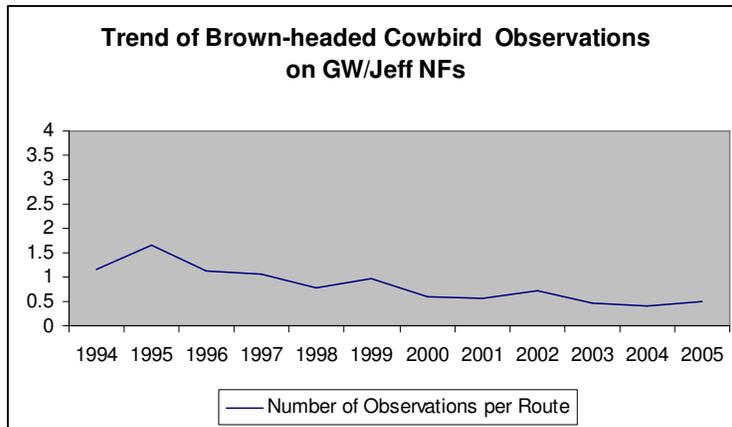


## CER Recommendations

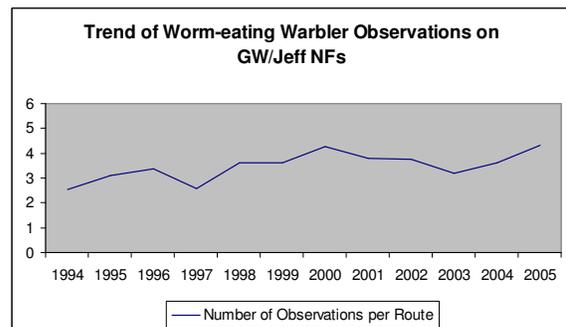
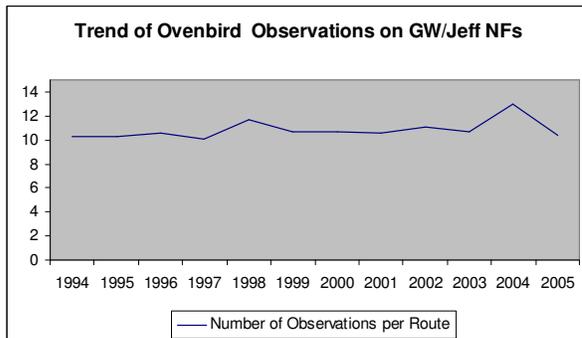
### Issue: Fragmentation

#### Trend in GWJNF Data of Brown-Headed Cowbirds across GWJNF, 1994 to 2005



The downward trend documented by point count data and steady downward trend by BBS data suggests the minimal amount of forest fragmentation (both existing and that created by management activities) across the George Washington is not sufficient to support significant populations of cowbirds. Additionally, patch size of interior forest on the George Washington appears not be readily penetrated by cowbirds searching for nests to parasitize.

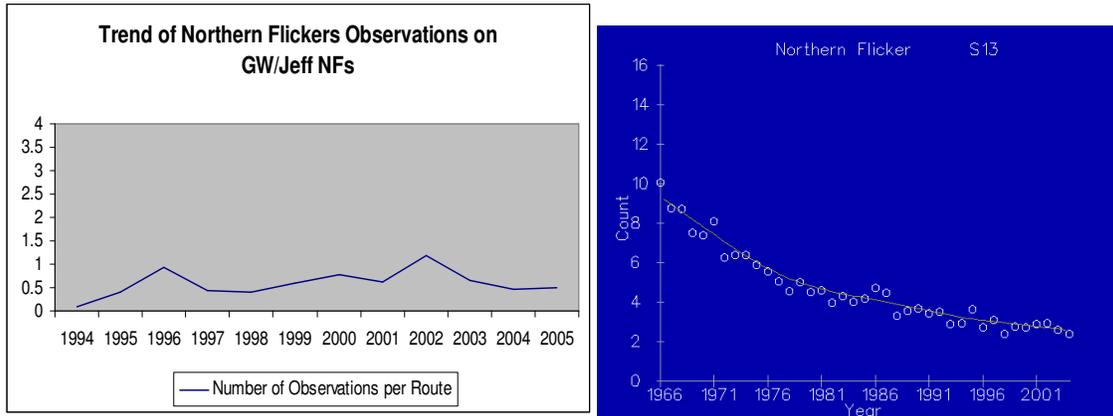
#### Trend in GWJNF Point Count Data of Ovenbirds and Worm-Eating Warblers across GWJNF, 1994 To 2005



