NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

16TH & 17TH ANNUAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR 2003 AND 2004

INFORMATION REQUESTS AND COMMENTS

Information requests or comments about the Nez Perce National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan and/or Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report can be directed to one of the following offices:

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White Bird, ID 83554
Phone: (208) 839-2211
TTY: (208) 839-2328
FAX: (208) 839-2730

Moose Creek
Ranger District
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Clearwater
Ranger District
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Red River
Ranger District
Elk City Ranger Station
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INTRODUCTION

This document highlights the major issues) that are reported in detail in the Forest's combined 16th and 17th Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report pertaining to fiscal years 2003 and 2004. Upon request, a copy of the Nez Perce National Forest's 16th & 17th Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report will be sent to you. Contact the Nez Perce National Forest Supervisor's Office for a copy. Copies are also available for review at any of the Forest offices listed on the previous page and on the Forest's web page at www.fs.fed.us/r1/nezperce/

This document is organized by resource. Four questions are addressed for each resource:

1. What did we accomplish?
2. What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?
3. What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?
4. What is the current condition and trend of the resource when compared to the desired condition?

The Nez Perce National Forest has continued the monitoring program in 2003 and 2004. A lodgepole pine beetle epidemic, increased by drought conditions, continues to affect the Nez Perce landscape and cause widespread mortality. Forest use and perceptions of the forest continue to be influenced by these types of events, which in turn are affecting both local and national policies. In addition to the standard Forest Plan requirements, we continued to monitor and evaluate these and other ecosystem and social trends in 2003 and 2004.

Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) are intended to provide long-range management direction for each National Forest. Forest Plans provide guidance for balancing the physical, biological, and social components of forest management in the form of goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines.

Continual Improvement is important to the Nez Perce National Forest. In 2003, the Nez Perce initiated the process to revise its Forest Plan. The current release date of the Revised Plan is September 2007. In conjunction with the Forest Plan Revision the Forest will be implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS) which will record the way the Forest completes various activities. In the mean time if you have any suggestions for improvement or comments regarding the current monitoring and evaluation report please let us know. Written comment may be sent to:

Jane L. Cottrell, Forest Supervisor
Nez Perce National Forest
1005 Highway 13
Grangeville, ID 83530

If you would rather speak with someone in person, please call us at (208) 983-1950, or visit any of the forest offices to share your comments.

__/s/ Jane L. Cottrell_____ ___7/24/06_____
JANE L. COTTRELL Date
Forest Supervisor

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WILDLIFE

1) What did we accomplish?

- We acknowledged unnatural stand-replacing fire risks particularly to old growth reserves in ponderosa pine and dry Douglas-fir cover types and initiated adaptive management to begin reducing the risks of future habitat losses. Forest personnel have begun designing and implementing high-intensity fire risk reduction and ecosystem restoration treatments incorporating timber harvest/thinning and/or prescribed fire plans as tools (i.e. Salmon River Canyon fire project, Meadow Face Stewardship Project, and Clean Slate Project).

- We continue supporting the prudent, careful application of biocontrol agents to suppress noxious weed infestation affecting native plant communities and big game winter range.

- We reviewed the effect of land management activities on federally listed and Forest Service sensitive species and prepared over 40 biological assessments and evaluations to meet Endangered Species Act and Forest Service policy requirements. We maintained protections and habitat conditions for threatened and endangered species through informal consultations and good working relations with U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- We continued broad-scale neotropical migrant bird habitat inventories. Forest personnel continued coordination and data sharing across the Northern Region to help improve landscape-scale monitoring and international biological diversity issues related to land birds.

- We continue population monitoring of Forest Management Indicator Species to the extent possible with available funding, staffing and assigned work priorities.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Big game winter range improvements funded by wildlife dollars fell short of Forest Plan prescribed burning objectives by about 5,000 acres for FY2003, due principally to priority placement of people and resources to wildfire emergencies. However, we have met or exceeded the 5,000 acres through wildland fire use.

- Timber harvest treatment on big game winter ranges fell short of Forest Plan goals for FY2003 and FY2004.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- In times of severely low budgets and limited personnel, monitoring resources must be focused on a reduced number of priority ecological indicator species.

- Population trend monitoring of elk, big horn sheep, and moose should be dropped as Forest Service monitoring items since these species are regulated principally through hunting and are carefully managed and monitored by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. These species were originally selected as management indicators principally due to their featured status as hunted species rather than serving as ecological indicators. None of these species is even remotely considered rare or in jeopardy of population viability risk.

- Some federally listed Forest Plan management indicator species (bald eagle, wolf, grizzly, and peregrine) should be de-emphasized and monitored intermittently or dropped entirely as management indicators since: 1) They are monitored across larger landscapes by multiple agencies, 2) Most have made substantial progress toward recovery and have been down-listed or are essentially recovered, and 3) Local populations status and recovery information far exceeds available information on other less studied species whose habitats have been severely reduced.

