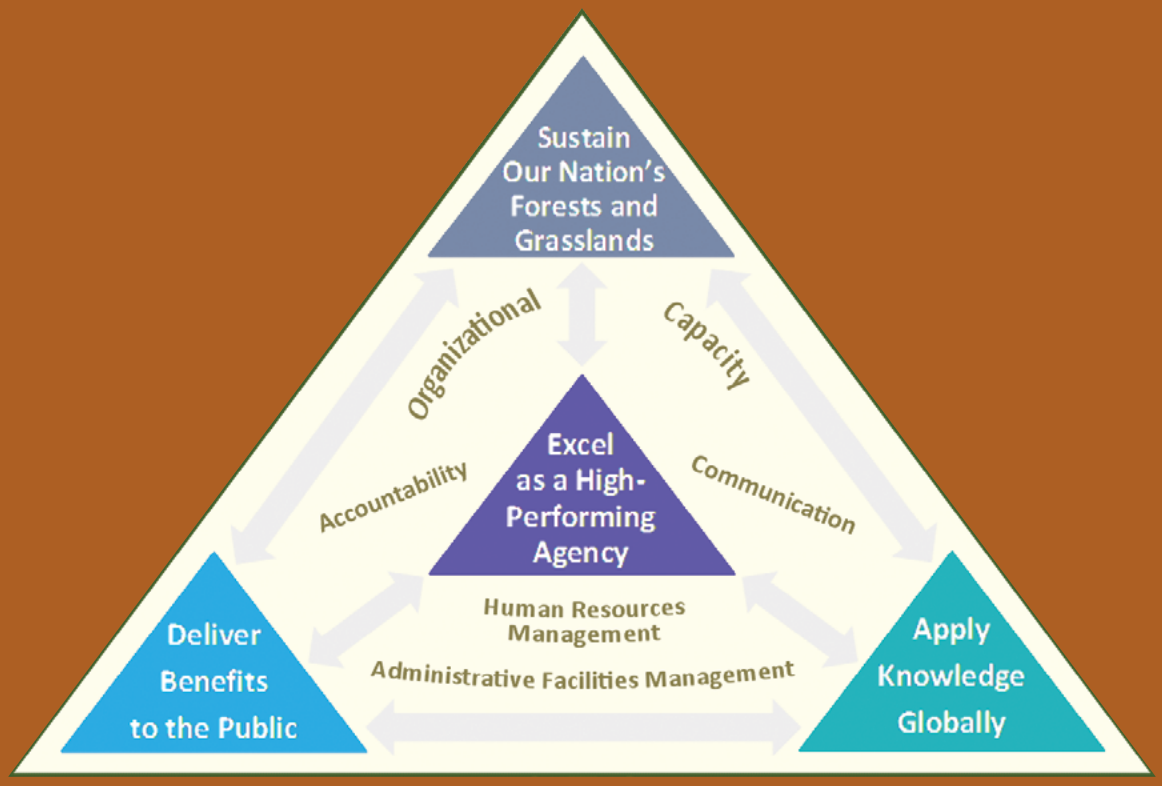
USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan: FY 2015–2020

Forest Service FS-1045 June 2015



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Message From the Chief

In his description of conservation as "the greatest good," Gifford Pinchot emphasized the need to achieve it "in the long run." America's national forests and grasslands are there for the benefit not of the few, but of all Americans. Our commitment at the Forest Service is to work with partners to achieve "the greatest good of the greatest number," both now and for generations to come.

Chief Tom Tidwell

"……the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run."

Gifford Pinchot

First Chief of the Forest Service, 1905

Our strategic plan embodies our focus on the future, providing the American people with a vision of our direction for the next 5 years. Our plan contains four outcome-oriented goals for the Forest Service.

1. Sustain Our Nation's Forests and Grasslands.
2. Deliver Benefits to the Public.
3. Apply Knowledge Globally.
4. Excel as a High-Performing Agency.

Although the plan covers only 5 years, we will strive to achieve these goals far beyond the planning period.

Each goal has several objectives. We expect to make progress toward reaching them during the next 5 years, and we will evaluate and report our performance each year.

Thomas L. Tidwell

Thomas L. Tidwell
Chief

FOREST SERVICE MISSION

The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and **future** generations

MOTTO

Caring for the Land and **serving** people

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Introduction to the Forest Service

The Forest Service is the Nation's foremost Federal forestry organization, providing leadership in the management, protection, use, research, and stewardship of natural and cultural resources on our country's vast forests and grasslands. Our organization functions within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), propelled by a dedicated workforce of permanent and temporary seasonal employees that exceeds 40,000 employees during the peak summer work season. The Forest Service was established in 1905 to sustainably manage our national forests and promote conservation across the land. We in the Forest Service are committed to retaining forests and grasslands for present and future generations.

- We manage a system of 154 national forests and 20 national grasslands for the public good that is nearly twice the size of California—193 million acres in 43 States, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. These lands include specially designated wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, national monuments, research and experimental areas, and other unique natural and cultural treasures.
- We operate a network of research units, laboratories, and experimental forests and rangelands to conduct leading-edge research on all aspects of forestry, rangeland management, biological and physical sciences, socioeconomics, forest uses, and more.
- We help communities; State, local, and tribal governments; forest industries; and private forest landowners improve conditions in both urban and rural areas.
- We operate Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers to educate and train America's youth.
- We help other nations and international groups manage and conserve the world's forest resources.

The public often initially experiences the Forest Service by participating in recreational opportunities available on publicly managed national forests and grasslands, where recreation use exceeds 160 million visits annually. On our national forests and grasslands, picnicking, camping, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, scenic driving, horseback riding, visiting cultural resource sites, and many other recreational opportunities are available. Visitors may go downhill skiing at 122 ski areas, hiking on more than 157,000 miles of available trails, and canoeing and rafting on 119 wild and scenic rivers. Outdoor recreation participation provides physically challenging exercise, development of lifelong skills, and a connection to the wonders of nature.

We provide the public with much more than great outdoor recreation opportunities. Our forest fire suppression capability helps protect human lives, natural resources, and communities. Public and private forest land together provide substantial freshwater flows to the Nation, and millions of Americans rely on drinking water that originates on our national forests. Forest Service land management, combined with private landowner efforts, supports clean, plentiful drinking water in America.

A variety of benefits are derived from implementing new landscape-scale management approaches and applying our understanding of how the public wants to use forests and grasslands. From improving spectator and participant safety in America's baseball pastime by researching the problem of shattering maple wood baseball bats, to developing advanced wood materials

used in home construction, to using recyclable peel-and-stick postage stamps, Forest Service research products touch our lives daily. When insect and disease infestations threaten tree species, the Forest Service is a key partner in preventing, suppressing, and controlling outbreaks. Our national forests and grasslands provide opportunities for livestock grazing, minerals and energy production, wood products, communication and energy transmission corridors, mushroom picking, and more.

These few examples illustrate the importance of the Forest Service to our Nation, now and in the future. Successfully achieving results desired by the public requires collaboration with a wide range of partners to complement our own efforts. Working with universities; State, local, and tribal governments; other Federal agencies; nonprofit organizations; the private sector; private landowners; and many others interested in land stewardship helps us maintain the sustainability of our forests and grasslands while providing a wide variety of societal needs.

Key laws governing the Forest Service's mission, programs, and activities include the following:

- Organic Administration Act of 1897.
- Clarke-McNary Act of 1924.
- Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960.
- The Wilderness Act of 1964.
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.
- Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) of 1974, as amended.
- National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976.
- Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978, as amended.
- Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978.
- International Forestry Cooperation Act of 1990.
- Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.

Strategic Plan **Purpose**

The Forest Service is accountable for sustaining the Nation's forest and grassland resources on behalf of the American people. To make our efforts transparent to the people we serve, we regularly develop, publish, and implement a 5-year strategic plan designed to guide our efforts. We are accountable for making progress on the goals and objectives set forth in this plan, in accordance with our statutory authorities, regulations, and mission.

USDA Core Values

The USDA's strategic plan for fiscal years (FYs) 2014–2018 identifies the Department's core values. As part of USDA, the Forest Service embraces the same values, thereby contributing to the success of the Department as a whole.

The success of USDA depends on—

Transparency. Making the Department's management processes more open so that the public can learn how USDA supports Americans every day in every way.

Participation. Providing opportunities for USDA constituents to shape and improve services provided by the Department.

Collaboration. Working cooperatively at all governmental levels domestically and internationally on policy matters affecting a broad audience.

Accountability. Ensuring that the performance of all employees is measured against the achievement of the Department's strategic goals.

Customer Focus. Serving USDA's constituents by delivering programs that address their diverse needs.

Professionalism. Building and maintaining a highly skilled, diverse, and compassionate workforce.

Results Orientation. Measuring performance and making management decisions to direct resources to where they are used most effectively.

