



United States Department of Agriculture

Providing Benefits and Services for the Greater Good

Sustainable Operations Collective FY 2014 Accomplishment Report



Forest Service

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About This Report

This report highlights accomplishments of the nationwide Sustainable Operations (SusOps) Collective during fiscal year (FY) 2014. It includes examples of place-based successes and offers links to more comprehensive information and reporting.

About Sustainable Operations: The SusOps Commitment

As an innovative organization, the SusOps Collective leads the Forest Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in collaborative resource conservation by curbing pollution, cultivating environmental action, and building habits for resilient communities and landscapes. The SusOps Collective's network of employees turns ideas into scalable actions by implementing ambitious, on-the-ground pilot projects and grows those projects into agencywide, leadership-supported solutions. This approach enables every level of the Forest Service community to develop adaptable innovations and better facilitate its mission in a changing climate. As employees, we empower each other and our shareholders by investing in a shared future with creativity, diversity, and teamwork.

Message From Leadership: Guiding Through Action

FY 2014 was a year of inspiration and transition. Lessons from the natural world in which we work present us with an opportunity to evolve and function much more like a network: sharing ideas and resources, acknowledging common outcomes, and working on common goals across our traditional organizational boundaries. The newly merged Climate Change Advisor's Office and the SusOps Collective will collaboratively facilitate the achievement of the Forest Service mission in the face of a changing climate. The combined office will help the Forest Service become more resilient. The examples in this report are intended to encourage others toward stronger connections and integrated effort.



Organizational Framework: Planning and People

The SusOps Collective achieved many notable accomplishments, both direct and indirect, in the four primary areas of the FY 2014 program of work. In its first year as an agencywide organization, the SusOps Collective brought forward positive attributes and began addressing the organizational needs of a new program office.

Direction

- Developing SusOps program and budget direction
- Facilitating the transition to an agencywide organization
- Supporting the efforts to integrate the SusOps Collective and Climate Change Advisor's Office
- Classifying position descriptions for regions/stations/area SusOps coordinators

Policy

- Developing a SusOps strategic performance goal for the Forest Service Strategic Plan goals, outcomes, objectives, & results, FY 2015–2019
- Selecting two Corporate Priority Action Items: Power-IT-Down and Utility Bill Cleanup
- Drafting an operating guide

Oversight

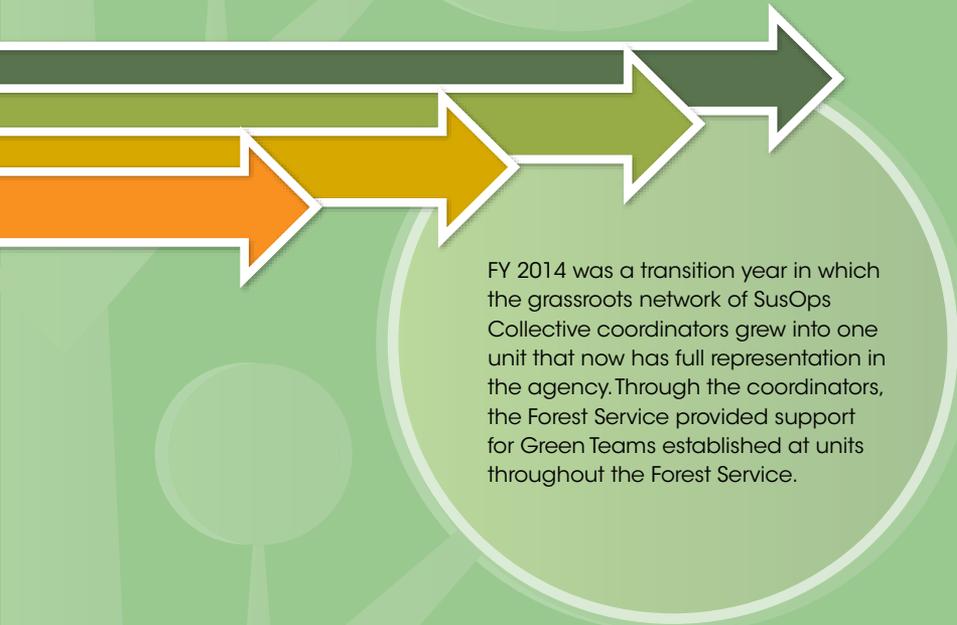
- Developing a core staff
- Establishing an Executive Steering Committee
- Fostering the growth of the SusOps Collective Board
- Identifying and strengthening the regions/stations/area coordinator network