- Reduce the number of individual management indicator species, based on information above.

- Incorporate and formally adopt the North Idaho old-growth standards in the Forest Plan revision process.

- Change snag monitoring to become a coordinated, joint effort among wildlife, timber, fire and fuel wood administration disciplines to ensure greater integration.

- Change road density monitoring (i.e. open/closed roads and trails) to a multi-resource monitoring element using GIS technology to track it. Consider adapting habitat effectiveness monitoring for elk (summer), forest carnivores, grizzly bear habitat, and other human-activity-adverse species to use this single variable.

- Incorporate habitat diversity (vegetation communities/successional stages status) as a new, GIS-tracked, multi-resource monitoring element Forest-wide to track structural diversity to better determine quality of wildlife habitat.

- Drop grand fir/Pacific yew (designated management area #21 in the Forest Plan) monitoring due to major shifts in forest management and harvest strategies away from clear-cut/burn techniques.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- Lower elevation habitat types and "protected" old growth areas in ponderosa pine and dry Douglas-fir habitats are generally too heavily stocked and fuel-rich. These conditions can lead to stand replacing fire regimes instead of the historic non-lethal or mixed fire regimes. Active fuel reduction by using fire of mechanical methods (or a combination of methods) may help prevent conversion of late successional habitat to early succession resulting from artificially high intensity fires. Habitats of some Nez Perce Forest sensitive, Management Indicator Species (MIS) and Neotropical birds are transitioning from highly suitable open late succession conditions to lower quality dense late succession habitats. Understory condition, canopy cover and forest composition shifts are occurring as a result of fire exclusion. Recent trends in wildland fire use are helping reverse these artificial habitat transitions.

- Most federally listed terrestrial species with the exception of lynx are in relatively good condition with upward trends or are essentially recovered. Recovery for bald eagles and wolves is on schedule or ahead of schedule. Peregrine falcons were de-listed in 1999.

Grizzly bear reintroduction and recovery is uncertain and has been temporarily shelved by the Department of the Interior.

- Big game winter range condition imbalances and forage distribution is being cited along with declining summer forage conditions as key factors in slow recovery of local elk population numbers from heavy hunting pressure and effects of current predator populations. In the longer term, species such as wolverine, wolf, and potentially lynx depend on the proper amounts and distribution of early seral habitats in the forest landscape which support key species used as prey and carrion. Forest carnivores including wolverine, wolves, lynx, and other species have likely been indirectly affected by past fire exclusion and unchecked forest succession in many habitat types. Current wildland fire use trends are helping to reverse the negative effects of fire exclusion in our fire-adapted habitats. These trends are helping to reestablish and sustain appropriate successional stage and forest type distributions. See Table 1 below.

- Over the past 10 years, timber harvest that has increased big game forage has averaged approximately 807 acres per year (18 percent of the Forest Plan projection). Prescribed burning has averaged 2,366 acres over the past 10 years (47% of the Forest Plan projection). Though timber harvest and prescribed burning have fallen short of projected acreages, wildfires have compensated for the shortfall. Wildland fires have averaged 15,452 acres per year over the past 10-years (329% of the Forest Plan projection). Combined, these activities have altered an average of 18,625 acres per year over the past 10 years (130% of the Forest Plan projection).

Table 1: Nez Perce Forest timber harvest, prescribed fire and wildland fire acres from 1988-2004.

Year	Regeneration Timber Harvest Acres	Prescribed Fire Acres	Wildland Fire Acres	Total Acres
1988	2,911	1,000	105,943	109,854
1989	2,544	2,800	8,888	14,232
1990	2,521	6,898	643	10,062
1991	2,931	2,600	2,207	7,738
1992	2,616	2,325	44,966	49,907
1993	2,304	690	4,700	7,694
1994	2,554	620	9,118	12,292
1995	1,454	550	26	2,030
1996	2,416	1,500	40,132	44,048
1997	489	2,530	29	3,048
1998	721	400	233	1,354
1999	495	4,850	1,278	6,623
2000	292	1,090	33,097	34,479
2001	514	1,950	18,160	20,624
2002	168	798	15,741	16,707
2003	411	1,035	44,689	46,135
2004	1,105	8,958	1,136	11,199
Total Acres	26,446	40,594	330,986	398,026
Average	1,556 acres per year	2,388 acres per year	19,470 acres per year	23,413 acres per year

- Forest Plan direction to limit timber harvest to 5 percent per decade has been followed. No harvesting occurred in MA 21 acres in FY2004. Harvest in moose winter range in FY2003 amounted to about 0.5% of Forest Plan identified moose winter range.

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FISHERIES

1) What did we accomplish?