FY 2015–2020 Goals and Objectives SUMMARY

STRATEGIC GOAL

Sustain Our Nation's Forests and Grasslands

Strategic Objective A. Foster resilient, adaptive ecosystems to mitigate climate change

Strategic Objective B. Mitigate wildfire risk

Strategic Objective C. Conserve open space

STRATEGIC GOAL

Deliver Benefits to the Public

Strategic Objective D. Provide abundant clean water

Strategic Objective E. Strengthen communities

Strategic Objective F. Connect people to the outdoors

STRATEGIC GOAL

Apply Knowledge Globally

Strategic Objective G. Advance knowledge

Strategic Objective H. Transfer technology and applications

Strategic Objective I. Exchange natural resource expertise

MANAGEMENT GOAL

Excel as a High-Performing Agency

Management Objective A. Recruit a diverse workforce

Management Objective B. Promote an inclusive culture

Management Objective C. Attract and retain top employees

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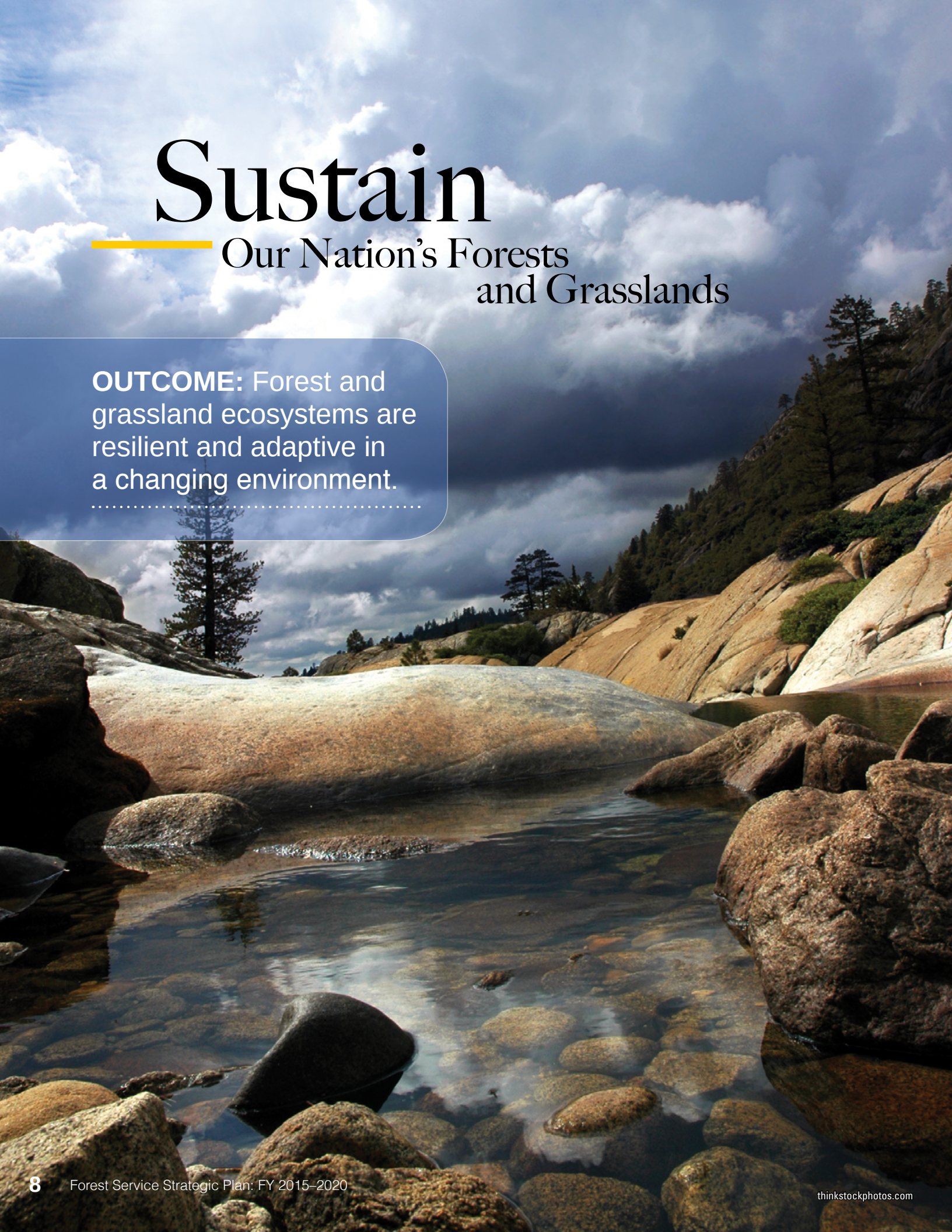

Sustain

Our Nation's Forests and Grasslands

OUTCOME: Forest and grassland ecosystems are resilient and adaptive in a changing environment.

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The Nation's vast forests and grasslands are essential to the ecological, physical, biological, economic, cultural, and social well-being of our country. Forested land alone comprises nearly one-third of the total land area of the United States—the single largest classification of land cover in the country. More than 56 percent of the total forested area is in private ownership. The Forest Service manages about one-fifth of the Nation's forested area and nearly 10 percent of the Nation's rangelands in a system of public lands called the national forests and grasslands. Through direct natural resource management, the pursuit and exchange of new knowledge, and partnerships with State and private landowners, the Forest Service has the capability to help support sustainable stewardship of much of America's forests and grasslands.

The relative stability of the Nation's forests and grasslands can obscure the environmental and land use changes that have occurred over time. Impacts from severe wildfires, insects and diseases, invasive species, human influences, climate change, extreme weather, and other visible disturbances have raised public awareness about the environment. These impacts, along with changing human demands, perpetually challenge our ability at the Forest Service to ensure that ecosystems are healthy, resilient, and, thus, more adaptable to changing conditions or that they can be restored to a healthy state.

As forests and grasslands continue to change, so does our understanding at the Forest Service about complex ecological processes and the effects of our management actions on natural resources. We constantly collect new information and acquire new knowledge through scientific inquiry and through our experience in managing natural resources. When we apply this knowledge, our land management practices become more effective, helping to make ecosystems more resilient. Long-term conservation across land ownership boundaries, through collaborative partnerships, and via knowledge transfer can enhance the natural functions of the land, such as producing cleaner water. It can also contribute to sustainability—the ability of forests and grasslands to produce goods and services that people want and need, both now and in the future. Our commitment to long-term sustainability will help maintain healthy, resilient, and productive forests and grasslands for future generations.

Strategic Objective A.

Foster resilient, adaptive ecosystems to mitigate climate change

Healthy ecosystems have the capacity for renewal, for recovery from a wide range of disturbances, and for retention of ecological resilience while meeting current and future needs. As land managers working on behalf of the American people, the Forest Service will work to restore impaired natural functions of forest and grassland ecosystems, such as filtering and purifying the water that goes into streams. We will improve the ability of forests and grasslands to remain healthy and resilient, despite stresses and disturbances such as drought and wildfire.

Many land areas are particularly susceptible to insects, disease, and wildfire. Climate change is exacerbating these challenges. Such areas might need more land management attention to address altered ecological conditions. Coordinated inventory, monitoring, and assessments support our prioritization of the areas of greatest concern and need for investment. Forest Service managers use the best available science and information to understand and respond to integrated ecological, social, cultural, and economic dynamics.

Our investment in restoration work and managing the land will help ensure that forests and grasslands continue to deliver values, uses, products, and services that people want and need, such as clean air and water; high-quality recreation settings and opportunities; scenic character; forest products; cultural sites; and a full suite of habitats for plant, aquatic, and wildlife species (including threatened and endangered species). Working with our partners, the Forest Service's ecological restoration projects will support the growth and development of healthy ecosystems and vibrant, resilient communities.

LONG-TERM RESULT

The Nation's forests and grasslands are in a healthy ecological condition.

Means and Strategies

- Integrate our work to achieve restoration objectives:
  - Restore ecosystems that are naturally adapted to wildland fire and repair ecosystems that have been damaged by severe wildfire.
  - Use information from climate change vulnerability assessments to inform adaptive management strategies.
- Maintain resilient land and water conditions at the watershed level and restore deteriorated lands and waters (such as abandoned mine lands and areas of unmanaged recreation use needing rehabilitation).
- Collaborate with other Federal agencies, State agencies, private landowners, communities, and American Indian tribes to improve the health and resilience of the land.
- Develop and apply detection, prediction, prevention, mitigation, treatment, restoration, and climate adaptation methods, technologies, and strategies for addressing disturbances such as wildfire, human uses, invasive species, insects, extreme weather events (e.g., storms), and changing climatic conditions.
- Coordinate inventory, monitoring, and assessment activities across all lands to improve our adaptive management of natural resources.

Strategic Objective B.

Mitigate wildfire risk

Wildland fire plays a natural and beneficial role in many forest types. Fire can also be a tool to help meet desirable outcomes for healthy forest and grassland ecosystems and to help us restore, maintain, and protect healthy forests and grasslands. Wildfires, however, can threaten public safety, property, and natural resources, especially in areas where developed lands intermix with rural forests, known as the wildland-urban interface. When a response to wildfire is necessary, the Forest Service will work to control fires in a coordinated manner that is safe, efficient, and cost effective in order to retain healthy, resilient forests and grasslands while bolstering thriving communities.

Our fire managers use science-based software to help them assess fire risk. Using the latest tools, we decide when and where to suppress a fire and when and where to use fire to achieve our objectives for long-term ecosystem health and resilience. Working with a range of partners, including other Federal agencies and State and local governments, we have developed a long-term fire management strategy with three main components: (1) restoring fire-adapted ecosystems, (2) helping communities become safer when threatened by wildfire, and (3) responding appropriately to wildfire.

