhabits mucky soils in alluvial swamps and floodplain streams in the Florida and Alabama panhandles and the northern Gulf coast of Florida. Only 30 occurrences are known. This species was added to the Sensitive list effective 01/01/2002.

The **Apalachicola Dusky Salamander** inhabits forested ravines and mucky floodplain and bottomland forests. They occur in Florida, Alabama, and Georgia. This species has been confirmed in Bradwell Bay Wilderness Area in the Apalachicola National Forest.

The **Striped Newt** is rare and localized in occurrence. They breed in isolated ponds in flatwoods, longleaf pine sandhills, and sand pine scrub habitats. Recent surveys have located only 32 breeding ponds in the entire geographic range of the striped newt - 17 of which are on the Apalachicola National Forest. All of the known breeding ponds on the Apalachicola National Forest are in the Munson Sandhills. Temporary ponds are being degraded by mud bogging throughout the urban interface zone, which includes all of the Munson Sandhills. A large area was closed to vehicular traffic in 2003 because of the damage being caused by mud bogging. The adult (eft stage) newts travel into the uplands surrounding the breeding ponds. Almost nothing is known about their biology in the uplands except they may travel considerable distances (at least half a mile and perhaps up to a mile and a quarter). A striped newt survey of 132 ponds in the Ocala National Forest in 1993 confirmed the striped newt in only one pond near Lake Delancy. The newts were neotenic (adults remained aquatic instead of metamorphosing to the terrestrial form). However, a 13-year study of 8 ponds in Norwalk and Salt Springs Islands by Dr. Katie Greenberg of the Southeastern Research Station confirmed newts in all 8 ponds. This study showed that newts may occur in any isolated pond in suitable habitat, but that several years of monitoring may be needed to catch the cyclical and eruptive pattern of newt reproduction (Table 35). This study confirmed the presence of terrestrial efts in the Ocala National Forest population, which was previously assumed entirely neotenic.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Table 35.
Ocala NF Pond Monitoring
Number of ponds with records, Total number captured

Year	Striped Newts	Gopher Frogs	Round-tailed Muskrat	Scrub Lizard
1994	4, 15	7, 46	4, 6	ND
1995	4, 4	8, 441	2, 4	ND
1996	4, 10	8, 240	0, 0	ND
1997	6, 94	7, 58	3, 3	ND
1998	7, 777	8, 655	0, 0	ND
1999	8, 876	4, 8	3, 3	ND
2000	7, 264	5, 7	1, 1	ND
2001	6, 101	7, 33	1, 1	ND
2002	8,37	8,89	1,1	5,9
2003	1,13	8,107	0,0	ND
2004	3,33	6,72	3,4	3,5
2005	1,3	5,216	0	1,1
2006	NA,88	NA,187	NA,1	NA,4
2007	NA,62	NA,12	NA,0	NA,5

Florida Gopher Frog was dropped from the revised Regional Forester's sensitive list effective January 1, 2002.

Mammals

Endangered

Felis concolor coryii/Florida Panther

Myotis grisescens/Gray Bat

Trichechus manatus latirostris/Florida Manatee or West Indian Manatee

Sensitive

Corynorhinus rafinesquii/Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat (added to list effective 01/01/2002)

Mustela frenata peninsulæ/Florida Long-tailed Weasel (dropped from list 01/01/2002)

Neofiber alleni/Round-tailed Muskrat

Podomys floridanus/Florida Mouse

Sciurus niger shermani/Sherman's Fox Squirrel

Ursus americanus floridanus/Florida Black Bear

The **Florida Panther** is a large, long-tailed felid with a great deal of color variation: pale brown or rusty upper parts; dull white or buffy under parts; and tail tip, back of ears, and sides of nose are dark brown or blackish. The only known self-sustaining population occurs in south Florida, generally within the Big Cypress Swamp physiographic region and centered in Collier and Hendry Counties. Currently, the wild population is estimated at 80 to 90 adult animals.

In general, panther population centers are in large remote tracts with adequate prey, cover, and reduced levels of disturbance. There are currently no known Florida panthers using National Forest lands. The Apalachicola and Osceola NFs are potential reintroduction sites (Thatcher et al. 2006). The Osceola was used in the mid-1990's as a reintroduction test site when sterile western cougars were released to test the possibility of future releases of Florida panthers.

Populations of **Gray Bats** are found mainly in Alabama, northern Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee, but a few occur in northwestern Florida, western Georgia, southwestern Kansas,

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

southern Indiana, southern and southwestern Illinois, northeastern Mississippi, northeastern Oklahoma, western Virginia, and possibly western North Carolina. Distribution within the range is always patchy, but fragmentation and isolation of populations has been a problem during the past three decades. The gray bat population was estimated to be about 2.25 million in 1970; however, in 1976 a census of 22 important colonies in Alabama and Tennessee revealed an average decline of more than 50 percent. Due to protective measures taken at high-priority colony sites in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, the declines have been arrested at some major sites, and those populations are now stable or in some cases increasing.

Gray bat colonies are restricted entirely to caves or cavelike habitats. Nine known caves are believed to house about 95 percent of the hibernating population. There are no caves on the National Forests in Florida that could provide the conditions required by gray bats for roosting and breeding habitat. Gray bats occasionally may occur over the forests during migration or foraging.

The **Florida Manatee**, or West Indian Manatee, is a large gray or brown aquatic mammal. Although primarily herbivorous, they will occasionally feed on fish. Manatees may spend about 5 hours a day feeding and may consume 4 to 9 percent of their body weight a day.

During the winter months, the manatee population in the United States confines itself to the coastal waters of the southern half of peninsular Florida and to springs and warm-water outfalls as far north as southeast Georgia. Manatees also winter in the St. Johns River near Blue Spring State Park. During summer months, they may migrate as far north as coastal Virginia on the east coast and the Louisiana coast on the Gulf of Mexico. Manatee populations also exist outside the continental United States in coastal areas of the Caribbean and Central and South America

Silver Glen Springs from its point of origin to its confluence with Lake George and Lake George itself are the only areas of habitat with known use in the forests. The manatee population was probably more abundant in the 18th or 19th century than today. Initial population decreases probably resulted from over harvesting for meat, oil, and leather. Today, hunting is prohibited and is not considered a problem; although there is an occasional poaching incidence. However, heavy mortality does occur from accidental collisions with boats and barges and from canal lock operations. Manatee population trends are poorly known, but deaths have increased steadily. The combination of high mortality rates and low reproductive rates has led to serious doubts about the species' ability to survive in the United States. Another closely related factor in the decline has been the loss of suitable habitat through incompatible coastal development, particularly destruction of sea grass beds by boating facilities.

The **Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat** inhabits forests throughout the southeast. They use caves in mountainous areas and hollow trees in the southern coastal plain. This species has been confirmed in the Ocala National Forest in the Little Lake George Wilderness Area. A big-eared bat monitoring protocol has yet to be developed for the National Forests in Florida.

The **Florida Long-Tailed Weasel** was dropped from the Regional Forester's sensitive species list effective 01/01/2002.

The **Round-tailed Muskrat** is restricted to Florida and southeastern Georgia. Shallow marshes with emergent vegetation constitute preferred habitat. The best habitat on the NFs in Florida likely occurs in the wet prairies on the Ocala NF. The muskrat has been confirmed in Franklin, Leon, Marion and Wakulla counties (encompassing portions of the Apalachicola and Ocala NFs); and is likely in Baker, Columbia, Lake, and Liberty counties (encompassing portions of all three NFs in Florida). The extended drought has dried prairies in the Ocala National Forest that had round-tailed muskrat colonies about 10 years ago. The muskrat has persisted in creeks and streams, such as Juniper Creek, and has been recorded at small isolated ponds in sandhills habitat that are monitored for the striped newt and other amphibians (ref. Table 35). Muskrats have been recorded at 7 of the 8 sampled ponds, and in 9 of the 13 years included in the study. Because the muskrats were not trapped regularly, they were probably dispersing individuals or

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

became trap-wise if resident. None of the ponds had the characteristic dome-shaped “muskrat house” that is formed of emergent wetland vegetation.

The known range of the **Florida Mouse** includes the northern two-thirds of the Florida peninsula and an isolated area near Carrabelle in Franklin County. This range encompasses portions of the Osceola and Ocala National Forests. There is no estimate of the statewide population, but the statewide trend is likely downwards due to habitat loss.

The mouse is restricted to fire maintained, dry, upland vegetation on deep sandy soils. The major habitats are scrub, including sand pine scrub and scrubby flatwoods, and sandhill. Scrub is the primary habitat. It has been confirmed in Marion and Lake counties (encompassing portions of the Ocala NF) and is likely in Columbia County (encompassing portions of the Osceola NF) (FNAI, 1997). Due to the abundance of preferred habitat, this species most likely occurs in the greatest numbers on the Ocala NF. The Florida mouse has also been captured during K.Greenberg’s Ocala Pond Study. Ten were captured in 2005 and 3 were captured in 2006. The deep sandy soils preferred by this species are not found on the Osceola NF.

Sherman’s Fox Squirrel is found on all three NFs in Florida. Total population size is unknown, but this species has declined in proportion to the loss of mature, fire-maintained longleaf pine. Longleaf pine – turkey oak sandhills and flatwoods are the optimum habitat for this squirrel. Home range size averages 100 acres for males and 50 acres for females.

Leaf nests predominate over cavities, and the squirrel may use up to 30 nests per year. More nests occur on the low slopes of sandhills rather than the uplands. The highest quality habitat might be along the edge of longleaf pine savannah and live oak forest, because live oak acorns appear to be a major food source when turkey oak acorn crops fail.

The **Florida Black Bear** is discussed in the Management Indicator Species section of this report.

Mollusks

Endangered

Ambia neislerii/Fat Three-Ridge Mussel
Lampsilis subangulata/Shiny-Rayed Pocketbook
Medionidus penicillatus/Gulf Moccasinshell
Medionidus simpsonianus/Ochlockonee Moccasinshell
Pleurobema pyriforme/Oval Pigtoe

Threatened

Elliptoideus sloatianus/Purple Bankclimber Mussel

Sensitive

Alasmidonta wrightiana/Ochlockonee Arcmussel
Anodonta heardi/Apalachicola Floater (added to sensitive list effective 01/01/2002)
Aphaostracon pycnus/Dense Hydrobe
Cincinnatia vanhyningi/Seminole Spring Siltsnail (added effective 01/01/2002)
Utterbackia peggyae/Florida Floater (added to sensitive list effective 01/01/2002)

The **Dense Hydrobe** and **Seminole Spring Siltsnail** are endemic to Alexander Creek and its tributaries in the Seminole District, Ocala National Forest.

The other mollusks on the PETS list occur near and within the Apalachicola National Forest in the Apalachicola and/or the Ochlockonee river systems. The **Purple Bankclimber** and the **Fat Three-ridged mussel** have both been collected from the Apalachicola River adjacent to the forest, with the former collected from the Ochlockonee River within the forest boundaries.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

The mussels appear to have decreased because of habitat loss associated with reservoir construction, channel construction and maintenance, and erosion. They are intolerant of the still water in the lakes behind the dams. Populations of the shinyrayed pocketbook, Gulf moccasinshell, and purple bankclimber have been isolated due to major impoundments on the Apalachicola, Flint, and Ochlockonee (ACF) rivers. Smaller impoundments on tributary streams in the region have resulted in further population isolation of some of the species. None of these mussels occur in the navigation channels of the Chattahoochee or Flint rivers. The fat threeridge and the purple bankclimber occur in portions of the Apalachicola River that have a navigation channel.

Observations by Forest Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service biologists during a July 20-22, 1993 field review indicated that the lower, unimpounded reaches of these rivers provided suitable refuge for the two mussels. The biologists felt that no Forest Service activities were adversely affecting these species. The revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the NFs in Florida directs that hardwood and cypress stands will not be managed for timber production. Consequently, river bottomland hardwoods will be retained with minimum disturbance.