- Forest projects resulting in a fish habitat condition improvement were accomplished (see monitoring element 1f).
- Cooperative restoration work with the Nez Perce Tribe continued in Meadow Creek, Newsome Creek, Red River and Mill Creek watersheds.
- Support to other resource activities minimized negative effects and provided positive benefits to the aquatic resource.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- In general, the planned work was accomplished.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- The results of monitoring continue to be used to adjust the priorities and activities on the Forest to contribute, to the extent possible, to the aquatic resource condition on the Forest. There are no monitoring results available at this time that identifies the need to make large-scale changes in practices on the Forest.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- The fisheries resource on the Nez Perce Forest has long been recognized as a very valuable and important resource. The Forest Plan established fish/water quality objectives for Forest subwatersheds (6^{th} code hydrologic units) considering each areas relative potential and value with respect to aquatic and other resources. The Forest Plan also recognizes that some areas do not meet established objectives, or desired conditions. These conditions are a result of many factors, including historic activities. There are a large number of opportunities on the Forest to restore aquatic resource conditions, many of them complimentary with other Forest resource priorities.

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TIMBER

1) What did we accomplish?

- In FY 2003, 1088 acres were pre-commercially thinned and 767 acres in FY 2004.
- In FY 2003, 1016 Acres were planted and 208 acres in FY 2004.
- In FY 2003 there were 1257 acres Harvested or 14,189 MMBF (27,795 CCF), and 2467 acres or 34,535 MMBF (65,358 CCF) in FY 2004.
- In FY 2003 the Nez Perce National Forest sold 1068 MMBF (2740 CCF) of non-chargeable (not part of ASQ) component such as firewood, post and pole material, and pulp. In FY 2004, 1306 MMBF (3,343 CCF) was sold.
- In FY 2003, the Nez Perce National Forest sold 15,913 MMBF (30,569 CCF) of chargeable (part of ASQ) component. In FY 2004, 7412 MMBF (13,957 CCF) was sold.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- None.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Vegetation management acres need to be increased if the Forest Plan objectives are to be met.

4) What is the current resource condition and trend when compared to desired conditions?

- Higher than historical stocking is contributing to increased insect and disease incidence, as well as contributing to potentially higher fire intensities. The trend needs to change to lower density and create more shade intolerant seral species stands.

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SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES

1) What did we accomplish?

- In FY 2003 the Forest accomplished 169 acres of soil and water improvement projects using a variety of funding sources. Thirty-one acres were improved using appropriated watershed funds, against an assigned target of 40 acres. In FY 2004, the Forest accomplished 123 acres using a variety of funding sources. Twenty-three acres were improved using appropriated watershed funds, against an assigned target of 9 acres. The Forest Plan goal is 200 acres per year.

- Water quality and stream flow monitoring was conducted at eight gauging stations. Data analysis was initiated in 2003 to detect trends in streamflow and sediment yield at two stations. This study was completed in 2004.

- Implementation monitoring was documented on one timber sale in 2003 and two timber sales in 2004.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Most project monitoring was qualitative rather than quantitative due to the funding constraints and work priorities. There are a number of watershed improvement projects that are cleared for implementation, but are waiting for funding and staff time for implementation. In FY03, a heavy fire workload precluded accomplishment of some projects.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- The Forest's watershed improvement program is limited by available funds to implement identified projects. The program rebounded somewhat in FY03 and FY04, partially due to the implementation of several projects funded by the Bonneville Power Administration through the Nez Perce Tribe.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- Watershed condition has probably improved gradually in most watersheds over the past decade, because of marked reductions in road construction and logging, and reduction of mining and grazing impacts. With some exceptions, there has also been a relative absence of large-scale stand-replacing wildfires recent decades. Recovery has been primarily natural. Watershed improvement projects within the last few years have become more ambitious in scope, including road obliteration and decommissioning, as well as mine reclamation projects and channel and valley bottom restoration projects. Staffing and funding limitations have limited accomplishments, as has priority of other work.

- Subbasin-scale assessments identify the need to more highly emphasize restoration in certain key watersheds to recover aquatic habitat potential. Developing a coordinated strategy could increase recovery effectiveness. Recovery rates could be improved by giving higher priority to restoration in program planning and implementation.

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RANGE

1) What did we accomplish?

- Basic permit administration was accomplished on active allotments.
- Implementation monitoring of the Annual Operating Instructions was accomplished.
- Allowable use levels were monitored on active allotments.

2) What outputs and/or work were planned that did not get accomplished?

- Scheduled allotments were not assessed in the NEPA process.
- Additional effectiveness monitoring sites along sensitive stream channels are needed.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Improve administration and inspections of existing range improvements to ensure that required maintenance is completed.
- Improve communication between fish biologists, range specialists, and permittees concerning effective grazing practices and riparian habitat management for federally listed fish.

4) What is the current resource condition and trend compared to the desired condition?

- From visual assessments and implementation monitoring, riparian areas generally appear to be improving or maintaining conditions within active allotments. There remains isolated areas where grazing is affecting specific riparian attributes. Long-term effectiveness monitoring is needed to validate these assessments.
- Upland (non-forested) vegetation is generally in stable condition. However, many low elevation grasslands have a significant component of annual grasses or exotic forbs. Little change is expected in the condition of non-forest vegetation over the next five years.

