

Outputs and Services

Introduction

Outputs and services are not only the results of Forest Plan implementation, but they also show our customers that we are accountable for doing what we say we will do. The Forest Plan is our contract with the public, and by fulfilling that contract we strive to build and maintain public trust, understanding, and collaboration with the Forest and our activities.

2010 Accomplishments

Forest accomplishments are directly addressed in the monitoring items covered below.

Monitoring and Evaluation

FOREST PLAN MONITORING ITEMS FOR OUTPUTS AND SERVICES

The 2006 Forest Plan includes one monitoring item for Outputs and Services on page IV-6. This item was reworded somewhat due to recommendations made in the FY 2007 Annual Monitoring Report and a subsequent Forest Plan administrative correction.

1. *How close are outputs and services projected for Forest Plan implementation to actual outputs and services?*

This monitoring item is derived from the NFMA requirement to compare how close we come to providing the outputs and services to the public that we project in our Forest Plan. There are a number of different ways to assess or report outputs and services generated by the Forest. This report will focus on the following indicators:

- 1) Target accomplishments that address program implementation in the Forest Plan,
- 2) Attainment or movement toward Forest Plan measurable objectives in resource areas such as vegetation, roads, trails, fire, wildlife, timber, and minerals.

Monitoring Question 1. How close are outputs and services projected for Forest Plan implementation to actual outputs and services?

Target Accomplishment Comparison

The first method used to compare projected and actual outputs and services is to look at the target accomplishments for FY 2010. Table OS-1 displays target accomplishments that were given to the Forest, the amount we planned to do, the amount we actually accomplished, and the difference between the original target and what we accomplished.

The accomplishments are related directly or indirectly to Forest Plan goals, objectives, or desired conditions. They do not account for everything we do as a Forest, but rather those items that were assigned a specific target by the Forest Service. Other accomplishments, such as aquatic passage restoration, are noted in the resource sections of this report.

Table OS-1. Comparison of Target, Planned, and Actual Accomplishments for FY 2010

Resource or Program Area	Accomplishment Description	Target Amount	Planned Amount	Actual Amount	Actual Difference from Target
Aquatic Habitat	Acres of inland lake habitat enhancement	38	38	38	0
Aquatic Habitat	Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced	7	7	7	0
Botanical	Acres treated for noxious weeds and invasive plants	98	296	423	+325
Heritage	Number of priority heritage assets managed to standard	19	19	24	+5
Facilities	Number of Admin. facilities maintained to standard	39	39	42	+3
Fire	Acres treated to reduce risk of catastrophic wildland fire	3,847	3,040	3,841	-6
Lands	Number of title management cases resolved	5	5	6	+1
Lands	Miles of property line marked or maintained to standard	16	16	27.4	+11.4
Lands	Acres acquired through purchase or donation	1,500	1,500	449	-1,051
Lands/Sp. Uses	No. of land use authorizations administered to standard	58	58	75	+17
Lands/Sp. Uses	Number of land use proposals and applications processed	60	60	30	-30
Minerals	Number of geologic resources or hazards managed	2	2	2	0
Minerals	Number of mineral proposals processed	4	5	5	+1
Minerals	Number of mineral operations administered to standard	30	31	31	+1
Planning	Land Management Plan amendments underway	1	1	0	-1
Range	Acres of grazing allotments managed to standard	3,000	4,500	4,994	+1,994
Range	Number of grazing allotments with new NEPA decisions	4	8	0	-4
Range	Acres of rangeland vegetation improved	80	300	1900	+1,820
Roads	Miles of Forest system road decommissioned	2	27	28.4	+22.8
Roads	Miles of high clearance system roads improved	6	6	142	+136
Roads	Miles of high clearance system roads maintained	137	300	303	+163
Roads	Miles of roads improved	13	14.2	216	+203
Roads	Miles of roads maintained	647	953	1,487	+840
Roads	Miles of passenger car system roads improved	7	8.2	73	+66
Roads	Miles of passenger car system roads maintained	510	653	1,184	+674
Recreation	Acres of NFS lands covered by a motor vehicle use map	919,126	919,126	919,619	+493
Recreation	Number of recreation site capacities operated to standard	425,895	425,895	425,895	0
Recreation	Number of recreation sites maintained to standard	140	133	133	-7
Recreation	Miles of system trail maintained to standard	225	225	225	0
Recreation	Wilderness areas managed to minimum stewardship level	3	3	8	+5
Recreation	No. of recreation special uses administered to standard	38	38	37	-1
Soil and Water	Acres of soil and water resources improved	135	135	135	0
T&E Species	No. of T&E species with recovery actions accomplished	5	5	5	0
Timber	Volume (CCF) of regular timber sold	11,880	11,880	12,455	+575
Timber	Acres treated to achieve healthier stand conditions	124	124	54	-70
Vegetation	Acres of forest vegetation established	450	346	357	-93
Vegetation	Acres of forest vegetation improved	1,000	1,000	1,044	+44
Wildlife	Acres of terrestrial habitat enhancement or restoration	988	1,001	11,835	+10,847
Inventory	Acres of inventoried data collected or acquired	53,495	53,495	68,268	+14,773
Monitoring	Annual monitoring requirements completed	14	14	24	+10

