



Forest Plan Implementation

**Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 Accomplishments
Boise National Forest
August 2008**

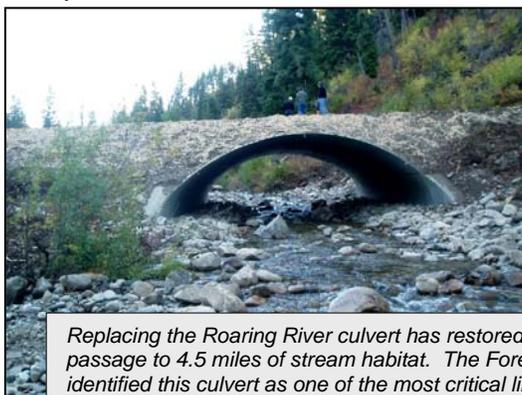
In September 2003, the Boise National Forest (NF) began implementing its revised Land and Resource Management Plan, which shapes management of the Forest for the next 10 to 15 years. The revised Forest Plan calls for maintaining or restoring watershed conditions, species diversity, terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and healthy, functioning ecosystems, while providing sustainable and predictable levels of products and services from the Forest.

Here are highlights of our revised Forest Plan, along with what we accomplished in FY 2007 (October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007), and in the four years to date (FY 2004-FY 2007) of implementing the revised Forest Plan.

The Forest Plan incorporates a long-term Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) that helps conserve and recover habitat important to fish species listed under the Endangered Species Act. The ACS will help restore and maintain beneficial uses related to water quality and long-term soil productivity.

Accomplishments: In FY 2007, the Forest completed restoration work in four “priority subwatersheds” identified under the ACS:

- o *Lower Deadwood: Completed 1093 acres of prescribed burning.*
- o *Third Fork Squaw Creek: Planted vegetation at Squaw Creek Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) sites (0.25 stream miles enhanced at Rammage and Wilson creek). Also completed 394 acres of mechanical fuels treatment.*
- o *Squaw-Pole: Completed 1106 acres of prescribed fire and 60 acres of mechanical fuels treatment.*
- o *Roaring River: Replaced culvert on Roaring River to restore fish passage to 4.5 miles of stream habitat.*



Replacing the Roaring River culvert has restored fish passage to 4.5 miles of stream habitat. The Forest Plan identified this culvert as one of the most critical limiting factors for enhancing bull trout habitat.

In the past four years of Forest Plan implementation, restoration work such as culvert replacement, seeding, prescribed fire, and thinning has been undertaken in 11 “priority subwatersheds,” including Upper Bear Valley, Bear Creek (South Fork Boise River subbasin), Elk Creek, Upper Middle Fork Payette, North Fork Gold Fork, Upper Mores Creek, and Bull Creek, in addition to the four subwatersheds noted above.

Aquatic Conservation Strategy

Fire & Fuels

The revised Forest Plan emphasizes restoration of fire-dependent landscapes by reducing hazardous fuels, especially in wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas, and in areas where fire regimes have been moderately or significantly altered from their historic ranges. In addition, the Forest Plan calls for identifying and carrying out wildland fire use in appropriate areas. Wildland fire use lets lightning-caused fires fulfill, under specific managed conditions, a natural process that has been occurring in the forest for centuries.

***Accomplishments:** In FY 2007, the Forest continued to focus fuels management efforts in the WUI, as well as areas outside the WUI in Fire Regimes I (frequent, non-lethal), II (frequent, lethal), and III (moderate frequency, mixed) in Condition Class 2 (fire regimes moderately altered from historic) and Condition Class 3 (fire regimes significantly altered from historic).*

In FY 2007, the Forest completed over 13,075 acres of treatments using both prescribed fire and mechanical treatments such as thinning, piling, mastication/ mulching and/or biomass removal. The number of acres treated in FY 2007 was substantially higher than in earlier years. Of the increased acreage, most (4700 acres) resulted from the Lime Creek Aspen Restoration Project on the Mountain Home RD, developed and implemented in collaboration with the Fairfield RD, Sawtooth NF.

In FY 2007, the Forest also implemented a large and successful WFU in the Trapper-Flat WFU subunit. The Trapper Ridge WFU started in mid July and over several weeks, burned a total of 20,159 acres (18,850 on the Boise NF, the remainder within the Sawtooth Wilderness). Fire personnel managed the Trapper Ridge WFU with the benefit of “lessons learned” from the Forest’s first two WFU fires, which burned a total of less than 100 acres on the Lowman and Idaho City RDs in 2006.

The Trapper Ridge fire was one of the largest WFU fires to date in Idaho to be implemented outside of designated Wilderness. Managing fires out of Wilderness presents many challenges due to the complexity of uses and presence of developments, investments, and other types of features that require protection. The strategies and tactics used to implement this fire, while concurrently addressing protection needs, reflect the national shift in fire management from full control to “appropriate management response.”