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RECREATION

1) What did we accomplish?

- The Forest continued use of a new financial reporting system that required completion of a new trail and recreation database.
- Forest personnel continued conducting a physical inventory of recreation and trail assets (20 percent per year) per Forest Service direction. At the end of 2003, condition surveys were completed for 100 percent of our facilities.
- Continuation of the Recreation Fee Demo Program. This includes all the current fee campgrounds and the cabin rental program.
- In FY 2003 a Vegetation Management Plan for the Red River Campground was completed. This is the first campground vegetation management plan completed in R-1 during the past 10 years.
- Implementation of the Red River Camp Ground Vegetation Management Plan was begun with the removal of hazard trees from the site in FY 2003.
- In FY 2003 and FY 2004 the Forest cooperated with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho County Snowmobile Advisory Committee, and local snowmobile clubs of Elk City, Dixie, Kooskia, and Grangeville, to groom 330 miles per year of snow trails in State Snowmobile grooming Areas 25 A and 25 B.
- The Forest worked with a variety of volunteer groups to complete trail maintenance, trail reconstruction and rehabilitation, signing, campground maintenance, and visitor contacts. These volunteers were members of organizations representing motorized trail vehicles and stock users. Many individuals not associated with organized groups also volunteer their skills to assist with the accomplishment of many recreation-associated tasks. In FY 2003, volunteers and partnerships, including Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation and State Trail Rangers Program, completed approximately 14 percent of our trail maintenance, and in FY 2004 they completed about 11 percent or 126 miles.
- Cooperated with Idaho Parks and Recreation in the Park N' Ski program to provide for seven miles of groomed and tracked cross-country ski trails at the Fish Creek Recreation Area in FY 2003 and in FY 2004.
- The Forest administered 40 recreational special use permits per year for outfitter/guides, recreation events and resort programs.
- Maintained developed recreation sites including campgrounds, boat ramps and swimming areas.
- In FY 2003, in conjunction with Idaho Parks and Recreation Dept., the Forest completed installation of new water systems at O'Hara and Johnson Bar Camp Grounds.
- Reconstruction of the Square Mountain Trailhead was completed in FY 2003.
- Reconstruction of the Moore's Station Trailhead was completed in FY 2004.
- Reconstruction/Construction of 30.8 miles of trail was completed in FY 2003 and 13.2 miles in FY 2004.

- Maintenance of 1,430 miles of trail was completed in FY 2003 and 1,172.2 miles in FY 2004.

2) What outputs and/or work were planned that did not get accomplished?

FY 2003

- Slims CG was closed the majority of the use season due to fire closure.
- Lookout Butte rental cabin was closed awaiting SHPO clearance and necessary repair work.
- Red River CG fees were not charged due to problems with the water system.
- Available funding and personnel limited new recreation special-use permits to 1-3 day events.

FY 2004

- Red River CG fees were not charged due to problems with the water system.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- The Forest needs to inventory trail and cross-country vehicle impacts, particularly those created by Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs).
- A new system providing better estimates of the number and kinds of recreation users needs development.
- Conduct a comprehensive Forest review of changes in ROS classification areas.
- Unmanaged OHV recreation is a big concern. The current use of single-track trails by OHVs is creating a difficult situation for access management. The new national OHV rule may help the forest mitigate that problem.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- While the national trend for National Forest recreational use continues to increase, recreation budgets for the Nez Perce National Forest have declined or remained flat over the past several years. Factors such as increasing fixed overhead costs and other resource management priorities in the agency continue to negatively affect the amount of funds available to unit recreation programs. The result has been the loss of permanent and seasonal recreation positions, reduced maintenance of recreational facilities, a smaller recreation special-use program, and fewer miles of trails maintained to standard.
- Despite our funding problems, the forest managed to keep most of our recreation facilities open during FY 2003 and FY 2004. This was due in part to dedicated employees, grant money, partnerships, and volunteer assistance.
- It is a reasonable assumption that recreational use of the Nez Perce National Forest will continue to increase in the near future. Increased use will present a challenge as recreation budgets are projected to decrease over the next few years. Our recreation and trails program could be affected in the following ways:

- Operation and maintenance of recreational facilities will have reduced service levels
- Some campgrounds could be closed
- Fewer miles of trails will be reconstructed and maintained.
- The ability to process recreation special-use permits will be reduced
- Given the circumstances, it will be important for the Forest to determine public needs and manage our organization to meet those needs to the best of our abilities.

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RIVER RECREATION RESOURCES

1) What did we accomplish?