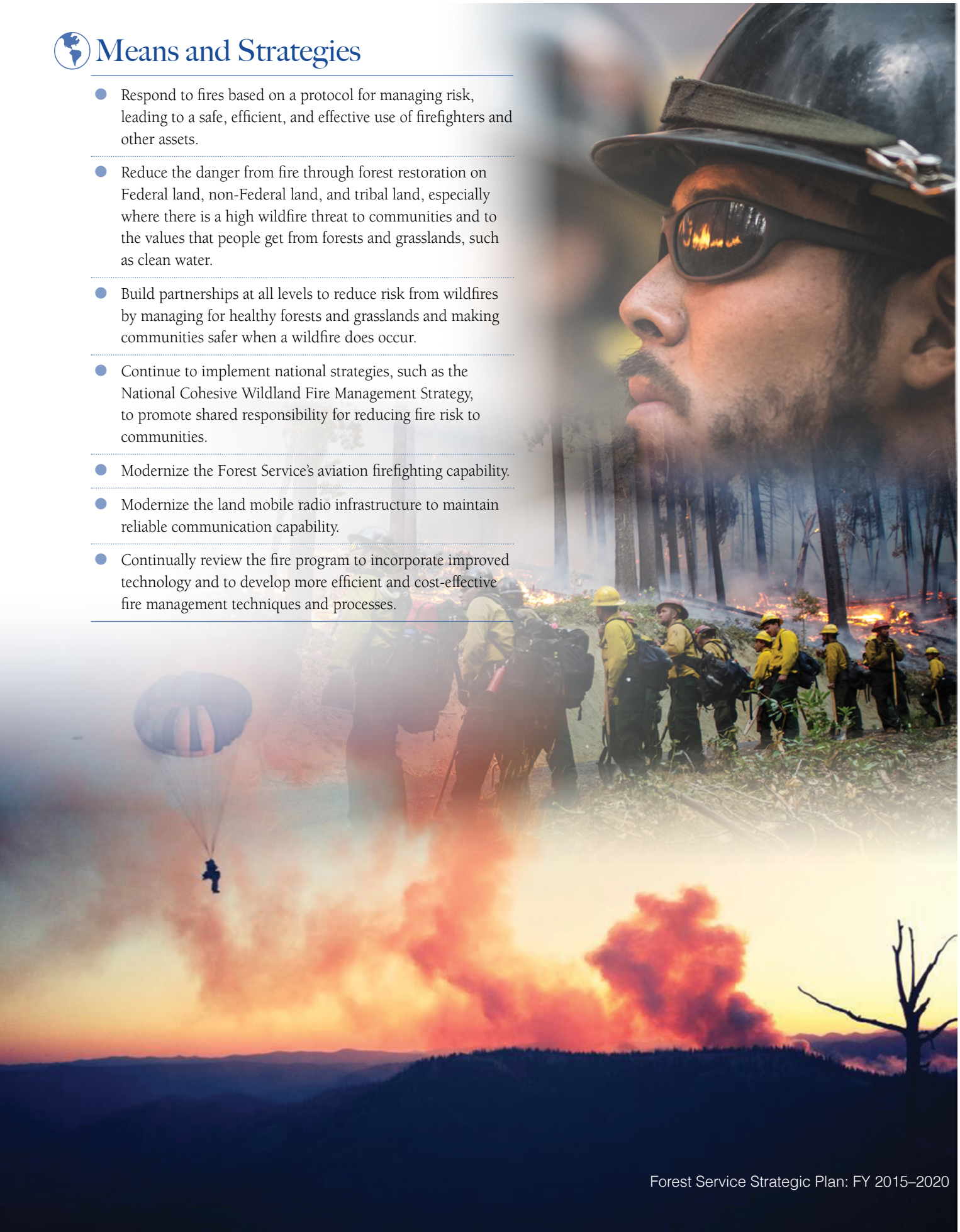
We will make sure that the actions we take, whether to use fire or control fire, are socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable. Our priority is to reduce the risk from wildfire to communities and natural resources. When fuels build up, especially in the wildland-urban interface—heavy vegetation, for example, or tangles of fallen trees and branches—the risk of a wildfire rises. We will work with partners to evaluate the risk and reduce it by removing the most hazardous fuels. We will also focus on reducing the number of human-caused wildfires by helping people learn ways to prevent them. By applying the best available science and land management and by working closely with landowners and other partners, we will restore the natural role of fire while helping at-risk communities adapt to wildfire hazards.

LONG-TERM RESULT

The Nation's forests, grasslands, and adjacent communities and property are resilient to the impacts from wildfire.

Means and Strategies

- Respond to fires based on a protocol for managing risk, leading to a safe, efficient, and effective use of firefighters and other assets.
- Reduce the danger from fire through forest restoration on Federal land, non-Federal land, and tribal land, especially where there is a high wildfire threat to communities and to the values that people get from forests and grasslands, such as clean water.
- Build partnerships at all levels to reduce risk from wildfires by managing for healthy forests and grasslands and making communities safer when a wildfire does occur.
- Continue to implement national strategies, such as the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, to promote shared responsibility for reducing fire risk to communities.
- Modernize the Forest Service's aviation firefighting capability.
- Modernize the land mobile radio infrastructure to maintain reliable communication capability.
- Continually review the fire program to incorporate improved technology and to develop more efficient and cost-effective fire management techniques and processes.



Strategic Objective C.

Conserve open space

Open space or "green spaces" provide many environmental, social, and economic benefits to both rural and urban communities. For example, many of our country's working farms and ranches provide open space opportunities while creating jobs and contributing to economic vitality. Undeveloped lands also provide surrounding communities with clean water, forest products, forage, aesthetic beauty, and recreational settings. People also benefit from the fish and wildlife habitat and soil protection and flood control that open space provides. In addition, open space can elevate home values, boost tourism, and provide different outdoor opportunities to maintain healthy lifestyles.

LONG-TERM RESULT

Crucial open space is protected from conversion to developed uses through strategic partnerships and investments.

Such lands located in close proximity to our communities may be particularly vulnerable to conversion to other uses. Focusing our attention on creating landowner incentives to retain vital open space will help us continue to enjoy all the associated benefits these lands provide.

The Forest Service will continue to work in partnership with landowners, governmental agencies, communities, and other organizations to promote voluntary landscape-scale conservation in both urban and rural landscapes. Management plans, such as urban forest plans and landscape-scale planning, help address the impacts of new and existing developments on open space. By supporting community-planning activities, we will work to maintain open space and sustain tourism, recreation, scenic character, and other benefits open space supports.

Means and Strategies

- Develop collaborative, voluntary strategies with communities to jointly identify and invest in conservation easements, public land acquisitions, shared stewardship, and other means of protecting the most environmentally and socially important lands.
- Develop land management options and provide technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, communities, State forestry agencies, American Indian tribes, and other partners who support sound land stewardship and open space conservation.
- Encourage community planning for sustainable tourism and recreation, providing private landowners with economic incentives to maintain open space.
- Use tools such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and the Scenery Management System to help identify, prioritize, protect, and enhance open spaces.
- Promote development based on long-term planning and strategic conservation that meets community needs, is sensitive to the environment, and preserves and restores forested landscapes and urban tree cover.
- Monitor land use change and evaluate the relationship people have with public lands and other ownerships across the rural-urban continuum.

Deliver

Benefits to the Public

OUTCOME: Social, economic, and environmental benefits flow from forest and grassland resources.

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America's forests and grasslands play pivotal roles in providing a wide range of benefits to the American people. Land management that is sustainable enables forests and grasslands to continue producing goods and services to meet multiple public demands, thereby contributing to human health, prosperity, and quality of life for local communities and for the Nation as a whole. Managing complex and potentially competing demands and land uses is a formidable challenge. People want many of the same benefits from forests and grasslands and working collaboratively can successfully meet any challenge.

Recognizing the importance of forest stewardship, our country set aside the national forest reserves in 1897 to "improve and protect the forest within the boundaries, or for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber." In 1960, the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act declared that the national forests should be managed "for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes." The Forest Service's research and development, technical assistance, technology transfer, and other services support natural resource management on the national forests, national grasslands, and on other lands. At the Forest Service, we work with other Federal agencies, State agencies, American Indian tribes, communities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and private landowners to sustain forests and grasslands across ownerships nationwide.

The people we serve benefit from healthy, resilient forests and grasslands in various ways. These lands provide recreational settings and opportunities; cultural and heritage resources; scenery; resources such as clean air and water, minerals, fish, wildlife, livestock forage, and firewood; various sources of renewable and nonrenewable energy; corridors for communication and energy transmission; and many other ecosystem services and benefits. The benefits generate billions of dollars contributed to the national economy, underpinning local economies in many rural areas and enhancing the quality of life and sense of place for people in many communities.

Strategic Objective D.

Provide abundant clean water

More than half of America's freshwater flows from public and private forest land, and about 60 million Americans rely on drinking water that originates on the national forests and grasslands. Healthy forests provide a host of watershed benefits, such as purifying water, sustaining surface water and ground water flow, maintaining fish and wildlife habitat, controlling erosion, and stabilizing streambanks. Urban and community trees are important for stormwater management and multiple other values to people in urban areas.

At the Forest Service, we will continue working to restore degraded and at-risk watersheds while maintaining or improving the condition of those in good or better condition. We will make strategic investments in projects and conservation practices designed to enhance conditions across entire landscapes and watersheds. By improving watershed conditions, we will help sustain the ecosystems that deliver so many benefits and values to the American people.

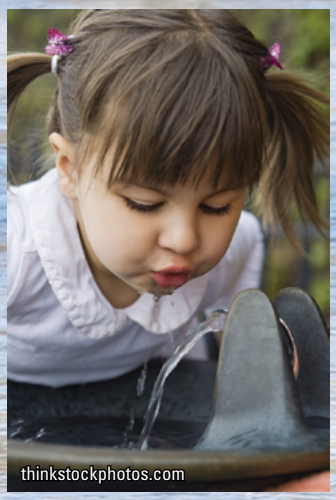
Protecting water resources by sustaining healthy, resilient forests and grasslands is generally more cost effective than investing in new or improved infrastructure, such as water purification plants and flood-control structures. The Forest Service will lead in managing the forests' and grasslands' contribution to delivering plenty of pure, clean water for people to enjoy.

LONG-TERM RESULT

Watersheds on our Nation's forests and grasslands are in good condition, functioning as they should.

