

Allegheny National Forest

Preliminary Storm Assessment

July 2003



USDA FOREST SERVICE



ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST

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Executive Summary

Allegheny National Forest

July 2003 Storm

A severe weather event struck northwestern Pennsylvania on July 21, 2003, followed by a second day of severe weather on July 22. Heavy rainfall and high downburst winds littered the area with downed power lines, uprooted trees, and flash floods.

Following the storm, Allegheny National Forest (ANF) personnel began a systematic canvassing of forest roads to ensure the safety and well-being of forest visitors, contractors, and employees, as well as to obtain a cursory assessment of storm damage.

Preliminary assessments indicated that the Bradford District on the north end of the ANF received a more severe rain event with blowdown occurring in the southern reaches. The Marienville District received more damage from the wind downbursts, subsequently resulting in greater blowdown. Damage is in a shotgun pattern, with pockets of downed trees of varying size and blowdown intensity scattered across the forest landscape.

The initial storm assessment resulted in clearing priority roads of windblown trees; temporarily closing two roads because of water damage; removing immediate hazards in recreation areas; closing Forest OHV trails, some pedestrian trails, beaches to swimming, and a boat launch; and expanding the ANF's firewood permit.

Most of the blowdown created by the storm event is classified as heavy where more than 50 percent of the standing trees have been impacted. The impact to the vegetation management program is extensive. Rough estimates indicate that approximately 2,300 acres of blowdown has occurred within existing sale area boundaries; 1,800 acres of blowdown is found within four on-going NEPA projects under development. The aerial reconnaissance flight and mapping also identified approximately 3,000 acres outside of existing project areas or sale areas where potential salvage treatments could be considered. A more detailed assessment of project feasibility is needed to determine what response should be made.

The reforestation program was also affected by the storm event. Many fences have been damaged by blowdown to the point where it is no longer considered "routine maintenance" to repair them. Area fencing is an essential reforestation technique that is used to help in the establishment of diverse seedling regeneration. Stands can be fenced for a number of years, and treatment success depends upon vigilant fence maintenance for the duration of the treatment. The regeneration process can be put in jeopardy when fences are damaged. Approximately 22 miles within portions of 83 fences received extensive damage.

Impacts appear to have been limited at developed recreation sites across the forest. Only minor cleanup work has been needed and undertaken, restricted mostly to hazard tree removal. Impacts to forest trail systems, both OHV and pedestrian, range from very little to severe, depending on location of the trail network.

Storm damage sustained in July 2003 has been effectively managed using the initial response actions taken to date. Public, contractor, and employee safety were emphasized. Public services have been maintained through re-opening of most recreation facilities, forest roads, and trails. Funds expended to date for storm recovery are \$167,524.

Considerable work remains in several resource areas, including road management, trail maintenance, and vegetation management (including fence reconstruction). Funding needs identified for Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 in order for the forest to continue to respond to the storm event are currently projected to be \$1,097,500.

Allegheny National Forest

July 2003 Preliminary Storm Assessment

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STORM EVENT

A severe weather event struck northwestern Pennsylvania during the late afternoon of July 21, 2003, and was followed by a second day of severe weather on July 22. Heavy rainfall and high downburst winds littered the area with downed power lines, uprooted trees, and flash floods. The July 21 thunderstorm produced heavy rainfalls and wind gusts up to approximately 80 mph. An F-1 tornado was confirmed just a few miles east of the forest boundary. Warren, Forest, and McKean Counties were among several counties declared as Federal Disaster Areas.

Immediate Response

Following the storm event, Allegheny National Forest (ANF) personnel began a systematic assessment of forest roads to ensure the safety and well-being of forest visitors, contractors, and employees, as well as to obtain a cursory assessment of storm damage.



Forest personnel began clearing roads of windblown trees where visitors were stranded by the storm. With a continued emphasis on safety, road clearing continued with ANF personnel focusing on clearing arterial and collector roads followed by restricted/gated roads identified as necessary to meet existing contractual commitments.

The initial storm assessment resulted in not only clearing priority roads of windblown trees, but temporarily closing of FR137 and

FR271 because of water damage, removing immediate windblown hazards in recreation areas, closing forest OHV trails and some pedestrian trails, closing beaches to swimming, closing one boat launch, and expanding the ANF's firewood permit to include the removal of tops of blowdown trees with green tops and intact bark.

Other forest personnel who were not actively assessing storm damage or clearing roads made contacts with timber sale operators, oil and gas operators, and other contractors to ascertain the impact of the storm damage on their work and to begin to work with them to recover from the storm.

Initial news releases to the public addressed the closing of OHV trails; the closing of beach areas and boat launches because of high water on the reservoir; storm-related recreation and road closures; and the firewood gathering permit amendment.

Secondary Response

Early on, the ANF's Budget and Finance staff set up job codes for personnel to use in order to ensure charge-as-worked during storm assessment and recovery.

On forest ATV trails, personnel removed hazard trees, and contractors repaired tread and drainage structures in the Rocky Gap ATV network in order for the trails to open by August 2, with the exception of the Marienville Bike Trail Area, which suffered severe blowdown.