Ovenbirds breed in upland deciduous or mixed deciduous/pine forests with a moderately dense understory. Both require large patches of mature forest for nesting. Based on the current age-class structure of forested land in the GWNF's, 88% of all forest types are mature (71-150+ years). Based on the results of monitoring data and habitat evaluation, these two species exhibit stable to increasing population trends on the GW, as well as state-wide and region-wide, indicating sufficient maintenance of desired condition relative to forest interior habitats.

## CER Recommendations

### Trend in GWJNF Data of Northern Flickers across GWJNF, 1994 to 2005



Northern flickers prefer open woodland habitat and ecotone habitat between forested and patches of early successional woody or grassy/shrubby habitat. Timber management and some prescribed fire, in addition to natural disturbances and continued maturation of the forest, should provide the following habitat requirements for northern flickers: large-sized snags and living trees for nest cavities, patches of early successional woody habitat, and some restoration /maintenance of open oak, oak/pine, and pine woodlands. However, the steep declining trends shown by USGS BBS data in populations of northern flicker across the larger regions of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Ridge and Valley Regions, which are year-round residents, indicates a marked decrease in the type of habitat they rely upon.

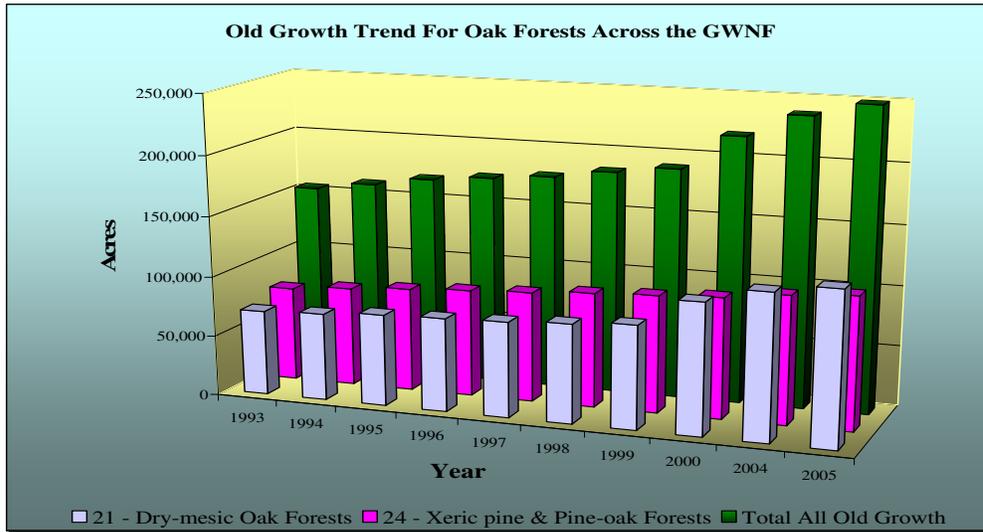
**Recommendation:** Add an objective for open woodland restoration. Since the 1993 revised GW forest plan, scientific understanding of fragmentation in general and the effects of fragmentation on various wildlife species has changed. In addition, species such as northern flickers, yellow pine, and white-tailed deer, open woodland habitat and early successional habitat has declined across the GWNF. Open woodland habitat contains large patches of mature trees, and is classified as mature in the overall age-class structure tables, yet provides an understory of native grasses and shrubs that can be maintained as a stable component of this forest type. Historically created and maintained with disturbance regimes such as prescribed fire and timber treatments, open oak woodland restoration can provide habitat required by many species at some point in their yearly life cycle needs, including white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, black bear, wild turkeys, Indiana bats, golden-winged warblers, and many 'forest interior' bird species during critical post-breeding, migratory, and wintering life cycles.

#### **Issue: Riparian Areas**

**Recommendation:** Adopt as guidelines the Jefferson Forest Plan Riparian Corridor and Forest-wide Channeled Ephemeral standards into the plan and have them applicable across the entire George Washington National Forest.

