

**Annual Monitoring Report**  
**Gila National Forest Land Management Plan**  
**FY 2011**

**September 2012**



### Forest Supervisor Certification

I certify that the Gila National Forest Plan as amended is sufficient to guide management of the Forest over the next year. A need for change analysis conducted as part of this monitoring report will be considered during the Forest Plan revision process scheduled to begin in FY2015.

*/s/ Kelly Russell*  
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9-18-2012  
Date

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On the Cover: Cattle on the Quemado Ranger District  
Photo Credit: U.S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region, Gila National Forest.

# Annual Monitoring Report FY 2011

## Overview

This report summarizes monitoring results on the Gila National Forest for the fiscal year 2011. Recommendations are provided to improve effectiveness of the current monitoring plan as outlined in the Gila National Forest Land Management Plan (Forest Plan). A monitoring action plan for 2012 work activities is provided as part of this report.

## 1. Monitoring and Trend Evaluation

Monitoring and trend evaluations are analyzed for the following 6 resources:

- Facilities
- Fire
- Lands
- Range
- Recreation
- Wilderness

The number of monitoring activities, monitoring frequencies, accuracy, and precision standards vary for each of the items listed above. Individual monitoring activities are selected annually based on the annual plan of work and, as described in the Gila National Forest Plan, not all monitoring items are applicable each year. Annual work plan activities are based on the Agency's and the public's priorities, concerns and interests. Some monitoring methods have become obsolete and will be updated during the next Forest Plan revision to reflect information that is relevant to reflect present standards.

## *Facilities*

### **Facilities 1: Forest transportation system**

#### **Monitoring Intent:**

Assure adequate road system to meet goals and objectives of Forest Plan.

#### **Monitoring Method/Unit of Measure:**

National Forest Transportation Inventory System miles constructed and reconstructed. Road management records on miles of travel ways closed. Road maintenance records for roads maintained to standard. Traffic use and distribution data will be collected on 5% of the Forest system from:

- 1) State of New Mexico Highway Department;
- 2) Forest Service traffic counters and surveillance methods.

#### **Measuring Frequency:**

Annual

#### **Percent Accuracy/Precision:**

+/-15%; +/-15%

#### **Variability that would indicate Re-evaluation:**

Change in average size of the system and in average miles not maintained to standard that exceed 25% of planned level. Review every 3 years.

#### **Monitoring and Trend Evaluation:**

**Amount and distribution of use of the Forest transportation system and the total miles in the system:** The transportation system inventory is verified every year in September.

At the end of FY 2011, the following mileages were: Level 1 - 523 miles, Level 2 - 4,230 miles, Level 3 – 247 miles, Level 4 – 129 miles, Level 5 – 24 miles. Of the total 5,153 miles that comprise the transportation system, 368 miles are considered to be arterial and collector roads, while the majority of the remaining 4,785 miles are classified as high clearance vehicle roads. Any changes in the disposition of roads are recorded in the Travel Routes module of INFRA. The forest has not obliterated (decommissioned) any roads over the last 5 years as compared with 22 obliterated (decommissioned) miles during the previous 3 years.

**Assure adequate road system to meet goals and objectives of Forest Plan:** On an annual basis, the engineering staff meets with each District Ranger to determine construction, reconstruction and maintenance needs for the coming fiscal year. Upon completion of District meetings, an overall Forest priority schedule is developed for project implementation.

**National Forest Transportation Inventory System (miles constructed and reconstructed):** At the end of each fiscal year, a report is generated listing the

amount of roads that were constructed/reconstructed over the past 12 months. Trends show less construction/reconstruction projects are being completed. No new roads were constructed over the last 5 years. Road reconstruction over the same time period averaged approximately 1.1 miles on an annual basis.

**Road management records on miles of travel-ways closed:** The INFRA database is used to track the disposition of each road within the Forest, with one of the categories being closed roads. The current inventory shows that 523 miles of roads are classified as closed. While the number of closed roads does vary slightly from year to year, the number has remained fairly stable over the last 10 years. The change in mileage is associated with corrections to the data.

**Road maintenance records for roads maintained to standard:** Road maintenance accomplishments are reported at the end of each fiscal year through the Road Accomplishment Report (RAR). In FY 2011, 321 miles of roads received maintenance. This represents 7% of the open system roads. The majority of these miles are not fully maintained, i.e., correcting all deficiencies to ensure the road and all its appurtenances are functioning properly. Trends indicate that no substantial change in the percentage of roads maintained will occur in the near future.

