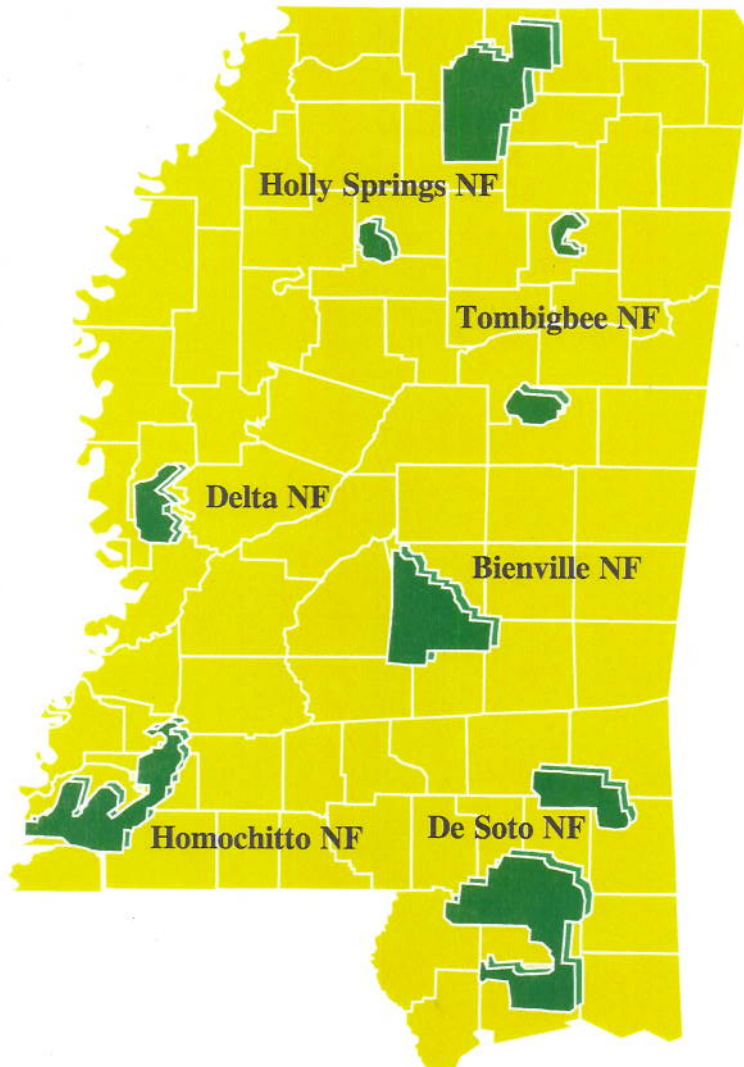




U. S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southern Region

Fiscal Year 2010 Monitoring Questions National Forests in Mississippi



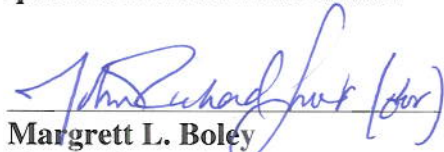
March 2011

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Monitoring and Evaluation Questions and Answers
FY 2010

The National Forests in Mississippi (NFsMS) is currently revising its Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). Monitoring and evaluation of Forest Plan actions is a continuous process that occurs throughout the revision and implementation process.

During the forest plan revision process, the monitoring and evaluation documented for fiscal year (FY) 2010 is being presented in an abbreviated question and answer format.


Margrett L. Boley
Forest Supervisor
National Forests in Mississippi

April 18, 2011
Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is the current forest type classification breakdown compared to the status at plan implementation?	1
What is the current age class composition of the Forest?	2
What were the harvest accomplishment trends for the last 10 years in terms of volume and acres?	3
What is the current status of the preliminary list of possible old growth?.....	4
What are the accomplishments for FY 2010 for Forest Health?	6
What progress was made in eradication of non-native invasive species (NNIS) in 2010?	6
What prescribed burning accomplishments were completed in FY 2010?	9
How did the current prescribed burning accomplishments compare to previous years?	10
What effects on soil productivity are occurring from fire line construction and restoration related to prescribed burning? How are these activities being monitored?.....	10
What progress has been made in gopher tortoise management in FY 2010?	11
What progress toward reaching red-cockaded woodpecker population goals was made in 2010?	12
What accomplishments in Heritage Resource Program management have been completed for FY 2010?	15
What Stewardship contracting program accomplishments occurred from 2005 – 2010?	16
What important activities occurred in FY 2010 to improve the transportation system and public safety?.....	17
What major changes were made to the forest transportation system to increase efficiency?	18

What is the current forest type classification breakdown compared to the status at plan implementation?

FY 2010 forest type data from the vegetation database (FSVeg) queries were analyzed to determine acreage by broad forest cover types (working groups) within lands classified as suitable for timber. The acreages are compared to similar figures compiled from the 1985 Forest Plan and FY 2009 to determine the magnitude and direction of change in forest cover types.

Since the 1985 Forest Plan, there has been an increase in acreage of pine-hardwood and longleaf, and a decrease in the yellow pine, slash pine and hardwood forest types (note: yellow pine included shortleaf and loblolly pine). The distribution in FY 2010 has changed slightly from the FY 2009 monitoring report. Hardwood and pine-hardwood decreased by 2% each while shortleaf and longleaf pine increased by 1% and loblolly pine increased 3%. Figures 1, 2, and 3 illustrate the percentage of land in each forest type in 1985, FY 2009, and FY 2010 respectively.

Figure 1. Forest types of NFsMS, 1985.