Assessing impacts to pedestrian trails began in this timeframe; however, due to the quantity of trails on the forest, little was completed. News releases to the public announced the opening of ATV trails.

GENERAL IMPACTS SUMMARY

Preliminary assessments indicated that the Bradford District on the north end of the ANF received a more severe rain event with blowdown occurring in the southern reaches, whereas the Marienville District received more damage from the wind downbursts, resulting in subsequently more blowdown. The storm track came from the southwest and moved to the northeast across the forest. Damage is not in major swaths, but instead is in a shotgun pattern, with pockets of downed trees of varying size and blowdown intensity scattered across the forest landscape.



Even though the localized and flash flooding that occurred over the 2-day period did result in some damage to forest roads, only two roads were closed for a short period because of water damage.

While recreation areas were impacted by wind and water, little damage was identified at developed sites, and no areas were closed immediately following the storms, except for two swimming beaches. Forest personnel responded promptly and thoroughly, and most areas are operational today, except for several pedestrian trails known to be thoroughly impacted by the storm and a number of pedestrian trails still needing to be assessed.



The reforestation program was also impacted by the storm event. Many fences have been damaged by blowdown trees to the point where it is no longer considered “routine maintenance” to repair them. Also, at this time, previously identified herbicide treatment areas for Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 have too much blowdown in them to complete planned treatment.

The storm event has impacted the vegetation management program extensively by the quantity of blowdown in active timber sales, both in and outside payment units; in recently awarded timber sales; and in timber sales to be awarded. In addition, the project planning strategy for the ANF, both ongoing and out-year, has been impacted by the quantity of blowdown in project areas.

Private oil and gas developed on the ANF was spared significant impact. Access roads were blocked by blowdown, but limited damage to well jacks and overhead powerlines was reported.

Aerial Reconnaissance Flight

The need for an aerial reconnaissance flight was recognized almost immediately; however, because of prolonged adverse weather conditions, flights did not occur until August 7 and August 13. Aerial sketch mapping has been useful in identifying some of the most severely impacted areas. Additional field reconnaissance will be needed to determine the accuracy of the aerial observations and to supplement with additional areas of impact. (See Map in Appendix I and refer to Table 1.)

Table 1: Results of Aerial Reconnaissance Flight Sketch Mapping			
<i>Ranger District</i>	<i>Forest Service</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Total</i>
Marienville	5,730	4,338	10,068
Bradford	3,795	1,021	4,816
<i>Total</i>	<i>9,525</i>	<i>5,359</i>	<i>14,884</i>

RESOURCE ASSESSMENTS

Facilities - Roads

Initial response: A number of ANF crews cleared forest system roads of windblown trees by starting with roads where the public might be stranded and then moving to arterial and collector roads, roads under the Highway Safety Act, and roads open to the public. Next, the crews began to clear restricted roads. The cost to cover salaries for forest personnel to clear roads, the cost for contractors to conduct some clearing work, and the cost to repair FR137 and FR271 to proper drainage is approximately \$67,000.

Long-term response: Work on restricted roads continues to date with a need for additional assessment and additional clearing as time permits. Clearing is continuing with priority given to those roads identified open for fall hunting season.



There is a need to repair 19 miles of damage on 20 roads to return them to the condition they were before the storm. The intent is not to improve roads, although a few roads damaged in this storm require some design changes such as culvert additions, dissipaters, ditch work, or other methods to reduce sedimentation and resist damage from future storms. Most of the damaged roads are arterial or collector roads (Traffic Service Level 3/4/5) and are open to public travel, or they are restricted roads, which are opened for

various management needs such as reducing the deer population through hunting, bat surveys, and vegetation management. The cost estimate to repair these roads is \$265,000.

A slump/slide on the Salmon Creek Road was further exacerbated by the storm and is estimated to cost approximately \$40,000 to repair. This cost is included in the \$265,000 total estimate.

Facilities -Buildings

As a result of torrential rains over the 2-day period, the roof over the Bradford Ranger District office sprang several leaks. Forest engineering staffs have prepared estimates of damage in order to solicit bids for repair. The cost to complete this work as part of a contract is estimated to be less than \$5,000.

Timber

The aerial reconnaissance flights conducted on August 7 and August 13, 2003, indicate that substantial damage has occurred on over 9,500 acres of NFS lands. Most of this occurs as heavy blowdown where more than 50 percent of the standing trees have been impacted. Field

reconnaissance indicates that additional blowdown exists in areas outside those observed in the flight. As much as a one-third increase in acres could be found when additional field survey work is completed.

<i>Sum of Acres</i>	<i>Management Areas</i>								<i>Totals</i>	
Intensity	1.0	3.0	5.0	6.1	6.2	6.4	8.0	Private	FS Total	Grand Total
Heavy	45	2741	0	856	1177	0	96	4012	4915	8927
Light-Moderate	0	2959	95	358	271	29	898	1347	4610	5957
Grand Total	45	5700	95	1214	1448	29	994	5359	9525	14884
<i>FS Total</i>	45	5700	95	1214	1448	29	994		9525	

* For a description of the management areas, see Appendix III.