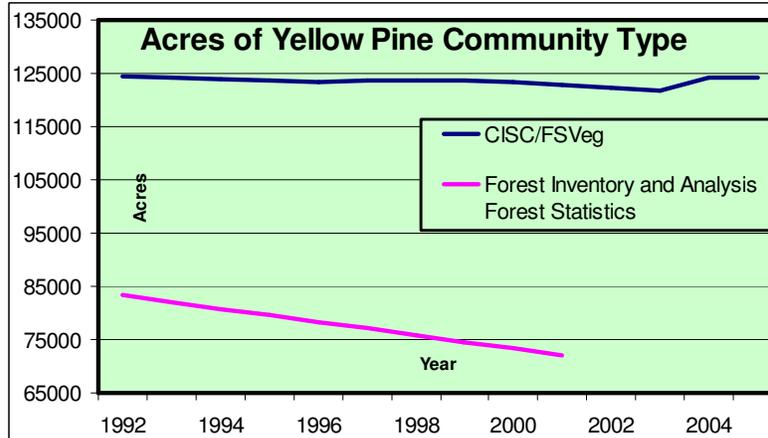
## CER Recommendations

### Issue: Old Growth



**Recommendation:** Adopt the Region 8 Guideline and its ages; the more common old growth types on suitable acreage can be harvested and will not be inventoried for old-growth characteristics since acreage and patches existing and developing will be enough to meet late successional or old growth needs.

### Issue: Management Indicator Species



Based on CISC information the number of acres of yellow pine forest types across the GWNF has been decreasing to stable over the past 12 years. More than 85% of the yellow pine stands on the GWNF are over 80 years old. These pine dominated stands require periodic fire for regeneration since the effects of burning result in opening the canopy to increased sunlight on the forest floor, killing thin-barked fire intolerant / shade tolerant trees that compete with pine seedlings, and in the case with table-mountain pine, heat from a fire opens serotinous cones allowing for seed release and dissemination. The lack of fire coupled with the ever-increasing beetle activity accounts for what is likely a downward trend in the number of acres (quantity) and in stand condition (quality) of this management indicator.

CER Recommendations

**Virginia's Black Bear Population Trend, 1989 to 1998  
Downing Method**

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Population Growth Trend (%) per year</u>	<u>R-Square</u>	<u>Significance</u>
Male	+ 7.4	0.97	P<0.97
Female	+ 4.2	0.91	P<0.91

**Spring Wild Turkey Harvest Information On GWNF, 1997 To 2006 (Source:**

<u>County</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>Harvest /square mile</u>
Allegheny	102	45	87	74	148	117	112	83	88	88	0.34
Amherst	34	26	30	30	37	43	51	32	40	35	0.39
Augusta	158	93	95	139	158	157	122	86	56	114	0.37
Bath	134	91	153	133	221	164	106	99	66	119	0.44
Botetourt	99	45	41	52	93	84	91	65	58	66	0.54
Frederick	4	6	4		3	3	6	5	6	8	1.04
Highland	26	26	41	47	61	38	32	17	22	36	0.40
Nelson	6	3	6	4	2	12	3	3	2	6	0.20
Page	10	6	6	7	13	5	8	6	9	20	0.47
Rockbridge	43	31	26	24	45	63	35	38	41	50	0.48
Rockingham	125	63	68	57	91	93	92	76	53	92	0.42
Shenandoah	57	41	31	20	48	48	47	60	44	70	0.59
Warren	3	4	3	3	9	5	9	6	3	3	0.31