Evaluation, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Target Accomplishment Comparison

As seen in Table OS-1, the Forest met or exceeded target accomplishments in 31 of 40 (78%) program areas in Fiscal Year 2010. Targets were exceeded in 24 of the 40 (60%) areas. Overall, targets were accomplished at an effective level. The areas where targets were not met were:

- Land Management Plan amendments underway,
- Acres treated to reduce risk of catastrophic wildfire,
- Acres acquired through purchase or donation,
- Number of land use proposals and applications processed,
- Number of grazing allotments with new NEPA decisions,
- Recreation sites maintained to standard,
- Recreation special uses administered to standard,
- Acres treated to achieve healthier stand conditions, and
- Acres of forest vegetation established.

Although there were a number of potential amendments to the Forest Plan in FY10, but none of them turned out to be necessary due to delays in litigation resolution (WVNFS delisting, RACR areas), and resolution of other Forest Plan concerns through administrative corrections (changes in Management Prescriptions due to wilderness designation).

For forest vegetation established, treatments to reduce wildland fire risk, and recreation sites maintained to standard, the target acre amounts exceeded the planned amounts, which were the amounts that we thought we could accomplish. In all of these cases, we accomplished as much or more work than we planned to do but still did not meet the target amount. These shortfalls may have been because the target amounts were unrealistic from the start, as opposed to our ability to accomplish work that we planned.

The large deficit in acres acquired through purchase or donation can be attributed to delays in purchasing one property called Thunderstruck. This large property (1,000+ acres) was complex to begin with, involving multiple tracts and owners, but the purchasing process was further complicated by a couple of changes in agency protocols last year that required new appraisals and additional work. This property is on schedule to be purchased in FY11.

The Forest accomplished 50 percent of the assigned 2010 target for Land Use Permits Processed. This shortfall stemmed from the following factors: 1) the 2010 target was 40 percent higher than the typical annual target even though funding and staffing actually decreased, 2) an increase in the number of complex and time-consuming permits to process, and 3) increased personnel time spent coordinating maintenance activities of existing Special Use Permits instead of authorizing new permits.

The Forest completed the NEPA analysis for 8 grazing allotments in the South Zone in FY10, but the decision for the NEPA EA was delayed at the request of the Regional Office until the first quarter of FY11. Thus, the FY10 Accomplishment Report shows a deficit of NEPA decisions in FY10, but the FY11 Accomplishment Report should show a corresponding surplus.

The small shortfall in administering recreation special uses was partly due to lower recreation funding that did not allow the Forest to hire as many seasonal recreation employees as we needed. This funding deficiency was felt in other aspects of recreation management as well. For example, even though we met the reduced target of 225 trail miles maintained, this amount was not as large as in years past and did not meet the Forest Plan objective of 425 trail miles maintained on an average annual basis.

The acres treated to achieve healthier stand conditions target was not met largely due to the way these acres are reported, as the portion of all treatment acres that are funded by CWK2 money. This portion is relatively small compared to the total funding we received and the total acres we accomplished for stand improvement, including tree thinning, crop tree release, and tree harvesting to improve age class distribution or to reduce insect and disease infestations.

Target accomplishment overruns can occur for a number of reasons. Sometimes the targets are set too low. Sometimes contract bids come in lower than expected and we can accomplish more for the same amount of appropriated dollars. Other times we receive additional funding or personnel help during the year so that we can accomplish more than we originally predicted. One example of this is the additional funding we received from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), which allowed us to greatly exceed targets for Acres of Rangeland Vegetation Improved, and road maintenance, improvement, and decommissioning.