The Florida-Caribbean Science Center of Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in Gainesville, Florida surveyed for mussels in both the ACF (324 sites) and Ochlockonee (77 sites) river systems from 1991 to 1993.

The Forest is a source of free flowing, clean water for the Apalachicola and Ochlockonee Rivers. Silvicultural operations could exacerbate sedimentation if no buffer zones were left to avoid erosion and filter runoff. Road construction could cause similar problems. Current silvicultural activities following best management practices are compatible with the continued existence of the species. Forest Service management under the revised LRMP does not constitute a threat to these species. Forest plan Standard and Guide VG-8 (LRMP P.3-19) and WA-1 through WA-7 (LRMP, p.3-24 & 3-25) are expected to protect water draining from National Forest lands. Watershed impacts related to agriculture, urbanization, and water management outside National Forest lands will have the definitive impacts on these species.

Crustaceans

Sensitive

***Crangonyx hobbsii*/Hobb's Cave Amphipod**

***Procambarus attiguus*/Silver Glen Spring Cave Crayfish (added to list effective 01/01/2002)**

***Procambarus delicatus*/Big-cheeked Cave Crayfish**

***Procambarus orcinus*/Woodville Cave Crayfish**

Cave divers from the Woodville Karst Plain Project have documented **Hobb's Cave Amphipod** in the following sites in Leon and Wakulla Counties: Sullivan's Tunnel in Leon and River Sinks, Shepard Blue Springs, Sally Ward Spring, and McBride Slough in Wakulla.

The **Silver Glen Spring Cave Crayfish** is endemic to Silver Glen Spring in Marion County in the Lake George District, Ocala National Forest.

The **Big-cheeked Cave Crayfish** is endemic to Alexander Spring in Lake County in the Seminole District.

The **Woodville Cave Crayfish** is found in limestone sinkholes and caves. It is known from 15 sites and is relatively common in the cave system in and around the eastern side of the Apalachicola National Forest. This system is presently being explored by the Woodville Karst Plain Project, a local group of cave divers and scientists. The divers have documented this species in Leon and Wakulla Counties.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Cave crayfishes forage on detritus that enters through the open mouth(s) of the cave system. It is presumed that water quality in the cave system is important to their survival. Protection of natural detritus flow and prevention of chemical contamination are often cited as the most important protective measures. Based on observations of divers, the part of the cave systems originating under the National Forests appears to be relatively clean. Water flows originating on private lands apparently are sometimes contaminated by surface water runoff that flows directly into open sink holes.

Insects

Sensitive

***Atrytone arogos arogos*/Arogos skipper (added to sensitive list effective 01/01/2002)**

***Cordulegaster sayi*/Say's Dragonfly**

***Progomphus bellei*/Belle's Sand Clubtail**

***Somatochlora calverti*/Calvert's Emerald**

The **Arogos skipper** occurs in much of the eastern US. It lives in a variety of grassland habitats with local distribution defined by the availability of food plants. The Arogos skipper is known from a sandhills site west of Lake Delancy in the Ocala National Forest, where the larval food plant is lopsided indiagrass (*Sorghastrum secundum*). This is the only xeric sandhill site known to be inhabited by the skipper, which occupies moist grasslands in other areas. The skipper has not been seen at the site for about 5 years. The species has not been confirmed in the Apalachicola or Osceola National Forests, but may occupy sandhills or flatwoods habitats there.

Say's Spiketail Dragonfly is associated with silt-bottomed spring seepages in hardwood forests, with nearby weedy clearings for foraging. It is known from 8 localities in northern Florida and 1 in central Georgia.

Belle's sand clubtail uses two habitat types, sand bottomed lakes and small sandy spring-fed trickles in the open. Their larvae burrow in the sand. Their range is apparently relatively small, including a few counties in the Florida panhandle.

Calvert's emerald, a metallic brown and green dragonfly is known only from the Florida Panhandle and a few specimens taken in South Carolina. Their habitat requirements are unknown. By analogy with similar species, it is assumed that the larvae probably live in boggy seepage trickles in hardwood forests.

1.7 Monitoring Question: Are we maintaining viable populations of PETS plant species and habitats to support them?

Item to Measure: Locations and numbers of PETS plant populations

Results and Evaluation: Proposed, Threatened and Endangered (PETS) species which are also Management Indicator Species (MIS) are discussed under Monitoring Question 1.1. Many of the PETS plants on the National Forests in Florida are rare endemics and have become even rarer due to loss of habitat. Others were once more widely distributed, but have become rare due to loss of habitat. The habitat of most of these species depends upon frequent fire. Habitat loss has resulted from a combination of fire exclusion, mechanical disturbance, and conversion to pine plantations.

Considering the reasons for loss of habitat, one of the most reliable ways to track population viability is by monitoring those activities that affect habitat. Such activities include acres maintained/restored by burning, acres restored by thinning, and acres restored to longleaf, verses

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

acres degraded by mechanical disturbance. These are monitoring items reported elsewhere in this report.

Most of the Sensitive plants known or likely to occur on the National Forest in Florida are fire dependant components of wiregrass communities. A few are components of the scrub communities. These species require similar habitat to the T & E plants associated with these respective communities. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that those activities that maintain or improve habitat for these listed T & E Plants will also serve to provide habitat for those sensitive plants that occupy similar habitat. A few sensitive plants are associated with canopied wetlands and mesic hardwood forests. These areas are not considered suitable for timber production and are not significantly affected by Forest Service management activities. A list of all Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive plant species can be found in the Environmental Impact Statement for the Forest Plan, Appendix E, page E-5.

Forest Plan Goal:

- Apply prescribed burning technology as a primary tool for restoring fire's historic role in ecosystems.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Prescribe burn on average every 3 years with varied intervals on any given site to restore natural processes in all sites where the natural-fire-return interval was less than 10 years. Strive to burn 50 percent of those acres between March 15 and September 30 and 20 percent between May 1 and July 31. This includes wilderness, wilderness study areas, and the Savannah research natural area.

1.8 Monitoring Question: What is the burn interval of upland pine acres? In what months have upland pine been burned?

Items to Measure: Acres of upland pine burned. Acres by month.

Results: Total Acres burned on the National Forests in Florida in the last 3 years are shown in Table 36. Total acres by individual forest are shown in Table 37.

**Table 36.
Acres Burned**

Year	Acres
2005	139,344
2006	107,163
2007	141,731
Total	388,238

Table 37. 2007 Total acres burned for the National Forests in Florida by individual Forest

Forest	Acres burned	Total Acres of Upland Pine Habitat (MA 7.1)
Apalachicola	73,021	375,311
Osceola	51,005	93,480

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Forest	Acres burned	Total Acres of Upland Pine Habitat (MA 7.1)
Ocala	17,705	35,792
Total	141,731	504,583

Based on the upland pine Management Area 7.1 acres of 507,740, 76% longleaf type was burned in the last 3 years (2005, 2006, 2007). However, in FY 2007, 141,731 acres were burned; 63 percent of these acres were burned in the winter months, 37 percent of these acres were burned between March 15 and September 30, and 32% of acres were burned between May 1 and July 31. The Forest did not achieve some of the objectives for FY 2007 due to lack of significant rainfall during the growing season (April – July).

Tables 38 and 39 provide a breakdown of acres burned by month in FY2007.

Table 38. Percent total acres burned by month

Month	Percent
October	3.6
November	23.6
December	2.5
January	10.0
February	22.6
March	3.0
April	0
May	28.2
June	0.3
July	3.5
August	0.1
September	2.6
Total	100

Table 39. 2007 percent of total acres burned in each month for National Forests in Florida by individual Forest

Month	Apalachicola (Percent)	Osceola (Percent)	Ocala (Percent)
October	7.0	0	0
November	46.0	0	0
December	4.0	0	3.0
January	13.0	3.0	16.0
February	23.0	19.0	34.0
March	2.0	0	16.0
April	0	0	0
May	0	78.0	0
June	0	0	2.0
July	0	0	28.0
August	0	0	1.0
September	5.0	0	0
Total	100	100	100

Evaluation: An average of 150,000 acres every 3 years should be burned to maintain the upland pines. The Forest should strive to burn 50% of those acres (75,000 acres) between March 15 and September 30, and 20% (30,000 acres) between May 1 and July 31.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

FY 2007 saw a slightly below average year for prescribed fire accomplishments. This can primarily be attributed to lack of rainfall and drought conditions for the months of April, May and June. The spike in accomplishments in May was due to the Bugaboo Fire on the Osceola National Forest. National Business Rules for reporting allow areas to be claimed towards prescribed fire targets if NEPA has already been completed on the area for burning and the resource objectives for the acres were met. Approximately 40,000 acres within the Bugaboo Fire met the standard. The defined criteria for growing season burns (March 15-September 30) were not met, but the May 1 – July 31 benchmark of 20% was met. The Forest burned 37.4% (52,951 acres) of total acres in the period from March to September. From May 1 to July 31, 31.9% (45,257 acres) of total acres was burned. Average yearly acres (2005-2007) were 129,413.

Apalachicola: 3629 (5%) of the acres burned in 2007 were completed during the March 15-September 30 timeframe. None were completed between May 1 and July 31.

Osceola: 39,902 (78%) acres were completed during the timeframe of both March 15-September 30 and May 1 – July 31 in conjunction with the Bugaboo fire

Ocala: 8353 acres (47%) were completed between March 15 and September 30. 5355 (30%) acres were completed within the May 1 – July 31 timeframe.

Currently, it is believed that the frequency of fire is more critical to overall forest health than season of burn if growing season burns can not be carried out due to climatic conditions or budgets.

Forest Plan Standards & Guidelines:

- FI-7: Minimize the use of plowed firelines for prescribed burns. Favor the use of alternatives such as disked firelines, foam, water, existing roads, or natural barriers.

1.9 **Monitoring Question:** How many miles of firelines were plowed for prescribed fire and wildfires? How many miles were restored?

Item to Measure: Miles of plowed fireline for each purpose. Miles of plowed firelines restored.

Results: A total of 78.6 miles of re-worked (plowed or bladed) prescribed fire firelines were installed during FY2007. Wildfire generated 297.5 miles of firelines, and 235 miles of the total were in conjunction with suppression of the Bugaboo Fire

During FY2007, 365.1 miles of plowed firelines were restored.

Alternative Firelines (swamp, foam, water, existing roads, disked lines): Alternative firelines utilized for prescribed fire totaled 1189 miles. Alternative firelines utilized for wildfires totaled 36 miles.

Evaluation: A total of 79 miles of re-worked firelines were installed during FY2007. Wildfire generated 298 miles of plowed firelines. The majority of this was during the suppression actions during the Bugaboo Fire on the Osceola National Forest. Alternative firelines utilized for prescribed fire totaled 1188 and 36 miles of alternative lines were used during wildfires. In FY 2007 the Forest did minimize the use of plowed firelines and also optimized the use of alternative firelines to the extent possible. Minimization of firelines during times of drought is more difficult due to changes in suppression tactics when lightning occurrences produce multiple ignitions being managed with limited resources or large project fires.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Forest Plan Objective:

- Restore between 10,000 and 15,000 acres of off-site slash pine to the appropriate native vegetation in the next 10 years. Remove slash pine from 8,000 acres of mixed longleaf/slash pine stands on the Osceola NF. The long-term objective is to restore all the off-site slash pine to the appropriate native vegetation.

1.10 **Monitoring Question:** How much off-site slash pine has been restored to other types?

Item to Measure: Acres type-converted from slash pine to other species.

Results: 5,229 acres have been restored to longleaf pine from off-site slash pine through the end of FY 2007. Through FY 2007, 986 acres of longleaf stands on the Osceola had slash pine removals.

Evaluation: In order to meet the 10-year objective, efforts should be made to increase the acreage of restoration in future years. More effort should be made to schedule removal of slash pine from mixed stands on the Osceola National Forest.

1.11 **Monitoring Question:** Are we collecting data on understory structure?

Item to Measure: CISC report data on understory field

Results: The CISC database has been replaced by the FSVeg database, which should allow for collection and storage of more detailed understory vegetation information. The purpose of this monitoring item is to ensure that data is collected in order to provide information for the next Plan revision.