Means and Strategies

- Conserve, maintain, and restore watersheds, ecosystems, and the services they provide to people.
- Use the Forest Service's Watershed Condition Framework to classify watershed conditions, identify restoration priorities, and monitor program accomplishments.
- Maintain water of sufficient quantity and quality to sustain aquatic life and support terrestrial habitats, domestic uses, recreation opportunities, and scenic character.
- Deliver the knowledge, tools, and technologies to restore, sustain, and enhance watersheds in a changing future.
- Facilitate partnerships that foster water conservation and citizen stewardship.
- Illustrate the importance of the link between forests and faucets from both surface and groundwater sources through educational programs.



Strategic Objective E.

Strengthen Communities

Our rural forests and grasslands and our urban trees strengthen communities by providing ecological, economic, and social benefits. Many benefits come from large natural areas that are connected as a functioning whole, such as a watershed. These areas are often in multiple landownerships. Working with State and local partners across ownership boundaries, we will focus on sustaining the benefits that people receive from these natural areas—maintaining local cultures and traditions, connecting people to the land, and contributing to a higher quality of life.

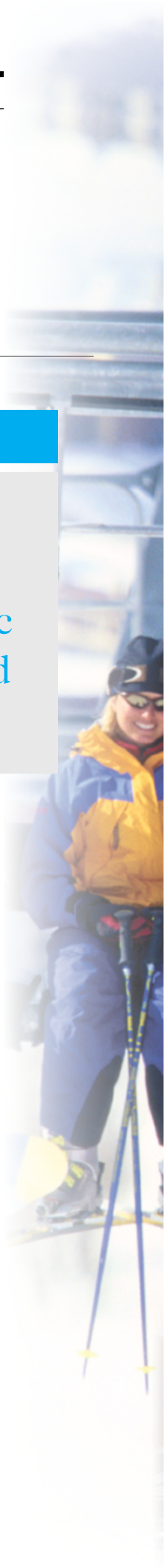
At the Forest Service, we will work through partnerships across the Nation, allowing for communication and collaboration across jurisdictional and cultural boundaries. Our ethic of working together reinforces community bonds, strengthening our Nation's social fabric and fostering community prosperity. Collaboration and community involvement are keys to accomplishing our work; our management of the national forests and grasslands is based on strong relationships between our local offices and the communities we live in—the neighbors who live next door.

Delivery of forest-related goods and services is integral to our mission at the Forest Service, stimulating tangible economic benefits to rural communities, such as private-sector investment and employment opportunities. The economic activity we support is directly attributable to the natural resource investments we make and the use of national forest and grassland resources that result in marketable products associated with outdoor recreation, hunting, fishing, timber production, livestock grazing, mineral production, land stewardship, and other activities. An extensive transportation infrastructure underpins most activities. In FY 2011, for example, all Forest Service activities combined contributed to nearly 450,000 jobs nationwide, with most of these jobs providing a tremendous benefit to rural communities located near the national forests and grasslands. Outdoor recreation alone, the largest contributor, supported more than 205,000 jobs and added more than $13.6 billion to the Nation's gross domestic product. In addition, other activities such as subsistence hunting and fishing provide the primary food source for some rural residents.

LONG-TERM RESULT

Forest Service programs and activities contribute substantial socioeconomic benefits to the Nation and local communities.

As America's urban areas continue to grow, access to the natural environment and nature-based activities is becoming increasingly important to a community's overall health and well-being. Access to natural areas is particularly beneficial for youth, especially in many urban areas, where opportunities for outdoor play in natural settings may be limited. The Forest Service is dedicated to engaging young people in discussions about natural and cultural resources and encouraging them to help us care for the land. Engaging youth in our work will strengthen our communities and enable more Americans to explore and appreciate America's great outdoors, growing the future stewards of the Nation's lands.



Wildfire poses increasing risks for growing rural communities near forest land. More than 70,000 communities are at risk from wildfire. The Forest Service works through cross-jurisdictional partnerships to help communities become safer. From 2008 through 2013, our joint efforts more than doubled the number of designated Firewise communities able to survive a wildfire without outside intervention. By fire adapting their communities, homeowners and landowners alike can reduce fire risks and work toward healthier landscapes and stronger communities.

Means and Strategies

- Promote and develop markets for sustainably grown wood, particularly for low-value timber and for use of wood as a "green" building material.
- Collaborate with and engage communities (including the public, our partners, American Indian tribes, and other Federal agencies) in making decisions about managing the national forests and grasslands.
- Continue to restore high-priority landscapes, taking social, economic, and ecological factors into account.
- Develop sustainable recreation settings and opportunities along with programs that complement national, State, and community tourism strategies.
- Use stewardship contracting authority when appropriate to achieve integrated natural resource management goals, including ecological restoration and production of wood products.
- Fully use programs and authorities, including the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps and Job Corps programs, for youth and veteran employment to deliver mission work, promote conservation values, and train the future workforce.
- Create jobs and opportunities for local communities to sustainably produce and use wood products and provide contracting opportunities in communities for small businesses.

Strategic Objective F.

Connect people to the outdoors

Forests and grasslands provide many opportunities for people to connect with the outdoors in both rural and urban settings, enhancing our quality of life. These lands offer a place to escape from daily routines and experience the serenity of nature, the mystery of wild places, the history of past cultures, and the excitement of engaging in the greatest variety of outdoor activities. The Forest Service manages 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands, comprising 30 percent of all Federal lands and including millions of acres of designated wilderness and thousands of miles of wild and scenic rivers. Most of this land is open for recreational pursuits; we receive more than 160 million recreation visits annually. More than 80 percent of Americans live in urban areas, and they have many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors on local open space and nearby national forests. Urban Americans benefit from the 100 million acres of urban forests, including urban parks, neighborhoods with shade trees, landscaped boulevards, public gardens, and more.

People of all ages and physical abilities visiting natural settings can enjoy beautiful scenery, engage in physical activities, socialize with friends and family, escape the sights and sounds of civilization, and learn about natural and cultural environments. The Forest Service offers information and interpretive programs to help individuals discover, understand, appreciate, and connect with the natural and cultural resources around us and to tell them how we manage and protect these resources for present and future generations. Outdoor opportunities and experiences promote physical, mental, and spiritual health; enhance community identity and sense of place; help bond family and friends; and foster citizen stewardship of the Nation's forests and grasslands. In many instances, lifelong conservation values develop from outdoor recreation experiences.

As a prominent portal through which the public interacts with the agency, outdoor recreation plays a

LONG-TERM RESULT

Our Nation's citizens are engaged with their natural and cultural heritage.

significant role in serving the public. We are broadening the scope of our recreational services to include more Americans, giving a wider range of access to the national forests and grasslands. We are making recreational facilities on the national forests and grasslands more accessible to everyone, including the estimated 57 million Americans with disabilities. Nationwide, we have more than 23,000 accessible recreational sites, such as campsites and picnic areas, and 8,000 accessible recreation buildings. By making our facilities more accessible, we are also providing additional recreation opportunities for senior citizens, large family groups, and families with infant strollers or young children. We are committed to inclusive participation in recreation opportunities for all people, regardless of age or ability.

Many forests and grasslands provide sustenance to American Indians, protect tribal spiritual values, and help perpetuate traditional uses and benefits for tribes and other cultures. Communities can share in the challenge of sustaining recreation settings and opportunities on public, private, and tribal lands while also conserving cherished natural and cultural resources. As more people connect to the outdoors, the balance between recreational opportunities and other management objectives may require greater attention. At the Forest Service, we will remain dedicated to providing sustainable recreation opportunities and high-quality recreation experiences while minimizing the impacts of visitor use on the landscape.

Means and Strategies

- Maintain recreational settings, hiking trails, and other sustainable recreational opportunities on the national forests and grasslands for public use.
- Improve recreation facility accessibility.
- Engage partners and educators in developing, distributing, and using high-quality conservation education programs and materials so that people of different ages and abilities can understand and appreciate our country's natural and cultural resources and the need to manage them for present and future generations.
- Build stronger relationships with American Indian tribes through collaborative efforts focused on complementary management needs and information sharing.
- Support local urban and community forestry initiatives that reach people living, working, and visiting our country's urban areas.
- Help meet public needs and expectations for outdoor recreation on the national forests and grasslands through public and private partnerships.
- Improve our capacity to engage volunteers through enhanced partnerships and service organizations.
- Improve our communication of outdoor recreation information about the national forests and grasslands on the Internet, social media, and other outlets to reach more people, serve them better, and receive customer feedback.
- Use the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps programs to provide outdoor experiences for young people and returning veterans to build conservation ethics and future stewards of the Nation's public lands legacy.

Apply Knowledge Globally

OUTCOME: Natural resource decisionmaking is improved through the use of reliable information and applications.

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Through intellectual inquiry and knowledge transfer, the Forest Service provides land managers and others with better information, applications, and tools for improved resource management and decisionmaking. By advancing our fundamental understanding of forests and grasslands, we can make better informed decisions and better achieve our goals. To increase our understanding of forests and grasslands, we are constantly improving our knowledge of complex environmental processes, biological and physical conditions, resource uses, human and social dimensions, the economic value of the resources we manage, and the interconnections among all these elements. From on-the-ground natural resource management to long-term strategic policy development, all our efforts to sustain forests and grasslands far into the future depend on new knowledge, information, and applications.

The Forest Service has a long record of land management success, even though we work in complex and changing environments. We attribute our success in part to our world-class expertise in research and development; our capacity to develop new technologies; our innovation in forest products; our ability to conduct resource assessments; and our vast collection of geospatial information, inventory data, and monitoring information. Today, knowledge from many disciplines and issues is interconnected, both within and outside the Forest Service. To continue our advancement, we foresee the need to improve knowledge-sharing globally across disciplines and jurisdictional boundaries.