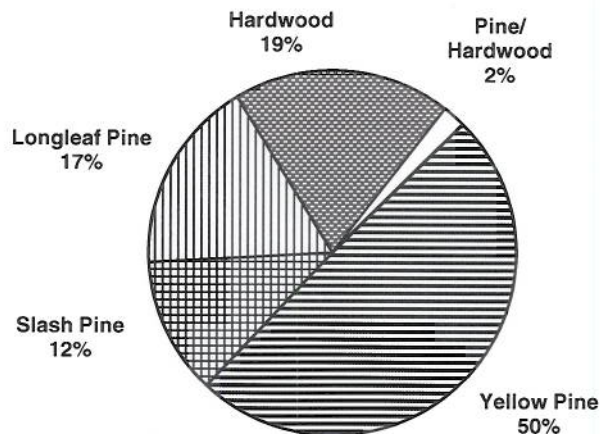


Figure 2. Forest types of NFsMS, 2009.

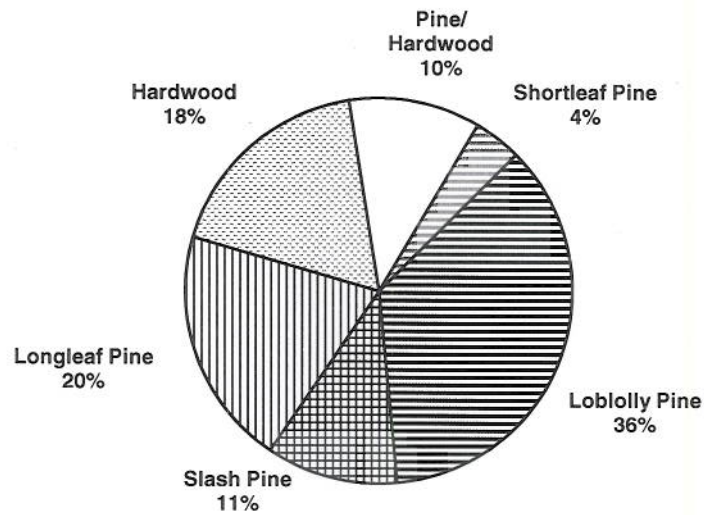
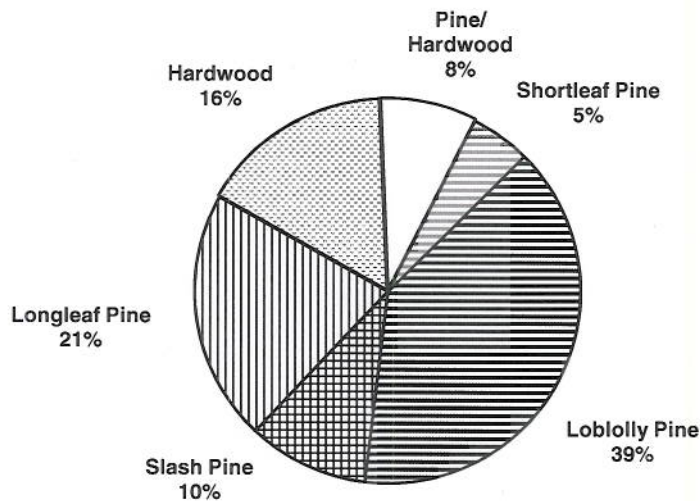


Figure 3. Forest types of NFsMS, 2010.



What is the current age class composition of the Forest?

Table 1 displays the percent of forested acres for the NFsMS by ten year age classes based on inventory in FSVeg.

Previous monitoring reports documented a downward trend of regeneration in the 0-10 year age class from 11% in FY 2000 to 3% in FY 2009. This age class continued to comprise 3% of the age class distribution in FY 2010.

One of the objectives in determining areas selected for regeneration is balancing age class distribution. Currently, the three age classes falling in the 61-90 year age distribution have a higher proportion of acres than other age classes (47%).

With lower regeneration rates, the forest is now compiled of more acreage in older age classes. Seven percent of the forest is now greater than 100 years old.

Table 1. NFsMS Age Class Acreage Distribution as of 1/12/2011.

Age Class	Percent of Forested Acres*
0 - 10	3
11 - 20	9
21 - 30	11
31 - 40	8
41 - 50	5
51 - 60	6
61 - 70	11
71 - 80	22
81 - 90	14
91 - 100	6
101 - 110	3
111 - 120	2
121 - 130	1
131 +	1

*Sum total of forested acres >100% due to rounding percentages.

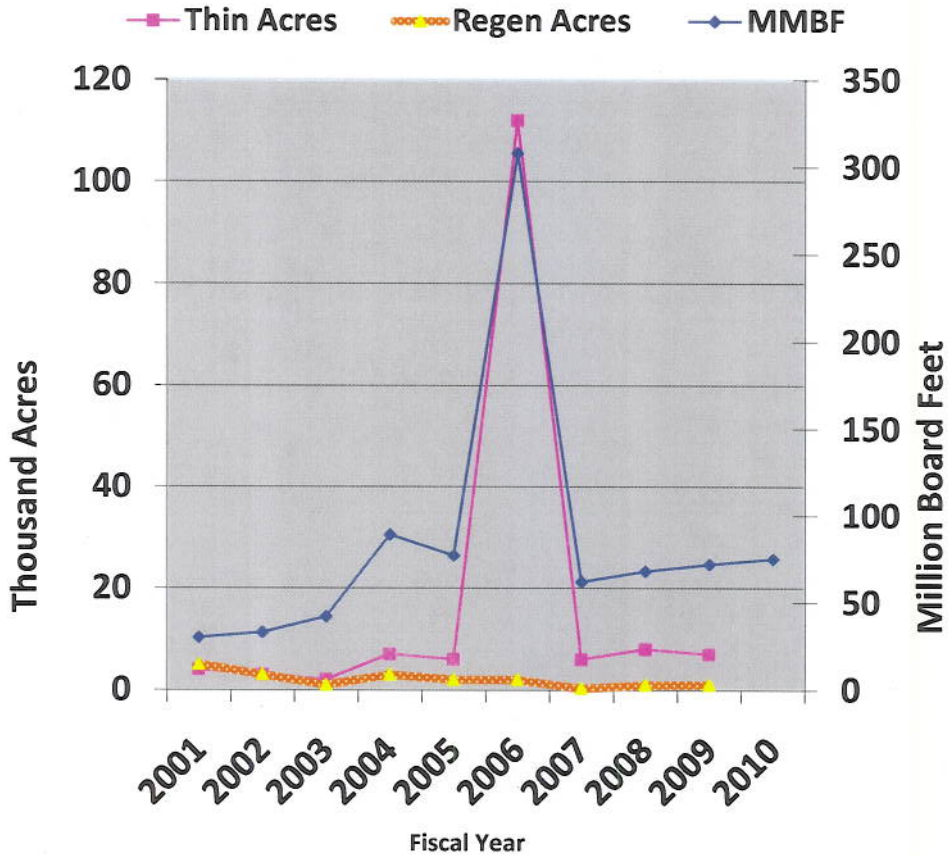
What were the harvest accomplishment trends for the last 10 years in terms of volume and acres?