Partnerships

- Collaborating with new and existing partnerships
- Hosting the first face-to-face meeting in 4 years

On March 19, 2015, President Obama signed Executive Order (E.O.) 13693, *Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade*. The E.O. offers a more holistic approach for Federal agencies to lead by example in making the Federal Government's operations more sustainable, efficient, and energy secure while saving taxpayer dollars. E.O. 13693 significantly increases targets in reducing GHG emissions from Federal operations over previous E.O.s, and it focuses on Federal facilities' climate preparedness and resilience. The E.O. states that "we have the opportunity to reduce agency direct greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40 percent over the next decade while at the same time fostering innovation, reducing spending, and strengthening the communities in which our federal facilities operate."

The E.O. 13693 raises the bar on many actions required for the Forest Service and other agencies. The Forest Service's actions to reduce GHG emissions, however, already fall in line with the direction in E.O. 13693. The Forest Service's unique mission to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations demands that we lead the way in the Federal sector toward sustainability and resilience.



FY 2014 was a transition year in which the grassroots network of SusOps Collective coordinators grew into one unit that now has full representation in the agency. Through the coordinators, the Forest Service provided support for Green Teams established at units throughout the Forest Service.

Leadership in Sustainable Operations

Goal 5 under the *Forest Service Strategic Framework for Responding to Climate Change* is “Sustainable Operations—Reduce the environmental footprint of Forest Service operations and be a leading example of a green organization.” The Forest Service monitors achievement of this goal through Element 10 of the Climate Change Scorecard, which tracks 66 action items in 6 environmental footprint areas: **energy, water, fleet and transportation, waste prevention and recycling, green purchasing, and sustainability leadership**. The scorecard’s intent is to help national forests and grasslands staff work on strategies to adjust and prepare for new conditions created by changing climates and to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions present in the atmosphere.

To help achieve these goals and to inspire, connect, and reinvigorate Forest Service Green Teams, the SusOps Collective designed a Web-based, self-reporting system called Leadership in Sustainable Operations (LISO). LISO identifies 98 specific actions that provide ways to fulfill legal requirements, introduce cost savings, and offer Green Teams new ideas to pursue. Green Teams also can use LISO to develop a formal action plan or share success stories and “how to’s.” Since its introduction in 2012, LISO has seen a substantial increase in use: from 1 unit in 2012 to 77 units in 2014 (out of 113 units).

SusOps Environmental Footprint Areas



ENERGY: Reduce our use of energy from unsustainable sources and contribute to the market for sustainable energy.



WATER: Implement practices and technologies supporting water resource conservation and reduce waterway contamination.



FLEET & TRANSPORTATION: Improve transportation practices, reduce emissions, increase fuel efficiency, and increase renewable fuel use.



WASTE PREVENTION & RECYCLING: Minimize waste generation and landfill use, strive toward zero waste and continue to reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost.



SUSTAINABLE ACQUISITION: Purchase sustainable goods and services; and reduce waste, toxic products, and resource consumption.



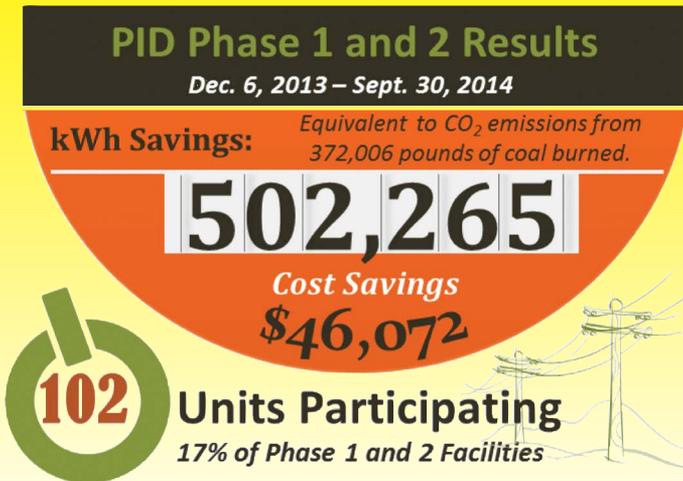
SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP: Create habits to change behaviors, leading directly to conserving natural, economic, and human resources.