The Forest Service is one of many forestry and natural resource organizations, interest groups, and knowledge centers across the United States and around the world. These entities include other government agencies, partners, collaborators, universities, the private sector, American Indian tribes, and international groups. To benefit from global knowledge, we continually interact—and share what we know—with partners worldwide. By exchanging scientific results, natural resource assessments, management trends, innovations, and best practices across natural resource management disciplines and jurisdictional boundaries, we will gain the information we need to sustain and improve the Nation's forests and grasslands. The transfer of knowledge, technology, and applications will help the global natural resource community make better management decisions in our collective effort to care for all lands and deliver sustainable benefits to people.

Strategic Objective G.

Advance knowledge

The Forest Service conducts highly integrated research at various geographic scales to address issues of environmental and social concern. Basic information gathered through agency programs, such as Forest Inventory and Analysis, Forest Health Monitoring, and our National Forest System land management planning and monitoring work, enables us to provide data, reports, maps, and consultation services to natural resource managers, landowners, policymakers, researchers, analysts, and other interested parties. Our products and services provide for timely analyses of scientifically sound information and lead to better informed management decisions.

Although uncertainty is inherent in our work, we can improve our resource management decisions and outcomes by using the best available information. Our cutting-edge research, monitoring, and assessment activities will continue to enable us to reduce uncertainty by interpreting emerging results and translating them into practical knowledge. As land managers, policymakers, and other users incorporate the scientific discoveries and new knowledge into their decision frameworks, we can expect more effective operational guidelines, forest and grassland management, land management plans, natural resource policymaking, and other constructive improvements.

At all levels of the Forest Service and in every program area, we will strive to advance our knowledge of natural and cultural resources. From data-collection projects that span the Nation to inventory, monitoring, and analysis of individual watersheds, we will communicate new knowledge and make it available and accessible. By sharing information and learning from our partners, we will continue to engage in a global conversation about forest and grassland conservation and management.

LONG-TERM RESULT

Forest Service knowledge-based products and services improve global natural resource stewardship.

Means and Strategies

- Regularly review research and development needs and set priorities.
- Continue information collection and sharing through the Forest Inventory and Analysis program and implementation of the national inventory, monitoring, and assessment strategy.
- Identify priority resource management requirements and core social, economic, and ecological information needs for the agency.
- Find effective ways of communicating resource data and new knowledge and making it widely available, using social media, publications, the Internet, and other tools that have a global reach for disseminating information.
- Identify and capitalize on opportunities to leverage resources across organizational and geographic boundaries to address shared information and technology needs with partners and stakeholders.
- Establish effective, transparent, and collaborative governing processes for agency inventory, monitoring, assessment, and information management activities.

Strategic Objective H.

Transfer technology and applications

Developing effective technologies and applications can help the Forest Service find solutions to vexing problems we face in managing forests and grasslands. By sharing our discoveries with our partners, we will continue to help others across the Nation and around the world to manage forests sustainably.

The Forest Service operates many centers of excellence that develop tools for land managers. The centers include research and development stations, geospatial and remote-sensing centers, a laboratory specifically devoted to forest product development, a multiagency agroforestry center, and technology and development centers. These centers work cooperatively with Federal and State agencies, universities, private firms, and independent research groups to make equipment, information, analysis tools, concepts, and ideas available to fulfill important needs. The centers face a common challenge: distributing their applications widely enough to realize their potential. Nevertheless, they make it possible for Federal and State agencies and other partners to better manage millions of acres of forests and grasslands.

New technology, tools, and expertise will help us identify not only new management options and their impacts but also address threats such as fire, insects, disease, and other forest disturbances, as well as the human influences that shape them. Our understanding of natural processes and socioeconomic dimensions influencing past and present conditions can help us model future conditions and guide adaptive management strategies to achieve desired results. We will help our partners use new technologies and tools, enhancing the use and value of our Nation's natural and cultural resources.

LONG-TERM RESULT

Technology and applications delivered to users meet expectations.

Means and Strategies

- Develop and use cost-effective methods for transferring scientific information, technologies, and applications.
- Develop tools for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of different management practices that may better achieve our management objectives.
- Develop options to ensure that agency decisionmakers acquire and apply the most appropriate scientific information, technologies, and applications.
- Implement effective communication plans to improve the distribution of technologies and applications that have been developed.

Strategic Objective I.

Exchange natural resource expertise

Experts outside the Forest Service develop vital information relevant to land and resource management. By combining their information with ours, the Forest Service generates new ideas, contributing to the global knowledge base. To maintain an engaging and cooperative environment, we are dedicated to sharing natural resource expertise, both within the Forest Service and with outside entities across the Nation and around the world. The exchange of natural and cultural resource expertise can benefit everyone, from managers in the field to national policymakers and external partners.

The Forest Service collaborates with a range of international organizations. Through international cooperation, we exchange innovative technologies, address cross-boundary challenges, and find new opportunities to hone our skills. International cooperation is necessary to conserve biodiversity and sustain the ecological, social, economic, and commercial viability of global forest resources.

Our expertise in both natural resource and disaster management uniquely positions the Forest Service to help global partners manage natural resource risks. Assistance we provide includes developing management and conservation strategies for vulnerable ecosystems and strengthening our partners' institutional capacity for adaptation and disaster management. Through our national and global leadership in dealing effectively with wildfires, international disasters, and other incidents, the Forest Service delivers many emergency response services to the American people and to the global community.

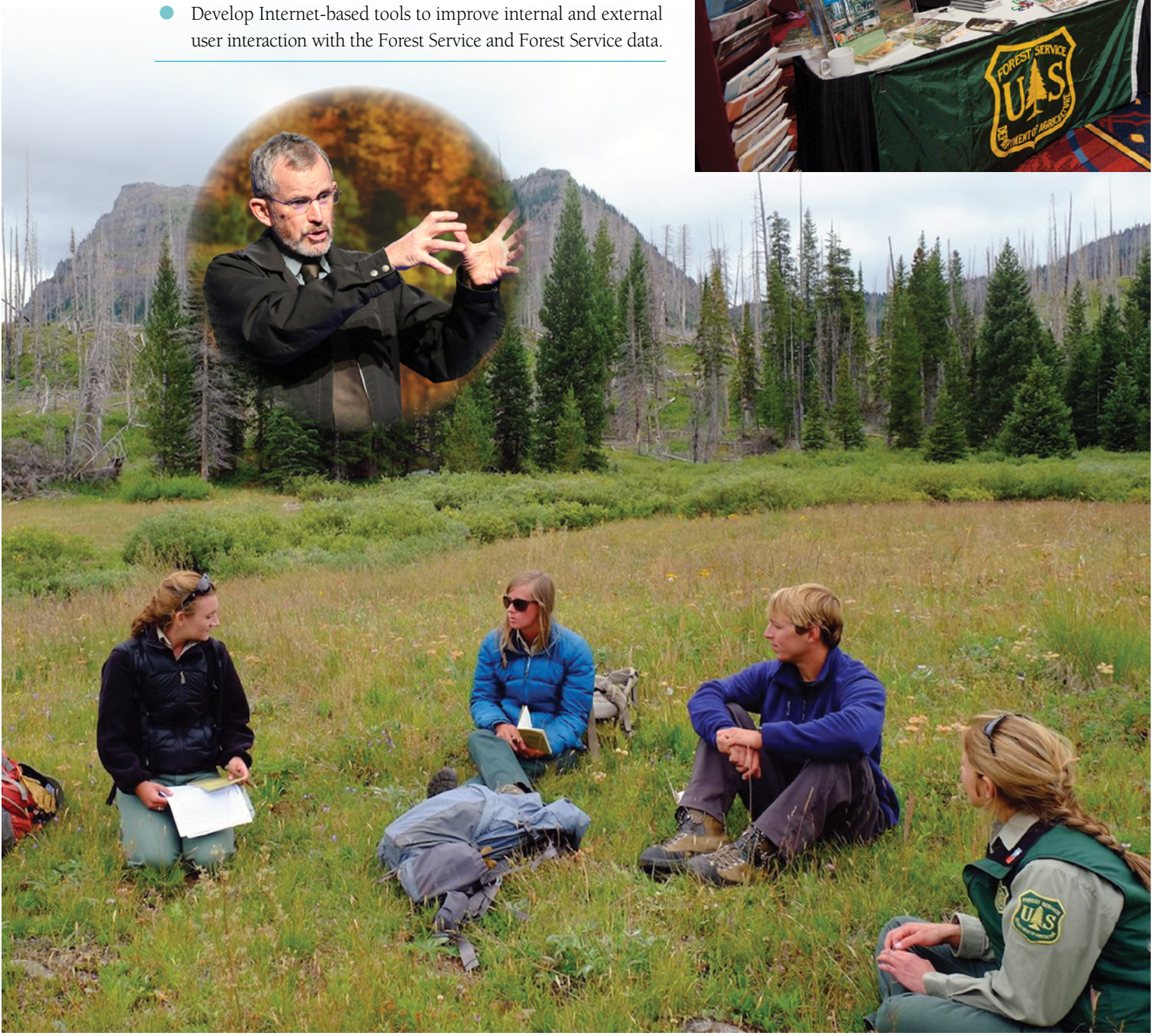
At the Forest Service, we will continue to work internally and with our external partners to share knowledge, technology, and tools across jurisdictional and cultural boundaries. Through collaboration and effective communication, land managers will help make forests and grasslands become more resilient to a changing climate, discover more effective tools for natural resource stewardship, and improve our understanding and integration of socioeconomic factors. Examples of other outcomes of collaboration and effective communication include managing projects across broad landscapes and improving collaboration with the public. By linking the skills of our field-based staff and policy experts with partners nationally and globally, we will address the most critical land and resource management issues and concerns across the Nation—and around the world.

LONG-TERM RESULT

Exchange of natural resource expertise within the agency and with external partners improves forest and grassland resource management in our Nation and in the world.