Recent harvest accomplishment trends are summarized in Table 2 and Figure 4. Note the harvest increase in FY 2006 represents the salvage timber resulting from Hurricane Katrina. In most cases the salvage timber was harvested utilizing a moderate to heavy thinning.

Table 2. NFsMS timber harvest volume and acres 2001 – 2010.

Fiscal Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Volume - MMBF	30	33	42	89	77	308	62	68	72	75
Volume - MMCF	5	6	8	18	15	62	12	14	15	16
Intermediate Acres (x 1,000)	4	3	2	7	6	112	6	8	7	6
Regeneration Acres (x 1,000)	5	3	1	3	2	2	0.3	1	1	1

Figure 4. NFsMS timber harvest volume and acres.



What is the current status of the preliminary list of possible old growth?

The preliminary list of possible old growth developed for the forest plan revision was provided to the public on August 10, 2005. The stands identified through this analysis for inclusion on this list were coded in the FS Veg database. This data has been updated since that time as a result of project level inventory and project decisions. The 2005 preliminary list and current status are summarized in the Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. NFsMS Preliminary Inventory of Possible Old-Growth Acreage Summarized by District and Selection Criteria (July 8 2005).

Districts	Bienville	De Soto	Homochitto	Chickasawhay	Delta	Holly Springs	Tombigbee	NFsMS
Selection Criteria								
Wilderness (3)		6,466						6,466
Research Natural Areas (4)	189	1,820	230	539	670	186	803	4,437
Other Administratively Designated Unregulated Areas (5)	568	5,585	84	451	3,122	235	72	10,117
Red-cockaded Woodpecker Clusters (6)	8,505	3,236	4,230	2,007				17,978
Late Seral (7)	10,770	14,578	7,300	7,239	2,946	5,138	3,004	50,975
R8 Old Growth Minimum Age (8)	698	2,031	580	14	13,581	6,393	958	24,255
Rare Community Types (9)	937	1,175	807	134	759	759	552	4,364
Totals	21,667	34,891	13,231	10,384	20,319	12,711	5,389	118,592

Table 4. NFsMS Preliminary Inventory of Possible Old-Growth Acreage Summarized by District and Selection Criteria (February 09, 2011).

Districts	Bienville	De Soto	Homochitto	Chickasawhay	Delta	Holly Springs	Tombigbee	NFsMS
Selection Criteria								
Wilderness (3)		6,489						6,489
Research Natural Areas (4)	226	720	228	539	670	186	803	3,372
Other Administratively Designated Unregulated Areas (5)	310	6,983	70	461	3,325	235	811	12,195
Red-cockaded Woodpecker Clusters (6)	8,505	4,140	3,813	2,013				18,471
Late Seral (7)	10,770	15,400	7,206	7,239	2,946	4,944	2,967	51,472
R8 Old Growth Minimum Age (8)	558	2,184	473	14	13,420	5,699	958	23,306
Rare Community Types (9)	937	984	875	24		704	136	3,660
Totals	21,306	36,900	12,665	10,290	20,361	11,768	5,675	118,965

Over approximately six years, this list has increased by a total of 373 acres as a result of data corrections and changes in project implementation. Since the FY 2009 monitoring report, the Homochitto District classification of red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) cluster recruitment stands and late seral designations has resulted in 524 less acres considered potential old growth.

What are the accomplishments for FY 2010 for Forest Health?

Forest health is the objective of all vegetation management activities on the NFsMS. Currently, the most prevalent and devastating forest health issue concerning forests in Mississippi (MS) is tree mortality caused by the southern pine beetle (SPB). The most effective management activities to combat SPB infestation are those that reduce density and favor trees less susceptible to SPB attack, such as thinning some forests. In FY 2010, 5,907 acres were contracted for commercial thinning of which 2,713 acres were first thinning of plantations for SPB hazard reduction. Additionally, 748 acres were precommercially thinned. For context, the estimated annual need for thinning is 46,000 acres, with 16,000 of that comprised of plantation first thinning based on modeling analysis done for Forest plan revision.

What progress was made in eradication of non-native invasive species (NNIS) in 2010?

Non-native invasive species (NNIS) are an ever-increasing problem on NFsMS. These species threaten forest health and ecosystems by reducing natural diversity and habitat for fish, wildlife and native plants, and affecting soil stability. Effective treatment and control is compounded by the intermingled ownership pattern of federal, state, county, and private land throughout the state. The accelerated spread of noxious weeds has led to increased public awareness of the environmental problems associated with weeds. The National Forests in Mississippi is a major partner in the Mississippi Cooperative Weed Management Area along with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT), Federal Highway Administration, Mississippi Forestry Commission, and others.

Each year, the NFsMS uses the noxious weed control strategy to which involves active management to control these species. The noxious weed control strategy outlines five emphasis areas which include: (1) cooperation, (2) education and prevention, (3) inventory, (4) control, and (5) monitoring. Kudzu and cogongrass are the priority species of concern although other pest plants of interest include water hyacinth, alligator weed, tropical soda apple, privet, honeysuckles, and Johnson grass. Table 5 shows the number of acres treated for NNIS by district for FY 2008-2010.