Evaluation: At this time no additional understory species information has been collected. This is primarily due to the additional cost to collect this information and training required to complete it during routine silvicultural exams.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Thin 45,000 to 55,000 acres of longleaf and slash pine stands to release overcrowded live crowns, favor appropriate pine species for regeneration, increase stand growth, allow more sunlight onto the forest floor, and increase suitable habitat for red-cockaded woodpeckers.

1.12 **Monitoring Question:** How many acres have been offered for thinning?

Item to Measure: Number of acres of thinning harvest offered.

Results: Through FY2007, 12,985 acres were offered for thinning purposes.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluation: In order to meet the Forest Plan objective, efforts should be made to increase the acreage offered for thinning.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Replace between 500 and 1,000 acres of the off-site sand pine to the appropriate native vegetation in the next 10 years. The long-term objective is to restore the off-site sand pine to the appropriate native vegetation.

1.13 Monitoring Question: How much off-site sand pine has been restored, and to what other types?

Item to Measure: Acres type-converted from off-site sand pine to other species.

Results: A total of 844 acres of off-site sand pine have been restored to longleaf pine through FY 2007.

Evaluation: The results from the first six years of plan implementation indicate that the objective for the plan period will be met.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Initiate uneven-aged management with group selection harvests on 30,000 to 33,000 acres principally in longleaf pine forests with some in slash pine forests.

1.14 Monitoring Question: On how many acres have we initiated uneven-aged management harvests? Is the group selection method producing the anticipated desired conditions in the longleaf pine ecosystem and what are the effects of group selection harvest in longleaf pine?

Item to Measure: Number of acres offered with uneven-aged harvest. Tree stem diameter and frequency, frequency of seed crops, longleaf pine regeneration establishment and survival, growth, and development of seedlings, pine midstory development and distribution, costs and return of implementation of harvesting, costs and effects of burning within harvest units, plant species frequency and distribution, PETS species population trends/habitat conditions, MIS plant/animal population trends/habitat conditions.

Results: Through FY 2007, 2,810 acres have been offered with uneven-aged management harvest methods. An evaluation of the effects of this harvest method is to be reported in five-year intervals. There were not any studies initiated in FY 2007; however, the requirements for this are known and recognized. Areas that may be suitable for this work are being surveyed, examined, and assessed for inclusion in future years work scheduling.

Evaluation: While there is a need to provide regeneration of mature stands, the backlog of thinning needs as well as conflicts to provide an adequate number of large trees for RCWs has limited its use. In order to meet the objectives of the Forest Plan, efforts should be made to increase the acreage offered for uneven-aged harvest.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Initiate irregular shelterwood harvests on between 1,800 and 2,000 acres of slash pine forests.

1.15 Monitoring Question: How many acres have we initiated irregular shelterwood harvest? Is the irregular shelterwood method producing the anticipated desired conditions in the slash pine forest?

Item to Measure: Number of acres offered with uneven-aged harvest. Growth and development of seedlings, costs and returns of implementation of harvesting, costs and effects of burning within harvest units, plant species frequency and distribution, PETS species effects/population trends.

Results: There were no acres of irregular shelterwood offered for harvest for FY 2007. An evaluation of the effects of this harvest method is to be reported in five-year intervals. There were no studies initiated in FY 2007.

Evaluation: While use of irregular shelterwood should remain as an available tool, it may no longer be applicable as a forest objective.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Regenerate between 39,000 and 41,000 acres of sand pine on the Ocala NF.

1.16 Monitoring Question: How many acres of sand pine have had a regeneration harvest?

Item to Measure: Number of acres offered with sand pine regeneration harvest.

Results: There were 20,087 acres of sand pine committed to regeneration harvest through the end of FY 2007. 1,341 acres of sand pine were offered for regeneration harvest in FY 2007.

Evaluation: In order to meet the 10-year Plan objective, efforts should be made to increase the acreage committed to sand pine regeneration.

Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines for size and distribution of sand pine openings are found on pages 4-45, 4-47, and 4-48 and includes standards and guidelines 8.1-3, 8.2-3, and 8.4-3.

1.17 Monitoring Question: What is the size and distribution of openings in sand pine?

Item to Measure: Size of openings.

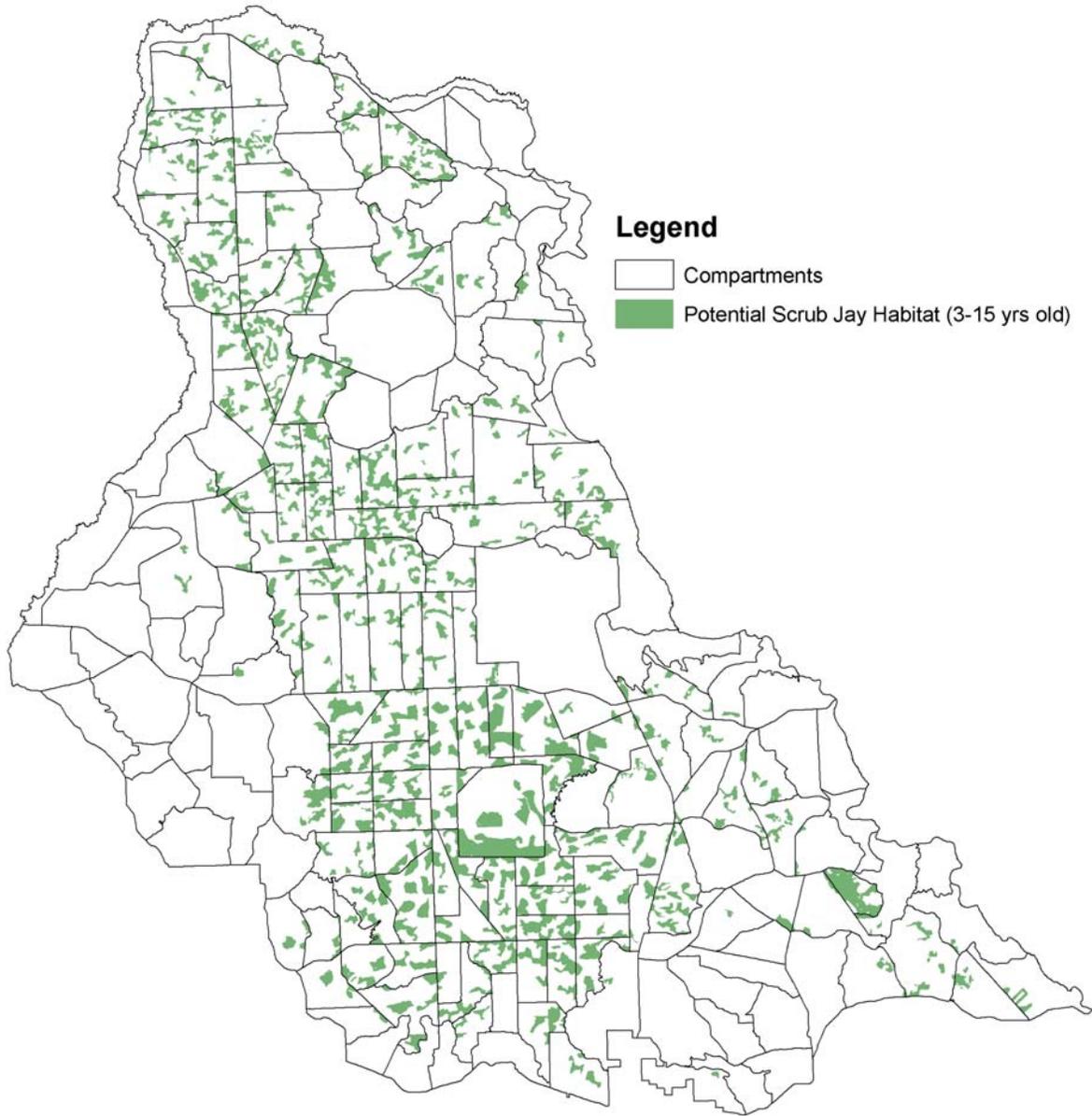
Results: The average size of sand pine openings created by timber harvest from 2000-2007 is 58 acres. The average size of openings created by timber harvest in 2007 was 84 acres.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Since FY 2000, there have been 40 openings created greater than 100 acres. In 2007, there were six openings created greater than 100 acres by timber harvest.

Evaluation: The Forest Plan desired condition of sand pine scrub openings is to have large openings up to 160 acres in most of the forest and up to 320 acres in portions of the forest. While some large openings have been created, the average size of acres committed to regeneration in FY 2006 is smaller than desired. The purpose of increasing the size of opening is to maximize scrub-jay occupancy. The following figure shows the distribution of scrub-jay habitat on the Ocala National Forest.

Potential Scrub Jay Habitat (2007)



Legend

- Compartments
- Potential Scrub Jay Habitat (3-15 yrs old)

Printing Date: Monday, July 21, 2008
 File: K:\plan\oacorr1920_Monitoring\2007 M&E Report\GIS\Potential_ScrubJay_Habitat_2007.mxd
 Prepared By: J. Drake

Management Area	Acres of Potential SJ Habitat
Trailless Wilderness - MA 0.1	2
Wilderness with Trails - MA 0.2	998
Genetic Resource Management Area - MA 2.3	14
Special Interest Area - MA 3.1	5
Minimum Development, Motorized - MA 4.2	63
Moderate Recreational Development - MA 4.4	263
Hardwood/Cypress, No Timber Production - MA 5.1	58
Longleaf/Slash, Adaptive Mgmt., RCW Mgmt. - MA 7.1	166
Longleaf/Slash, Adaptive Mgmt., No RCW Mgmt. - MA 7.3	310
Sand Pine, Natural Regeneration, Large Openings - MA 8.1	3,384
Sand Pine, Mixed Regeneration, Moderate Openings - MA 8.2	35,472
Scrub Jay Management Area - MA 8.4	742
Pinecastle Bombing Range - MA 9.1	1,830
Total	43,295

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Forest Plan Objective:

- Designate the following acres of future old growth by community type.

Table 40. Old-Growth Community Objectives

Old-Growth Community	Acres
Upland Longleaf Pine Forest	10,200
Southern Wet Pine Forest, Woodland, and Savannah	11,000
Cypress/Tupelo Swamp Forest	17,700
River Floodplain Hardwood Forest	2,900
Hardwood Wetland Forest	24,200
Dry and Dry Mesic Oak/Pine Forest	2,200
Coastal Plain Upland Mesic Hardwood Forest	1,700
Dry and Xeric Oak Forest, Woodland, and Savannah	2,100
Total	72,000

1.18 Monitoring Question: Have old-growth stands been designated in each community type?

Item to Measure: Acres of old growth by community type designated in CISC.

Results: Old growth has only been designated on the Apalachicola NF and the table below shows the acres of each community designated.

Table 41. Old-Growth Designations on the Apalachicola NF

Old-Growth Community	Acres
Upland Longleaf Pine Forest	6,836
Southern Wet Pine Forest, Woodland, and Savannah	9,944
Cypress/Tupelo Swamp Forest	6,120
River Floodplain Hardwood Forest	1,548
Hardwood Wetland Forest	8,423
Dry and Dry Mesic Oak/Pine Forest	1,686
Coastal Plain Upland Mesic Hardwood Forest	315
Dry and Xeric Oak Forest, Woodland, and Savannah	410
Total	35,282
Upland Longleaf Pine Forest	6,836

Evaluation: Old growth should be designated on the Ocala and Osceola NF. A review of acres available suitable for old growth designation on the Osceola and Ocala NF in management areas where there is no scheduled timber harvest to provide for sustained yield timber production are listed below by community type. This shows the potential for old growth in these management areas as an example.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Table 42. Acres available for old growth designation in management areas classed as unsuitable for timber production on the Osceola and Ocala NF

Old-Growth Community	Acres		
Upland Longleaf Pine Forest	932	1,175	2,107
Southern Wet Pine Forest, Woodland, and Savannah	1,490	9,171	10,661
Cypress/Tupelo Swamp Forest	9,469	848	10,317
River Floodplain Hardwood Forest	269	841	1,110
Hardwood Wetland Forest	2,056	11,163	13,219
Dry and Dry Mesic Oak/Pine Forest	0	32	32
Coastal Plain Upland Mesic Hardwood Forest	0	354	354
Dry and Xeric Oak Forest, Woodland, and Savannah	0	1,308	1,308
Total	14,216	24,892	39,108

Forest Plan Goals:

- Obtain a national forest ownership pattern that reduces management costs and helps meet ecosystem management objectives. Acquire land to connect large tracts of public ownership to maintain biologic and hydrologic linkages in partnerships with other public agencies. Locate and maintain national forest boundaries that are visible to forest users and neighbors.