**Recommendations:**

1. Traffic counting is no longer utilized as a monitoring measure on the Forest. Recommend removal of this measuring method during Forest Plan revision.

**Change in average size of the system and in average miles not maintained to standard that exceed 25% of planned level. Review every 3 years:** The number of miles of roads within each maintenance level category is verified each September. Trends show that decreasing budgets are causing the number of miles of roads maintained to standard to decrease. As a result, the amount of deferred maintenance is subject to increase over time. At the end of FY 2007 (the last year deferred maintenance summary data was available), the following deferred maintenance needs were shown: Level 1 - \$857,543, Level 2 – \$7,973,010, Level 3 - \$76,461,058, Level 4 - \$52,040,021, Level 5 - \$19,492,972. Deferred maintenance inventories were started in 1999, therefore no data is available prior to that date.

## *Fire Management*

### **Fire Management 1: Fire suppression effectiveness**

**Monitoring Intent:**

Follow Federal regulations and measure prescriptions and effects.

**Monitoring Method/Unit of Measure:**

a) Periodic inspections and review to determine if the fire management organization is effective in controlling fire losses within prescription, b) The use of the fire budget analysis process to determine fire management efficiency, and c) Fire review of select projects.

**Measuring Frequency:** Annual inspections, periodic reviews, and fire budget analysis as needed.

**Percent Accuracy/Precision:**

+/-10%; +/-10%

**Variability that would indicate Re-evaluation:**

Fire management organization is not insuring compliance with standards and guidelines applied to 90% of the wildfires. To be reviewed every 3 years.

**Monitoring and Trend Evaluation:**

Annual and periodic reviews of the fire management organization were conducted from FY2004 through FY2011, to determine the effectiveness in meeting fire suppression needs on the Forest. A comprehensive unit review in the form of Forest and District Readiness Inspections was conducted in May of 2011.

The Fire Qualifications Review Committee on Forest provides oversight for the qualifications and training of 250 to 300 people. Training is conducted each year to ensure crew safety and effectiveness in managing wildland fire. All Incident Qualification carded fire fighters both seasonal and permanent undergo basic firefighter training S130 /190. All red carded personnel attend fire refresher training each year. Additional training is taken as required for different positions and skill needs. A complete review of all red card files for all employees was completed in 2007, and we continue the audit process to ensure accuracy and currency of all of our personnel. The results of the review have identified areas for refinement and revision of all red card documentation as well as help identify training needs and position shortages. This past year we revised our Red Card Committee Operating Plan to better meet the needs of our employees.

The budgeting process was updated as needed to address needs in the fire organization. This is currently done in the National Fire Management Analysis System (NFMAS). The forest is currently working on the Fire Planning Analysis (FPA) process that will be implemented in 2013 or later, and will replace NFMAS.

The 2011 fire season on the Gila National Forest was pretty close to average for total number of fires and acres burned. Our occurrence of person caused fires remained

above average. This increase is partially due to an abundant amount of grass in the Wildland Urban Interface and a very dry spring. People burning trash, vegetation or using equipment that caused sparks quickly started fires in the heavy grass.

The forest had a total of 257 fires totaling 96,602 acres. Of the total, 222 were lightning caused fires totaling 1,650 acres. Nine were managed for multiple objectives for a total of 5,505 acres. Resource benefits achieved by restoring fire's role to our fire-dependent ecosystem include eliminating heavy fuels, creating vegetative diversity, and improving wildlife habitat. Additionally, there were 26 person caused fires totaling 89,693 acres, the largest being the Miller Fire. Gila NF fire managers will continue to allow fire to perform its natural role on the landscape to the greatest extent possible, coordinating with all other resource areas (wildlife, soils, air quality, watershed and range). As the process of fire is allowed to be an integral part of the ecosystem the structure of the Gila NF will continue to improve.

## **Fire Management 2: Project generated fuel treatment**

### **Monitoring Intent:**

Meet Federal regulations, measure prescriptions and effects. Assure that fuel treatment following the various timber activities is meeting fire protection and insect and disease control objectives.