Table 5. Acres treated for non-native invasive species by year on NFsMS lands.

District	2008	2009	2010
Bienville	0.0	93.0	65.0
Chickasawhay	2,137.0	62.5	105.0
Delta	14.0	10.0	0.0
De Soto	221.0	405.0	850.0
Holly Springs	461.0	1,078.0	1300.0
Homochitto	30.9	0.0	45.5
Tombigbee	13.0	313.0	1157.0
Total	2,876.9	1,961.5	3,522.5

Cogongrass is aggressively spreading on roadsides within the De Soto, Chickasawhay, Bienville, and Tombigbee Ranger Districts and has recently been discovered on the Homochitto Ranger District. The National Forests in Mississippi a member of the Mississippi Cogongrass Task Force, assisting partner agencies in training and educational events. The Task Force has taken the lead role in developing a regional coordination strategy that includes all invasive species. Treatment is planned and accomplished annually. Districts have also partnered with landowners, MDOT, our armed forces, and others who contribute labor to treat cogongrass infestations.

The Chickasawhay Ranger District has been actively spraying herbicide on cogongrass since 1999. It began with a small program using district employees and mainly targeting infestations found in timber sales and funded by Knutson-Vandenburg Act (KV) dollars. This district received \$180,000 in funding in 2007 to control the spread of cogongrass following the aftermath and cleanup of Hurricane Katrina. The money was applied to an existing vegetation management contract as a new task and the balance is currently available for annual treatments. This new task item furnishes labor for spraying on an hourly basis. The herbicides were initially bought through National Forest Vegetation and Watersheds (NFVW) and KV dollars but have recently been purchased through stewardship money from retained receipts. The only cost out of appropriated funding is the cost of administering the contract on weekends. This has been a very effective and cost efficient way of control as seen in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Chickasawhay Ranger District non-native invasive species contract spending.

Year	Spots	Acres	Contract Cost (\$180K Initial Balance)	Herbicide Cost	Administration Cost Average
2007	544	65	\$29,057	\$15,600	\$4,000
2008	630	75	\$26,827	\$18,000	\$4,000
2009	997	59	\$25,033	\$14,160	\$4,000
2010	742	47	\$18,424	\$11,280	\$4,000
Total	2,913	246	\$99,341 Balance \$80,659	\$59,040	\$16,000

Additionally, the Chickasawhay Ranger District has also partnered with the Laurel Garden Club, a Member of The Garden Club of America, in an initiative called Partners for Plants. The national organization has a goal of noxious weed eradication on Federal lands and is interested in the conservation of native wildflowers on Federal lands. The local chapter sponsored a field day to survey and map cogongrass infestations, and 21 volunteers from as far away as Houston, Texas came to participate in this event. Infestations located by this group have been included in a stewardship contract where goods and services (cogongrass eradication treatments) will be paid for as work is completed by the purchaser. To date over 80 acres of cogongrass infestations have been treated using stewardship service contracts.

Kudzu is invasive species on the Holly Springs and Tombigbee Ranger Districts impacting an estimated 20,000 and 7,000 acres respectively. It also occurs on the Bienville, De Soto, and Homochitto Ranger Districts, but to a much lesser extent. Statewide, the impact of kudzu infestations is estimated at 54 million dollars per annum of lost timber related revenues. The National Forests in Mississippi has completed National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis to control and reduce kudzu infestations on the Holly Springs, Tombigbee, and Bienville Ranger Districts. The majority of the infested areas are within 150 to 200 feet of roads. The program emphasizes a systematic approach to treatment of current and prevention of future infestations of kudzu on all three districts, with the goal of eventual elimination of this invasive species.

Previously, the control of kudzu in northern MS had been considered too complex to address due to the expansive coverage and rate of growth of kudzu combined with the mixed land ownership. The Holly Springs Ranger District has formed a Kudzu Coalition (The Coalition), which consists of local, state, and federal agencies along with conservation groups and academia, to address these challenges. To provide a baseline, partners conducted a preliminary survey of the 82 counties in MS during July-August 2004 and found kudzu in 72 counties. Approximately 546,000 acres of private-owned forest land infested with kudzu, and 17 counties have kudzu infestation of more than 10,000 acres. The Coalition has applied for several state and federal grants and has created a MOU amongst its partners to better leverage funds and share expertise in the treatment of kudzu. These funds will allow The Coalition to educate the public about kudzu and control methods to combat this invasive weed. As a result, it is anticipated that private landowners, utility companies, conservation organizations and local, state, and federal officials will collaborate to control kudzu across the landscape.

In 2009, NFsMS received \$1.6 million in American Reinvestment and Recovery ACT (ARRA) funding for a kudzu control project encompassing Holly Springs and Tombigbee Ranger Districts. The National Forests in Mississippi plans to treat approximately 2700 acres of kudzu over a span of four years. Each acre will be treated three consecutive years to ensure that the kudzu has been controlled. Areas where cooperation with adjacent landowners is present will be given priority since kudzu respects no property boundary and spreads across multiple land ownerships. The National Forests in Mississippi decided to use a two-phase approach to expedite spending in order to increase

jobs and stimulate the economy. In 2009, the Holly Springs Ranger District utilized a pre-existing contract to spray 600 acres and the Tombigbee Ranger District utilized a purchase order to control approximately 125 acres of kudzu using this funding. Starting in FY10, one all encompassing contract has been used to accomplish all kudzu control for both Districts which requires the contractor to buy and apply the herbicide across each district. For 2010 and 2011, this contract is being used to treat the aforementioned acreages for two more years while also spraying an additional 1700 acres for 2010 through 2012.

What prescribed burning accomplishments were completed in FY 2010?