Corporate Priority Action Items

Corporate Priority Action Items (CPAIs) are specific actions implemented across the Forest Service to reduce the environmental footprint of its operations. CPAIs are based on results of field-based projects that are determined to be applicable at a national level and will result in a significant (1) change in behavior, (2) increase in efficiency, or (3) cost savings. CPAIs enable the Forest Service to implement two sustainable operations actions on the corporate scale. In FY 2014, the Forest Service Executive Leadership Team selected two items: Power-IT-Down (PID) and Utility Bill Cleanup. Power-IT-Down promotes regular shutdown of computers and information technology peripherals, while Utility Bill Cleanup promotes comprehensive reviews of utility bills to more efficiently understand, manage, and monitor utility consumption. Both actions began as grassroots pilots led by champions in the field. Case studies validated the criteria of the actions becoming CPAIs.



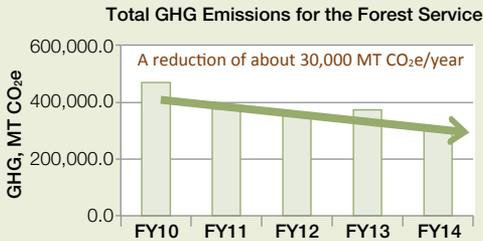
CPAI: Power-IT-Down—As of December 2014, 102 units were participating in PID Phase 1 and 2 (i.e., weekend-only shutdown at larger Forest Service offices), yielding savings of \$46,072 and 502,265 kilowatt hours of electricity. This savings is equivalent to annual GHG emissions from 73 passenger vehicles.



GHG Report

Annual Energy Greenhouse Gas Report*

The Annual Energy and Greenhouse Gas Report includes data for energy and water consumption from the National Finance Center combined with data collected from Ameresco AXIS utility database. This data, along with regional, State, and area field input, provides the basis of the agency's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory.



The Forest Service's three largest emissions categories are:



1. Fleet and Equipment



2. Employee Commuting



3. Building Energy

Sustainability Success Stories in the Forest Service

Real efforts underway throughout the Forest Service are building sustainability into operations in the field and in the office. The Southern Region awarded an Energy Savings Performance Contract to retrofit lighting at facilities on the Kisatchie, Ozark, and El Yunque National Forests. In addition, a Demand Control Ventilation retrofit was installed at the Land Between the Lakes Administrative Building, projected to result in energy savings of 497,982 kilowatt hours of electricity per year. The total Forest Service savings during the 19-year contract is estimated to be \$1.2 million. Energy saved throughout the 19-year contract (and beyond) is a net benefit to the environment and a reduction in the Forest Service's environmental footprint and GHG emissions.

In Alaska, the Tongass National Forest Green Team produced a video that captures employees working in the field as they demonstrate the importance of sustainability in fulfilling the agency's core conservation mission and managing valuable local forest resources.

Greening Fire—FY 2014 was another year of continuous collaboration and innovation among dedicated members of field-based teams, including the Greening Fire Field Team. Greening Fire prioritizes waste reduction, recycling, alternatives to plastic bottles, and education and outreach. In trying to integrate sustainable practice into fire operations, the team partnered with Northwest Incident Supply Cache to provide recycling collection accommodations and instructions for fire incidents and to assist in reducing waste associated with fire-related activities. The team continues to identify suitable plastic bottle alternatives and educate fire personnel on their waste prevention and recycling options.

Track to Zero—Nine Net Zero Fellows and Greenhouse Gas Inventory Pilots were awarded in States stretching from Alaska to New Hampshire. The Net Zero Guides for energy, water, waste, and fleet were further refined. Net Zero Guides were piloted through new fellowships on the Tuskegee and White River National Forests (Net Zero Fleet Guide); through the McKenzie Ranger District of the Willamette National Forest (Net Zero Energy); and through returning fellows from the Durham, NH, Field Office and Laboratory and the Sierraville Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest in California (Net Zero Energy). Each returning unit now has well-documented and significant energy use and GHG emission reductions compared with previous years.

Case Study: Energy Footprint—Returning Net Zero Energy Fellows from the Durham, NH, Field Office and Laboratory and the Sierraville Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest in California used monitoring and continuous improvement to identify additional opportunities to move toward net zero energy. Durham replaced a large, antiquated, walk-in refrigerator/freezer and installed insulation and adopted new technologies while Sierraville installed ENERGY STAR refrigerators and a solar furnace (a small-scale renewable energy technology). By implementing 5 of 17 possible energy conservation measures, Durham realized a 12-percent reduction in electric consumption and a 5-percent reduction in natural gas use, resulting in a savings of \$4,800 per year. After becoming Net Zero Energy Fellows in January 2013, members of the Sierraville Ranger District decreased its electricity consumption by 67,000 kilowatt hours per year and its propane consumption by 4,670 gallons per year. These resource savings amount to more than \$21,000 per year in reduced utility costs compared with pre-2013 consumption.