There are two basic questions that must be considered in the removal of storm-damaged timber – under what authority can the removal take place? And, is additional consultation required with the USFWS? Generally, damaged trees that create hazardous conditions and are adjacent to existing facilities such as buildings, roads, or trails can be removed under existing maintenance authority, with no additional consultation with the USFWS needed. Proper documentation for the appropriate Categorical Exclusion should be made in a project file. Where possible, commercially valuable products should be recovered and sold by short-term competitive bidding where possible.

Aerial reconnaissance and field data have been evaluated to make a preliminary assessment of possible response strategies for damaged timber. The acreage will differ the data above because of additional areas that have been identified since the initial field reconnaissance. (Note that field reconnaissance and verification continue.) In the general forest zone, consideration of whether the damage occurs inside or outside an existing sale area and whether it is inside or outside an area being prepared as a new project will help determine an appropriate course of action.

<i>Response Strategy</i>	<i>Bradford</i>	<i>Marienville</i>	<i>Totals</i>
In Existing Sale Area	75	140	215
In Existing Sale Area – Needs NEPA	880	1313	2193
In Project Area Under Current Analysis	419	1344	1763
Outside Existing Sale or New Project Area	927	2521	3448
<i>MAXIMUM ACREAGE WITH SALVAGE POTENTIAL SUB-TOTAL</i>	<i>2301</i>	<i>5318</i>	<i>7619</i>
Deferred from Treatment Consideration	3000 ^a	1008 ^b	4008
<i>GRAND TOTAL</i>	<i>5301</i>	<i>6326</i>	<i>11627</i>

^a Includes Tionesta Scenic Area (994 ac), areas in MA 6.2 with no access, acres in NRA, and errors in aerial observation.

^b Includes MA 6.2 acreage.

Areas Where No Salvage May Occur Under Current Forest Plan Direction

Blowdown is found in several areas where salvage activities are presently prohibited under current Forest Plan direction. There are approximately 95 acres of blowdown found within the Hickory Creek Wilderness (MA 5), 1,000 acres found within Tionesta Scenic Area (MA 8), and approximately 1,448 acres of blowdown found within Stoney Point, Big Mill Creek, and Morrison Run 6.2 Management Areas. None of these 6.2 MA areas are scheduled for treatment during the current decade; therefore, a site-specific forest plan amendment would be needed to treat these areas. The Morrison Run 6.2 MA is scheduled for treatment beginning in 2006. Salvage treatment on 133 acres could be considered (where access is currently available); however, the sale would not occur until 2006 unless a site-specific amendment to the Forest Plan was made to allow harvest prior to 2006.

Firewood

Substantial additional quantities of firewood were made available by the storm. Prior to the storm event, the firewood policy had been to allow the removal of dead trees where there are no live branches and 25 percent of the bark had fallen off. In order to respond to increased interest and demand for firewood, firewood permits will include the removal of green blown down trees, limbs, and topwood less than 10 inches in diameter through September 30, 2003. The ANF will return to the original policy after September 30, 2003.

Active Timber Sales

Initial response: Preliminary assessment of damage within existing sales has been completed. There are 15 sales known to have suffered some degree of damage from the storm. Of these, 13 have light to moderate damage that can be addressed as Minor Damage by Natural Causes under contract provision BT 2.134.

Two sales need more extensive evaluation to determine whether catastrophic damage as defined under sale contract provision BT 2.133 has occurred. Rough estimates indicate that approximately 2,300 acres of blowdown has occurred within existing sale area boundaries. Some of this is found outside of existing payment unit boundaries, and additional NEPA documentation will be needed before salvage harvests may be made.

In active sale areas, the initial response has been to designate additional timber for removal from roadways, including leaning and/or hazard trees within 150 feet of the road edge.

Long-term response: In sales where minor natural damage has occurred, the sale area should be assessed to determine the extent of damage. Is damage found within existing payment units? Does the degree of damage require additional silvicultural evaluation, prescription change, or timber sale contract modification? If damage is found outside of existing payment units, how extensive is it? In sales where catastrophic damage may have occurred, sale area evaluation and damage determination must be completed.

Minor natural damage within the sale area, damage confined to existing payment units, or decision is made to forego volume outside of existing payment units. Damage within individual payment units will need to be evaluated to determine whether the existing stand prescription is still valid. These evaluations should be documented and filed in the timber sale folder and the NEPA project file.

1. If the original prescription is still valid and no change in effects is anticipated, additional volume may be marked and added to the timber sale contract at current contract rates in open or unreleased payment units.