The following table illustrates accomplishments by Ranger District for FY 2010.

Table 7. Prescribed burning accomplishments for FY 2010 by ranger district on NFsMS.

District	Dormant Season Accomplishment (Acres)	Growing Season Accomplishment (Acres)	District FY2010 Accomplishment (Total Acres)
Bienville	19,523	7,661	27,184
Chickasawhay	18,657	10,873	29,530
De Soto	85,103	16,281	101,384
Delta	0	0	0
Holly Springs	11,240	12,114	23,354
Homochitto	27,975	1,693	29,668
Tombigbee	11,264	5,779	17,043
Total Acres	173,762	54,401	228,163

How did the current prescribed burning accomplishments compare to previous years?

The following table illustrates accomplishments by Ranger District for FY 2007 through 2010.

Table 8. Prescribed burning accomplishments for FY 2007-2010 by ranger district on NFsMS

District	2007	2008	2009	2010
Bienville	32,243	20,818	36,426	27,184
Chickasawhay	33,178	20,703	33,190	29,530
De Soto	86,447	92,929	110,346	101,384
Delta	9	34	99	0
Holly Springs	18,447	14,481	21,036	23,354
Homochitto	37,903	31,009	32,066	29,668
Tombigbee	22,528	17,681	18,002	17,043
Total	230,755	197,655	251,165	228,163

What effects on soil productivity are occurring from fire line construction and restoration related to prescribed burning? How are these activities being monitored?

Monitoring is used to determine the extent and degree of compliance with the Forest Plan standards and guides or state best management practices (BMP) pertaining to prescribe fire-line placement, construction, and restoration. Recent monitoring was completed on the Holly Springs Ranger District. Selected prescribed fire sites were monitored by walking the constructed fire-line. Photography was used to illustrate proper compliance and noncompliance.

The following standards and guides were monitored for implementation: fire-line restored, hand-line installed on steep slopes, waterbar or water diversion used, filter-strip protected, and wetlands protected. Based on this monitoring fire-line construction (bladed) was in compliance with soil and water standards and guides overall. Generally, hand-lines were constructed on slopes greater than 30 percent and within filter strips along lakes, perennial and intermittent streams. Fire-lines followed the contour of the land. Results of this monitoring indicate no issues with prescribed fire-line construction and restoration that would necessitate changes in forest policy or approaches. However, as a recommendation, there is a need to continually recognize and emphasize that fire-lines of prescribed burns have a potential for causing unacceptable natural resource damage through soil erosion and sedimentation. The key to minimizing these conditions are proper location of lines and implementation of best management practices.

What progress has been made in gopher tortoise management in FY 2010?

Generally, all prescribed burns improve gopher tortoise habitat. Although the focus is on growing season burns to restore gopher tortoise habitat, it is not always possible due to funding, smoke management regulations, and environmental factors such as weather conditions. Dormant season fire can be a beneficial tool to maintain habitat and reduce fuel content to allow for a growing season fire at a later date. As a general strategy, the Districts plan to first conduct dormant season burns to reduce the fuel load before implementing growing season burns. Table 9 illustrates seven years of burning history on the De Soto Ranger and Chickasawhay Districts. Although it indicates that burning was low in FY06, this is a direct result of impacts from Hurricane Katrina and the following short-term drought conditions.

Table 9. Recent Prescribed Burning Accomplishments, De Soto and Chickasawhay Ranger Districts.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Desoto							
<i>Dormant</i>	63,700	70,457	13,044	74,017	76,562	81,270	85,103
<i>Growing</i>	28,377	22,651	1,520	12,430	10,944	30,753	16,281
Total	92,077	93,108	14,564	86,447	87,506	112,023	101,384
Chickasawhay							
<i>Dormant</i>	20,232	18,107	14,496	8,785	13,595	25,667	18,657
<i>Growing</i>	17,002	18,204	0	24,393	7,108	7,513	10,873
Total	37,234	36,311	14,496	33,178	20,703	33,180	29,530

In FY 07, the Chickasawhay Ranger District began implementation of the Gopher Tortoise, Red Cockaded Woodpecker & Longleaf Pine Habitat Restoration Stewardship Project. This project addressed gopher tortoise needs on “priority soils” as well as critical habitat needs for RCW such as mid-story removal and growing season burning for the recovery of the Longleaf Pine Ecosystem. The implementation of this project began in 2007 and was completed in 2010. In 2010, the final year of the project, 175 acres of commercial thinning, 313 acres of midstory reduction, and 41 acres of cogongrass control was accomplished on or near priority soils. Additionally, the Mason Creek Habitat Restoration Stewardship Project began on the Chickasawhay Ranger District in 2010. This is a 27,000 acre stewardship project designed to address critical habitat needs for the gopher tortoise on “suitable soils,” habitat needs for both game and non-game species, and control of noxious weeds.

The De Soto Ranger District signed the Decision Notice for the Gopher Tortoise Habitat Improvement with Herbicide Environmental Assessment (EA) on August 20, 2007. The purpose of this EA was to restore and improve habitat for the federally threatened gopher tortoise. This EA includes the herbicide treatment of all gopher tortoise potential habitat on the District utilizing several different herbicides and methods. Under this EA, 4,354 acres of hazardous fuels reduction and gopher tortoise habitat improvement were

accomplished using ARRA funding and an additional 517 acres through KV funding in FY 2010. Gopher tortoise habitat improvement utilizing herbicides will continue in the future until new information warrants a revision to the EA.

The “Ecosystem Restoration for Gopher Tortoise and Red Cockaded Woodpecker Habitat” project for the De Soto Ranger District was signed in 2008. This project proposes to improve gopher tortoise and RCW habitat on pine and pine-hardwood forests through thinning and longleaf restoration (removal of offsite pine species and restoring longleaf pine) outside of the Camp Shelby Special Use Permit area. This authorized fuels reduction project was proposed under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA) Title 1, Section 102(a) (5)-Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species Habitat, to provide better protection from catastrophic wildfires for T&E species habitat by reducing hazardous fuels and restoring safer fire-dependent ecosystem conditions. Under this decision, 283 acres of longleaf pine was thinned and 275 acres of longleaf was re-established in FY 2010.