### **Monitoring Method/Unit of Measure:**

Annual fuel treatment report. Data is generated from field personnel who monitor and/or direct fuel treatment by Forest Service crews, logging companies, contractors, etc.

### **Measuring Frequency:**

Annual

### **Percent Accuracy/Precision:**

+/-10%; +/-10%

### **Variability that would indicate Re-evaluation:**

Less than 80% of the fuels are not being treated within 2 years of generation.

### **Monitoring and Trend Evaluation:**

**Activity Generated Fuel Treatment:** In 2011 the Forest treated a total of 9,570 acres through the use of prescribed fire and mechanical manipulation/removal. The majority of those acres were treated with prescribed fire. Of the 9,570 acres, 1,650 acres treated activity fuels that were generated from 2008 to 2009. Activities were thinning and timber sales to create fuel breaks on the Reserve and Silver City Ranger Districts. Projects included the Red Rock Fuel Break (Silver City RD) and The Reserve WUI (Reserve RD). Piles were also treated on the Wilderness and Glenwood RD's. The forest also generated 550 acres of activity fuels as a result of thinning (Reserve and Silver City RD, and 200 acres of slash from the Gap 1 timber sale (Quemado RD). The forest was able to meet targets in 2011 due to the great coordination amongst the districts and good conditions for burning.



The Forest continues to treat fuels across the landscape. In the last five years the mechanical treatment projects emphasis have focused on the wildland urban interface (WUI) areas. Most of this work has been primarily mechanical treatment, removing accumulation of fuels around these areas. Secondary treatments may utilize fire to maintain the original fuel reduction treatment. The Forest still continues to treat large areas other than WUI to encourage fire to resume its natural role in the environment and provide for a healthier forest landscape.

In general, there is support for fire to assume its natural role. Smoke is an issue when it settles into a community area. However, this has been the exception, rather than the rule. The Forest works with the New Mexico Air Quality Bureau and registers burn activities as required by the New Mexico Smoke Management Program. The Forest also informs potentially affected communities in advance of prescribed burns.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the fuel monitoring item (Fire 2) include both activity and natural fuels. This would include fire use acres, which is the result of fire treatments associated with prescribed burns and fires managed for resource benefits.

## ***Lands***

### **Lands 1: Rights-of-way acquired**

**Monitoring Intent:**

Meet Federal regulations; measured prescriptions and effects.

**Monitoring Method/Unit of Measure:**

Work accomplishment report in miles.

**Measuring Frequency:**

Annual

**Percent Accuracy/Precision:**

+/-5%; +/-5%

**Variability that would indicate Re-evaluation:**

Failure to acquire projected needed rights-of-way at the end of the seventh year.

**Monitoring and Trend Evaluation:**

Per the Land Management Plan, the priorities for rights-of-way acquisition are: 1) resource harvesting programs; 2) administration of National Forest lands, and 3) public access to National Forest lands (pg. 38 Forest Plan).

Over the past years, private landowners have blocked traditional access to the Forest by exercising their private land rights. Acquisition of rights-of-way ensures that the public will continue to have access to the Forest. As timber harvesting programs have declined, the need for access for resource harvesting has also declined. Access for the range program has not been an issue. However, the need for access for recreation

and administration has increased; since the Forest Plan was approved, due to traditional routes being blocked.

At this time, right-of-way (ROW) acquisition is unpredictable due to its dependency on willing sellers. Owners of high priority ROWs need to always be approached for possible conveyance. When these owners are not interested, the ROWs of willing owners of property with lesser significance, will receive our efforts.

Public access is not solely dependent on the Forest Service acquiring easements. By law, County roads are open to the public. As subdivisions are created, some of the subdivision roads are dedicated to public use through dedication of the access roads to the County.

Table 10 (Forest Plan, Appendix C) lists 72.9 miles where ROW is needed. Of these 72.9 miles, approximately 40.0 miles can be deleted as they are either County Roads or a decision has been made to reroute the road or trail through National Forest

NFLM funding has been very limited in the past with the bulk of the funding going towards the salaries of a couple of individuals. The majority of the lands program deals with special use management.

#### **Recommendation:**

Of the 72.9 miles of trail and road access identified in the Forest Plan to be acquired, 32.9 miles of roads and trails are still in need of acquisition. An additional 1.0 mile of road need to be added to the ROW needs list in correcting a problem in an existing easement document. Many of the miles of roads and trails that are acquired are not listed in the Forest Plan, as they may be within a parcel of land which is acquired. As this exceeds the 5% of variation, the Forest Plan should be re-valuated during revision.