The Forest continues to work with Boise, Elmore Gem, and Valley counties as they update their Wildland Fire Mitigation Plans. These Plans are the cornerstone of National Fire Plan implementation in Idaho.



The Trapper Ridge WFU demonstrated that wildland fires managed to achieve resource benefits can be successfully implemented outside Wilderness.

The revised Forest Plan provides a mix of recreational opportunities to address growing demands, with an emphasis on bringing conflicting user groups together to resolve conflicts and minimize resource impacts.

Mix of Recreational Opportunities



With their focus on motorized routes, the new MVUMs will make it easier to determine motorized road and trail designations.

Accomplishments: In FY 2007, Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUMs) that display the designated system of roads and trails open to motor vehicle use were developed for the Cascade and Lowman Districts. These efforts implement the Forest Service's National Travel Management Rule for these parts of the Forest. In addition, the Mountain Home Ranger District continued work on its MVUM by field verifying existing routes,

involving the public, and developing a proposal for environmental analysis and additional public involvement. A final MVUM for the Mountain Home Ranger District is anticipated later in 2008.

Invasive Species

Invasive species are non-native species likely to cause economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health. The Forest works to protect forest and rangeland ecosystems by preventing the release of non-native species and by controlling the spread, or eradicating, invasive species.

Accomplishments: In FY 2007, the Forest treated nearly 5,000 acres for noxious weeds. This total is less than that accomplished in FY 2006 and slightly more than in FY 2005.

In FY 2007, the Forest continued cooperating with partners involved in five Cooperative Weed Management Areas by helping to establish and carry out strategic priorities, and by treating noxious weeds and non-native invasive species on National Forest land. Rush skeletonweed is of particular concern. Over 100,000 acres on the Boise NF are infested with this species. By participating in the Rush Skeletonweed Task Force, the Forest and other partners are fostering development and



Rush skeletonweed

introduction of additional biological agents to help control the spread of this invasive species.

In addition, about 219,000 acres of Boise NF land burned in the 2007 wildfires. Rehabilitation and noxious weed management activities will be carried out in 2008 and later years to prevent new infestations of noxious weeds and help assure that existing infestations do not spread as a result of wildfire suppression activities and wildfire impacts.

**Moving
Vegetation
Towards
Desired
Conditions**

The Forest Plan provides direction for moving forested and non-forested vegetation towards desired conditions, including those needed for terrestrial wildlife habitat.

Accomplishments: The Forest Plan emphasizes treatments in those vegetation types that are most “out of whack” from desired conditions.



Moving vegetation toward desired conditions through activities such as prescribed fire, thinning and invasive weed treatment, is important to meeting several Forest Plan goals, such as providing wildlife habitat.

Wildfires also affect vegetation. However, unlike planned management activities, the effects of unplanned wildfires may be desirable or

undesirable, depending on how they affect achievement of desired conditions.

Since the revised Forest Plan was first implemented in 2003, more than 350,000 acres of the Boise NF have been affected by large wildfires. These fires have affected vegetation in different ways, ranging from low severity /intensity underburns that burned understory vegetation but did not kill larger trees, to high severity/intensity burns in which both understory vegetation and large trees were killed.

Photos of the Cascade Complex, which burned northeast of the community of Cascade in 2007, illustrate these effects.



High severity/intensity burn:
2007 Cascade Complex

In September 2007 the Forest began updating its vegetation information to determine the extent of desired and undesirable effects from wildfires. Final products are expected to be available in 2010. This analysis will help us determine whether current Forest Plan vegetation treatment priorities are still appropriate or whether a change is needed.

**Sustainable
Resource
Conditions to
Support
Commodity
Outputs**

The revised Forest Plan emphasizes managing forested vegetation to achieve conditions that are resistant and resilient to uncharacteristic fire, insect and disease damage, and to contribute to desired vegetative conditions. Wood products are generated as a result of activities undertaken to achieve these desired conditions.

Accomplishments: In FY 2007, the Forest offered about 15.7 million board feet (MMBF) of green sawtimber from suited timberlands. This volume contributes to the Forest’s decadal Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ). An additional 2.7 MMBF of wood products (e.g., fuelwood, posts, poles, etc.) was also offered. This volume, when combined with that of the ASQ, is considered the Forest’s Total Sale Program Quantity (TSPQ).

In addition, the Forest reforested 1,562 acres and completed timber stand improvement activities (such as precommercial thinning) on nearly 6,210 acres of suited timberlands.

Cumulatively, the Forest has offered or sold a total of 78.4 MMBF of sawtimber from suited timberlands in the four years since the revised Forest Plan was implemented. The Forest’s TSPQ volume to date is 92.1 MMBF.