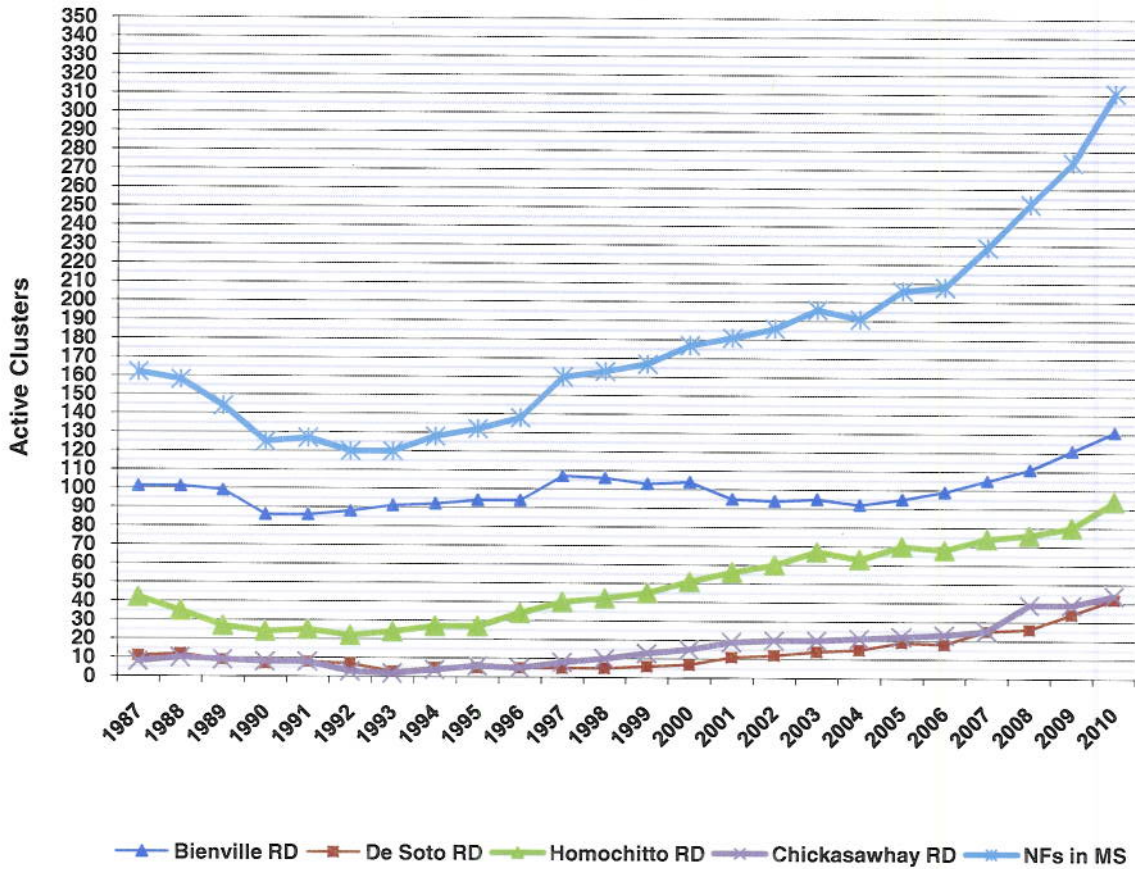
The De Soto Ranger District has also recently gained concurrence from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on a Biological Evaluation (BE) covering all wildlife openings on the District containing gopher tortoise burrows to allow the plots to be disked and planted in longleaf pine or reseeded to annual and perennial herbaceous vegetation beneficial to the gopher tortoise. Presently, gopher tortoise burrows are found in 15 food plots across the District.

What progress toward reaching red-cockaded woodpecker population goals was made in 2010?

The Revised Recovery Plan for the RCW (2003) lists three key management actions as essential to the success of the recovery of this species: 1) development of large old pines to serve as cavity trees, 2) restoration and maintenance of appropriate habitat structure, and 3) protection of existing cavity trees. The National Forests in Mississippi continue to improve and maintain favorable habitat conditions for RCW using different strategies tailored to individual populations and habitat conditions. It is the implementation of these strategies, carefully designed to meet the conditions of each of four very different populations and habitat, which will continue to enhance RCW recovery on the NFsMS.