- Routine river patrols were conducted throughout the control seasons on the Main Salmon and Selway Rivers in both FY 2003 and FY 2004. Two patrol crews were employed on the Main Salmon River (one from Slate Creek and one from North Fork Ranger Stations). The availability of Fee Demonstration funds allowed for river patrols before and after the Control Season. Shoulder season patrols were conducted as long as flows permitted on the Selway included before and after the control season. While shoulder season patrols on the Main Salmon began in mid-April in FY 2003 with a trail crew support float and continued through November in order to contact as many hunters and fisherman as possible.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Funding levels did not permit staffing the temporary backcountry ranger position to provide a Forest Service presence in the Rapid River Wild and Scenic area.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Efforts to provide river users with information regarding requirements need to be emphasized at river portals. This includes public and outfitted river users. Methods employed will included launch ramp briefings, outfitter and guide meetings, launch site information boards and participation at outdoor conventions

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- Generally, resource conditions on the Forests designated rivers are excellent. River patrols report increased incidents of micro-litter at lunch and campsites, human and pet waste deposits and camp/cooking fire debris.

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FIRE

1) What did we accomplish?

- The Forest continued successful implementation of the Federal Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy in FY 2003 and FY 2004. This included using appropriate management response, wildland fire use, and management ignited prescribed fire to meet Forest Plan goals, standards, and expectations. The Forest met its goal to prevent, suppress and manage fire commensurate with resource values to be protected, while recognizing fire's ecological role. We implemented five key points of the National Fire Plan: firefighting, preparedness, restoration, and rehabilitation of burned areas, hazardous fuels treatment, community assistance and accountability.

- National Fire Management Analysis was completed in 1997, establishing a most cost efficient level (MEL) for the Nez Perce Forest. This analysis helps establish the annual fire protection funding level. In FY 2003 the Forest was funded at 95 percent of MEL, slightly up from FY2002. In FY 2004, the Forest was again funded at 95 percent of MEL, which was slightly up from FY2003.

- Above average wildfire acres were recorded on the Forest during the summer of 2003 and below average in 2004. Drought conditions that have affected the Clearwater region since the fall of 1998 continue to moderate some, but long-term precipitation deficits continue. Weather patterns across the northern Rocky Mountains were strongly influenced by El Nino conditions beginning in 1998 and continued through the winter of 2003. These El Nino conditions diminished to neutral by the end of 2003 and remained neutral through the summer of 2004. A northwest flow aloft dominated the weather over the Pacific Northwest into Northern Idaho in the Fall and Winter of 2003 and continued into the summer of 2004.

- The hot dry summer of 2003 set the stage for large and long duration fire events beginning in early July. The Forest was slightly touched be several large storms that hit Western Montana hard in mid to late July. The Forest received a full share of lightning ignitions in early August. All Districts received many new starts and several large fires resulted.

- The Clearwater/Nez Perce Forest area utilized 14 incident management teams in 2003 to manage large fire events. From August 11 to September 12 seven incident management teams were managing fires on the Nez Perce Forest; one was a wildland fire use team. For the first time, we had an Area Command Team stationed in Grangeville to coordinate the efforts of the various incident management teams. We made Resources assigned to the Zone were extensively used to suppress the large fires. Fire Management Officers agree there would have been more large fires without ready access to available crews and helicopters. Expanded dispatch was staffed in Grangeville for 57 consecutive days to support large fires.

- Precipitation the first week of September brought a dip in Energy Release Component (ERC) to below the 90th percentile for the first time in two months only to see a rebound to record setting levels again by the first of October. The rebound was short lived as some moisture associated with shorter days and good humidity recovery limited further fire activity.

- All indications by early spring of 2004 were that 2004 would be a challenging fire season similar to the record setting 2003 season. Conditions were mild and generally dry through March into April with widespread moisture episodes moving across the Clearwater region in May and June, these decreasing somewhat in July. The effect of spring moisture resulted in a fire danger that was slow to move above normal values. Temperatures in mid July tended to dry all fuel classes and by late July Energy Release Component (ERC) values had moved above the 90%+ range. Wet thunderstorm activity the second week of August quickly lowered fire danger back to below normal levels and record setting precipitation in September resulted in a much below average fire season overall. Kelly Cr. received 30+ inches of precipitation between May and October while Powell experienced 19+ inches for the same time

- There were no large wildfire events requiring an incident management team on the Forest in 2004. Wildfire activity remained below average across the entire Northern Region despite the continuation of precipitation deficits.

- The periodic rain events followed by only short drying periods both helped and hindered the prescribed burning program on the Clearwater Forest. The large landscape scale burning projects designed to treat natural occurring fuels never came back into prescription after the initial wetting rain events in August. A "green up" of live fuels occurred in September further reducing the ability to ignite natural fuels. As a result the Forest never reached its planned target. The burning of activity fuels created by timber harvest actually surpassed expectations on the Forest. Heavy fuel loadings with large quantities of freshly cured fine fuels found in harvest units ignited and burned readily. Fuels consumed rapidly and a rain event soon eliminated any risk, quickly allowing additional units to be ignited. This cycle continued through September and into October, greatly reducing a backlog of activity fuels treatments.