Recommendations: Continue to apply for sufficient funding to meet Forest needs and objectives. Work with the Washington and Regional Offices to set realistic targets.

Forest Plan Objective Progress

Another way to look at Forest outputs and services is to examine how they may have contributed to measurable objectives in the Forest Plan. Table OS-2 describes these Forest Plan objectives and contributions that were made to achieving them in FY 2010.

Table OS-2. Progress toward Measurable Forest Plan Objectives in Fiscal Year 2010

Resource or Program Area	Forest Plan Objective	FY10 Progress Toward Objective
Fire Management	FM09 - Over the next 10 years use prescribed fire on 10,000 to 30,000 acres. Emphasize use in areas to reduce hazardous fuels and fire risk to property or investments, and/or in areas to maintain, restore, or enhance wildlife habitat or other ecosystem components.	An estimated 1,016 acres were treated with prescribed fire in FY10.
Vegetation	VE02 - Maintain or create age class diversity on suitable timberlands to provide for sustainable timber production and a variety of structure and wildlife habitat. Treat an estimated 20,000 to 40,000 acres over the next decade to move toward desired age class conditions.	An estimated 63 acres were treated with even-aged harvest in FY10 to move toward desired age class conditions.
Vegetation	VE03 - Treat an estimated 4,000 to 12,000 acres over the next decade on lands not suited for timber production to help restore ecosystems and enhance wildlife habitat.	An estimated 730 acres were treated in FY10 to help restore ecosystems or enhance habitat.

Resource or Program Area	Forest Plan Objective	FY10 Progress Toward Objective
T&E Species	TE30 - Provide a continuous supply of suitable roost trees by maintaining a minimum of 50 percent of each primary range on NFS lands in any combination of mid successional (40-79 years), mid to late successional (80-120 years), and late-successional (>120 years) age classes.	Because of Forest Plan Standards (TE23-TE25, TE33, TE35, TE36), no reduction in bat roost trees occurred in FY10.
Wildlife and Fish	WF07 - Reduce aquatic habitat fragmentation associated with the Forest transportation system by correcting 30-50 passage barriers, according to aquatic priorities, over the next 10 years. Correct existing passage problems with bridges, open bottom arches, or other structures that restore or simulate channel conditions that facilitate upstream and downstream passage of aquatic organisms, or remove barriers when roads are decommissioned or closed.	Three passage barriers were corrected in FY10, one in Poca Run, and two along FR 44. Many other culverts on small perennial or intermittent streams were also removed.
Wildlife and Fish	WF08 - Actively restore aquatic and riparian habitat conditions in 30-50 miles of stream over the next 10 years. Activities that restore or improve the natural structure and function of channel and riparian conditions may include the installation of instream structures, large woody debris loading, riparian fencing, riparian planting, and bank and channel stabilization.	An estimated 7 miles of aquatic and riparian habitat were restored or improved in Lambert Run and Coats Run.
Wildlife and Fish	WF09 - Maintain at least 50,000 acres of mid-late and late successional (>80 years old) mixed mesophytic and cove forest to meet habitat needs for cerulean warbler, a Management Indicator Species. (Current >80 year old mixed mesophytic and cove forest is estimated at around 320,000 acres.)	The 318 acres of harvest that occurred in FY10 had no measurable effect on our ability to continue to meet this objective.
Wildlife and Fish	WF10 - Maintain at least 150,000 acres of 50-150 year old oak and pine-oak forest in MPs 3.0 and 6.1 to meet habitat needs for wild turkey, a Management Indicator Species. (Current 50-150 year old oak forest is estimated at around 220,000 acres.)	No measurable loss of 50-150 year old oak forest occurred in FY10. There was likely a slight increase in these age classes due to natural aging/succession.
Wildlife and Fish	WF11 - Maintain at least 20,000 acres of mid-late and late successional (>80 years old) spruce forest to provide optimum habitat for West Virginia northern flying squirrel, a Management Indicator Species. The long-term objective is to increase mid-late and late successional spruce forest to at least 40,000 acres. (Current >80 year old spruce forest is estimated at around 38,000 acres.)	No measurable loss of >80 year old spruce forest occurred in FY10. There was likely a slight increase in these age classes due to natural aging/succession.
Wildlife and Fish	WF12 - Maintain at least 560 miles of coldwater stream habitat capable of supporting wild, naturally producing brook trout, a Management Indicator Species.	There were no known reductions in coldwater stream habitat in FY10.
Recreation	RC04 - Provide an annual average of 75 miles of Trail Maintenance/Reconstruction in Wilderness, and 350 miles in non-wilderness areas.	An estimated 225 miles of trail were maintained/reconstructed in FY10.
Recreation	RC27 - Develop a Forest-wide trail management plan to establish trail classes, permitted uses, construction, reconstruction, and maintenance priorities.	Forest trail management planning continued in FY10 and will likely conclude with a completed plan in FY11.
Timber	TR03 - Make available 25 to 105 million cubic feet of timber for the decade, which will contribute to Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ).	A little over 1.0 million cubic feet of timber were made available in FY10.
Timber	TR04 - Provide timber harvest, and related reforestation and timber stand improvement activities, to contribute toward the attainment of desired vegetation conditions. On suitable timber lands, harvest timber, other than by salvage, on an estimated 20,000 to 36,000	In FY10 we harvested 318 acres, did TSI on 843 acres, planted 10 acres, and did 197 acres of site