The following rights-of-way can be deleted from Table 10:

<b>Road/Trail</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Status as of 9/30/2010</b>
TR #179	DeLoche Trail	0.4	S1, T11S R19W: No ROW acquired. Per decision of Ranger, the trail is to be rerouted
TR #77	Bloodgood and Cooney	0.4	S27, T14S R11W: FT #77 was rerouted from the Mimbres River Trailhead at the Bloodgood Place to the CDNST Trailhead. S33, T14S R11W: FT #77 no longer goes through the Cooney Place.
FR #522	Tierra Blanca	1.0	S20, T16S R8W: No ROW acquired; prior to FY 2000, the road was rerouted around the private land. Portion of road outside of NF is Sierra County B013.
FR #19	Bill Knight Gap	0.1	Now Catron County Road B-007.
FR #19	Spur Lake	0.3	Now Catron County Road B-007.
FR #157N	Hermosa	14.0	Should be listed as FR #157N (not FR #157S) S20, T12S R8W is Sierra County Road C003; S23, T13S R9W: Most of the road was rerouted around the private land. ROW on the remaining portion of the road on private land was acquired in 1993. There is a 0.5 mile of road yet to process to complete this acquisition.

Road/Trail	Name	Miles	Status as of 9/30/2010
FR #3228 (#4074 & #4053)	Wildhorse (Elephant Lode)	1.5	Attempt to purchase was made. Landowner wanted more than the appraised value. No ROW acquired. Silver Creek Permits substitute for this route (see below).
FR #226	Chloride Creek	2.0	S31, T10S R10W ROW acquired in 1978 (outside of NF) is Sierra County Road C006.
FR #142	Snow Lake	0.5	S22, T10S R15W: now Catron County Road #C-021 (outside of NF).
FR #886	Royal John	8.1	(outside of NF): Grant County Road 3-77.
FR #210	Centerfire Creek	4.7	Now Catron County Road B-009.
FR #28	Y Canyon TS	4.0	Outside of NF: Catron County Road B-019 and B-054. Pvt. within NFS land: S24, 25 T7S R15W is now crossed by Catron Co. Rd. B-054
FR #49	Toriette Lakes	0.5	FY 2004 Review of existing deeds showed that the Forest already has a 1955 right-of-way for FR #49.
FR #519	Frisco Hot Springs	0.5	No ROW acquired; Forest rerouted access to Sundial Mountain Road.
FR #216 and #23	East Camp	2.0	FR #216: Now Catron County Road B-012. FR #23: Now Catron County Road B-029.
FR #506	Bear Creek	1.5	S23, 24, & 25, T16S R14W
Total		41.5	

The following rights-of-way are still needed per Table 10:

Road/Trail	Name	Miles	Status as of 9/30/2010
TR #724	Turkey Creek Trail	0.3	FT 724 is entirely on NF, No ROW acquired for FT 155 in S15, T14S R16W.
TR #708	East Fork Jeep Trail	2.0	S3, 4, 9, 11, T13S R13W: No ROW acquired
TR #247	Sapillo Creek	0.4	S31, T14S R13W: No ROW acquired
FR #231	Corduroy Canyon	10.0	S31, T8S R10W; S6, 7, T9S R10W, S12, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30, 31 T9S R11W, S1, T10S R12W: No ROW acquired. US Gov't may already own this road.
FR #524, #902, #896, #758	Area 2D Access	10.0	FR 524: S23, T10S R9W: No ROW acquired FR 524: S30, T10S R8W: No ROW acquired FR 902: S1, T10S R9W: No ROW acquired FR 896: S1, T11S R9W: No ROW acquired FR 896: (outside of NF); S8, 9, 10, T11S R8W: No ROW acquired FR 758: S18, T11S R8W: No ROW acquired FR 758: S12, T11S R9W: No ROW acquired FR 758 (outside of NF) S17, 21, T11S R8W: No ROW acquired
FR #157S	North Percha	3.0	(Identified as FR 157N on Plan.) (outside the NF), S4, 9, 16, T16S R8W: No ROW acquired S24, 25, 36, T15S R9W: No ROW acquired.
FR #40E	Kingston	2.0	S18, T16S R8W: No ROW acquired S13, T16S R9W: No ROW acquired. This is a designated County Road (#B082).

