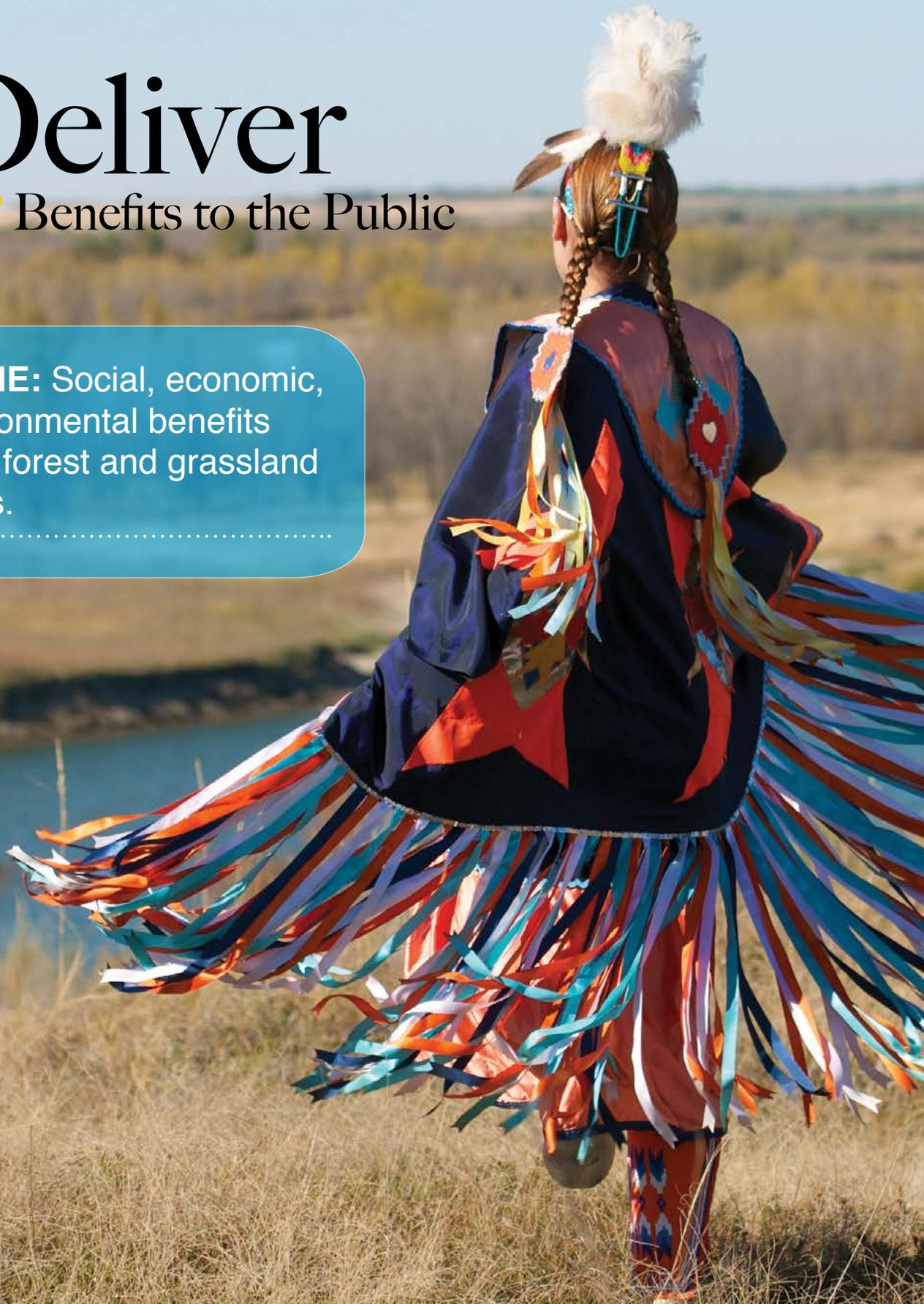


# Deliver

## Benefits to the Public

**OUTCOME:** Social, economic, and environmental benefits flow from forest and grassland resources.

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America's forests and grasslands play pivotal roles in providing a wide range of benefits to the American people. Land management that is sustainable enables forests and grasslands to continue producing goods and services to meet multiple public demands, thereby contributing to human health, prosperity, and quality of life for local communities and for the Nation as a whole. Managing complex and potentially competing demands and land uses is a formidable challenge. People want many of the same benefits from forests and grasslands and working collaboratively can successfully meet any challenge.

Recognizing the importance of forest stewardship, our country set aside the national forest reserves in 1897 to "improve and protect the forest within the boundaries, or for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber." In 1960, the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act declared that the national forests should be managed "for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed,

and wildlife and fish purposes." The Forest Service's research and development, technical assistance, technology transfer, and other services support natural resource management on the national forests, national grasslands, and on other lands. At the Forest Service, we work with other Federal agencies, State agencies, American Indian tribes, communities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and private landowners to sustain forests and grasslands across ownerships nationwide.