Financials and People Power

The SusOps Collective attributes much of its success to its extensive network of dedicated employees who share a common value and interest in sustainability. By working completely in a virtual setting, the SusOps Collective is able to engage employees from all geographic areas and organizational boundaries by having its employees serve as conveyors of ideas and implementers of actions. This inclusive, yet untraditional, approach has enabled our network to grow and become one of our strongest assets.

FY 2014 Financials & People Power

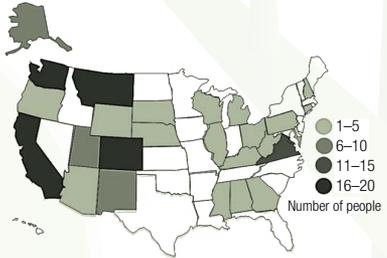
144 SusOps Collective participants



26 States and the Washington Office



9 Regions, **4** Research Stations, **1** Area



Financials



Over a quarter of our financial contributions come from in-kind contributions, totaling **\$564,394**

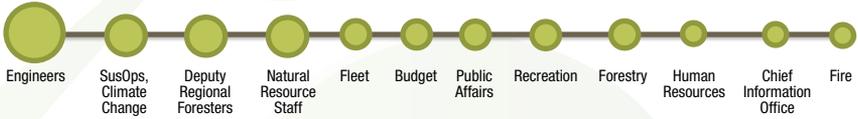
The rest of the budget comes from the regions, stations, and area and the Washington Office, totaling **\$1,672,000**



Collectively, we worked a total of 3,822 days towards agency resilience.



Our jobs are across resources areas



SusOps offers nontraditional employee development opportunities that build local leadership capacity while achieving nationwide efficiencies.

- SusOps has supported employees to reconnect their work with an inspiring vision.

- Our accomplishments serve as an example to other agencies. We are routinely asked to share the work of the Collective.

- Ideas like Power-IT-Down and Net Zero Fellows start as conversations at the local level.

IT ALL STARTS WITH THE COLLECTIVE POWER

idea

OF SUSOPS PARTICIPANTS

Susops Collective Employees Find Job Satisfaction

- Success & Learnings Replicated
- Agencywide
 - Partner Agencies

Grass Roots Ideas Start With Local Conversations



Power-IT-Down and Utility Bill Cleanup can save the Agency \$6.5 million.

Idea Scaled-Up at National Level

Ideas and actions are implemented as nationwide corporate priority action items.

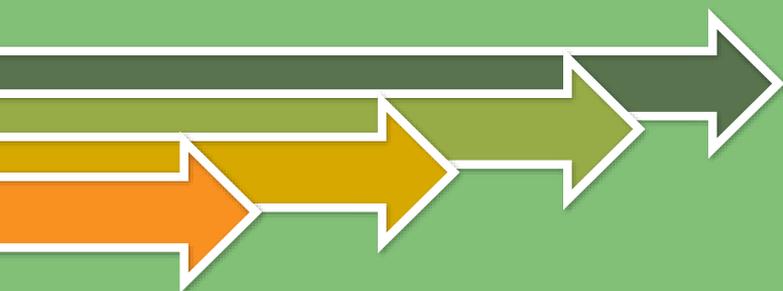
Idea Conveyed to Leadership

Leadership Supported

- Idea is conveyed to leadership as having substantial environmental footprint and cost reductions.

Pilot Idea at Local Level

- Several units test the idea for a period of time and convey the results back to the SusOps Collective.



Take Action

Everyone has an important role to play and a responsibility in helping to generate behavioral change. This accomplishment report is a product of that very change: the research, the implementation tactics, and the people who are working together to foster an agency that is sustainable in its operations. By bringing people and ideas together, we can continue to make progress on SusOps initiatives throughout our agency and in our local communities. We encourage you to join us in this effort and get involved: partner with the Forest Service on your sustainability project or explore online resources at the Sustainable Operations Web site. Collectively, we will continue working toward meeting the challenges of a changing climate and advancing the solutions for environmental sustainability.