2. If the original prescription is no longer valid (i.e., a stand {or portion of a stand} marked for an intermediate thinning has suffered severe damage and will now be treated as a salvage removal harvest), the NEPA documentation will need to be supplemented to address this change and consultation with the USFWS may be required before adding volume can occur. Additional volume may then be marked and added to the timber sale contract in open or unreleased payment units

Minor natural damage within the sale area, damage occurs within and outside of existing payment units: Damage within individual payment units will need to be evaluated to determine whether the existing stand prescription is still valid. Damage between payment units will need to be evaluated and quantified for treatment. Stand prescriptions will need to be developed. These evaluations should be documented and filed in the NEPA project file.

1. If the original prescription is still valid and no change in effects is anticipated, additional volume may be marked and added to the timber sale contract in open or unreleased payment units.
2. If the original prescription is no longer valid (i.e., a stand {or portion of a stand} marked for an intermediate thinning has suffered severe damage and will now be treated as a salvage removal harvest), the NEPA documentation will need to be supplemented to address this change and consultation with the USFWS may be required before adding volume can occur. Additional volume may then be marked and added to the timber sale contract (by agreement with the purchaser) in open or unreleased payment units.
3. Additional treatment units will need to be delineated and stand prescriptions will need to be developed but may need to be sold as part of a different timber sale.
4. Additional NEPA analysis (either a Categorical Exclusion, supplemental EA or EIS) and consultation with the USFWS will be needed for acres considered under 2 and 3.

Catastrophic damage within the sale area. Field reconnaissance surveys will be needed to determine if the damage qualifies as catastrophic under catastrophic damage provision BT 2.133. Consultation with the purchaser and contracting officer is needed to determine the purchaser's options under BT 8.33. Additional NEPA documentation and consultation with the USFWS would be required to assess changed conditions and the effects of harvesting additional volume within the sale area prior to resuming sale activity.

Sales being advertised/Soon to be awarded

Initial response: Three sales that are scheduled for offer in FY 03 suffered minor damage from the storm. Sale units were evaluated and a determination was made that original prescriptions were still valid. No change to NEPA or additional consultation with the USFWS was needed. Two sales will be advertised in FY 03, and one will be deferred until FY 04. (Note: acreage in this category is included in the 2,300 acres from the previous category.)

There are 13 East Side sales that have experienced storm damage; however, evaluation of the extent of damage has not yet occurred. We await a ruling from the court on pending East Side litigation before beginning any additional sale evaluation. In sales where extensive damage has occurred, additional work will be needed to assess the extent of damage, possibly revise the East Side EIS, remark stands, re-appraise sales, and re-advertise.

Long-term response: One sale originally scheduled for offer in FY 03 will be offered in FY 04. Additional evaluation of remaining East Side sales will need to be made once a ruling on the East Side litigation is received.

Projects under Development

Initial response: Aerial reconnaissance and minimal field surveys have been made to determine the degree of impact in project areas currently being developed to implement in FY 04 and FY 05. Two FY 04 projects remain intact (Sugar Run and Trails End Salvage). Spring Creek sustained considerable damage. Three of four FY 05 projects are impacted by blowdown (Martin Run, Brush Creek, and Forest Renewal). Meads Mill does not appear to have sustained any appreciable damage. Approximately 1,800 acres of blowdown is found within these four project areas.

Long-term response: Consideration of how best to address these changes varies by project area and is influenced by the stage of project development.

Spring Creek Project – A draft environmental impact statement will be distributed for this project in late September 2003. Approximately 1,450 acres of blowdown occurred within the project area. It is conceivable that in order to meet FY 04 timelines, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be distributed without reference to recent storm events. Field assessment of changed condition will need to be made this fall in order to make adjustments to the project between the DEIS and the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Martin Run Project – The proposed action for this project is in the final stages of development. Considerable damage has occurred in the vicinity of FR 469 that will require additional evaluation prior to distribution of the proposed action. Additional fieldwork and treatment identification will be needed this fall in order to be able to distribute the scoping letter and commence project analysis to meet FY 05 deadlines.

Brush Creek Project – The scoping letter for this project was distributed February 4, 2003, and the project is being analyzed. There are approximately 110 acres of blowdown within the project area. It is conceivable that a categorical exclusion could be used to address the blowdown in advance of the larger project analysis.

Forest Renewal – The proposed action for this project is being developed. There are approximately 55 acres of blowdown associated with stands being considered for this project. It is conceivable that a categorical exclusion could be used to address the blowdown in advance of the larger project analysis.

New Projects



Initial response: The aerial reconnaissance flight and mapping revealed approximately 3,000 acres outside of existing project areas or sale areas where potential salvage treatments could be considered. A more detailed assessment of project feasibility is needed to determine what response should be made.

Long-term response: Field reconnaissance of potential salvage sale areas is needed to determine if harvest potential exists. More information is needed to determine what the appropriate level of NEPA analysis would be. Additionally, areas being proposed for treatment would need to be evaluated to determine if survey data for T&E species or heritage resources is needed.

Reforestation

Herbicide

Initial response: Herbicide contract implementation was delayed several weeks because of wet conditions. Several units planned for treatment had suffered damage from winds (Bradford District had 3 units totaling 59 acres, Marienville had 2 units totaling 30 acres) and needed to be dropped from this summer’s contract. Increased pre-field inspection was needed to adequately flag buffers for wet areas, which required additional field personnel.