Forest Plan Objectives:

- Evaluate Choctawhatchee lands that no longer exhibit national forest character and consider for exchange for lands adjacent to or within the Apalachicola, Ocala, and Osceola National Forests. Exchange national forest land along the Ocklawaha River for State-owned land within national forest boundaries. Exchange Forest Service-owned minerals under Withlatchoochee and Blackwater State Forests for land within Pinhook purchase unit.
- Acquire land within the 170,600-acre Pinhook purchase unit. Within the Apalachicola, Ocala, and Osceola National Forests, annually acquire a minimum of 200 acres of forest inholdings. Acquire 6,500 acres adjacent to the Ocala NF.

1.19 Monitoring Question: Have land purchases and exchanges met the objectives established in the Forest Plan?

Item to Measure: Itemized by map what has been gained and what has been exchanged; miles of landlines maintained.

Results: There were 30.1 miles of boundary lines marked/maintained of National Forest System lands in Florida in FY 2007. Due to limited funding and staffing, it was not feasible to mark and post all newly acquired properties.

In FY 2007, the National Forests in Florida acquired a total of 884 acres through completion of four land adjustment cases.

Evaluation: The Forest lacks the funding and experienced staff to sufficiently mark/maintain our existing boundary lines and boundary lines associated with new acquisitions.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

These newly acquired lands, particularly those pertaining to the Florida National Scenic Trail, present a challenge to the Forest in regards to landline location and maintenance. In addition, constraints on acquisition funding continue to impede our ability to fully meet our potential and expectations within the program.

1.20 Monitoring Question: Are aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems being impaired by acid deposition? Is water quality being maintained?

Item to Measure: Change in water chemistry regarding acid neutralization. Fecal-coliform in swim sites, drinking water, recreation areas, and administrative sites; chemistry of water in State well sites.

Results: Districts have monitored water quality at all developed swim sites on all three national forests. One swim site on the Apalachicola monitored in 2007 exceeded state standards for fecal coliform on one day, June 6. Lost Lake, on the Apalachicola NF, remains closed due to its shrinking size and is no longer maintained as a developed swim area.

The districts have also ensured that drinking water at recreation areas and administrative sites were tested in 2007. The state standard for nitrates in potable water is 10mg/liter of nitrates for drinking water from groundwater sources and .30mg/liter from drinking water from springs. Nitrate levels for groundwater across the three forests are determined from water sampling at potable well sites and state ambient groundwater monitoring sites. Potable water at recreation and administrative sites originates from groundwater (not springs) and all potable water tested on the National Forests continues to be below state standards.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection recently completed a multi-year study in conjunction with Michigan State University on the relationship of nitrate and phosphorus to algal growth in creating adverse biological conditions in Florida's springs, choking out native plants and making springs inhospitable to a variety of fish, snails, turtles, crayfish, and other components of the springs ecosystem. Results of that study as well as several others have been combined in a report entitled Florida Springs Assessment, currently in draft form. Another publication, DEP's *Florida Springs Initiative, Program Summary and Recommendations*, published in 2007, documents the excessive algal growth at the state's major springs and notes the increasing levels of nitrates throughout 1960-2000. A total of 58 sampling locations at state parks and first-magnitude springs will be sampled quarterly for water quality and flow. Included are 5 springs located on Ocala National Forest: Salt Springs, Juniper Springs, Fern Hammock Springs, Silver Glen Springs, and Alexander Springs. Two other locations included in this network are Silver Springs and Wakulla Springs, both in close proximity to national forest lands.

Among the recommendations included in the Summary Report to heighten protection of springs are building setbacks and buffers, septic tank design and siting, alternative waste water treatment, stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), residential and agricultural (including silvicultural) BMPs, identifying nutrient loading sources, and acquisition of springs and springsheds.

1.21 Monitoring Question: Is air quality being maintained?

Item to Measure: Particulates, Ozone

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Results: Air quality information has been updated for all monitoring sites on or near the Forest. Ozone and fine particulate ($PM_{2.5}$) levels continue to remain below the 2007 national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS).

Ambient Air monitoring Information: The two criteria pollutants of most interest to Forest managers are ozone and fine particulate matter. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) operates a network of air quality monitors state-wide, both for fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) and ozone. Air quality monitoring for particulate matter includes both fine and coarse particulates, although from a human health stand-point, fine particulates are of the most concern.

The state-wide monitoring network is not distributed uniformly across the State and most monitors are concentrated near urban areas. The state operates one ozone monitor (Site 12-003-0002) at the Osceola Work Center; this monitor is part of the statewide network for ozone compliance monitoring. The particulate monitors located at the Wakulla (Site 12-073-0005) and Ocala (Site 12-069-0003) Work Centers are operated in cooperation with the FDEP, Division of Air Resource Management; however, data from these monitors is not included in the state's determination of NAAQS compliance. Acid deposition is monitored by EPA at a site on the Apalachicola National Forest. The US Fish and Wildlife Service operates an ozone monitor and an aerosol monitor (as part of the national visibility monitoring network, IMPROVE) at nearby St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Data collected by IMPROVE provides information on the constituents of particulates in the atmosphere, as well as a measure of visibility.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS): There are NAAQS for six air pollutants, but in the eastern US, ozone and fine particulate cause the most concern. Each state maintains a monitoring network designed to track attainment of the ozone and fine particulate standards. Currently there are no nonattainment areas in Florida.

Fine Particulate Matter: Fine particulate matter is defined as airborne particles with diameters less than or equal to 2.5 microns, hence the acronym $PM_{2.5}$. These very small particles remain suspended in the air much longer (on average) than coarse (PM_{10}) particles and behave more like a regional pollutant such as ozone. Examination of 2003 aerosol monitoring data from St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, located very near the Apalachicola National Forest and Bradwell Bay Wilderness, shows that ammonium sulfate and organic carbon account for about 85% of the fine particulate mass.

Data source: <http://vista.cira.colostate.edu/views/Web/AnnualSummary/Composition.aspx>

The $PM_{2.5}$ particulate standard has two parts; the 24-hour or daily standard and the annual standard. In September 2006 EPA reduced the 24-hour standard from 65 to 35 ug/m^3 , making it more stringent. The annual standard did not change. In order to attain these standards monitoring data must show that:

- the 98th percentile of the distribution of the 24-hour concentrations for a period of 1 year, averaged over 3 years, does not exceed 35 ug/m^3 and
- the three-year average of the annual arithmetic mean of the 24-hour concentrations does not exceed 15 ug/m^3 .

Monitoring results from sites near the Forest for 2005-2007 show that annual average fine particulate concentrations are relatively unchanged. Short term (24-hour) concentrations increased slightly from the previous year; the 3-year averages remain well below the 24-hour fine particulate standard of 35 micrometers/cubic meter. Note that 2007 $PM_{2.5}$ data from the Wakulla and Ocala sites was insufficient to produce valid averages, due to amount of time the sites were inoperable and the resulting site maintenance during the year. Data from these 2 sites were not included in 2007 monitoring.

Ozone: In addition to the ozone monitor operated by the FDEP and located at the Osceola Work Center in Baker County, another ozone monitor is located near Sumatra on the Apalachicola

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

National Forest. The Sumatra monitor is part of EPA's Clean Air Status and Trends Network (CASTNET). The purpose of this network is to assess the effectiveness of emission control strategies implemented nationwide. Ozone data from the Sumatra site is not used for determining attainment, but the results from the most recent year of available data (2005) are similar to other ozone monitors in the area. All monitors located on, or near, the Forest show compliance with the 2007 ozone NAAQS.

Acid Deposition: CASTNET operates two sites in Florida that measure dry deposition of sulfur and nitrogen. One site is located on the Apalachicola National Forest near Sumatra. Wet deposition is also measured at the same site by the National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP). Co-location of CASTNET and NADP sites allows these programs to estimate ratios of wet/dry deposition and wet/total deposition (<http://www.epa.gov/castnet/>). There are no additional data summaries for these sites since the 2005 Monitoring and Evaluation Report, so the following information has not changed. Dry deposition accounts for about 18 percent of total sulfur and 23 percent of total nitrogen deposition near the Forest. A review of the available NADP data (1991 to 2004 from the Sumatra site) indicates that total sulfur deposition fluctuated from a high of 7.8 kilograms/hectare/year (kg/ha/yr) to the level of 4.3 kg/ha/yr. Nitrogen deposition decreased from a high of 5.6 kg/ha/yr to 3.8 kg/ha/yr. It is believed that acid deposition rates are decreasing due to the final implementation of pollution controls by electric generation utilities, as required by the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments Title IV (Acid Rain) program.

Mercury Deposition: The mercury deposition monitoring site closest to the Forests is located on the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge. Data from the site showed an increase in mercury deposition in 2005 (21.7ug/m²) over the previous year (17.7 ug/ m² in 2004) which fits the overall increasing trend since monitoring began in 1998. Florida continues to record some of the highest mercury deposition in the country, and has a statewide freshwater fish consumption advisory in effect.

Evaluation: Air quality in the vicinity of the Forests remains within National and State standards; mercury deposition appears to continue increasing.

1.22 Monitoring Question: Which water bodies were fertilized?

Item to Measure: Report which water bodies were fertilized.

Results: Selected excavated ponds on the Apalachicola and Osceola National Forest have been fertilized to enhanced fish production. In 2004, following the break in the prolonged drought, water levels increased significantly in most of Florida's manmade and natural water bodies. Fertilization was re-initiated on ten excavated ponds on the Apalachicola and nine excavated ponds on the Osceola National Forest. When normal water levels are attained the listed ponds are fertilized during the largemouth bass growing season (Table 43). The fish populations are monitored annually with electro-fishing gear.

Table 43. Pond Locations Fertilized in 2007.

Apalachicola National Forest	Osceola National Forest
o Buttermilk	o Still Road Pond
o Sumatra west	o Boy Scout Pond
o Sumatra east	o Work Center Pond
o 120 north	o Big Curve Pond
o 120 south	o Blackman Pond
o Bloxham	o Battleground Pond
o Derby Pond	o White Egret Pond
o 267 Pond	o Catfish Pond
o 348 Pond	o Dip Site Pond

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Apalachicola National Forest	Osceola National Forest
o Sopchoppy	

Forest Plan Standard VG-18- Minimize soil disturbing site preparation in longleaf and slash pine sites. When disturbance is necessary to achieve the desired future conditions, use methods that displace no more than 10 percent of the soil surface in the treated areas. The objective should be to maintain the integrity of the native herbaceous vegetation (especially wiregrass) over time.

1.23 Monitoring Question: Has soil disturbance been minimized in preparing longleaf and slash pine sites for tree regeneration?

Item to Measure: Percent of the area treated with soil displacement

Results: 229 acres of longleaf sites had site preparation for planting by roller chopping on the Osceola National Forest. Very little soil was actually displaced. It is estimated that where the chopping blades penetrated the soil, the penetration was less than 2". The area of soil disturbance of any kind was estimated at 15%.

Evaluation: Single pass roller drum chopping in palmetto-gallberry understory types for site preparation appears to result in minimum soil disturbance.