**White-tailed Deer Population Index Trend Across the GWNF, 1996 to 2005  
(Source: VDGIF).**

<u>County</u>	<u>Percent GWNF in County</u>	<u>Number of GWNF Acres in County</u>	<u>Ranger Districts Included</u>	<u>R<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>r<sup>2</sup> Value</u>	<u>Status</u>
Allegheny	56	159,359	James River, Warm Springs	-3.23%	0.180	Stable
Amherst	19	57,600	Pedlar	-6.90%	0.762	Decreasing
Augusta	30	186,239	North River, Pedlar	-1.80%	0.168	Stable
Bath	50	170,239	North River, Warm Springs	-4.70%	0.299	Stable
Botetourt	2	5870	James River,	-3.04	0.325	Decreasing
Frederick	2	5,120	Lee	-4.58	0.297	Stable
Highland	5	13,440	North River, Warm Springs	-4.80%	0.269	Stable
Nelson	6	17,920	Pedlar	-4.39%	0.254	Stable
Page	13	25,600	Lee	-0.12%	0.002	Stable
Rockbridge	17	95,999	North River, James River, Pedlar	-3.85%	0.374	Decreasing
Rockingham	25	136,319	North River, Lee,	-5.15%	0.545	Decreasing
Shenandoah	23	75,519	Lee	-1.98%	0.284	Stable
Warren	5	7,040	Lee	2.95%	0.150	Stable

<sup>1</sup> R = Percent annual change in population index. Values less than -2.26% and values greater than 2.26% are considered significant (1.0226<sup>10</sup> = 1.25 or a 25% increase or decrease over the 10-year period).

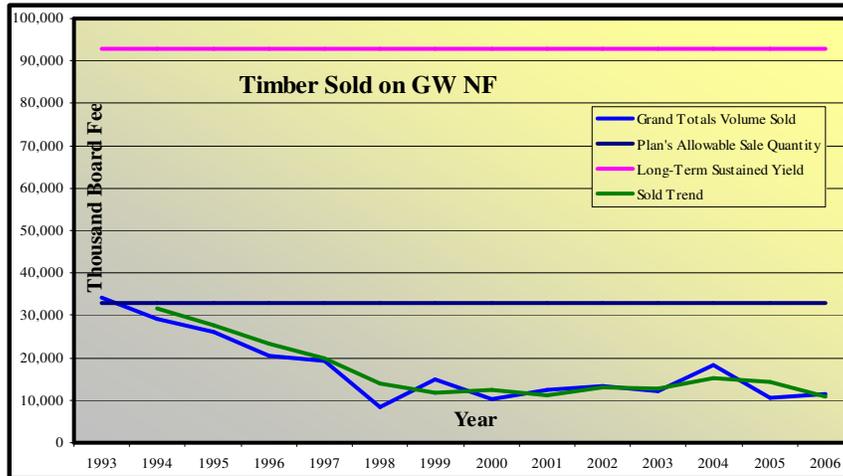
<sup>2</sup> p = Statistical significance level of exponential regression model. Values (p < 0.10) are considered significant.

## CER Recommendations

### **Issue: Unique Natural Communities (Special Biological Areas)**

**Recommendation:** Modify the Forest Plan by designating 83 SBAs and expanding the boundaries of 13 existing SBAs a for a total of 49,584 acres of new SBAs.

### **Issue: Timber Harvest**



**Recommendation:** Strive to maintain existing amount of forest generally suitable for timber production between 350,000 to 370,000 acres.

### **Issue: System Roads in Wildlife Management Areas**

**Recommendation:** Black bear and wild turkey populations are stable to increasing even though Forest Plan road density objectives were not met. Remove the existing standards regarding road density requirements and create guidelines that roads should be closed during nesting and brooding rearing seasons and then opened during hunting seasons.

### **Issue: Existing Inventoried Roadless Areas**

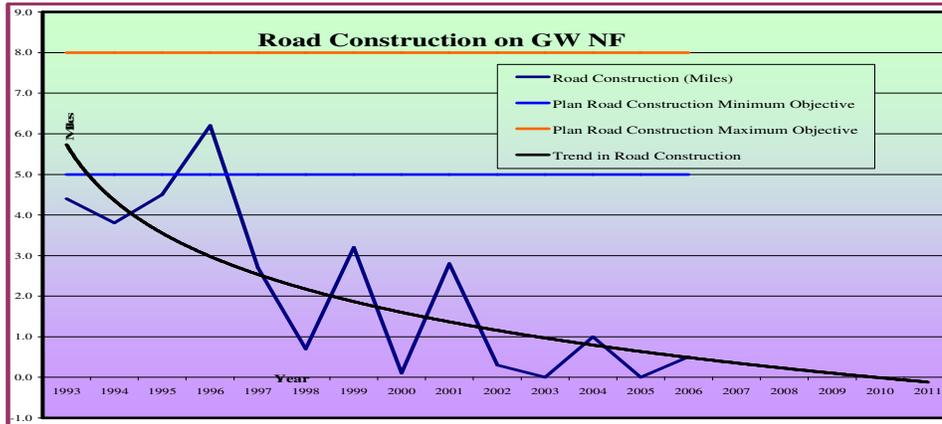
**Recommendation:** Add a guideline that inventoried roadless areas will be managed under the current agency roadless policy and direction. Adding a guideline that where conflicts occur between management of inventoried roadless areas and known locations of special botanical – zoological areas, the biological values will be addressed first.