Long-term response: Field reconnaissance is necessary to determine what action is needed to be able to complete the herbicide treatment in the five stands deferred from treatment this year in FY 05. There might be some potential for salvage to be considered.

Fencing



Area fencing is an essential reforestation technique that is used to help in the establishment of diverse seedling regeneration. Stands can be fenced for a number of years and treatment success depends upon vigilant fence maintenance for the duration of the treatment. When fences are damaged, deer can enter the area and quickly reduce the number of seedlings. The regeneration process can be put in jeopardy.

Fences are often used following a shelterwood seed harvest. The timing of the shelterwood removal harvest depends on the successful establishment of seedlings.

Thus, the ANF out-year timber sale program is very dependent upon fencing. It is critical that fences damaged in this storm event be repaired quickly to assure timely development of new seedlings and a stable out-year timber sale program.

Initial response: Both districts completed an assessment of damage to fences. Damage ranged from light to extensive. Fences with minor damage can be repaired through existing maintenance contracts or by force account labor. Fences with more extensive damage will require additional evaluation to determine what work is needed.

Long-term Response: Extensive damage occurred to 83 fences. Supplemental funding will be needed to finance needed evaluation surveys, contract preparation, and fence reconstruction. In several instances, fences will need to be removed. There is some potential for the commercial salvage of timber that is down on the fences. Prompt reconstruction of fences is needed to assure successful establishment of seedlings.

Table 4: Fence Damage		
<i>District</i>	<i>Length of Fence Down in Miles (No. of Fences Affected)</i>	<i>Cost Estimate to Replace</i>
Marienville	6 Miles (33 Fences)	\$ 86,000
Bradford	16 Miles (50 Fences)	\$ 200,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>22 Miles (83 Fences)</i>	<i>\$ 286,000</i>

Recreation

Developed Recreation Facilities

Initial response: Impacts appear to have been limited at developed sites across the forest. Minor cleanup work, primarily hazard tree removal, has been completed at several sites. The most highly developed recreation areas were relatively unaffected.

Trails – ATV

Initial response: Impacts to the ATV trail system ranged from minor to severe, depending on location of the trail network. Approximately 77 miles of ATV trail were affected. By August 14, with the exception of the Marienville Bike Trail, all trails had been cleared of damage and reopened for public use. Most impacts were limited to windfall in the form of whole trees across the trail, branches and tops and other litter within the trail, or uprooting of whole root wads immediately adjacent to the trail. Rocky Gap Trail did sustain a small amount of erosion damage that was repaired on August 8, 2003, through a contract.



Long-term response: Because of the extensive damage and hazardous conditions on the Marienville Bike Trail, an outside contractor cleared the trail; this was completed on September 10, 2003.

Trails – Pedestrian



Long-term response: Given the track of the storm and lack of available personnel to walk every mile of the pedestrian trails, only an estimate can be made at this time as to the severity of storm damage on the pedestrian trail system. It appears that approximately 75 miles will require clearing by professional contract crews. Damage could be as severe as that which occurred on the ATV trails. Access to repair storm damage is more restricted with pedestrian trails than ATV trails because of Management Area prescriptions, distance to nearby roads, and the width and condition of the trail tread. This may affect the speed at which these trails can be repaired. Trail assessments from the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) on needed work for segments of the North Country Trail (NCT) are currently being completed.

A Forest Closure Order will be in effect on the pedestrian trails known to be affected enough by the storm to close the trail at this time. The trails include: Brush Hollow, Mill Creek, Black Cherry, Tionesta Scenic Trail, and portions of the North Country Trail (SR 948 to US 6 only).

A strategy to systematically assess pedestrian trails that will assure a consistent evaluation is being developed under the direction of the ANF Recreation Program Manager.

Once systematically assessed, it appears that the most efficient way to clear the remaining pedestrian trails is with a combination of professional sawyers and force account oversight. Contract crews guided by ANF personnel can identify restricted equipment use areas, timber sale boundaries, and

other less-than-obvious restrictions and efficiently remove sawlogs and trail debris/hazards. To some degree, volunteer crews from the NCTA will be utilized in areas of minor blowdown along the NCT.

Table 5. Status of Trails with Assessment of the Storm Damage^a	
<i>Trail Status</i>	<i>Miles</i>
Total Miles of Pedestrian Trails Assessed to Date	200.7
Total Miles of ATV Trails Assessed to Date	106.4
Total Miles of Snowmobile Trails Assessed to Date	109.6
<i>Total Miles with Assessment Completed</i>	<i>416.7</i>
Total Miles of Pedestrian Trails Needing Assessments	71.7
Total Miles of Snowmobile Trail Needing Assessments ^b	91.8
<i>Total Miles with Assessment Needed</i>	<i>163.5</i>

^a Refer to Appendix for a complete list of trails, mileage, and condition summary.

^b Assessments on Snowmobile Trails need to occur prior to the 2003 Snowmobile season.