Figure 1: Clearwater/Nez Perce Forest Fire Management Zone Energy Release Component

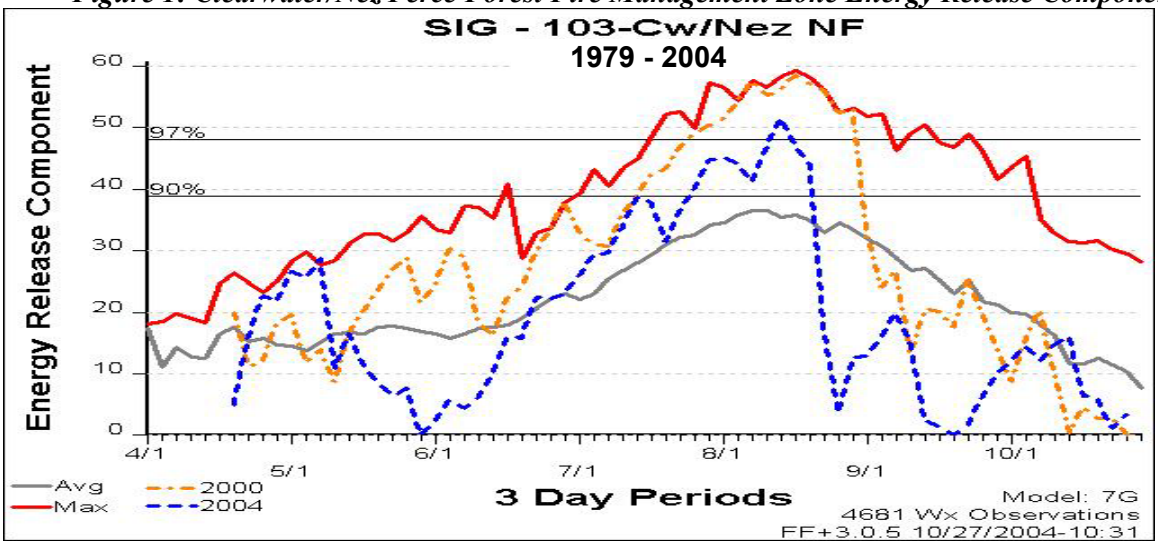

Table 2: Nez Perce National Forest FY 2003 Large Fires

Fire	Administrative Unit(s)	Acres
Bear	Moose Creek	2,174
Pettibone Creek	Moose Creek	11,833
Pinchot	Moose Creek	2,434

Slims	Moose Creek	12,011
Poet	Red River	2,574
Sapp*	Red River	9,686
Berg	Salmon River	2,102
Fiddle	Salmon River	708

*The Sapp Fire started on Payette National Forest and burned onto Red River District, Nez Perce Forest

Table 3: Nez Perce National Forest FY 2004 Large Fires

Fire	Administrative Unit(s)	Acres
Three Links 2 (WFU)	Moose Creek	153
North Battle (WFU)	Moose Creek	882

- All wildfires on the Forest were successfully managed under appropriate management response policies. Lightning fire starts and, therefore, total fire starts and total acreage were above average, with Moose Creek RD having more than double the 10-yr average number of fires in FY 2003. Human caused fire starts were about average. In FY 2004 Lightning fire starts were 70% of the 10 year average, while person caused fire starts were about 1½ times the 10-year average. A total of 119 fires occurred on the Forest in 2004, Almost 30% of these fires were managed for resource benefit (WFU).

- The 10-year trend for managing natural ignitions for resource benefits shows an increase. Approximately 7,072 acres were burned for resource benefits in FY 2003. A total of 1,153 acres burned on the Forest in 2004, this is less that 8% of the 10-year average. 1,108 acres of the total burned acreage on the Forest occurred on fires being managed for resource benefit.

- The Brush Disposal MAR target of 600 acres was met, with 606 acres treated in FY 2003 and 1,167 acres treated in FY 2004.

- Clear/Nez Fire Zone met with Fire Cooperators on a number of issues and programs, including the development county disaster plans, community protection, hazardous fuels treatment around communities, and on economic development strategies.

- The primary hazardous fuels treatment accomplishment of 14,908 acres was 142% of the assigned target in FY 2004.