**1.24 Monitoring Question: What are the effects of cattle grazing on vegetation?
QUESTION REMOVED BY AMENDMENT #2**

Sustainable Multiple Forest and Range Benefits

Forest Plan Goal:

- Provide a wide range of accessible recreation opportunities to accommodate the varied ability levels of forest visitors.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Make at least 20 percent of the developed site (Level 3 and above) recreation opportunities universally accessible. Provide fully accessible opportunities on at least one swimming area, one hiking trail, and one fishing pier/boating site per forest. The long-term objective is to make all developed sites universally accessible.

2.1 Monitoring Question: What percent of each type of recreation site (at least 1 swimming, 1 hiking, 1 fishing) is accessible? (Level 3 and above)

Item to Measure: Percent of accessible site by type of recreation site.

Results: Table 44 shows the percent of areas meeting ADA standards. There are 35 developed sites level 3 and above, and one level 2 boat ramp/fishing pier, where this objective applies. This table shows the sites that meet some level of accessibility standards.

Table 44. Recreation Sites Meeting ADA Standards.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Location	Recreation Site
Apalachicola National Forest	Leon Sinks Trail Head – 100% (hiking trail – 20%)
	Silver Lake Day Use (picnic and swim) – 75%
	Wright Lake Campground – 50%
	Hickory Landing Campground– 25%
	Whitehead Landing Campground – 25%
	Fort Gadsden Historic Site – 25%
	Mack Landing Campground – 25%
	Camel Lake Campground – 0%
Ocala National Forest	Juniper Springs Recreation Area – 35%
	Salt Springs Recreation Area – 75%
	Silver Glen Springs Day Use – 25%
	Fore Lake Recreation Area – 25%
	Mill Dam Day Use (picnic and swim) – 25%
	Alexander Springs Recreation Area – 25%
	Doe Lake Group Camp – 50%
	Lake Dorr Cabin – 100%
	Wildcat Lake Day Use – 25%
	Lake Delancy East Campground– 25%
	Lake Delancy West Campground – 35%
	Buck Lake Campground – 25%
	Hopkins Prairie Campground – 25%
	Juniper Wayside Day-use – 50%
	Lake Dorr South Boat ramp and Fishing Pier – 75%
	Clearwater Lake Campground –0%
	Big Scrub Campground – 30%
	Big Bass Campground –0%
	River Forest Group Campground –0%
	Lake Shore Group Camp –0%
Sweetwater Cabin –0%	
Lake Eaton Campground –25%	
Lake Dorr Campground –0%	
Osceola National Forest	Olustee Beach Day Use (picnic and swim) – 75%
	Ocean Pond Campground – 100%
	Olustee Depot VIC – 100%
	The Landing Group Camp – 75%
	Olustee Battlefield – Niswander Hiking Trail – 100%

Evaluation: Seven of the 35 developed campgrounds do not meet this objective. Efforts are underway to achieve 20% accessibility at all level three sites. With seven years of the Forest Plan completed, it is anticipated that the forest will be able to achieve this objective within the next four years.

Forest Plan Goal:

- Provide safe and enjoyable visitor opportunities at developed recreation areas by maintaining, retrofitting, or replacing recreation facilities or upgrading amenities.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Upgrade, refurbish, or replace four recreation facilities per year.

2.2 Monitoring Question: Are developed recreation facilities providing Meaningful Measures (MM) standards for safety, cleanliness, and service? Do they reflect quality and customer service?

Item to Measure: Evaluations of each facility component are defined by MM standards and customer survey forms.

Results: MM also describes standards to provide a desired quality experience and customer service. Areas that were being reconstructed in FY 2007, and will meet all applicable MM quality standards when completed are Shanty Pond Campground on the Ocala NF and several OHV trailheads on the Apalachicola and Ocala National Forests. Recreation areas managed by the Ocala Recreation Complex special use permit (concessionaire) are expected to meet all applicable MM standards for quality of experience and customer service.

During FY 2007, Fee Demo revenues have been used to repair, replace and augment facilities, especially to construct new accessible host sites, accessible parking spaces and replace many old and unused bulletin boards. Fee Demo was used at numerous recreation areas day use areas to enhance the quality of experience and customer service provided. The second round (5-year cycle) of facility condition inspections of developed recreation areas were completed in FY 2006 on the Lake George District. In the year 2007, the Seminole District facility conditions were completed. The Osceola District is expected to be completed in 2009.

Evaluation: In general, the lower level (amenity level 2 and below) areas attain approximately 50% to 75% of applicable Meaningful Measures standards for quality experience and customer service, whereas areas at level 3 or higher attain from 75% to 100% of these standards. Recommended actions include removal from the Fee Demo program of some areas showing very low use, and either closure of these areas or curtailment of services and/or facilities.

Forest Plan Goal:

- Provide a system of marked recreation trails and support facilities that will provide a variety of experiences for both motorized and nonmotorized trail users.

2.3 Monitoring Question: What system of trails has been designated on the ground, and are they maintained at appropriate levels?

Nonmotorized: The following table displays the trail system for the National Forests in Florida by mileage and type. Inspections on the Apalachicola NF, Ocala NF, and the Osceola NF have confirmed that all trails are being maintained at the 75% to 100% level of all applicable MM standards for quality of experience and customer service.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Table 45. Miles of Non-motorized Trail by Type

Forest	Type of Trail	Mileage
Apalachicola	Hiking	134.5
	Vinzant Horse Trail	36.5
	Bicycle	19
Ocala	Hiking	80.3
	Horse Trail	134
	Off-Road Bicycle	22.0
Osceola	Hiking	26.4
	Horse Trail	53.0

Evaluation: Recommended actions are to relocate some trails out of wet and eroding areas and off of roads also used by motorized vehicles, and also to construct additional footbridges and boardwalks on selected trail segments, for greater degree of attainment of MM standards.

Motorized: Motorized Trails have been designated and implemented for the former “restricted areas” (Phase 1) of the Ocala and Osceola NFs. Table 46 contains the number and mileage of these designated trails. In 2007, both of these forests also completed the designation of OHV routes on the rest of the forest (Phase 2) and will implement them on the ground in 2008.

The Apalachicola NF completed an environmental assessment for designated trails throughout the entire forest (Phase 1 and Phase 2) during the last week of FY 2007 and expects these trails to be implemented on the ground in 2008. Throughout 2007, the Apalachicola NF operated under the direction of the access standards contained in Amendment #5 of the Forest Plan.

Table 46. Motorized Trails designated on each of the National Forests in Florida

Forest	Type of Motorized Trail	Mileage
Ocala NF	Motorcycle	14
	ATV & Motorcycle	42
	Mixed-use Roads	86
Osceola NF	Mixed-use Roads	124
Apalachicola NF	Motorcycle	55
	ATV & Motorcycle	34
	Mixed-use Roads	52

2.4 Monitoring Question: How many miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail have been certified for public use?

Item to Measure: Number of miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail certified.

Results: Approximately 933 miles (67 percent) of the planned 1,400-mile long trail have been certified and opened for public use as FNST. In addition to the continuous FNST, 244 miles of officially certified side, connector and alternate trail routes are also open to the public. It is estimated that an additional 130 miles of the continuous trail can be constructed and/or certified on existing public land. The remaining 337 miles of the continuous trail requires acquisition to secure a route for public use.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

The National Forests in Florida and the Florida Trail Association manage the FNST through a partnership agreement that totaled \$717,123 in FY07 (the Florida Trail Association provided over \$800,000 in-kind and cash match). Federal funds also leverage tens of thousands of dollars of contributions from partner agencies through whose land the FNST passes. Through this agreement, these partners work with dozens of land managers and owners along the trail in certifying trail segments for public use.

Trail volunteers maintained 1,177 miles of trail and associated trail infrastructure in FY07. Additionally, volunteer trail crews constructed or reconstructed 28.5 miles of FNST, planned and laid out 41 miles of new trail, and built 15 bridges, 782 feet of boardwalk and six trailheads. An additional 61 volunteers and staff were certified to USDA Forest Service standards for safe chainsaw or crosscut operation, 17 volunteers were trained in the use of rigging, and 19 volunteers in hand tools maintenance. The public was provided with current trail information and how to get involved via its updated website, hiking guide maps, publications and outreach to the media.

Three sections of FNST were certified adding 7.5 miles of new trail providing important linkages for the FNST including the second privately owned segment. The FNST program responded to over a dozen proposed government actions affecting the trail; enhanced the information was provided on the WWW (www.floridatrail.org) about how the public can use and enjoy the Florida Trail; 67 miles of trail were inventoried and assessed; the FNST geographic information was updated and utilized system in support of the FNST program including conversion of the FNST GIS into the Forest Service INFRA database; thousands of personal contacts were made with the public promoting and providing information about the trail throughout Florida; the communities of White Springs, Belleview, Crestview, Milton and Pahokee were designated by the Florida Trail Association as Florida Trail Gateway Communities to promote them as destinations for outdoor enthusiasts; and a Florida Trail video was produced and distributed for television broadcasting.

In the absence of Federal funding for land acquisition, the FNST acquisition program has been working with state, water management district, and local land acquisition programs to protect the Trail. This approach has been successful with the State and water management districts acquiring lands in Columbia, Orange and Seminole Counties that will provide a route for 15.5 miles of trail.

Evaluation: Progress on certifying the trail is proceeding well within the projected amount needed to accomplish the objective. The challenge cost share agreement between the National Forests in Florida and the Florida Trail Association should be continued in order to place emphasis on building trail, certifying sections, and acquiring land for the trail.

Forest Plan Goal:

- Protect rivers and preserve their cultural, historical, ecological, fish and wildlife, recreational, geological, or scenic values.

2.5 Monitoring Question: Have rivers been recommended as wild and scenic, and what is their status?

Item to Measure: Status of Record of Decision/Legislative EIS.

Results: Management of the river corridors continues to be based on their ongoing status as proposed wild and scenic rivers. Again this year, there are no statewide or regional initiatives to move forward with a Legislative EIS to recommend the rivers studied in the revised Forest Plan.

Evaluation: Direction from the Washington Office and Region Offices continues to be on ensuring there is strong local support for river designation, and that forests should not move

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

forward with a Legislative EIS for river or wilderness recommendation unless there is support for it from the state's congressional delegation and a commitment to introduce a bill into Congress.

Forest Plan Goal:

- Increase public awareness of wilderness values. Protect and enhance resources, quality, and wilderness character of designated wilderness areas.

2.6 Monitoring Question: Have wilderness opportunities been increased and has Clear Lake been recommended for wilderness status?

Item to Measure: Status of Record of Decision/Legislative EIS.

Results: Clear Lake has not yet been recommended for wilderness designation and no Legislative EIS has gone forward. The area continues to be managed as a Wilderness Study Area to protect wilderness values.

Evaluation: Similar to the Wild and Scenic River recommendations, Legislative EISs for wilderness designation will not proceed unless there is support for it from the state's congressional delegation and a commitment to introduce a bill into Congress. The Forest will continue to work with Florida's congressional delegation to gain support to draft and introduce new wilderness legislation for Florida.

2.7 Monitoring Question: Has wilderness character been protected?

Item to Measure: Percent of land in primitive and semi-primitive Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classes, trail-use data; Ecosystem plots

Results: New ecosystem plots were not established in wilderness area in 2007. Continuing threats to wilderness character include motorized incursions into wilderness by OHVs and ATVs, military overflights on the Ocala and Apalachicola National Forests, the boat dock structure at Juniper Prairie Wilderness, the inholding in Juniper Prairie Wilderness, and the old CCC bridge in the Mud Swamp/New River Wilderness.

Evaluation: The forest wilderness specialist will need to work with the forest botanist and district biologists to establish and measure ecosystem/vegetation plots in wilderness.

2.8 Monitoring Question: Has Natural Area wilderness study area been recommended for release?

Item to Measure: Status of Record of Decision/Legislative EIS

Results: Natural Area Wilderness Study Area has not been recommended for release.

Evaluation: Action on this would normally be combined with legislative actions on other wilderness and wild and scenic rivers designations, since only Congress can release an area from Wilderness Study Area status. Until that time the area will continue to be managed as a Wilderness Study Area. At present, there is no support from Florida's congressional delegation to move forward on a legislative EIS. The Forest will continue to work with Florida's congressional delegation to gain support to draft and introduce new wilderness legislation for Florida that will include release language for Natural Area WSA.