<b>Road/Trail</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Status as of 9/30/2010</b>
FR #521	Adobe	2.8	S22, T9S R10W; ROW acquisition in progress (outside of NF): S12, S7, T7S R9W; S17, 18, 19, 30 T7S R10W; S1, 12 T8S R10W
FR #886	Royal John	0.4	S9 & 17, T17S R9W.
FR #157N	Hermosa	0.5	S23, T13S R9W: Most of the private land under which this road crossed was purchased (Aldo Leopold acquisition). An 80 acre tract of land remained that the road was routed around. A remaining short section of easement remains to be cleared up. (Shows up as 157S on the Plan.)
Total		31.4	

The following rights-of-way have been acquired since the Forest Plan was written.

<b>Road/Trail</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Status as of 9/30/2010</b>
FR #157N	Dines	0.25	ROW acquired by purchasing the property <b>1993</b>
FR #727	Dines	0.50	ROW acquired by easement purchase. <b>1993</b>
FR #727	North Fork Palomas	1.00	ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>1993</b>
FR #157N	North Fork Palomas	0.50	ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>1993</b>
FR #157N	Circle Seven	2.00	ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>1993</b>
FR #730	Circle Seven	0.50	ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>1993</b>
FR#4081A	Hickland	0.25	ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>2002</b>
No #	Curtis	0.75	ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>2002</b>
FR #891	S. Fork Palomas Ck	0.50	ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>1993</b>
FR #157N	S. Fork Palomas Ck	0.50	ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>1993</b>
FR #732	Morgan Creek	1.50	ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>1993</b>
FR #893	Seco Canyon	1.50	ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>1993</b>
FT #110	Seco Canyon	2.00	(Formerly FR 893) ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>1993</b>
FR #761	Animas Creek	0.50	ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>2002</b>
FT #114	Animas Creek	1.75	ROW acquired by purchasing the property. <b>2001 &amp; 2002</b>
		Total 14.0	The Above Roads & Trails are all part of the Hermosa 14.5 mile target. (0.5 mi remains to clear-up)
FT #201	Mineral Creek Trail	0.25	ROW acquired by property donation. <b>2006</b>
FR #119	Copper Creek Road	0.10	ROW acquired by property donation. <b>2006</b>
FR #323	North Access	3.00	Permits from State of NM & BLM <b>2007</b>
FR#4053N	Silver Creek	4.50	Permits from State of NM & BLM <b>2008 &amp; 2009</b>
FT #241	Little Cherry Ck Trail	0.07	ROW acquired by purchasing the property <b>2009</b>
FR #701	Cooney's Tomb	0.25	ROW acquired by land purchase. <b>2009</b>
FR #506	Bear Creek	3.00	ROW acquired by purchase of the property the road is located on. <b>2010</b>
FR #32	San Francisco River	1.00	ROW acquired by purchasing the property <b>2011</b>
Total		23.17	

The following rights-of-way are in need of acquisition, in addition to the needs identified in the Forest Plan.

Road/Trail	Name	Miles	Status as of 9/30/2010
FR 4318P	Cruzville (Trujillo, Ernestina)	0.25	SE¼NE¼ S11, T6S. R.18 W. Easement granted is not valid. Need to have easement re-issued by the legal owners. This was a reciprocal easement exchange.
FR #119 & C 010	Claremont	0.75	S14 & 15, T.10 S., R.19 W. Easement document of record appears to have problems.
FR #141	Stotts (Tract #39)	0.50	Tract #39, T8S, R19W, Major, paved Forest Road crosses this parcel with no easement.
FR #506	Bear Creek	1.5	S23, 24, & 25, T16S R14W; ROW acquired by reciprocal easement, from the seller of the property to the west.
Total		3.00	

## ***Range***

### **Range 1: Over story modification in woodland type**

#### **Monitoring Intent:**

Meet Federal regulation; measure prescription and effects. Assure increase forage production in analysis areas where over story modification is scheduled.

#### **Monitoring Method/Unit of Measure**

Review of annual work accomplishment reports / acres.

#### **Measuring Frequency:**

Annual

#### **Percent Accuracy / Precision:**

+/-10%; +/-20%

#### **Variability that would indicate Re-evaluation:**

The acres of overstory modification completed for the evaluation period (ending at the 7<sup>th</sup> year) should be within 10% of projection level.