The people we serve benefit from healthy, resilient forests and grasslands in various ways. These lands provide recreational settings and opportunities; cultural and heritage resources; scenery; resources such as clean air and water, minerals, fish, wildlife, livestock forage, and firewood; various sources of renewable and nonrenewable energy; corridors for communication and energy transmission; and many other ecosystem services and benefits. The benefits generate billions of dollars contributed to the national economy, underpinning local economies in many rural areas and enhancing the quality of life and sense of place for people in many communities.



# Strategic Objective E.

## Strengthen Communities

Our rural forests and grasslands and our urban trees strengthen communities by providing ecological, economic, and social benefits. Many benefits come from large natural areas that are connected as a functioning whole, such as a watershed. These areas are often in multiple landownerships. Working with State and local partners across ownership boundaries, we will focus on sustaining the benefits that people receive from these natural areas—maintaining local cultures and traditions, connecting people to the land, and contributing to a higher quality of life.

At the Forest Service, we will work through partnerships across the Nation, allowing for communication and collaboration across jurisdictional and cultural boundaries. Our ethic of working together reinforces community bonds, strengthening our Nation's social fabric and fostering community prosperity. Collaboration and community involvement are keys to accomplishing our work; our management of the national forests and grasslands is based on strong relationships between our local offices and the communities we live in—the neighbors who live next door.

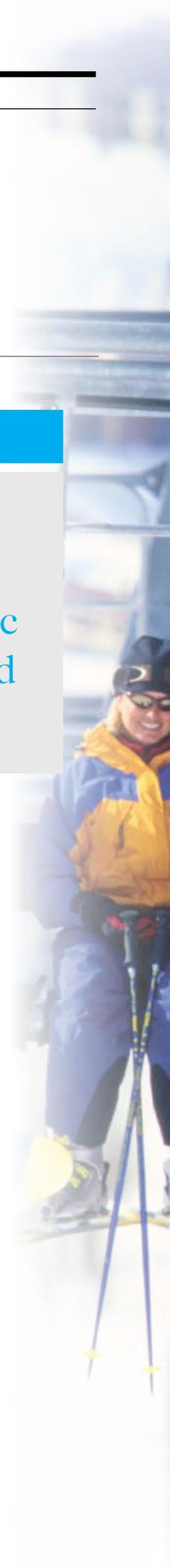
Delivery of forest-related goods and services is integral to our mission at the Forest Service, stimulating tangible economic benefits to rural communities, such as private-sector investment and employment opportunities. The economic activity we support is directly attributable to the natural resource investments we make and the use of national forest and grassland resources that result in marketable products associated with outdoor recreation, hunting, fishing, timber production, livestock grazing, mineral production, land stewardship, and other activities. An extensive transportation infrastructure underpins most activities. In FY 2011, for example, all Forest Service activities combined contributed to nearly 450,000

### ▶ LONG-TERM RESULT

Forest Service programs and activities contribute substantial socioeconomic benefits to the Nation and local communities.

jobs nationwide, with most of these jobs providing a tremendous benefit to rural communities located near the national forests and grasslands. Outdoor recreation alone, the largest contributor, supported more than 205,000 jobs and added more than \$13.6 billion to the Nation's gross domestic product. In addition, other activities such as subsistence hunting and fishing provide the primary food source for some rural residents.

As America's urban areas continue to grow, access to the natural environment and nature-based activities is becoming increasingly important to a community's overall health and well-being. Access to natural areas is particularly beneficial for youth, especially in many urban areas, where opportunities for outdoor play in natural settings may be limited. The Forest Service is dedicated to engaging young people in discussions about natural and cultural resources and encouraging them to help us care for the land. Engaging youth in our work will strengthen our communities and enable more Americans to explore and appreciate America's great outdoors, growing the future stewards of the Nation's lands.





Wildfire poses increasing risks for growing rural communities near forest land. More than 70,000 communities are at risk from wildfire. The Forest Service works through cross-jurisdictional partnerships to help communities become safer. From 2008 through 2013, our joint efforts more than doubled the number of designated Firewise communities able to survive a wildfire without outside intervention. By fire adapting their communities, homeowners and landowners alike can reduce fire risks and work toward healthier landscapes and stronger communities.

## Means and Strategies

- Promote and develop markets for sustainably grown wood, particularly for low-value timber and for use of wood as a “green” building material.
- Collaborate with and engage communities (including the public, our partners, American Indian tribes, and other Federal agencies) in making decisions about managing the national forests and grasslands.
- Continue to restore high-priority landscapes, taking social, economic, and ecological factors into account.
- Develop sustainable recreation settings and opportunities along with programs that complement national, State, and community tourism strategies.
- Use stewardship contracting authority when appropriate to achieve integrated natural resource management goals, including ecological restoration and production of wood products.
- Fully use programs and authorities, including the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps and Job Corps programs, for youth and veteran employment to deliver mission work, promote conservation values, and train the future workforce.
- Create jobs and opportunities for local communities to sustainably produce and use wood products and provide contracting opportunities in communities for small businesses.