

Scientists Develop System for Prioritizing Projects for Clean Water, Wildlife Areas, Recreation

During 2010-2011, employees working in the Northern Region’s Headquarters made significant updates to a system that helps National Forests and Grasslands in the region identify priority areas for accomplishing their goals in areas of wildlife, forest and grasslands management, clean water, public safety and recreation.

A focus of the Integrated Restoration and Protection Strategy (IRPS) is to provide information on current and projected risks that will help forests and grasslands develop and prioritize restoration projects. The strategy identifies the highest priorities for nineteen key resource values from six primary theme areas.

The primary theme areas in the IRPS are:

1. Restoration of forests, grasslands, and human communities to a more resilient condition.
2. Restoration and maintenance of wildlife habitats, including restoration of more resilient vegetation conditions where appropriate, to meet ecological and social goals.
3. Restoration and maintenance of resilient, high-value watersheds.
4. Restoration of high-value fisheries streams developing more resilient habitat.
5. Restoration and protection of recreation sites and scenic vistas.
6. Protection of people, structures and community infrastructure (roads, trails, bridges, power corridors, recreational developments etc.) highlighting current and projected insect and wildfire effects.

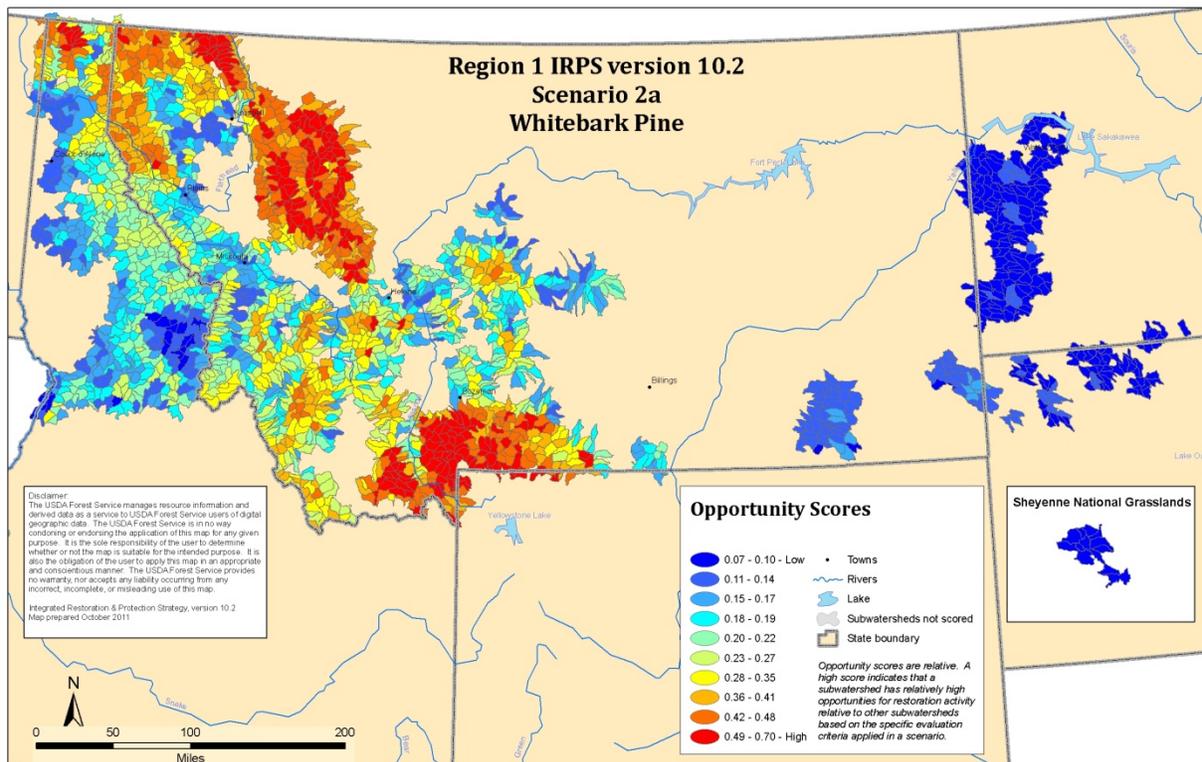
One scenario looks at the vulnerability of Whitebark pine against the value it has for wildlife and the risks associated with fire, insects and disease.

Scenario 2a: Whitebark Pine

Weight	Component	Data Input
50%	Value	Whitebark pine composition, % HUC6 (30%)
		Grizzly bear species range (20%)
35%	Risk	Crown fire burn probability (15%)
		Blister rust damage map (10%)
		Insect occurrence from ADS over multi-year period (10%)

Weight	Component	Data Input
15%	Feasibility	Non-wilderness (10%)
		MTBS moderate/high burn severity (5%)

For each scenario, a number of primary treatments are identified to reduce the associated risks. For Whitebark pine, this includes planting in some areas, prescribed burning or wildland fire to promote seed dispersal and regeneration, and the reduction of the potential for crown fires.



Victoria Christiansen, acting Regional Forester for the U.S. Forest Service Northern Region, has recognized the efforts behind the development of the Integrated Restoration and Protection Strategy and has awarded the team one of the Regional Forester’s Honor Awards for Stewardship of National Forests and Grasslands. Team members include: Bruce Sims, Scott Spaulding, Eric Tomasik, Barry Bollenbacher, Mary Manning, Cathy Stewart, Steve Shelly, Ann Carlson, Lis Novak, Meredith Webster, Chip Fisher, Erin Nock, Beth Hahn, Linda Vance, Mellissa Hart, Ute Langner and Keith Reynolds.

The goal of the Integrated Restoration and Protection Strategy is to provide a consistent, transparent, and reproducible approach to identification and prioritization of restoration opportunities by watershed across the region, forests and grasslands and districts. The system helps provide decision-making support while setting the context for collaboration in an all-lands approach.

Not only does IRPS help federal land management efforts, it also helps inform assessments done by state governments as well as other collaborative efforts, and can be used to integrate national fire, wildlife and clean water initiatives. This system is also the region's platform for assessing the region's climate change vulnerability and a basis for the developing a climate change adaptation strategy.

The Honor Award Stewardship of National Forests and Grasslands was among five awards recently given by Christiansen. The Northern Region has established a series of special awards to recognize exceptional performance or outstanding contributions and accomplishments to improve the quality and efficiency of Forest Service administrative and resource programs.



Victoria Christiansen and other members of the Regional Leadership Council recognize Integrated Restoration and Protection Strategy team members: Bruce Sims, Scott Spaulding, Eric Tomasik, Barry Bollenbacher, Mary Manning, Cathy Stewart, Steve Shelly, Ann Carlson, Lis Novak, Meredith Webster, Chip Fisher, Erin Nock, Beth Hahn, Linda Vance, Mellissa Hart, Ute Langner and Keith Reynolds.