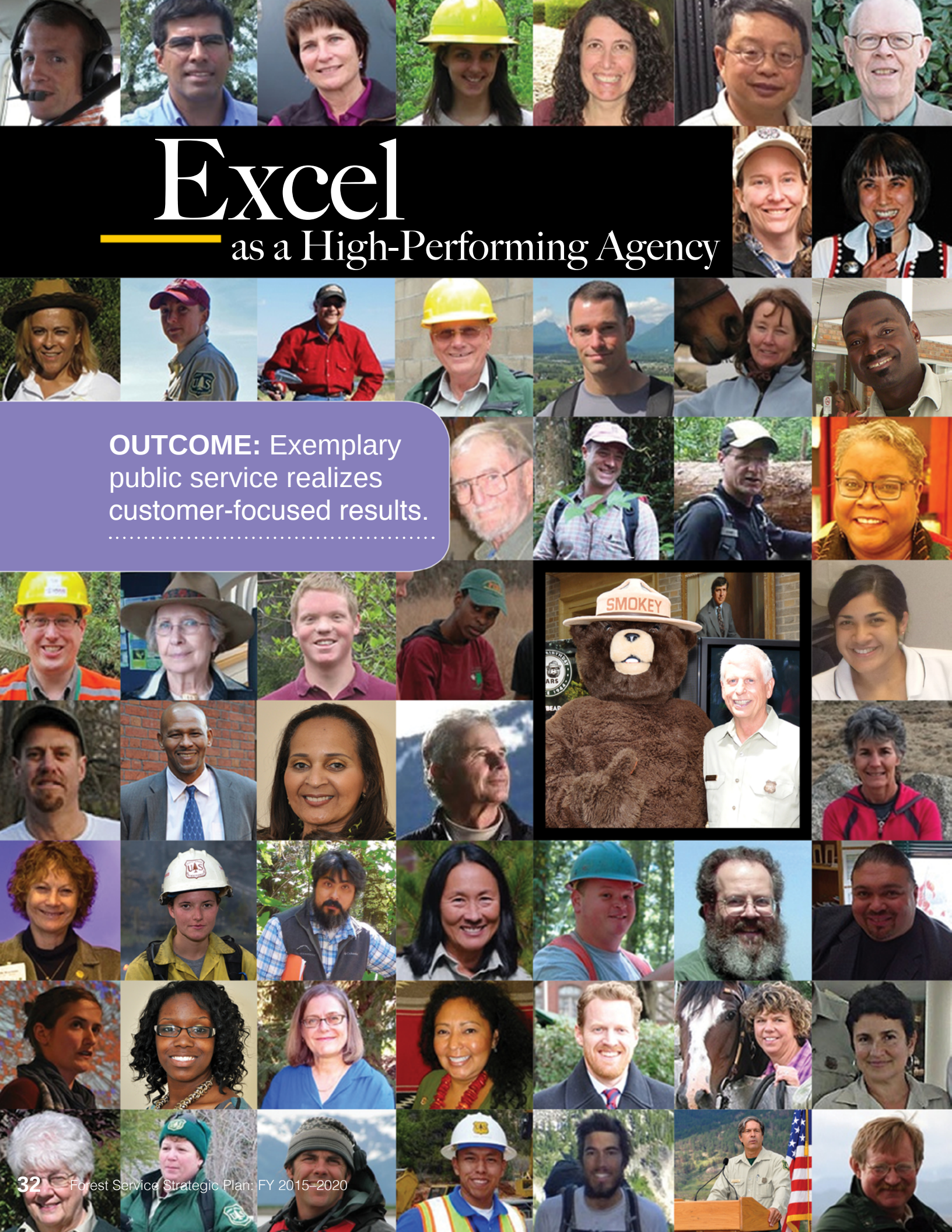
Means and Strategies

- Continue to expand information exchange within the Forest Service and externally.
- Develop collaborative tools to support internal and external exchange of information with governments at all levels, both in the United States and around the world.
- Support intra-agency personnel exchanges to provide researchers, technical specialists, managers, and other employees with alternative perspectives of the roles and challenges of different mission areas.
- Develop Internet-based tools to improve internal and external user interaction with the Forest Service and Forest Service data.



Excel
as a High-Performing Agency

OUTCOME: Exemplary public service realizes customer-focused results.



Service is implicit in the Forest Service's name and in our motto: "Caring for the land and serving people." Striving for outstanding public service is part of our organizational culture. We have traditionally attracted employees with genuine interests in natural resources and land management—and who are also dedicated to serving the American people.

To fulfill our mission, Forest Service leadership will communicate a clear vision and clear direction to all employees. As our country's demographics change, the needs and desires of our citizens change as well. By increasing the diversity in our workforce and promoting an inclusive organizational culture, we are better meeting the needs of the people we serve. The Forest Service is committed to creating a workplace environment that can attract and retain top employees while meeting the Nation's present and future needs.

The deep connection that our employees feel to our mission and conservation ethic motivates them to better serve our Nation. We are also dedicated to organizational efficiency and cost-effectiveness. We constantly seek better ways of doing business, such as teleconferencing to enhance communication in our geographically dispersed organization and using a virtual work environment to improve organizational performance and employee morale. Telework, for example, can reduce commuting time, costs, and energy use while decreasing office space needs. New workplace technologies and virtual tools will result in a workforce with a wider set of skills and new perspectives, bringing with it greater efficiency and more innovation.

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Management Objective A.

Recruit a diverse workforce

The Forest Service is striving to build a multicultural workforce. We want employees with a wide variety of skills and ideas—employees who are able to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse U.S. population. In accordance with this multicultural focus, we are fostering an environment of respect; we appreciate and value individual differences, drawing on them to help us fulfill our mission. By hiring individuals from diverse backgrounds—people of different ages, from different parts of the country, with different levels of training, and with different genders, ethnicities, and abilities—we will add to the vitality of our workforce. We are committed to hiring talented employees from a wide range of backgrounds and with a broad array of experiences.

To transform our organizational culture, we are focusing on seven critical areas: (1) leadership development, (2) employee development, (3) talent management, (4) recruitment and retention, (5) customer focus, (6) community outreach, and (7) process improvement. An agency culture that fosters diversity and encourages new perspectives will strengthen our ability to meet public expectations. The best teams are built from unique, smart, motivated individuals who work together. By joining together people with diverse perspectives, the Forest Service will find new solutions to complex management

LONG-TERM RESULT

The Forest Service workforce reflects U.S. demographic characteristics for race, gender, and national origin.

Means and Strategies

- Apply our agency workforce planning data to target specific positions for recruitment in trainee, career, and underrepresented categories.
- Use the Public Lands Corps and Pathways employment authorities to increase the placement rates of Forest Service Job Corps graduates within USDA and the U.S. Department of the Interior.
- Implement plans for leadership development, employee development, talent management, recruitment and retention, customer focus, community outreach, and process improvement.
- Seek employees with creativity, critical thinking skills, and technical skills.
- Capitalize on the retirement and attrition of employees to recruit a diverse workforce.

The Corps Network/Levi Novey

Management Objective B.

Promote an inclusive culture

In fulfilling our mission, the Forest Service strives to reflect the array of cultures, ideas, and perspectives of the American people. We promote safety, respect, and mutual acceptance; we expect our employees to treat each other and the people we serve with dignity and respect so that every employee has the opportunity to realize the highest levels of success and service.

The Forest Service's civil rights program is designed to ensure that every employee is treated fairly, preventing discrimination and safeguarding employees against discriminatory practices. We are committed to being a model employer and complying with all Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

LONG-TERM RESULT

Forest Service employees and the public are valued and respected for their diverse talents, ideas, backgrounds, and abilities.

requirements and with USDA's civil rights policy direction. We follow the Civil Rights Accountability Policy and Procedures (USDA regulation DR4300-010) direction, strengthening how we carry out our civil rights policies. We will continue to promptly address civil rights complaints.

By promoting an inclusive culture, the Forest Service is encouraging our workforce to learn, change, and grow over time; with a more flexible workforce, we will better serve the public.

Means and Strategies

- Equip supervisory employees with skills to create an equitable, respectful workplace.
- Provide tools, data, and training opportunities that increase our capability to monitor work environment quality indicators.
- Foster regular, meaningful conversations with the public to understand the needs and requirements of the many public entities and communities served.
- Encourage employees to bring forth dissatisfactions and grievances in a timely manner and receive prompt resolution.

Management Objective C.

Attract and retain top employees

At the Forest Service, we need skilled and dedicated scientists, professionals, technicians, and administrative personnel to fulfill our mission, with leaders in natural resource management at all organizational levels. Given the complexity of the management challenges we face, we need talented people. By attracting and retaining a new generation of leaders, we are positioning ourselves for the future.

To appeal to our future cadre of employees, we are working to recruit young people by making them aware of career opportunities within the Forest Service. For example, we are reaching out to students to inspire them to consider careers in conservation and natural and cultural resource management, and we are working hard to attract and retain other experienced candidates as well. Our effort to achieve a culture of diversity and inclusiveness for all people is helping to build a workplace environment that new employees will want to join.

We are developing our employees to their fullest potential by providing training and advancement opportunities they need, based on a workforce plan to ensure retention of talent. We will help develop employees through mentoring programs, student training programs, leadership development programs, training courses and conferences, and opportunities to experiment with new assignments, often in different locations of the country. By promoting leadership and professional development, we will continue to employ the highest quality workforce.

Professional satisfaction is important for workplace productivity. The 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey shows that we have substantial room for improvement, a key priority for our leadership. The survey results and future surveys will help us identify areas we need to work on and monitor our

LONG-TERM RESULT

Forest Service employee satisfaction continually improves toward the top 10th percentile among all Federal agencies.

progress. We will do everything we can to empower our employees to work together and with our partners to sustain our forests and grasslands.