Special Areas

Earthworks Heritage Sites

The McKinley Earthworks site suffered a direct hit from the storm event. More than a dozen trees were uprooted, causing extensive damage to the archaeological site. The impact from the storms is an adverse effect that has been documented and reported to the SHPO and THPO. The other two earthwork sites, however, did not suffer any damage from the storms.



Tionesta Scenic & Research Natural Area

According to the sketch mapping done during the aerial reconnaissance flight, the Tionesta Scenic Area sustained as much as 994 acres of blowdown. This acreage figure is merely an approximation at this point; ground truthing of the actual condition will need to occur. While the Forest Plan does allow for some timber salvage in the Tionesta Scenic Area, it is unlikely this will occur.

Kane Experimental Forest (KEF)

According to the aerial reconnaissance flight sketch mapping, the 1,650-acre KEF sustained as much as 266 acres of blowdown. This acreage figure is merely an approximation at this point. Ground truthing of the actual condition on the ground will need to occur in order to verify with accuracy the field and air observations that clearly indicate that the KEF was impacted. There exists a likely opportunity for potential salvage of blowdown. An assessment of the status of ongoing research in the KEF is currently being conducted.

Hickory Creek Wilderness

According to the aerial reconnaissance flight, Hickory Creek Wilderness sustained as much as 95 acres of blowdown. This acreage figure is merely an approximation at this point. Approximately 215 feet of the 12.1-mile trail in the wilderness was impacted by blowdown. Future trail maintenance using volunteers and minimal impact techniques are currently being planned for the fall.

EXPENDITURES

Funds Expended to Date

As of September 5, 2003, FFIS records reflect the following for storm-related recovery during FY 2003. Most of these amounts are for ANF salary costs, except CMTL, which includes \$16,700 for contract sawyers.

<i>Fund codes</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Roads (CMRD19)	\$ 67,255
Timber Salvage (SS1A19)	\$ 55,825
Reforestation (NFVW19)	\$ 4,986
Trails (CMTL19)	\$ 29,335
Recreation (NFRW19)	\$ 9,602
Minerals (NFMG19)	\$ 521
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$ 167,524</i>

Funding Needs Identified for Fiscal Year 2004

In response to the Regional Office's August call for FY 04 Special Projects/Changed Condition requests, the ANF identified the following needs to deal with storm-related impacts:

<i>Fund codes</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Roads (CMRD)	\$ 265,000
Timber Salvage (NFTM/SSS)	\$ 535,000
Reforestation (NFVW)	\$ 260,000
Trails (CMTL)	\$ 37,500
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$ 1,097,500</i>

CONCLUSIONS

Storm damage sustained in July 2003 has been effectively managed using the initial response actions taken to date. Public, contractor, and employee safety were emphasized. Public services have been maintained through the re-opening of most recreation facilities, forest roads, and trails. Work remains to be completed on some pedestrian trails, snowmobile trails, and roads needed for access during fall/winter hunting seasons. Initial response to timber sale contract needs has been made; however, additional work is needed within many active timber sale areas. Access for most oil and gas operations has been restored.

Initial evaluation of the extent of storm impacts does not suggest that exemptions under CEQ are warranted in light of other cases where this exemption was denied.

Considerable work remains in several resource areas, including road management, trail maintenance, and vegetation management (including fence reconstruction). Forest stewardship priorities would indicate that shifts in program emphasis are needed to address damage caused by the storm. The ANF will develop a comprehensive approach to address the storm's impacts in consultation with the Regional Office.

The forest needs to repair roads, as funding permits, and emphasize the continued clearing of debris from roads that are traditionally opened during large-game hunting seasons.

Of particular importance is the need to evaluate vegetation management options and to consider impacts on our current Out-Year Vegetation Management Plan.