Resource or Program Area	Forest Plan Objective	FY10 Progress Toward Objective
	acres over the next 10 years.	preparation.
Minerals	MG05 - Inventory abandoned mines and prepare restoration plans to address biological and physical resource concerns, chemical stability, and human health and safety.	No abandoned mines were inventoried in FY10. Work began with the State to plan restoration of the Tub Run abandoned coal mine.
Minerals	MG06 - Keep 70 to 80 percent of federally owned oil and gas available for exploration, development and production.	Availability remains at roughly 74 percent of MNF lands.
Roads	RF03 - Over the next decade, decommission or reclaim at least 30 miles of roads that are no longer needed for achieving access management objectives. These can include system roads or old woods roads. Actions may range from full obliteration to administratively removing a road from the transportation system as long as it poses no resource impacts without additional rehabilitation efforts.	An estimated 24.8 miles of Forest system and non-system roads were decommissioned in FY10.

Evaluation, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Plan Objectives Progress

Table OS-2 indicates that the progress made toward achieving Forest Plan objectives was highly variable in FY 2010. For objectives where we are trying to maintain certain habitat conditions (WF09-WF12), we were reasonably successful, although habitat conditions are innately variable and subject to influences beyond our management activities. For objectives that require active treatments, such as prescribed burning or road decommissioning, the results were mixed.

For instance, our accomplishment of 1,016 acres of prescribed burning is moving us toward our ten-year objective of 10,000 to 30,000 acres, but when combined with previous year outputs, it still puts us well behind our desired production. However, the Five Year Plan for the Forest indicates a dramatic increase for burn acres could occur in the near future. This increase, if realized, would put us back on track to achieve Objective FM09.

Similarly, timber production remains low compared to our objective levels. Given current funding/staffing and NEPA capability levels, however, it appears that the original objective levels may have been ambitious. Time will tell whether expectations need to be adjusted.

Conversely, the 24.8 miles of road decommissioning we did, combined with the 13.8 miles done in FY07-FY09, has us exceeding the ten-year objective of at least 30 miles.

This variability in our capacity to achieve objectives is one of the main reasons why we monitor our progress. By tracking results, we can shift management priorities or emphasis over time to provide more resources to objectives where we have more to do. In certain instances, monitoring may also show us where we need to lower or raise our objective expectations.

For example, we may have had unrealistic expectations for Objective VE03: *Treat an estimated 4,000 to 12,000 acres over the next decade on lands not suited for timber production to help restore ecosystems and enhance wildlife habitat.* We have been treating a substantial amount of

acres to restore ecosystems and enhance wildlife habitat, but those acres have not typically been in lands not suited for timber production. Thus, we find ourselves in a situation where we are making a concerted effort to help restore ecosystems and enhance wildlife habitat, but we are not able to effectively display the results of that effort through this objective. However, we did enhance or restore an estimated 730 acres of unsuited timberlands in FY 2010, which is a sizable contribution to Objective VE03.

Other monitoring results may sound an alarm for public expectations. For example, the shortfall in miles of maintained trails may indicate that we need one or more of the following: 1) procure more maintenance funding, 2) find innovative ways to do maintenance, 3) reduce the amount of trail miles open to the public for safe and enjoyable use, and/or 4) revise the Forest Plan trail maintenance objective.

Recommendations: Continue to monitor progress toward achieving Forest Plan objectives. Use monitoring results to make needed adjustments in Forest management strategies, direction, and projections.