Forest Plan Objective (Amendment #5):

- Designate a system of roads, trails and areas for motor vehicle access. This process will incorporate existing travelways as much as possible and include public participation and collaboration with local user groups.

2.9 Monitoring Question: Is the access process having the desired effect of protecting the resources?

Item to Measure: Photo points at areas of resource concern.

Results: As part of the environmental assessments for motorized vehicle route designation on the National Forests in Florida, the Forest Service worked with stakeholders to develop a monitoring plan for OHV routes on the Ocala NF during the Phase 1 analysis process. This plan was adopted for Phase II on the Ocala and the Apalachicola NF.

At this time, the only completed monitoring is on the Phase 1 area of the Ocala and Osceola NF. The Osceola has established base line photo points in the Phase II area. The Apalachicola NF will establish baseline photo points in FY 2008.

Photo points were established along OHV routes where non-designated routes crossed designated routes on the Osceola NF in 2006, and repeated in 2007. Similar photo points were established on the Ocala NF in 2007.

Evaluation: The photo record of monitoring points consists of two years for the Osceola and one year for the Ocala. OHV Monitoring Report for Phase 1 on the Ocala and Osceola NF are on file at the Supervisors Office in Tallahassee.

Ocala NF

Implementation: All trails were marked on the ground, with trails averaging 5 or more signs or carsonite posts per mile (i.e., a marker every quarter-mile or less). The number of signs vandalized or missing was tracked, and this ranged from 3% on the Delancy Loops trail to a high of 20% for the Longleaf Trail (the longest OHV route on the forest). The number of volunteer hours it took to post and maintain the trails was tracked, and ranged from 900 volunteer hours per month to 1,900 hours per month over the first nine months of 2007.

Compliance: Only 3 areas with unauthorized trails were noted (one each on Hog Valley, Tobacco Patch, and Delancy Loops), and in each case these unauthorized trails came onto Forest Service land from private property. OHV corrals have been added to trailheads to accommodate parking demand. Trailhead parking reached capacity only on two occasions in 2007, the Thanksgiving weekend and pre-Christmas weekends. A query of the Law Enforcement database showed a total of 1,321 warnings or violation notices; however, because of the way Incident Reports and Violation Notices are tracked, there is no meaningful way to track vehicle type (licensed car, truck, motorcycle, or ATV) or determine trend information.

Photo points have been very useful in documenting which non-designated, unauthorized roads are still being used; vehicle tracks show up well in photographs (Figure 5). The percentage of non-designated roads being used on the Ocala ranged from 36% on the Tobacco Patch Trail to 80 percent on the Wandering Wiregrass Trail. This level of unauthorized use is not unexpected during the early implementation phases of this project and in most cases the amount of was very low. The monitoring process identified several areas of high use and a variety of corrective measures have been initiated including blocking trails, improving signage, and installing fences. A total of 45 unauthorized roads/trails were blocked with downed trees where they intersected designated OHV routes which has helped discourage use and speed recovery (Figure 7).

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

However, it was reported that forest users opened up some of the blocked roads with chain saws during hunting season.

Recovery: After two years of requiring visitors to use designated OHV trails on the Ocala NF (2006 and 2007), photo points indicate that the average percent of ground cover on the non-designated routes range from 20% on the Tobacco Patch trail to 52% on the Wandering Wiregrass Trail. While the amount of “live” ground cover on these non-designated roads is approximately 5% or less, compliance is allowing needlecast, leaf litter, and dead limbs to accumulate enough to cover more than half of these non-designated routes. Many non-designated roads are still apparent on the landscape, and will remain so for a number of years, but show little or no use (Figure 6). Most of the non-designated roads in the photo points fall into this category.

Trail Conditions: Designated trails are visited at least weekly to identify problem areas and identify maintenance needs. The seven designated OHV trails received over 964 days of maintenance work in FY2007. A total of 26 “problem areas” were noted, with 18 of them being on the Longleaf Trail. A variety of methods have been used including fences, posts, and other barriers to re-direct use in these areas (Figures 8a and 8b).



Figure 5. Tobacco Patch Photo Point 5 in 2007. Vehicle tracks apparent.



Figure 6. Hog Valley Photo Point 17 in 2007. An unauthorized road no longer being used; no tracks and light ground cover.



Figure 7. Longleaf Trail Photo Point 20 in 2007. A well-blocked road.



Figure 8a. Longleaf Trail Photo Point 43 in 2007. A dry sinkhole heavily used by OHVs.



Figure 8b. Longleaf Trail Photo Point 43 in 2007. Widened by OHV use. District staff began blocking these off with fences and barriers in 2007.

Osceola NF

The Osceola NF designated a system of Mixed use roads as OHV routes, and the first photo points were taken in 2006 and again in 2007. The photo points indicate that non-designated routes are recovering and becoming overgrown with vegetation. Figures 9 – 16 show photo points along OHV routes on the Osceola NF.



Figure 9. Ocean Pond Photo Point 7 in 2006. A nondesignated road with no use and live ground cover.



Figure 10: Ocean Pond Photo Point 7 in 2007. Still no use evident and shrubs growing in.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT



Figure 11. Ocean Pond Photo Point 18 in 2006. A closed road leading to an RCW colony.



Figure 12. Ocean Pond Photo Point 7 in 2007. A closed road leading to an RCW colony. No evidence of use by the public.



Figure 13. Ocean Pond Photo Point 21 in 2006. A control line for prescribed fire around a plantation.



Figure 14. Ocean Pond Photo Point 21 in 2007. A control line for prescribed fire around plantation, but no evidence of use by the public.



Figure 15. Ocean Pond Photo Point 25 in 2006. Intermittent pond with heavy OHV use.



Figure 16. Ocean Pond Photo Point 25 in 2007. OHV use still occurring around intermittent pond.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Forest Plan Goal:

- Preserve significant heritage resources as remnants of our cultural heritage by locating, evaluating, and protecting heritage resource sites.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Evaluate for significance five archeological sites each year.

2.10 Monitoring Question: Are heritage resource sites being evaluated and protected?

Item to Measure: Number of sites evaluated. Annual report on protection efforts.

Results: *Apalachicola NF:* Five archeological sites were evaluated in FY2007 that were within the Area of Potential Effect for motorized travel access designation because it was not possible to re-route around the sites. Site protection efforts included a condition assessment for Ft. Gadsden and an investigation of an incident where an individual conducted unauthorized ground-disturbing tractor and back-hoe work.

Ocala NF: A total of 94 recreation residence structures were evaluated and determined not eligible for NRHP listing. Nine archeological sites were evaluated in the Lake Kerr Recreation Residence Tract prompted by proposed land sale of this tract under special legislation. Condition assessments were conducted of Kimball Island archeological site and the historic CCC-constructed Mill House at Juniper Springs Recreation Area. Site protection efforts included an investigation of ground disturbance, originally thought to be looting activity with a metal detector, which turned out to be a land surveyor having a really difficult time locating a corner marker.

Osceola NF: The large "Bugaboo" wildfire with follow-up rehabilitation and salvage work was the focus of this forest for half of 2007. Site protection efforts were taken during the fire to identify them for avoidance and conduct assessment where emergency fire suppression impacted significant sites.

Evaluation: The objective to evaluate five archeological sites in FY2007 was met. Additionally, site protection measures were within the Forest Plan objective for FY 2007. However, the majority of FY2007 work focused upon compliance work associated with fire hazardous fuel reduction and fire suppression, timber sales, special uses, recreation developments and forest access (designated routes) analysis. An additional requirement that did not exist when the Florida Land Management Plan was written is entering all site data into a corporate database called "INFRA". FY2007 was the second year that accomplishment reporting required for the Annual Report to Congress was compiled directly from the INFRA database.

Forest Plan Goal:

- Protect, enhance, and where necessary, restore the forests' scenery resource values.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Complete the inventory of existing scenic conditions and proposed scenic classes and implement the updated Scenery Management System within 3 years of the adoption of this plan.

2.11 Monitoring Question: Are the scenic resources being protected, enhanced, and where necessary, restored?

Item to Measure: Implementation of the Scenery Management System (SMS) and management of scenery according to the recommendations of the SMS.

Results: This objective was to be accomplished by June 2002. Currently, the 2380 section of the Forest Service Manual continues to be revised to provide direction for implementation of the SMS. The National SMS Training Modules are also being developed (projected to be available in FY 2007 or FY 2008) to provide orientation level, working level, and technical level knowledge. Until forest personnel have received training in SMS, the visual management system (VMS) is still in place. The inability of the Forest to implement the SMS by the target date of June 2002, is directly attributable to the lateness of the availability of regional and national direction on the methodology and technology to be employed.

Evaluation: Although there are significant differences between the new SMS and the old VMS, there are also many aspects of the two systems that are similar and consistent. For instance, some new mapping and field ground truthing will be necessary, but much of the mapping and other inventorying done previously for the VMS will be able to be verified and used within the SMS with only minor modifications. Likewise, many of the mitigation measures described for the VMS are also valid for the SMS. Appropriate and adequate use of the previous VMS direction for coordination with other resources will continue within the LMP until the SMS is fully implemented. Hopefully in the near future, the Forest SMS program managers will continue verifying and updating the old VMS inventories (primarily within the GIS), and defining SMS management direction as part of Forest-wide direction and management area direction, if applicable, to be included in the next update of the LMP.

Forest Plan Goal:

- Interpret forest attributes such as scenic byways, cultural sites, and special areas. Interpret forest management practices, emphasizing how sand pine clearcutting and prescribed fire improve ecosystem functions.

2.12 Monitoring Question: Do forest visitors understand Forest Service practices and do they value and respect the resource being interpreted? QUESTION REMOVED BY AMENDMENT #2

Forest Plan Goal:

- Contribute to the social and economic well-being of local communities by promoting sustainable use of renewable natural resources and participating in efforts to devise creative solutions for economic health.

2.13 Monitoring Question: How are we contributing to the socioeconomic well-being?

Item to Measure: Returns to counties, indirect benefits through timber, recreation, range allotments, status report on rural development programs.

Results: The following tables show the gross receipts by source for the National Forests in Florida, and the payments to counties containing national forest system land in FY2007.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Table 47. Gross Receipts by Source.

Source	Apalachicola	Ocala	Osceola	Choctawhatchee	Total
Recreation User Fees					
Timber Products Cut	65517	147840	240416		453773
Grazing Fees					
Land Use Fees	31038	77249	8736		117023
Mineral Fees			4223		4223
Power	43723	35059	1976		80758
Special use Fees		115496	33400		148896
Fee Demo	*	*	*		*337057
Total	140278	375644	288751		1141730

Table 48. Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act Receipts

Apalachicola		Ocala		Osceola		Choctawhatchee	
Franklin	\$ 26,983.90	Lake	\$ 285,058.93	Baker	\$272,861.20	Okaloosa	\$ 0
Leon	\$127,795.76	Marion	\$ 933,427.12	Columbia	\$240,893.69	Walton	\$ 0
Liberty	\$325,533.78	Putnam	\$ 80,088.22			Santa Rosa	\$ 0
Wakulla	\$206,264.95						
Total	\$686,578.39		\$1,298,574.27		\$513,754.89		\$ 0

Table 49. Payment in Lieu of Taxes

Apalachicola		Ocala		Osceola		Choctawhatchee	
Franklin	\$ 22,018.00	Lake	\$ 31,469.00	Baker	\$ 46,097.00	Okaloosa	\$5,602.00
Leon	\$ 93,290.00	Marion	\$102,233.00	Columbia	\$ 49,336.00	Santa Rosa	\$2,110.00
Liberty	\$ 234,675.00	Putnam	\$12,027.00			Walton	\$ 577.00
Wakulla	\$ 153,616.00						
Total	\$503,599.00		\$145,729.00		\$ 95,433.00		\$8,289.00

Evaluation: Federal legislation (Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, P.L. 106-393) changed the way Forest Service payments to states are calculated. Since 1908 under legislation commonly known as the 25 Percent Fund Act, 25% of any revenues from National Forest lands within state boundaries were returned to that state to be used for roads and schools. The state then distributed those funds to their counties with National Forest lands in their boundaries. The new legislation gives counties containing National Forest lands the option of taking the average high-three 25% payments they received between the years 1986 and 1999 in place of the 25% payment they would receive from Forest revenues from the most recent year. In FY 2006, all counties elected the "full payment" (the law's term used to mean the "average of the high-three"). Total payments to counties increased to \$3,459,966 in FY 2002, and remained at that level until this year. The Secure Rural Schools bill reached its termination date in 2006. A final payment was authorized under continuation legislation in 2007 but no permanent replacement legislation has passed yet. Unless replacement legislation is passed, the payments to states will revert to the 25 Percent Fund Act for 2008 payments.