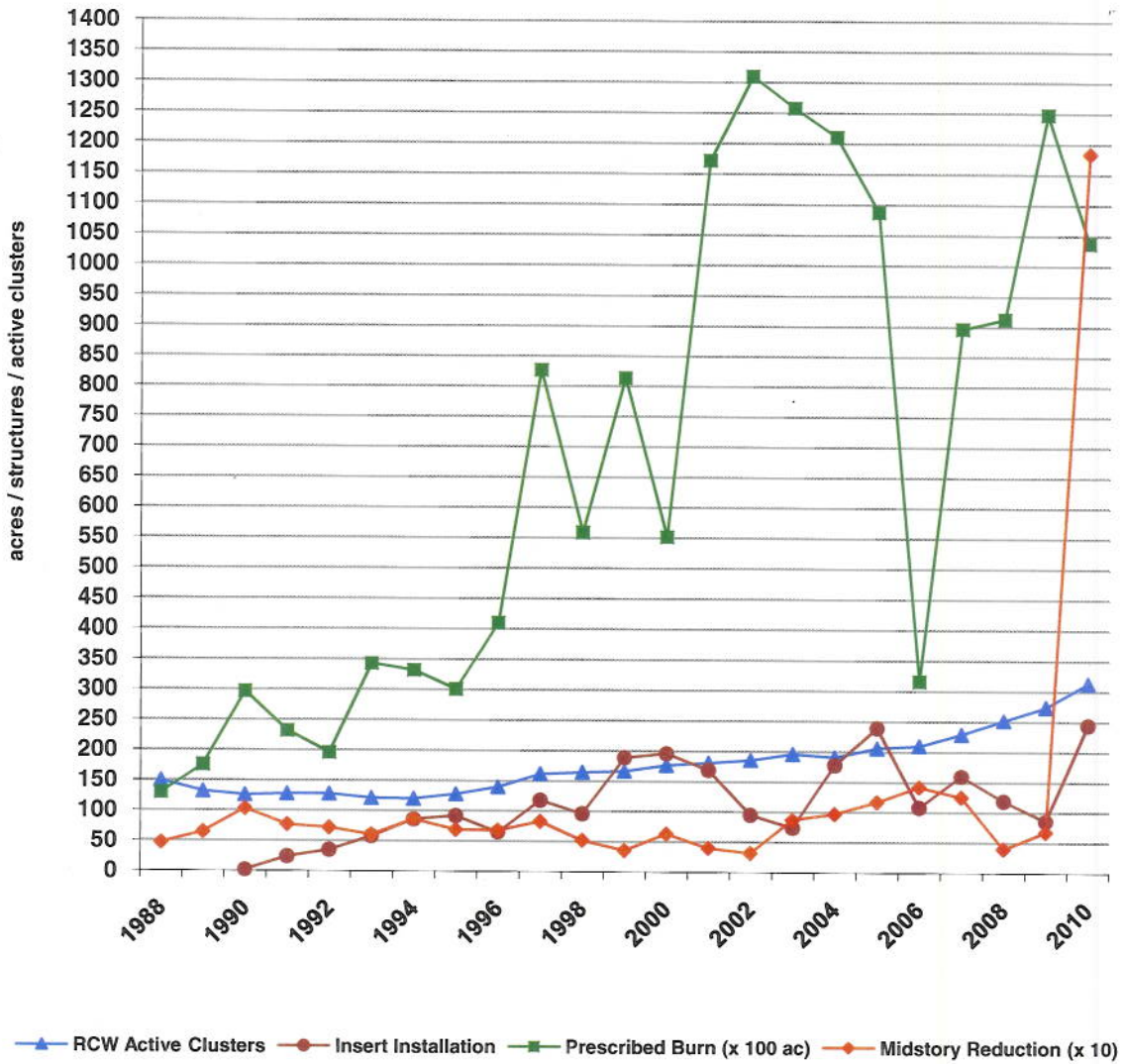
Currently there are 313 total active RCW clusters on the NFsMS, an increase from the 274 active clusters listed in the FY2009 Monitoring and Evaluation report. Although still far short of population goals of 1,595 active clusters, the numbers of active clusters have increased during the past 20 years (Figure 5).

Figure 5. History of active RCW clusters on NFsMS.



Although total acres of mature yellow pine forest has declined since 1981, the condition of the remaining pine forest habitat is much improved due to an aggressive prescribed fire program, application of midstory control, and installation of artificial cavities. Aggressive application of prescribed fire has been critical to maintaining open habitat conditions on the four districts where RCW occur. Installation and maintenance of inserts and management of natural cavities have corresponded with increases in both the number of individuals in family groups (increased group size), and in numbers of clusters (population expansion) on the Chickasawhay, De Soto and Homochitto Ranger Districts. Maintenance of cavities on all units is critical to RCW occupation and population expansion. Off-site pine continues to be restored to longleaf pine in areas where longleaf pine historically occurred. As these young longleaf stands are released from competition and grow into mature stands, increased acreage in this forest type will enhance habitat conditions for RCW. Figure 6 summarizes RCW habitat improvements and population trends on the NFsMS since 1988.

Figure 6. RCW habitat improvement on the NFsMS.



In addition to habitat improvement efforts on the NFsMS, RCW populations have been augmented in recent years by translocating birds from larger populations. These translocations have increased overall populations and enhanced genetic integrity on districts with smaller populations (Chickasawhay and De Soto Ranger Districts). On the Chickasawhay, augmentation has been critical to the survival of the species. In 1992, only three single males remained on the district. With the augmentation of females to these males, and continued augmentation of both singles and pairs, this population now contains 44 active groups. The De Soto Biloxi HMA population reached 29 active clusters and 27 potential breeding groups (PBG) in 2009. Subsequently, it was announced that this HMA would be removed from the Southern Range Translocation Cooperative (SRTC) recipient list since the overall goal of reaching 30 PBG's had been

adequately attained. Further growth is expected with current management and natural recruitment. The District has now focused translocation efforts on the Black Creek HMA and has translocated 16 pairs since 2008 and 75% of these birds remain within the HMA.

What accomplishments in Heritage Resource Program management have been completed for FY 2010?

The National Forests in Mississippi continue to monitor heritage resource sites. Table 10 lists the sites visited and evaluated on the Delta, Bienville, Tombigbee, Holly Springs, and Homochitto Ranger Districts.

Table 10. Heritage resource sites evaluated in FY 2010 on the Delta, Bienville, Tombigbee, Holly Springs, and Homochitto Ranger Districts.

District	Site	Damage
Delta	Little Spanish Fort	None
Bienville	Moore Tower	None
Tombigbee	Owl Creek Mounds	None
Tombigbee	Choctaw Lake Ranger Residence	None
Holly Springs	Chewalla Lake Mound	None
Homochitto	CCC Pavilion at Clear Springs Lake	Maintenance and repair needed (FY 2011)
Homochitto	22 AM 989	None
Homochitto	22 AM 1008	None
Homochitto	22 FR 1580	None
Homochitto	Sullivan Cemetery	None
Homochitto	Luck Cemetery	None

Table 11 lists the sites on the Chickasawhay Ranger District evaluated for boundary integrity, erosion damage, and ground disturbing activity. No damage was found on any site monitored.