Safety for employees and the people we serve is a high priority in the Forest Service. In accordance with our focus on safety, we are building a safety culture in which safety is paramount and unsafe conditions are promptly addressed. Another aspect of our safety culture is to learn important lessons from past experiences. Our efforts will also include transparency and straight talk in which employees can freely speak out about improving safe work practices, critical for an open channel of communication and employee retention.

Means and Strategies

- Improve the retention rate of permanent employees within 2 years of hiring.
  - Develop and implement an "onboarding" process to introduce and proactively mentor new employees in the agency.
  - Develop and implement an "exit" process for employees leaving the agency to learn how to increase the retention of employees.
- Match workload commitments with available resources to establish realistic goals and foster work/life balance.
- Encourage employee innovation and creativity.
- Continue our safety journey, instilling an organizational culture in which a safe work environment is vital.

Optimize
Organizational Capacity

OUTCOME: An efficient and effective business foundation helps the Forest Service fulfill its mission.

Crosscutting Responsibilities

The Forest Service's ability to fulfill its mission depends on having an optimal organizational capacity. We are committed to maintaining an effective and efficient business foundation that helps achieve mission results.

Four common business capabilities are necessary for effective agency operations: (1) accountability, (2) human resources management, (3) communication, and (4) administrative facilities management. All four capabilities operate at every level of the Forest Service, from remote field offices to the headquarters in Washington, DC, resulting in success that is a shared responsibility.

Most of our individual business functions require a centralized organization and staff to coordinate and manage the associated responsibilities. For functions in which we are more efficient or in which we achieve greater consistency conducting our business, we will maintain centralized responsibilities. All of our business operation functions support our strategic direction; without them, we would have far more difficulty achieving our goals and objectives.

Accountability

The Forest Service's shared accountability business functions include financial management, budgeting, performance accountability, records management, contract management, grants and agreements management, and other responsibilities that directly affect our reputation and integrity as an agency. Competent performance of each function increases our success in other areas and influences how the public perceives us.

Human Resources Management

Human resources are both internal (such as agency employees) and external (such as volunteers and partners). Because people are the Forest Service's most valuable asset, we provide a wide range of support for human resources, including personnel management, leadership training, partnership coordination, meeting our civil rights requirements, and support for occupational safety and health. Managing people in our organization is a complex shared responsibility with a permanent workforce of approximately 29,000 employees and variable temporary and seasonal additions to our workforce that exceed 11,000 employees during the summer work season. In addition, more than 100,000 volunteers contribute their services annually to our conservation mission.

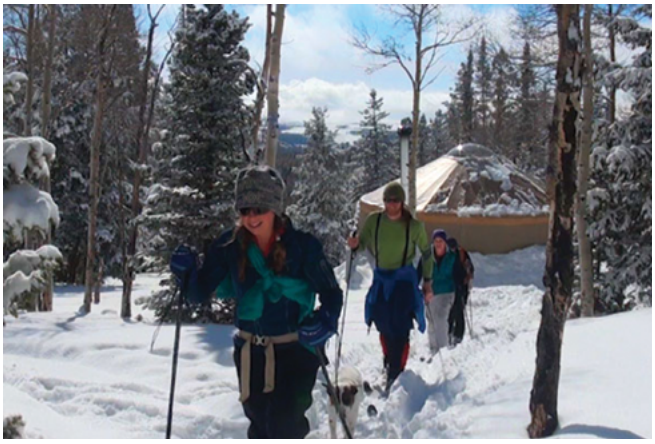
Communication

Informative, reliable, effective, and timely communication is vital to the Forest Service, both internally and externally. We will focus on effectively communicating with our employees and with the people we serve. For example, our leaders regularly consult with our external partners, with each other, and with our individual staffs. Our leaders also routinely meet with governing officials and Members of Congress to sustain an ongoing dialogue about our activities and people's needs. Moreover, we work to keep all Americans informed about what we are doing. A sound information technology framework underpins our capacity for effective communication.

Administrative Facilities Management

With a workforce that can exceed 40,000 permanent and temporary seasonal employees engaging in a wide range of natural and cultural resource management activities nationwide, the Forest Service manages thousands of administrative buildings and a substantial transportation fleet to support them. Depending on the circumstances, we maintain, construct, or lease work locations or make space-sharing arrangements with other organizations. We will manage all our administrative facilities and our fleet for safety, accessibility, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness, also striving to reduce our environmental footprint by using wood and other sustainable materials and by improving energy efficiency in building construction and reconstruction practices.

External Factors



For the Forest Service, external factors can hinder our success in achieving progress on our strategic plan. These factors include the following:

- Extreme weather, climate fluctuations, and environmental change beyond the natural range of forest and grassland variability, which may alter ecological productivity and resilience.
- Legal and regulatory constraints and changes that affect management activities, reduce management options, and diminish program resources.
- Incomplete, untimely, inaccessible, or conflicting information that reduces managerial efficiency and effectiveness.

Potential Challenges to Forest Service Success

- Actions by external groups and individuals that affect forest and grassland management and make it more difficult to achieve our objectives.
- Demographic shifts or changes in stakeholders' perceptions or values that result in unanticipated shifts in expectations from our forests and grasslands.
- Economic fluctuations, including those caused by potential Federal tax code revisions or other governmental actions, which change market conditions and human behavior.
- International crises or homeland security issues that transform public needs affecting our program accomplishments.

Relationship
to the USDA Strategic Plan

During the development of our Forest Service strategic plan, the USDA strategic plan for FY 2014–2018 was taken into account to ensure a fully consistent plan. The Forest Service plan accordingly supports and elaborates on several goals and objectives in the USDA strategic plan.

The Forest Service plan corresponds directly to USDA Strategic Goal 2: Ensure Our National Forests and Private Working Lands Are Conserved, Restored, and Made More Resilient to Climate Change, While Enhancing Our Water Resources. Our plan also indirectly supports several other USDA goals. For example, by providing public recreational benefits, we contribute to economic prosperity for rural communities and the Nation (USDA goal 1) and promote healthy physical activity (Objective 4.2 in USDA goal 4). We also work to help create a USDA for the 21st century that is high performing, efficient, and adaptable (USDA goal 5).

The USDA plan identifies the specific Forest Service performance measures we use to track progress in attaining goals and objectives in the USDA plan and the Forest Service plan.

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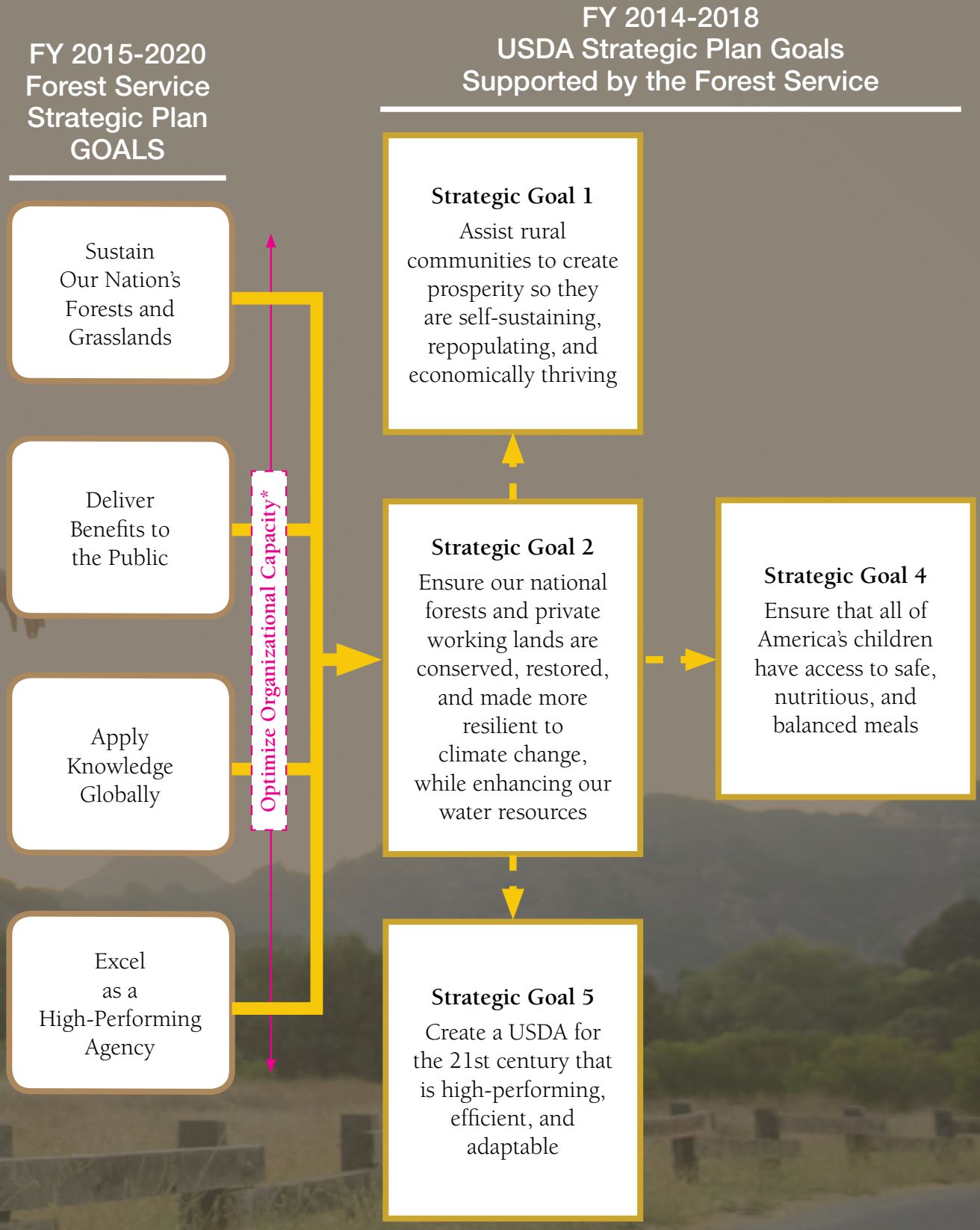


* Optimize Organizational Capacity does not represent a separate goal but illustrates how crosscutting organizational components are accommodated within the Forest Service Strategic Plan.