2.14 Monitoring Question: How much of each "special forest product" did we give permits to be collected and in what locations?

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Item to Measure: Quantity of each type, ranger district and compartment.

Results: The actual quantity of products *collected* is unknown for 2007. The quantity for which collection permits were *issued* is shown in Table 50. Permits are usually issued on a broad area basis and specific locations are generally not recorded. 511 permits were issued. 190 permits were free-use with a value of \$2,753. 321 permits were commercial permits with a total value of \$13,146.

Table 50. Special Product Summary

	Apalachicola	Osceola	Ocala	Total
Fire-wood (CCF)	196	2	196	394
Palmetto Berries (lbs)	0	0	39,800	39,800
Palmetto Fronds (lbs)	0	0	53,500	53,500
Plants (lbs)	4	4,000	0	4,004
Boughs (lbs)	0	1,332	4,000	5,332
Boughs (each)	0	0	5,207	5,207
Pine Straw (bushel)	4	0	0	4
Christmas Trees (each)	0	0	100	100
Crooked Wood (lbs)	0	0	20,173	20,173
Poles (each)	0	0	100	100
Deer-Moss (lbs)	0	0	2,500	2,500

Evaluation: In the context of acres and amounts of the above resources present on each National Forest, the quantities of these special products removed does not appear to be significant except for palmetto berries on the Ocala NF. The Ocala NF has initiated an environmental analysis to determine the specific impacts of harvesting palmetto berries and any needed mitigating measures. Also, minimum permit values may need to be increased to provide more efficiency of management. More detailed information on specific sites should be tracked to help determine cumulative amounts in the same area.

Forest Plan Standard VG-29, Sell no more than 103 million cubic feet (MMCF) of chargeable timber from suitable land (Appendix B, "Lands Suitable for Timber Production") in the 10-year planning period.

2.15 Monitoring Question: How much timber was offered for sale?

Item to Measure: MMCF (million cubic feet) of timber offered annually by type, product, and forest.

Results: 10.027 MMCF was offered for sale in FY 2007: 1.773 MMCF on the Ocala, 7.145 MMCF on the Osceola, and 1.109 MMCF on the Apalachicola. The seven year total of timber offered for sale through FY's 2000-2007 is 54.1 MMCF, which is 53% of the maximum allowed for the first 10-year period. Table 51 shows the products offered by National Forest in each year of the Forest Plan.

Table 51 Timber Offered by Year, Product and National Forest

Fiscal Year	SAWTIMBER				PULPWOOD & POSTS				Grand Total
	Apalach	Osceola	Ocala	Total	Apalach	Osceola	Ocala	Total	
2000	.292	.010	.011	..313	1.240	.831	3.757	5.828	6.141
2001	.021	.003	.037	.061	.193	.774	2.125	3.092	3.153
2002	.002	.013	.123	.138	.007	.316	4.918	5.241	5.379
2003	.147	.083	.025	.255	.173	.361	4.229	4.763	5.018

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Fiscal	SAWTIMBER				PULPWOOD & POSTS				Grand
2004	.337	1.057	000	1.394	.867	.713	4.039	5.618	7.012
2005	.391	.324	.000	.715	.920	.396	9.754	11.070	11.785
2006	.985	.217	.766	1.968	.357	.579	2.681	3.617	5.585
2007	.391	2.625	.219	3.235	.718	4.520	1.554	6.792	10.027
Total	2.565	4.332	1.180	8.078	4.475	8.489	33.056	46.019	54.097

Evaluation: The standard in the Forest Plan related to timber production places a limit of selling no more than 103 MMCF of timber in the ten-year planning period. The total volumes offered for sale and actually sold are within the standard.

Forest Plan Standard LA-8- Evaluate special-use applications to see if they are in the public interest.

2.16 Monitoring Question: Are special use permits in compliance and if not, what actions are taken?

Item to Measure: Number of cases of noncompliance actions taken.

Results: In FY 2007, the National Forests in Florida processed/administered 1,128 special use permits. Due to budget constraints, compliance monitoring was completed on a sample of special use permits in FY 2007. Based on this information, it is estimated that generally less than 1% of permits are in noncompliance.

We find ourselves processing new applications rather than completing inspections of current uses to meet public demand. The Forest has found it to be problematic and not realistic to inform new special use applicants that we are not accepting new applications until all current uses have been inspected and brought up to standard.

Evaluation: Our biggest challenge is not having the funds and staffing to adequately manage the program.

Forest Plan Standard IN-2- Close and return to resource production all existing roads, whether temporary or system roads, that are not needed for resource activities.

2.17 Monitoring Question: How many miles of roads have been converted to another use or otherwise closed?

Item to Measure: Miles of roads closed and removed from transportation inventory system updates.

Results: 68* miles of unauthorized roads were decommissioned in FY 2007.
16.3* miles of roads were removed from the system.
(* miles as reported out of INFRA)

Evaluation: Road condition surveys utilizing electronic road logs (ERL) were accomplished on the assigned random sample of roads. Condition survey requirements changed this year and now surveys will be done on a random sample of all maintenance level roads.

All forests worked to complete the Road Access Designation process in 07. This was based on the travel management rule which required designation of roads, trails and areas open to motor vehicle use by vehicle class. Licensed motor vehicles have been allowed on numbered national forest system roads and will continue to be allowed on these roads. However, unlicensed motor vehicles (OHVs) will now need to stay on roads, trails and areas designated for their use. The

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

final decisions include: which currently non-designated routes will be designated for motor vehicle use, which national forest system roads will allow mixed use by both licensed and unlicensed motor vehicles, and in a limited number of cases, which low standard national forest system roads will not be designated for motor vehicle use.

The forests have a 2008 September deadline to produce the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). Implementation on approved plans began in 2007. Database updates began with a goal of connecting GIS information and data from Infra in order to produce the MVUM maps. Implementation on the ground began with roads and trails being numbered on the ground, and signing that indicated what type of vehicles were allowed, warning and regulatory signs for safety, and numbering maintenance level 2 system roads on the ground. Implementation will continue in 2008 once all Environmental Assessments are complete.

Organizational Effectiveness

Forest Plan Goals:

- Ensure a philosophy of service is paramount in our relationship with the public in the management of forest resources.
- Be aggressive and innovative in providing for public participation in planning, managing, and monitoring of the national forests.
- Strengthen partnerships and actively pursue communication, cooperation, and partnerships with other national forests, other agencies, groups, local communities, organizations, and tribal governments to serve the public interest, consistent with the Forest Service Mission.
- Meet regularly and often with county commissioners, congressional staff, tribal governments, and State agency directors to ensure a high level of positive communication needed to maintain national forests for quality public uses and values.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Implement surveys for determining public satisfaction with National Forests in Florida programs.

3.1 Monitoring Question: Are people satisfied with service from the National Forests in Florida? QUESTION REMOVED BY AMENDMENT #2

3.2 Monitoring Questions: How much public participation do we have? Have partnerships been strengthened? QUESTION REMOVED BY AMENDMENT #2

3.3 Monitoring Question: Did we do what we said we would?

Item to Measure: Decision documents and field review of implementation.

Results: Vegetation management activities were monitored by sale administrators.

Evaluation: No serious deviation in the implementation of planned projects has been identified. Continued review of projects needs to be on-going.

III. Evaluation of Outcomes on the Land

Major Findings and Evaluation:

Based on the expected annual average of outcomes for the planning period, some of the monitoring items reflect that expected outcomes are not progressing within the rate to achieve the desired conditions, goals, and objectives of the Plan. There are areas where monitoring indicates follow-up action is needed.

The primary causes of these lower outputs are the result of natural events such as wildfires and hurricane response. To a lesser extent, management emphasis on the completion of the motorized route designation process and reduced budgets have affected our ability to achieve the objectives.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Restore between 10,000 and 15,000 acres of off-site slash pine to the appropriate native vegetation in the next 10 years. Remove slash pine from 8,000 acres of mixed longleaf/slash pine stands on the Osceola NF. The long-term objective is to restore all the off-site slash pine to the appropriate native vegetation.

5,229 acres have been restored to longleaf pine from off-site slash pine through the end of FY 2007. 986 acres of slash pine was removed from mixed stands on the Osceola in FY 2007. In order to meet the 10-year objective, efforts should be made to increase the acreage of restoration in future years. More effort should be made to schedule removal of slash pine from mixed stands on the Osceola National Forest.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Thin 45,000 to 55,000 acres of longleaf and slash pine stands to release overcrowded live crowns, favor appropriate pine species regeneration, increase stand growth, allow more sunlight onto the forest floor, and increase suitable habitat for red-cockaded woodpeckers (RCW).

A total of 12,985 acres have been offered through the end of FY 2007. In order to meet the Forest Plan objective, areas that may be suitable for this work should be surveyed, examined, and assessed for inclusion in future years work scheduling.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Initiate uneven-aged management with group selection on 30,000 to 33,000 acres principally in longleaf pine forests with some in slash pine forests.

Through the end of FY 2007, 2,810 acres were offered with uneven-aged management harvest methods. In order to meet the objectives of the Forest Plan, areas that may be suitable for this work should be surveyed, examined, and assessed for inclusion in future years work scheduling.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Initiate irregular shelterwood harvests on between 1,800 and 2,000 acres of slash pine forests.

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

There were no acres of irregular shelterwood offered for harvest through the end of FY 2007. This objective may no longer be applicable as a forest objective.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Regenerate between 39,000 and 41,000 acres of sand pine on the Ocala NF.

Timber harvest is the primary management tool for maintaining scrub jay habitat on the Ocala National Forest. Clear-cutting of mature sand pine regenerates the scrub habitat necessary for the jay. A regular cycle of sand pine regeneration is being employed to maintain the jays across the scrub on the Ocala National Forest. At the end of FY 2007, there were 43,295 acres of sand pine scrub in the 3-15 year old age class. A total of 20,807 acres of sand pine have been committed to regeneration harvest through the end of FY 2007. This has resulted in an estimated 9% increase in the total number of Florida Scrub-jays in the Ocala's population. 1,341 acres of sand pine were offered for regeneration harvest in FY 2007. In order to meet the objectives of the Forest Plan, areas that may be suitable for this work should be surveyed, examined, and assessed for inclusion in future years work scheduling.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Designate the following acres of future old growth by community type.

Table 52. Old growth Community Objectives

Old-Growth Community	Acres
Upland Longleaf Pine Forest	10,200
Southern Wet Pine Forest, Woodland, and Savannah	11,000
Cypress/Tupelo Swamp Forest	17,700
River Floodplain Hardwood Forest	2,900
Hardwood Wetland Forest	24,200
Dry and Dry Mesic Oak/Pine Forest	2,200
Coastal Plain Upland Mesic Hardwood Forest	1,700
Dry and Xeric Oak Forest, Woodland, and Savannah	2,100
Total	72,000

Old growth has been designated 35,282 acres of the Apalachicola NF. Old growth should be designated on the Ocala and Osceola NF to fulfill the 72,000 acre forest-wide old growth objective.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Meet requirements of the Revised RCW Recovery Plan.