- FY 2004 was the first year the Forest was required to track secondary fuels treatments. These included approximately 550 acres of precommercial thinning and 350 acres of commercial thinning of overstocked stands, and 1,300 acres of activity fuels treatment. WFU acres burned are considered a secondary fuels treatment that totaled 1,100 acres.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- The natural fuels program target of 9687 acres (7840 non-WUI + 1847 WUI) was not met in FY 2003. Actual accomplishments were 2132 acres (2035 non-WUI + 97 WUI). Spring and fall weather caused conditions exceeding prescription parameters. The Forest accomplished 5663 acres with Wildland Fire Use in FY 2003.
- The Grangeville based National Air Tanker never arrived here due to the grounding of the PB4Y segment of the fleet. However, Idaho Department of Lands positioned two single engine air tankers at Grangeville, which saw wide spread Forest use in FY 2003.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Activity fuel treatment and hazardous fuels treatment monitoring should be done in an interdisciplinary setting to ensure all resource objectives are being identified and met.
- The monitoring of acres treated by fire need to be improved across the Forest (Wildland Fire Use and prescribed fire). Monitor by Land Type Association to see if we are meeting objectives to maintain and sustain healthy ecosystems. Monitoring of burn severity needs to occur.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

Appropriate Management Response

- Suppression oriented responses to wildland fires are generally successful; this continues the past trend of wildland resource protection.

- Fuel accumulation has occurred, increasing the risk of larger more intense fires. The trend toward higher intensity fires is a departure from historic variable fire intensity patterns on the landscape.

Prescribed Fire

- Fewer acres are being burned today from both planned and unplanned ignitions that burned historically (before fire exclusion policies began). The recommendations from Subbasin assessments and watershed analysis are for increased prescribed fire and/or natural fire in most ecosystems. The need is greatest in short fire return interval ecosystems. The Forest has been increasing hazardous fuels treatments.

- The passage of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act and Healthy Forest Initiative will be useful tools and may expedite the NEPA process for qualifying projects.

- Field reviews indicate prescribed burning objectives are being met.

- Despite increases in prescribed burning, the need for fire disturbance processes identified in Subbasin assessments will be difficult to meet.

- The trend for prescribed fire projects is for increasingly complex objectives, constraints, and mitigations (i.e. air quality, noxious weeds) potentially constraining future accomplishments.

Wildland Fire Use

- Natural fires in wilderness areas are returning some areas to a more historic vegetative condition. However, fires are burning fewer acres than were burned in the pre-exclusion era and current fire intensities are often higher than in the past. The desired condition would be a return to historic fire regimes with greater acreages burned at lower fire intensities; recognizing that some areas do need to burn at higher intensities (i.e. mosaics).

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Insects and Disease

1) What did we accomplish?

- Insect and disease conditions on the Forest were monitored via aerial detection flights and field reconnaissance. This contributes to the historic conditions data set.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- All planned insect and disease associated work was accomplished.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Monitoring results indicate the Forest is experiencing outbreaks of at least three insects that may require a shift in management priorities in order to protect and restore forest, wildlife, and aquatic resources. As this information is incorporated into watershed assessments, it will help identify specific needs.

4) What is the current resource condition and trend when compared to desired conditions?

- Insects and diseases are an integral part of forest disturbance regimes and contribute to the makeup and structure of our forests. Current outbreak levels of Douglas-fir beetle and mountain pine beetle are above desired levels. Losses of whitebark pine to white pine blister rust and mountain pine beetle are far beyond desired conditions. Mortality of subalpine fir caused by the balsam wooly adelgid and the western balsam bark beetle are increasing and could become a larger concern in the future.

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FACILITIES

1) What did we accomplish?

Facilities on the Nez Perce National Forest include buildings, administrative sites, property boundaries, and the forest road and trail transportation system. Construction and maintenance of all facilities improves the safety and health of both forest employees and the visiting public.

- **Buildings and Administrative Sites**

  - Monitoring the health and safety of forest buildings and administrative sites is not a monitoring requirement of the Forest Plan. Federal, state, and local laws and regulations govern the construction, maintenance, and use of structures, potable water systems, and sewage treatment systems.

  - The forest has three "public community" water systems that serve the Fenn, Red River, and Slate Creek Ranger Stations. Bacteriological monitoring of all operational water systems is completed monthly. If any systems fail quality requirements, the problems are corrected or the system closed to use.

  - Sanitary surveys are conducted on schedule to ensure water systems are capable of providing quality water.

  - The consumer confidence report is published and distributed annually in accord with State law to disclose water quality testing results and issues.

  - The forest maintains three sewage treatment plants, one each at Fenn, Red River, and Slate Creek Ranger Stations. Effluent from these plants is tested monthly in accordance with each site's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements. The information from these tests is forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency.

  - Drinking water was monitored monthly for bacteriological contamination at all 13 operating potable water systems managed directly by the Forest Service. Drinking water chemical testing was performed. Nitrate tests were conducted in all campgrounds except Castle Creek Campground. Safe drinking water was provided at all systems where potable water is available.

  - Wastewater discharges were monitored at all three sewage treatment plants.

  - 2003 construction work included the Moose Creek District visitor information/office building and water at O'Hara, Johnson Bar and Spring Bar Campgrounds.

  - 2004 construction work included the installation of a Travel Trailer Sanitary Station at Cedar Flats and communications site work at High Camp, Iron Mountain Remote, the O'Hara Radio Site, and Slate Point.

  - Routine maintenance assured all used buildings met basic structural and public health standards.