#### **Monitoring and Trend Evaluation:**

Forest decade projection (pg 19): 21,590 acres in first decade (2,159 acres per year);

For the period 2003-2011, over-story modification has continued at the pace of approximately 3,000 acres per year. This activity was primarily accomplished via prescribed burning, fire use fires and mechanical treatment.

In FY2011 the primary treatments occurred on the Black Range, Quemado, Wilderness, Reserve and Silver City Ranger Districts using a variety of funding sources. The projects completed in 2011 included approximately 2,000 acres of mechanical thinning and tree pulling and approximately 5,500 acres of burning.

It is expected that in the future mechanical treatment will average about 500 acres per year and prescribed fire treatment will average about 3,000 acres per year.

It is projected that these activities will continue at the rate of approximately 3,500 acres per year.

## **Range 2: Brush conversion and reseedling**

### **Monitoring Intent:**

Meet Federal regulation; measure prescription and effects. Assure increased forage production.

### **Monitoring Method / Units of Measure**

Review of annual work accomplishment reports / acres.

### **Measuring Frequency:**

Annual

### **Percent Accuracy/Precision:**

+/-10%; +/-20%

### **Variability that would indicate Re-evaluation:**

The acres of brush conversion and reseedling completed for the evaluation period (ending the 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> year) should be within 25% of projection.

### **Monitoring and Trend Evaluation:**

Forest Decade Projection: 450 acres in first decade (45 acres per year); page 20;

For the period 2003-2011, brush control and seeding (control of rabbit brush and snakeweed) has declined significantly. No acres of rabbit brush or snakeweed were treated via mechanical methods on the Gila in 2011. In the future it is expected that treatments of this nature will decline however will be implemented as funding allows. This activity (rabbit brush and snakeweed control) is not expected to significantly increase in the future.

## ***Recreation***

### **Recreation 1: Dispersed Recreation Use**

#### **Monitoring Intent:**

Meet Federal regulations; measure prescriptions and effects. Assure that demand for dispersed recreation use will be within anticipated capacity.

#### **Monitoring Method/Unit of Measure:**

a) Recreation Information Management Report, and b) Inspections of heavily used dispersed areas, including evaluation of vegetative deterioration and soil erosion / Recreation Visitor Days (RVDs) and site condition.

#### **Monitoring Frequency:**

Annual

#### **Percent Accuracy / Precision:**

+/-15%; +/-15%

#### **Variability that would indicate Re-evaluation:**

Actual use exceeds 30% of projected use by ROS setting, and/or the trend in ORV violations increase 20% over current violations by year 5 and 10.

#### **Monitoring and Trend Evaluation:**

a) The Recreation Inventory Management (RIM) reporting system has been eliminated. The Gila NF had an estimated 514,000 site visits in FY2011 as recorded from the National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey (NVUM) (Appendix A). About 402,000 visits took place in dispersed, undeveloped areas and about 21,000 visits took place in one of the three designated wilderness areas. The general conclusion is the trend for Forest visits will increase. Results from the NVUM survey show that almost 88percent of visitors rated their satisfaction with undeveloped areas as good or very good in the satisfaction elements for developed facilities, access, services, and feeling of safety. About 65 percent rated their satisfaction within the same elements in designated wilderness areas as good or very good. A discussion of the NVUM is found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/>

b) There is no data available on inspections on heavily used dispersed areas, therefore unknown site conditions.

### **Recreation 2: Developed site use, public and private sector**

#### **Monitoring Intent:**

Meet Federal regulation: sample output

**Monitoring Method/Unit of Measure:**

The RIM reporting system has been eliminated and the agency is currently using the number of Recreation Sites Managed to Standard and Recreation Site Capacity Operated to Standard. We also use the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NRSE) to help describe outdoor recreation by the general public and their interest in and around the Gila National Forest. Recommend changing the RIM reporting system to the number of Recreation Sites Managed to Standard and Recreation Site Capacity Operated to Standard.

**Measuring Frequency:**

Annually

**Percent Accuracy/Precision:**

+/-15%; +/-15%

**Variability that would indicate Re-evaluation:**

Actual use exceeds 30% in PAOT. Review in year 3, 6, and 9.