The RCW Recovery Plan (Second Revision, 2003) does not modify the recovery goals for the NFF. The ARD remains the only fully-recovered RCW population in the southeast. The Recovery Plan sets the goal for each population to increase by 5% per year. The Wakulla population increased 8% from 2006 – 2007, the Osceola population increased by 10% from 2006 – 2007, and the Ocala population increased by 4% from 2006 – 2007. In order to more closely conform to the revised Recovery Plan, the Forest prepared a plan amendment in 2005 which adopted management direction from the Recovery Plan, superseding the RCW management standards in the 1999 Forest Plan.

Forest Plan Objective:

- Designate a system of trail and opened, classified roads in areas where motorized vehicles and bicycles are restricted. This process will incorporate existing travelways as much as possible and include public participation and collaboration with local user groups.

The Ocala NF released a Final EA for Phase 2 of the Access Designation in 2007 and began the process of identifying and marking the Phase 2 trails on the ground and expects the process to be completed in FY 2008. The Osceola NF completed and implemented the designated trail system in 2006 for Phase 1 and began an environmental assessment on Phase 2 trails in 2007; they expect to have the trail system for Phase 2 marked on the ground by 2008. The Apalachicola NF completed an EA in 2007 to cover both Phase 1 and Phase 2 OHV trail designations, but identifying and marking them on the ground will not occur until 2008.

The National Forests in Florida are now in compliance with the due date set by the Region to complete OHV trail route designations on all forests in September 2007, although some of the trails for Phase 2 still need to be identified and marked on the ground. Photo Point monitoring of the Phase 1 trails began in 2006 for the Osceola NF and in 2007 for the Ocala. Some photo points of the old trails that comprise part of the "Enduro Trail" on the Apalachicola NF were taken in 2007, and if parts of these trails become designated, these photo points will be included in the annual OHV monitoring; however, photo points still need to be established for the Apalachicola NF.

Forest Plan Goal:

- Increase public awareness of wilderness values. Protect and enhance resources, quality, and wilderness character of designated wilderness areas.

The Revised Forest Plan contains recommendations for wilderness (Clear Lake WSA) and for wild and scenic rivers (4 rivers). Regional and Washington Office direction is that legislative EISs for wilderness designation or wild and scenic river designation should not go forward unless there is support for it from the state's congressional delegation and a commitment to introduce a bill into Congress. At this time, there is no indication of support for a wilderness or rivers bill in Florida.

Demands of the Public and Emerging Issues

The Southern Region of the Forest Service is currently undertaking an assessment of current knowledge about the influence of climate change on aquatic and terrestrial resources in the south and identifying assessment tools for monitoring climate change and measuring its effects. This assessment will not only expand our understanding of the effects of climate change on biological and physical resources, it will also help determine how this information is integrated into both long and short term planning efforts.

Research Needs

Monitoring efforts during 2007 did not disclose any immediate needs for research efforts to support the implementation and monitoring of the National Forests in Florida Forest Plan. However, some research projects could contribute to understanding forest ecosystem interactions as well as impacts of management and public activities on forest systems. A better understanding

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

of these interactions would allow managers to identify any changes needed in management activities or direction in the Forest Plan. Possible research needs include:

1. Research to determine how long T&E plant species are able to persist between disturbances in sand pine scrub habitat.
2. Research to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of management techniques for site preparation in Florida scrub jay habitat. Primary techniques which should be evaluated are prescribed burning and mechanical roller chopping.
3. Research to determine habitat variables affecting movement of Florida scrub-jay over time. Emphasis may be on spatial constraints as well as potential barriers to movements.
4. Research to determine optimum burning intensities, frequencies and seasons required to return longleaf/palmetto flatwoods ecosystems to conditions existing prior to fire suppression management.
5. Research to determine upland use by adult and juvenile flatwood salamanders.
6. Research to identify impacts of habitat fragmentation on flatwood salamanders and striped newts.
7. Research to evaluate pond management strategies to optimize habitat for flatwood salamanders and striped newts.
8. Research on harvest methods and other options for removal of small diameter wood for hazardous fuel reduction. Research would focus on overcoming barriers that hinder use of biomass and development of markets utilizing biomass for fuel or other purposes.
9. Research current issues related to forest management within the Wildland Urban Interface.
10. Research to develop monitoring techniques to accurately assess the impacts of OHV activities on wildlife and rare plants and their habitats.
11. Research to develop techniques for the effective restoration of habitats damaged by OHV activities.

On-Going Research on the forest includes:

1. Identification of visitor needs and perspectives along the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST). This research is in the second year of a five year study being conducted by the University of Florida. Annual reports are on file at the Forest Supervisors office.

IV. M & E Action Plan

1.0 Actions Not requiring Forest Plan Amendment or Revision:

Action: Develop and implement a strategy to increase the number of RCW groups monitored annually on the Apalachicola Ranger District from approximately 20% of the population to approximately 33% of the population. On the Wakulla Ranger District, accomplish cluster status checks at all (approximately 130) currently active clusters. Accomplish group composition determinations at 50% of the Wakulla clusters annually.

Responsibility: Apalachicola National Forest Biologist, RCW Biologist, USFWS RCW technician.

Status: Tentative strategy developed in cooperation with regional USFWS RCW biologist. This is currently being done.

Completion Date: Ongoing

Action: Develop and implement strategies to monitor Florida scrub-jay discussed in the US Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion on Phase I of the Ocala National Forest Access Management Plan.

Responsibility: Forest Biologist, Ocala National Forest biological staff.

Status: This item was dropped based on US Fish and Wildlife Service letter dated May 30, 2007 removing this requirement until a scientifically sound approach could be identified.

Completion Date: NA

Action: Solicit support from the Florida congressional delegation for designation of wilderness and wild and scenic rivers recommended in the Revised Forest Plan.

Responsibility: Forest Public Affairs Officer

Status: Carried over from 2006 Monitoring Report

Completion Date: FY2008-2010

Action: Continue to update and utilize 5-year vegetation management plans on all forests. Develop methods of analysis or modeling to better prioritize activities in the 5-year vegetation management plans.

Responsibility: Ecosystem Staff Officer, District Rangers, GIS analyst, District TMAs and Silviculturists

Status: 5-year vegetation management plans have been prepared on the individual forests. Analysis and modeling techniques need to be developed to improve prioritization efforts to better utilize limited budgets and critical habitat needs.

Completion Date: Ongoing, updated annually.

Action: Designate old growth on the Ocala and Osceola NF.

Responsibility: District Rangers and Silviculturists

Status: This item remains unchanged since FY 2006. We expect to complete by 2009.

Completion Date: FY 2009

Action: Develop a Forest-wide action plan for treating non-native invasive species based on Regional Guidance.

Responsibility: Ecosystem Staff Officer

Status: Initial proposal being developed

Completion Date: FY 2009

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Action: Update the GIS database, and appropriate Forest Plan pages (including maps), to reflect Management Area changes due to newly acquired lands which were automatically allocated to the management areas they were surrounded by pursuant to 36 CFR 254.3(f).

Responsibility: GIS Coordinator, Forest Planner, Lands Staff Officer

Status: On-going

Completion Date: FY 2009

Action: Obtain data needed for revising the Forest Plan to incorporate lands acquired within the Designated Pinhook Purchase Unit.

Responsibility: Forest Lands Staff Officer

Status: Current management of the area is primarily custodial due to the conditions created by the Impassible fire. At this time, the Forest plans to wait until the Forest Plan is revised due to the size of area involved, and higher management priorities of other resources in other parts of the forest. In the interim period, data will be gathered and entered into the Forest GIS system for future analysis.

Completion Date: 2012

Action: Prepare a Forest-wide Environmental Assessment for treating Non-native Invasive Plants within Wilderness areas.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Ecologists, District Staff

Status: Preparing proposal

Completion Date: FY 2009

2.0 Actions Requiring Amendment or Revision of the Forest Plan:

Table 53. Completed Amendments to the 1999 Forest Plan.

Completed Amendments	Year Completed
#1 Supplement to the FEIS Vegetation Management in the Coastal Plain/Piedmont	2002
#2 Updates of Various Standards and Management Area Allocation on the Osceola NF	2004
#3 Update of RCW Recovery Plan	2005
#4 Removal of FW Standard VG-24	2006
#5 Update for Consistency with the 2005 Travel Management Rule	2006
#6 Addition of Management Area 4.6 for Management of the FNST	2006
#7 Reallocation of Scrub-jay Management Area 8.2 to 8.4	2007

Action: Clarify and re-word direction for Forest Plan Standard VG-18 to address confusion over disturbance limit.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Ecologist and Silviculturist

Status: Preparing Scoping Statement

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Clarify and re-word direction for Forest Plan Standard WA-1 to reference most recent BMP manual.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Ecologist and Silviculturist

Status: Preparing Scoping Statement

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Clarify and re-word direction for Forest Plan Standard WA-3 to facilitate treatment of vegetation around water so that artificial buffers are not created around wetlands.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Ecologist and Silviculturist

Status: Preparing Scoping Statement

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Remove objective 18 for irregular shelterwood harvests.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Ecologist and Silviculturist

Status: Preparing Scoping Statement

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Clarify Objective 4 to identify overall fire frequency as the highest burn priority.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Ecologist and Silviculturist

Status: Preparing Scoping Statement

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Update the Wildland Fire terminology of Appropriate Management Response.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Fire Management Officer, Ecologist and Silviculturist

Status: Preparing Scoping Statement

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Update Forest Plan standard FI-12 to clarify Appropriate Management Response.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Fire Management Officer, Ecologist and Silviculturist

Status: Preparing Scoping Statement

2007 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Update Forest Plan standard FI-15 to reflect use of fire retardants from the National Fire Retardant EA.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Fire Management Officer, Ecologist and Silviculturist

Status: Preparing Scoping Statement

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Update Forest Plan standard FI-16 to reflect use of fire retardants from the National Fire Retardant EA.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Fire Management Officer, Ecologist and Silviculturist

Status: Preparing Scoping Statement

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Update Forest Plan gopher tortoise direction to reference the most current Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission Gopher Tortoise Management Plan.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Wildlife Biologist, Silviculturist

Status: Initial scoping underway

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Update Forest Plan standard WL-11 to reflect most recent direction in the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission Gopher Tortoise Management Plan.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Wildlife Biologist, Silviculturist

Status: Initial scoping underway

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Update Forest Plan standard RE-4 to clarify applicable situations for locating trails based on most recent direction in the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission Gopher Tortoise Management Plan.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Wildlife Biologist, Silviculturist

Status: Initial scoping underway

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Update general direction for bald eagles and standards WL-4 and WL-5 to reflect the most recent National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Wildlife Biologist, Silviculturist

Status: Initial scoping underway

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Update Flatwoods salamander guidance under standards WL-16 and WL-17 to clarify "dry periods".

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Wildlife Biologist, Silviculturist

Status: Initial scoping underway

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Update Management Area 8.2 desired condition statements and Management Area standard 8.2-3 to increase maximum clearcut size to 800 acres.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Wildlife Biologist, Silviculturist

Status: Initial scoping underway

Completion Date: FY-09

Action: Re-allocate Management Area 8.1 to Management Area 8.2.

Responsibility: Forest Planner, Wildlife Biologist, Silviculturist

Status: Initial scoping underway

Completion Date: FY-09

Appendix A: Interdisciplinary Team Members

Monitoring data were collected by all staff groups in the Forest Supervisor's Office and from the Ranger Districts. The Interdisciplinary Team that assembled the monitoring data, evaluated the results, and recommended changes included:

Name	Discipline
David Harris	Forest Planner
Haven Cook	Recreation Planner
Louise Kirn	Botanist
William Carromero	Botanist
Skip Griep	Wildlife Biologist
Debbie Casto	Fire Management Officer
Kyle Jones	Lands Program Manager
Rhonda Kimbrough	Forest Archeologist
Kathy O'Byran	Civil Engineer
Richard Shelfer	Forest Silviculturalist
Tony Matthews	Regional Air Quality Specialist
Grey Lussier	Forest Interpretive Specialist
Kent Wimmer	FNST Coordinator
Bobby Grinstead	Fisheries Biologist