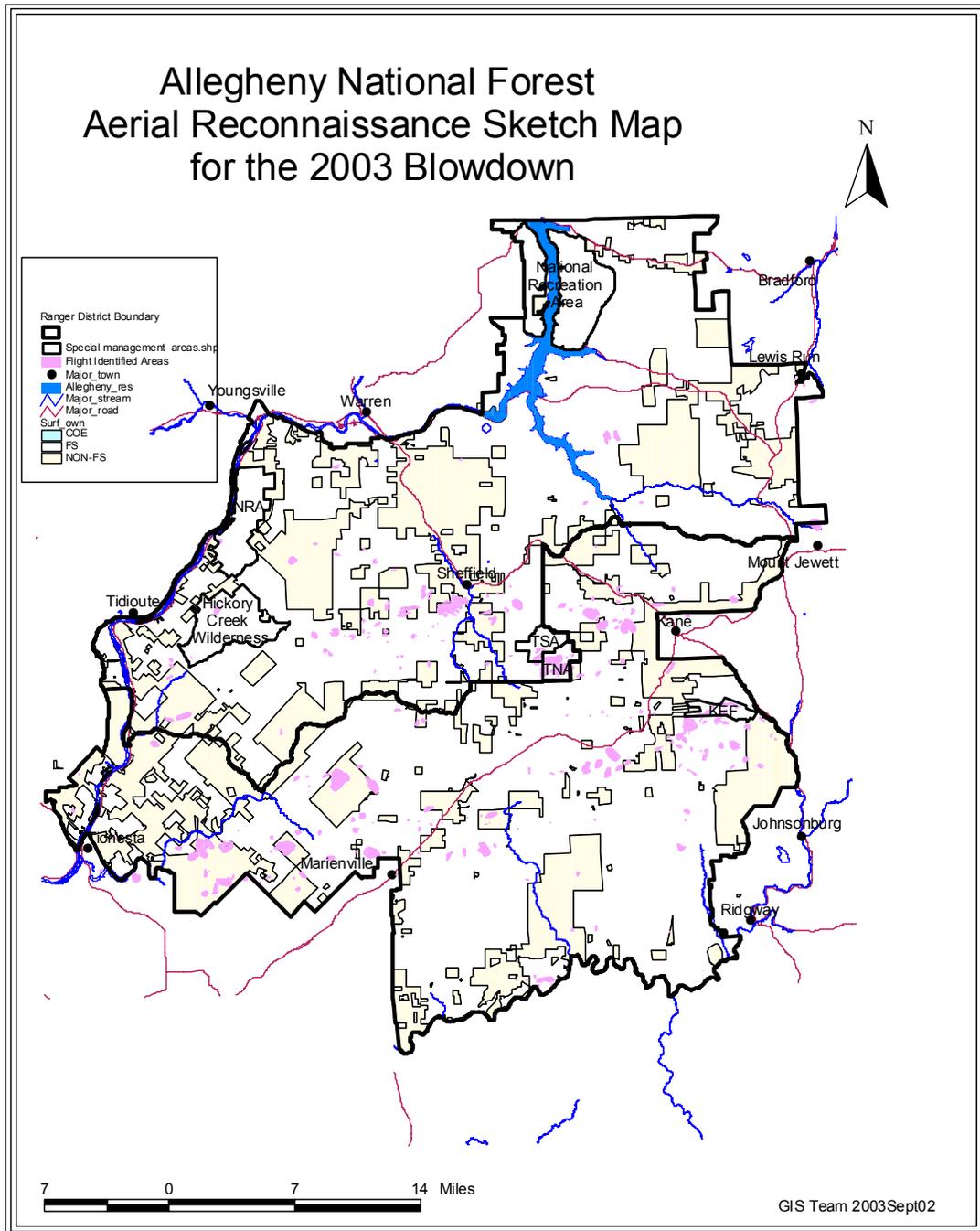
1. There are 15 timber sales that have sustained damage from the storm. Changed conditions in most of these sales may require some additional NEPA work, such as Supplemental EA's and/or correction notices. New salvage sale projects will result in shifting program priorities.
2. Four projects currently in some stage of analysis require re-assessment. New stand prescriptions, heritage surveys, and T&E surveys are needed to meet timelines and commitments. The FY 04 vegetation management program will be affected and will need adjustment.
3. There are approximately 3,450 acres outside of existing sale areas and areas already being analyzed for project development where some amount of blowdown has occurred and the potential for salvage harvest exists. The new Limited Timber Harvest Categorical Exclusions and Forest Health Initiative options may create some opportunity to expedite environmental analysis for salvage response.

Of equal importance is the need to determine fence repair/reconstruction options. Future stability of the out-year timber sale program depends upon the timely availability of acres of final harvest cuts planned and scheduled in prior NEPA documents. The disruption of flow of volume from these units is likely to affect out-year sale programs.

Recreation program management needs to emphasize the assessment and continued clearing of numerous pedestrian trails. Continued assessment and clearing of the snowmobile trail and connectors is needed prior to December 20, 2003.

Discussion with the USFWS is needed to outline overall impacts of the July 2003 storms, necessary management responses, and additional consultation needs.

Appendix I



Appendix II: Status of Trails on the ANF

ANF Trails with Storm Damage Assessments to date		Trail Condition
Name	Miles	Date: 9/2/2003
Beaver Meadows Hiking	5.9	Light Blowdown
Black Cherry Nat. Rec. Interp	1.4	Suspected heavy blowdown
Brush Hollow X-C Ski/Hiking	7.7	Trail Closed: Heavy Blowdown
Buzzard Swamp Hiking	9.9	Clear
Elijah Shoreline Trail	<1.0	Erosion damage
Hearts Content Interp	1.2	Clear
Hearts Content X-C Ski	8.3	Scattered blowdown
Hickory Creek Wilderness	12.1	Heavy blowdown near Jacks Run
Irwin Run Bankfishing	0.4	Clear
Laurel Mill X-C Ski/Hiking	10.7	moderate blowdown
Little Drummer Historical Path	3.1	Clear
Mill Creek Hiking	5.6	Trail Closed: Heavy Blowdown
Minister Creek Hiking	6.0	Light Blowdown
Morrison Hiking	11.4	Clear
North Country National Scenic	96.3	Trail closed: SR 948 to US 6; heavy near Little Salmon Creek.
Songbird Sojourn Interp	1.5	Light Blowdown
Tionesta Scenic Area Interp	1.6	Heavy Blowdown
Timberdoodle Flats Interp	1.4	Clear
Twin Lakes Hiking	16.6	Heavy near Tionesta Scenic Area and Twin Lakes Rec Area
<i>Total Miles Pedestrian Trails Assessed to date</i>	200.7	