**Monitoring and Trend Evaluation:**

The Recreation Inventory Management (RIM) reporting system has been eliminated and the agency is currently using number of Recreation Sites Managed to Standard and Recreation Site Capacity Operated to Standard. The Gila NF had an estimated 514,000 site visits in FY2011 as recorded from the National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey (NVUM). Of these, about 214,000 were at developed day use sites and about 62,000 were at developed overnight use sites. The Forest has reported an average of 389,502 PAOT's (People At One Time) days per year for the last 5 years as its accomplishment for the measure Recreation Site Capacity Operated to Standard. Over 514,000 PAOT's were accomplished in FY2011. The general conclusion is the trend for Forest visits will continue to increase. The Forest averaged 98 recreation sites managed to standard over the last five years with 105 sites managed to standard in FY2011. Results from the NVUM survey show that almost 94 percent of visitors rated their satisfaction with developed day use and overnight use sites as good or very good in the elements for developed facilities, access, services, and feeling of safety. A discussion of the NVUM is found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/>.

**Recreation 3: Visual quality levels****Monitoring Intent:**

Meet Federal regulations: measure prescriptions and effect. Assure compliance with visual quality objectives.

**Monitoring Method/Unit of Measure:**

The Visual Resource Management System will be used as a basis of the monitoring activity / acres by visual quality level.

**Measuring Frequency:**

4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> year



**Percent Accuracy/Precision:**

+/-10% / +/-10%

**Variability that would indicate re-evaluation:**

Visual quality level acres are changed by larger percent than indicated in Forest wide Standards and Guidelines.

**Monitoring and Trend Evaluation:**

There are no known effects on visual quality levels from management activities within the last 5 years. Most vegetation treatments have been limited in scope and size. Any changes in visual quality levels for all vegetation treatments were within the allowable limits for Retention, Partial Retention, & Modification, and no changes have been made for Preservation within the last 5 years. All treatment activities have complied with the visual quality objectives through mitigation in project proposal development and application of best management practices.

**Recommendations:**

Re-evaluate during Forest Plan revision.

## *Wilderness*

### **Wilderness 1: Wilderness use by Wilderness Opportunity Spectrum Class**

**Monitoring Intent:**

Meet Federal regulation; measure prescriptions and effects. Assure demand is within capacity so resource does not deteriorate.

**Monitoring Method/Unit of Measure:**

Use information from the 2002 and 2007 National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) Survey Reports in concert with success in meeting the Forest Service 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge.

**Measuring Frequency:**

NVUM schedule and annually for the meeting the Forest Service 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge.

**Percent Accuracy/Precision:**

+/-20%; +/-20%

**Variability that would indicate re-evaluation:**

Actual use exceeds 30% of total projected use for any wilderness. Review in year 3, 6, and 9.

**Monitoring and Trend Evaluation:**

Based on the 2011 National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) survey results, the Gila NF had about 21,000 National Forest visits to the three designated wilderness areas in FY2011. The Forest managed the Gila Wilderness to a minimum stewardship level

according to the criteria of the 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge. The goal is to have all three designated wilderness areas managed to a minimum stewardship level by 2014. The Gila Wilderness met the minimum stewardship level as determined by the criteria of the 10-year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge. A discussion of the NVUM is found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/>.

## **Wilderness 2: Wilderness trail construction & reconstruction and maintenance**

### **Monitoring Intent:**

Meet Federal regulations; measure prescriptions and effects. Assure that an improved trail system through construction, reconstruction and maintenance will provide for better distribution of visitor use and improve wilderness opportunities.

### **Monitoring Method/Unit of Measure:**

Work Accomplishment Reports / Miles.

### **Measuring Frequency:**

Annual

### **Percent Accuracy/Precision:**

+/-5%; +/-5%

### **Variability that would indicate re-evaluation:**

Cumulative deviation from the planned level varies by more than +/-25%. Review at years 3, 6, and 9.

### **Monitoring and Trend Evaluation:**

Forest Plan projections are for 115 miles of reconstruction per decade. From 1986 – 2001 the Forest met the plan projections. In the last 5 years (2007 – 2011) the Forest maintained an average of 274 miles of trail maintenance per year. In FY2011 we maintained almost 274 miles of trail. A significant portion of the trail maintenance was accomplished with the assistance of various outside organizations. The Forest constructed/reconstructed about 59 miles of trail from FY2007 through FY2011. A little over 5 miles of trail was constructed in FY2011.