### **Issue: Wind Energy Development**

**Recommendation:** Identify the Forest as generally suitable for locating wind energy development (commercial wind farms) outside of the following special areas: Wilderness or wilderness study areas; special botanical, zoological, geological, or research natural areas; Shenandoah Mountain Crest (Cow Knob Salamander Habitat); both Indiana Bat protection areas; Appalachian Trail corridor; remote backcountry areas; Mt. Pleasant National Recreation Area; and Big Schloss, Laurel Fork, and Little River Special Areas.

## CER Recommendations

### Issue: System Roads Across the Forest

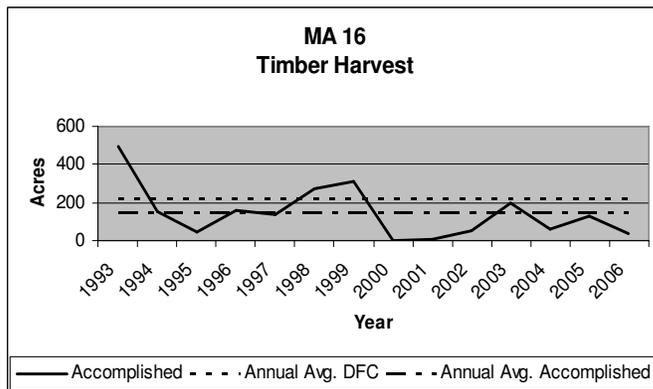
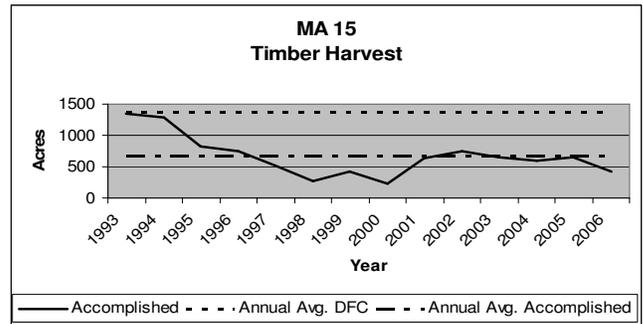
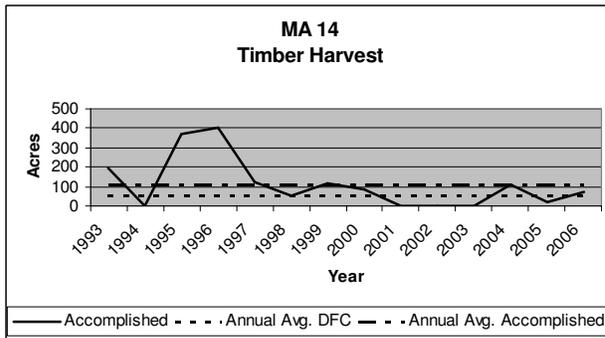


**Recommendation:** Delete road construction as an objective of the Plan.

### Issue: Fire

Recommendation: Modify the Forest Plan by: 1) Identifying that Wildland Fire Use is a generally suitable use everywhere on the George Washington National Forest; 2) Increasing the prescribed fire objective to an annual program of 10,000 to 15,000 acres on the GW. 3) Identifying a forestwide desired condition establishing a goal to have fire regimes within their historical range.

### Wildlife



Recommendation: Adopt similar goals and objective as the Jefferson Forest Plan including: increasing the prescribed burn objective; adding an objective for open woodland restoration, specifically for wildlife purposes; and adding an objective for blight resistant American chestnut restoration.