Name	Miles	Date: 9/2/2003
Marienville ATV	14.3	Open
Marienville Bike	23.5	Closed – Blowdown; contract awarded
Rocky Gap ATV	20.0	Open
Timberline ATV	37.8	Open
Willow Creek ATV	10.8	Open
<i>Total Miles ATV Trails Assessed to date</i>	106.4	

Name	Miles	Date: 8/19/2003
Snowmobile Connector #3 (FR437)	1.1	Clear
Snowmobile Connector #5 (FR119)	9.0	clear
Snowmobile Connector #6 (FR180)	5.3	clear
Snowmobile Connector #7 (FR127)	7.7	clear
Snowmobile Connector #8 (FR116)	3.1	clear
Snowmobile Connector #9 (Job Corps)	12.7	clear
Snowmobile Connector #10 (FR287)	2.4	clear
Snowmobile Connector #11 (221, mbike, Watson Farm)	5.6	221 cleared
Snowmobile Connector #13 (Duhring Rd)	3.2	clear
Snowmobile Connector #14 (FR227/403)	9.2	clear
Snowmobile Connector #16 (FR131)	9.4	clear
Snowmobile Connector #17 (FR186)	5.7	clear
Snowmobile Connector #18 (FR150)	7.7	clear
Snowmobile Connector #19 (FR262/160)	13.4	clear
Snowmobile Connector #20 (FR187/279)	12.1	clear
Snowmobile Connector #25 (FR152)	0.3	Clear
Snowmobile Connector #27 (FR155)	0.7	clear
Snowmobile Connector #28 (FR221b, mbike)	1.0	221b cleared
<i>Total Miles of Snowmobile Trails Assessed to date</i>	<i>109.6</i>	

ANF Trails Not Assessed as of this time		Condition
Name	Miles	Date: 8/8/2003
Campbell Mill Interp	2.0	unknown
Deerlick X-C Ski/Hiking	8.8	unknown
Handsome Lake	0.3	unknown
Hopewell	0.1	unknown
Irwin Run Bankfishing	0.4	unknown
Johnnycake Hiking	2.4	unknown
Land Of Many Uses Interp	3.0	unknown
Little Drummer Historical Path	3.1	unknown
Loleta Hiking	3.0	unknown
Longhouse Interp	1.8	unknown
Rimrock X-C Ski	4.9	unknown
Seneca Interp	1.0	unknown
Tanbark Hiking	8.8	unknown
Tidioute Riverside	4.3	unknown
Tracy Ridge Hiking	19.1	unknown
Tracy Ridge X-C Ski	3.1	unknown
Westline X-C Ski/Hiking	9.1	unknown
<i>Total Miles Pedestrian Trails needing assessments</i>	<i>71.7</i>	

Allegheny Snowmobile Loop	158.7	Trail portions likely need clearing
Snowmobile Connector #2 (FR449)	5.0	clearing likely needed
Snowmobile Connector #4 (SGL29)	5.7	clearing likely needed
Snowmobile Connector #12 (FR226, 521, 287)	8.9	clearing likely needed
Snowmobile Connector #15 (FR130/404)	4.2	clearing likely needed
Snowmobile Connector #21 (FR449D)	1.5	clearing likely needed
Snowmobile Connector #22 (Wetmore Rd)	1.6	clearing likely needed
Snowmobile Connector #23 (Highland)	1.2	clearing likely needed
Snowmobile Connector #24 (Kane)	2.8	clearing likely needed
Snowmobile Connector #26 (Lantz Corners)	1.9	clearing likely needed
Snowmobile Connector Graybill	0.3	clearing likely needed
<i>Total Miles of Snowmobile Trail needing assessments</i>	<i>191.8</i>	

Appendix III: Table 2, Description of ANF Management Areas (MA)

- MA 1:** Mixed even-aged forest with a large aspen component with wildlife species needing early successional habitat.
- MA 3:** Even-aged hardwood forest with wildlife associated with shade tolerant vegetation, particularly non-game species.
- MA 5:** Area designated wilderness and managed to protect wilderness values.
- MA 6.1:** Forest area managed primarily for semi-primitive motorized dispersed recreation opportunities and wildlife species such as turkey, bear, cavity nesting birds and mammals.
- MA 6.2:** Even-aged hardwoods, logging activities limited to one decade every 40 years; associated wildlife species, particularly big game; semi-primitive non-motorized recreation between harvesting decades.
- MA 6.4:** Area designated and managed as the Allegheny National Recreation Area.
- MA 8:** Protection and management of unique scenic, research or natural areas having National significance.