Relationship

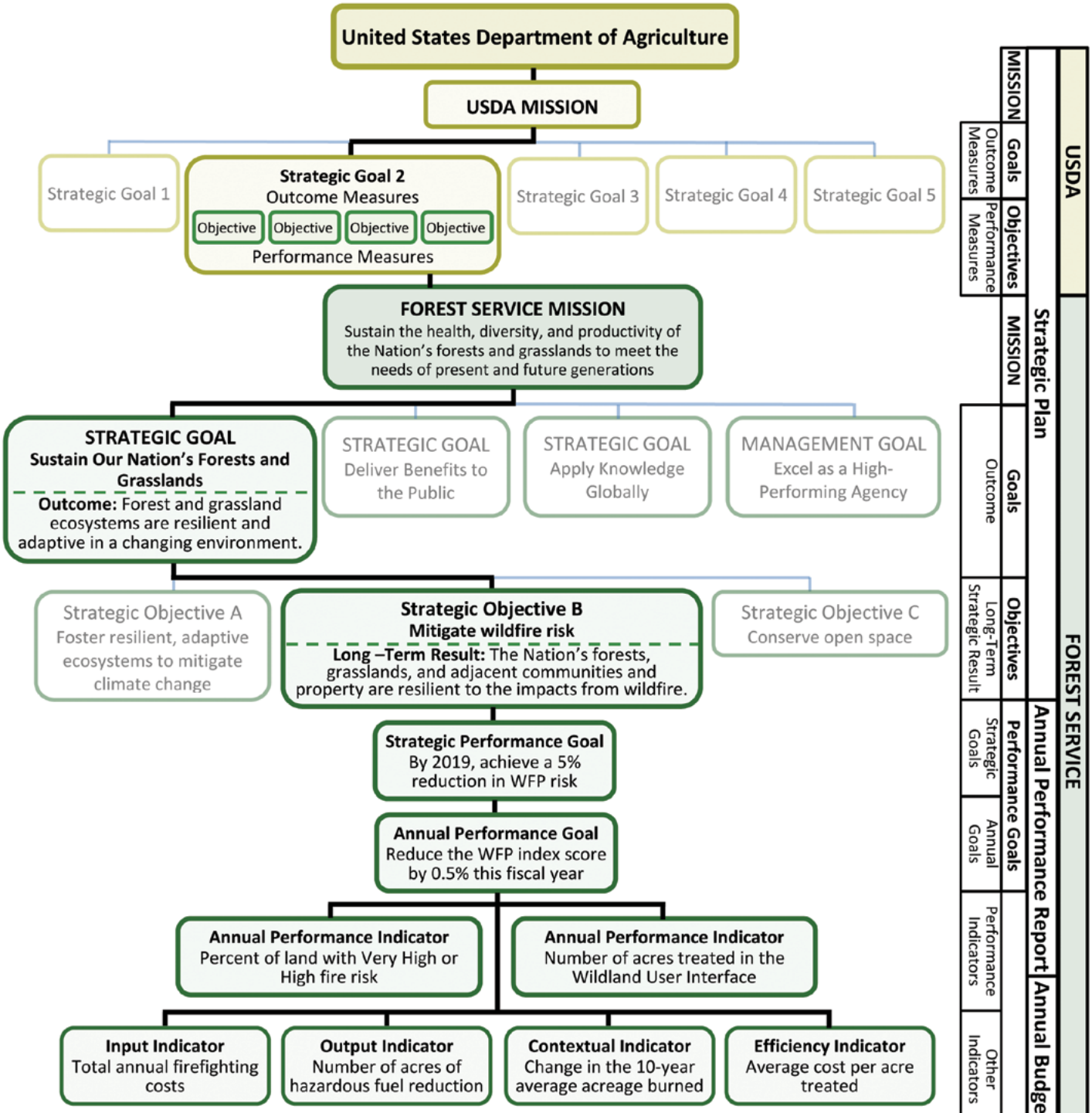
Between Strategic Plan Goals and Performance Goals

The *USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan: FY 2015–2020* establishes broad, long-term goals and objectives to address our mission during the 5-year planning period. Specific measurable performance indicators and accomplishment targets tailored to much shorter planning periods provide accountability to the American people for the progress achieved on the strategic goals and objectives.

Each year, we propose an annual Forest Service budget for the next fiscal year with a detailed budget justification. The budget justification is our proposed annual plan, which specifies our annual performance measures, accomplishment targets (for quantitative performance measures), and the budget resources required to achieve them. Actual accomplishments may be affected by the previously identified external factors, including final budget resource availability that may differ from the proposed budget.

We use the annual performance measures and targets to assess the Forest Service's progress on our strategic goals. Each year, we track our progress toward meeting our targets in our annual performance report. The report sets forth the broader progress we have made in addressing the strategic goals of both the Forest Service and USDA.

Assessing Progress on Our Strategic Plan



Note: Information is illustrative only. Actual indicators and data will be determined.

Program Evaluations

The Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 requires a description of the program evaluations that Federal agencies use in establishing or revising their general goals and objectives, along with a schedule of future program evaluations. The Forest Service conducts program evaluations as described below.

A complete evaluation cycle of all Forest Service programs takes several years because of the large variation of existing agency programs. At the beginning of each fiscal year, we issue direction to employees containing our review schedule for that year.

Evaluations Used To Revise Goals and Objectives

In preparing to revise and update the *USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan: FY 2015–2020*, we reviewed previous strategic plans of both the Forest Service and USDA. We also took into account the prospective major initiatives and priorities of the Forest Service, USDA, and the Administration. In addition, we reviewed the Forest Service's latest assessment of forest and rangeland renewable resources.

Schedule of Future Program Evaluations

At the Forest Service, we regularly conduct program evaluations at various levels of the organization from the executive level to individual project or site reviews. We also conduct additional studies and evaluations, as directed by agency leaders, the Administration, and Congress. The following schedule shows the major evaluations we plan to conduct during the next 5 years.

Schedule of Future Program Evaluations

Evaluations/ Analyses	General Scope	Methodology	Timetable
Research and Development Program Peer Review	Nation	Comprehensive external subject matter specialist's review of strategic program area	Review each program every 5 years, or 20% of all programs each year (100% of Research and Development programs reviewed during a 5-year period)
Research and Development Administrative Review	Washington Office and research stations	Review of administrative functions by panel of Forest Service personnel and external partners and collaborators	Periodically
Research and Development Research Work Unit/Program Area Review	Research work unit and program areas	Internal review of work units and charters	Every 5 years
Forest Service Chief's Review	Region	Integrated review of joint region and Research and Development programs to evaluate mission delivery	Periodically
State and Private Forestry Program and Financial Reviews	Region and area office	Examine the objectives, coordination, planning, administration, achievement, staffing, financing, and needs of programs to determine the effectiveness of technical assistance, to monitor performance, to identify and resolve State concerns, and to provide accountability for program delivery; financial reviews completed by internal Forest Service auditors	Review each grantee every 5 years
Fire and Aviation Preparedness and Financial Program Reviews	Region and area office	Evaluation of program implementation and effectiveness by internal program subject matter experts	Periodically

Schedule of Future Program Evaluations (continued)

Evaluations/ Analyses	General Scope	Methodology	Timetable
Fire and Aviation Large Fire Reviews	Individually selected fires of national significance	Evaluate the effectiveness of risk-based decisions on fire cost, using a facilitated learning analysis approach by subject matter experts	Annual fire season
Civil Rights Title VI and VII Reviews	Regional office/ research station/ area office	Review of program area	Periodically
Maintenance Reviews (fleet, roads, and structures [e.g., dams, bridges, and towers])	Regional office/ research station/ area office	Review of program area, including participation by the Forest Service Chief Information Officer	Periodically
Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment Strategy	Nation	Identification of the critical natural resource information needed to effectively address agency priorities	Every 3 to 5 years
Integrated Reviews of Programs With Partners	Program and partner field reviews	Review of program area (under agreements or memorandums)	Periodically
Integrated Resources Restoration Evaluation	Region	Independent third-party evaluation of the integration, efficiency, and effectiveness of restoration activities in pilot regions	FY 2015
Business Management Audits (budgeting, accounting, fund management, acquisition management)	Regional office/ research station/ area office, and business operations	Review of program areas (business functions and service centers)	Periodically
Information Resources Direction Board (technology, capital assets/investments)	Regional office/ research station/ area office, and business operations	Program reviews of business functions and service centers	Periodically
Acquisition Management Reviews	Regional office/ research station/ area office/ Washington Office/ individual agency unit	Review of contracts, grants, agreements, and asset management	Every 3 to 4 years
Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act Assessments of U.S. Natural Resources	Nation	Independent technical documents on emerging issues and analyses of national natural resource conditions and uses, present and future, by the Nation's scientists	Every 10 years, with interim 5-year updates (complete assessment)

Strategic Consultations

The Forest Service regularly consults with external stakeholders, including customers, partners, landowners, policy experts, industry groups, environmental groups, and consumer groups, regarding the direction and effectiveness of our programs. Although these consultations are conducted for many purposes, they affect the development of our strategic plan goals, objectives, strategies, and outcomes. This strategic plan was also developed in accordance with guidance provided by USDA.

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