Table 11. Heritage resource sites evaluated in FY 2010 on the Chickasawhay Ranger District.

Heritage Sites in Green, Jones and Wayne Counties, MS				
22-GN-623	22-JO-619	22-JO-778	22-WA-665	22-WA-1086
22-GN-689	22-JO-659	22-JO-791	22-WA-676	22-WA-1114
22-GN-695	22-JO-660	22-JO-793	22-WA-678	22-WA-1115
22-GN-701	22-JO-661	22-WA-522	22WA-683	22-WA-1134
22-GN-705	22-JO-662	22-WA-530	22WA-689	22-WA-1138
22-GN-769	22-JO-663	22-WA-531	22WA-1059	22-WA-1139
22-JO-583	22-JO-664	22-WA-635	22-WA-1060	22-WA-1141
		22-WA-642 Tanya's Knoll		

What Stewardship contracting program accomplishments occurred from 2005 - 2010?

Tables 12 and 13 display the stewardship program accomplishments for FY's 2005 - 2010. No additional Stewardship Proposals were approved in FY 2010; however, several are in the developmental/collaborative process.

Table 12. Stewardship proposals approved.

District	Proposal Name	Emphasis	Project Acres	Date Approved
Bienville	RCW/Prairie	RCW	414	03/28/2005
Chickasawhay	Ecosystem Restoration	RCW/GT/NNIS	100,000	10/24/2005
Chickasawhay	Mason Creek	RCW/GT/NNIS	27,000	09/23/2008
Bienville	RCW Habitat Expansion	RCW	24,381	09/28/2009
Total			151,795	

Table 13. Stewardship contracts awarded.

District	Contract Name & Type	Emphasis	Contract Acres	Date Awarded
Bienville	Bienville Prairies (IRTC)	Prairie Restoration	70	09/17/2007
Chickasawhay	Chick ER # 1 (IRTC)	RCW/GT/NNIS	1067	09/26/2007
Chickasawhay	Chick ER # 2 (IRTC)	RCW/GT/NNIS	782	07/11/2008
Bienville	Stewardship Thin (IRTC)	RCW/Wildlife	391	04/25/2008
Chickasawhay	Chick ER # 3 (IRTC)	RCW/GT/NNIS	2492	09/04/2009
Chickasawhay	Chick ER # 4 (IRTC)	RCW/GT/NNIS	257	08/02/2010
Chickasawhay	Mason Cr. WL (Agreement)	RCW/GT/NNIS	788	08/10/2010
Bienville	Stewardship Service Contracts (2)	RCW/Wildlife	1691	FY 2010
Chickasawhay	Stewardship Service Contracts (3)	RCW/GT/Fisheries	1 2,581	FY 2010
Total			20,119	

Implementation of approved projects and approval of new proposals is expected to continue over the next several years under stewardship authorities. New proposals will be focused on one or more of the following land management goals contained in the law:

- road and trail maintenance or obliteration to restore or maintain water quality
- soil productivity, habitat for wildlife and fisheries, or other resource values
- use of prescribed fires to improve the composition, structure, condition and
- health of stands or improve wildlife habitat
- removing vegetation or other activities to promote healthy forests, reduce fire
- hazards, or achieve other land management objectives
- watershed restoration and maintenance
- restoration and maintenance of wildlife and fish habitat
- control of noxious weeds and exotic weeds, and re-establishment of native plant species.

What important activities occurred in FY 2010 to improve the transportation system and public safety?

Nine road bridges were replaced in FY 2010 and another three were under construction at the end of the fiscal year. These were all part of an ARRA project to replace 21 deficient road bridges across the forest. The remaining nine ARRA bridges are scheduled for replacement in FY2011. In addition, one bridge was found during an inspection to have previously undiscovered structural issues, and a contract was awarded in FY10 to replace this bridge. After these projects are completed, the NFsMS will not have any weight limited bridges; all bridges will be capable of supporting full legal highway loads.

The National Forests in Mississippi is also working with MDOT State Aid to replace county bridges in and around the national forests under the Forest Highway Program. FY10 was the third year of a five year program plan. Under this program, the NFsMS will fully fund the replacement of 27 bridges. Although most of the work during the first two years involved planning and design, several bridges have been completed or are under construction, with the remainder to be finished by FY12. The Forest Highway Program, administered by the Federal Highway Administration, allows the NFsMS to improve the transportation infrastructure on critical non-federal routes in and around national forests. Practically speaking, this program enables the NFsMS to replace weight limited county bridges that are hindering the accessibility of logging vehicles, fire transports, construction equipment, etc. to areas of forest.

What major changes were made to the forest transportation system to increase efficiency?

In FY10, 140 miles of road on the De Soto Ranger District were decommissioned (permanently removed from service). Virtually all of these roads were already closed to public use; so impacts to the traveling public were negligible. The work required for decommissioning varied from road to road, but generally involved a combination of activities such as removing culverts, ripping and/or disking the roadbed, installing waterbars, restoring natural contours, and seeding. Eighty miles of these roads were system roads, or roads that had been designed and built as part of the forest timber transportation system. The National Forests of Mississippi historically harvested much more timber than it currently does and utilized an extensive network of roads to do so. These roads were constructed or reconstructed for timber sales, then closed afterward with the expectation they would be needed again within a few years. However, with small volumes of timber now being cut, many of those closed roads will not be needed for many years, if ever. The decision was made to decommission those roads and if or when timber sale access is ever again needed in an area formerly served by one of them, temporary roads will be used. The other 60 miles of decommissioned roads were inherited when the NFsMS acquired 22,000 acres from the University of Mississippi several years ago. Because those roads had not been formally designed, constructed, or maintained, they were in generally poor shape and required more work to decommission. Although decommissioning does not immediately obliterate a road, the work stabilizes and restores the land, giving nature a good head start to erasing all traces of it.