## 2. Action Plan for 2012

The Action Plan for 2011 identifies which monitoring items and monitoring activities will be reported on fiscal year 2011 monitoring report. Activities monitored are selected from the Forest Plan list and may include recommended monitoring items from previous reports.

Monitoring Item	Monitoring Activity	Description of Monitoring Activity	2012 Monitoring Item
Air 1	Class I wilderness	Visibility baseline and current	Yes
Cost 1	Units costs	Ability to implement Forest Plan	No <sup>1</sup>
Cost 2	Annual budget	Ability to implement Forest Plan	No <sup>1</sup>
Cost 3	Program budget	Ability to implement Forest Plan	No <sup>1</sup>
Cultural 1	Protection of significant cultural resource properties	Resource protection	Yes
Cultural 2	Compliance	Project clearance	Yes
Facilities	Transportation system amount and distribution	Forest Plan goals and objectives	Yes
Fire 1	Fire suppression	Prescriptions and effects	Yes
Fire 2	Fuel treatment (activity fuels) need uncharacteristic levels/FRCC	Prescriptions and effects	Yes
Lands 1	Rights-of-way acquired	Prescriptions and effects	Yes
Protection 1	Law enforcement	Effectiveness and cooperative agreements	Yes
Range 1	Woodland over story	Forage production	Yes
Range 2	Brush conversion and reseeding	Forage production	Yes
Range 3	Range development	Range use and capacity	No
Range 4	Permitted use	Balance use with capacity	No
Range 5	Grazing Capacity	Projected levels	No <sup>2</sup>
Recreation 1	Dispersed recreation (ROS settings)	Demand and capacity	Yes
Recreation 2	Developed sites (public and private)	Output	Yes
Recreation 3	Visual quality	Prescriptions and effects	Yes
Riparian and Aquatic	Riparian and aquatic condition	Improve condition	No <sup>3</sup>
Soil and Water 1	Watershed condition	Increase in satisfactory condition (acres)	Yes
Soil and Water 2	Prescriptions	Compliance with State and federal regulations	Yes
Timber 1	Intermediate and removal harvest	Prescriptions and effects	Yes
Timber 2	Regeneration harvest	Prescriptions and effects	No <sup>4</sup>
Timber 3	Timber stand improvement	Stocking levels	Yes
Timber 4	Saw timber	Allowable sale quantity	Yes
Timber 5	Fuel wood	Sustained yield	Yes
Timber 6	Restocking regeneration Harvests	Restoration standards (5 years and 80%)	No <sup>6</sup>
Timber 7	Harvest area size	Opening size limits	No <sup>7</sup>
Timber 8	Timber Land Classification	Suitable for sustained yield production	No <sup>8</sup>

<b>Monitoring Item</b>	<b>Monitoring Activity</b>	<b>Description of Monitoring Activity</b>	<b>2012 Monitoring Item</b>
Wilderness 1	Wilderness or recreation opportunity spectrum class	Prescriptions and effects. Ensure demand does not exceed capacity	Yes
Wilderness 2	Trails	Construction, reconstruction and maintenance	Yes
Wildlife 1 & 2	Threatened and endangered species, management indicator species and sensitive species	Population and habitat trends	Yes

<sup>1</sup> Measuring progress toward achieving the goals, objectives and standards of the Forest plan using unit costs is a difficult measure and not always an effective tool. Fund code and accomplishment definitions have changed extensively over the life of the plan and fund codes have been added, deleted and/or combined during this period.

<sup>2</sup> This is based on no clear guidance on how to determine capacity for our Range NEPA.

<sup>3</sup> This is based on changing the method for monitoring nationwide. The method for report HUC6 has been announced in 2009 and was implemented in FY2011 and will be reported in the FY2011 monitoring report.

<sup>4</sup> The Gila is currently not doing regeneration cuts.

<sup>5</sup> The ASQ is outdated in the plan and will be revisited during Plan Revision.

<sup>6</sup> The Gila is currently not doing regeneration cuts.

<sup>7</sup> The Gila NF is not clear cutting openings since the Goshawk guidelines have been implemented.

<sup>8</sup> The Gila NF will re-evaluate classification of suitable timber lands in Plan Revision.

## Preparers

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