- Radon and asbestos monitoring continued in 2003. There is still some friable asbestos in a few buildings, but radon and asbestos are not known current health hazards at any Forest Service residence.

- Micro particulate Analysis was completed as required by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to ensure that our wells were not under the influence of surface water. Micro particulate Analysis was completed on waters systems that serve the Fenn, Red River, and Slate Creek Ranger Stations.

- A total of eight potential Shallow Injection Wells were inventoried and reported to the Idaho Department of Water Resources as required by the Environmental Protection Agency.

- Sewer Sludge Disposal Permit applications were completed for Sewage Sludge Disposal Treatment at three sewage treatment sites as requested by the Environmental Protection Agency. Sewer Sludge Disposal Permit applications were completed at the sewage treatment plants that serve the Fenn, Red River, and Slate Creek Ranger Districts.

- Sanitary Surveys and Building Surveys were completed at 100% for the five year Infra reporting cycle.

- Water distribution lines for the Four-plex at the Red River Ranger Station were renovated to replace leaking water distribution lines on the exterior of the Four-plex.

- Pump replacement for well #2 was completed at the Slate Creek Ranger Station.

- Painted residences and bunkhouses at Red River and Elk City (2003).

- Constructed a new accessible district office facility at the Fenn Ranger station.

- Re-roofed the fire office and ranger's garage at Fenn Ranger station (2004).

- Completed Forest Facilities master plan (2004).

- **Road system**

  - Passenger car roads (level 3 thru 5) receiving maintenance = 730 miles (level 3 thru 5) (2003)

  - Passenger car roads (level 3 thru 5) receiving maintenance = 735 miles (2004)

  - High clearance roads (level 1 and 2) receiving maintenance = 250 miles (2003)

  - High clearance roads (level 1 and 2) receiving maintenance = 250 miles (2004)

  - Aggregate placement and road drainage improvements on 7 miles of the seven devils road (road #517) in partnership with RAC funding (2003).

  - Rehabilitation of 12 miles of the Indian Hill road (road #290) following Slim's fire impacts (2003)

- Aggregate placement and drainage improvements on over 9 miles of roads #463 and #2028 in the Skookumchuck drainage. (2003)
- Decommissioned 8.6 miles of road (2003)
- Decommissioned 12 miles of road (2004).
- Aggregate placement and drainage improvements on the Selway river road (#223) (ongoing).
- Replaced East Fork Crooked River Bridge, road #233 (2004)
- Constructed Fourth of July Creek Bridge, road #222C (2004)
- Replaced existing culvert at Corral Creek on Hungry Ridge road #309 with stream simulation structure to provide for improved aquatic passage in cooperation with the Nez Perce Tribe (2004).
- Performed roads program deferred maintenance surveys and reporting as scheduled.
- Performed bridge inspections and reporting as scheduled.

- **Property Boundaries**
  - There are approximately 450 miles of boundary between forest land and private landowners. As of 2003 370 miles had been posted. This increased to 372 miles as of 2004 leaving 78 miles remaining to be posted.
  - In addition to the property lines, there is an estimated 350 miles of wilderness boundaries on the forest. As of 2004 there is 12.5 miles of Wilderness boundary posted.

- **Right-of-Ways**
  - Although no new roads or trails are planned across private property, the Forest has a substantial backlog of roads and trails, which have been managed under prescriptive/appropriated rights. The Forest continues to work on clarifying these situations.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Deferred maintenance needs in the facilities program continues to substantively exceed available funding. As work is identified it is regularly evaluated and prioritized against available funding.
- Funding levels precluded fully maintaining the entire transportation system in both 2003 and 2004. Maintenance of aggregate surfacing, and some bridges continues to be deferred. Some roads have been closed or restricted due to weather damage and will remain so until sufficient funds can be programmed to repair. Maintenance needs continue to be evaluated and prioritized on both an annual basis and as weather events dictate.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Buildings and administrative sites do not have Forest Plan monitoring requirements. Facilities management utilizes existing laws and policy to assess and manage these assets. When problems are discovered during inspections or monitoring they are corrected as funding allows.

- The efficiency of operations in the roads program will continue to be pursued. Efforts to work with partners and to perform work through most efficient means will continue to be pursued.

4) What is the current condition and trend of the resource when compared to the desired condition?

- Currently, the occupied Nez Perce National Forest buildings, water systems, wastewater systems, and administrative sites are in acceptable condition, with few exceptions. However, as buildings and systems age, they require more upkeep each year. Since maintenance funding has not increased with inflation, it becomes a greater challenge each year to maintain structural, health, and safety standards. The Forest Service is addressing this issue nationally and it is hoped that maintenance funding will increase in the future. The Forest is evaluating needs and costs on an ongoing basis to assure that we are not maintaining unneeded facilities. Opportunities for ongoing cost savings are continually pursued.

- Incremental deterioration of the road system can be expected to continue. The roads program will continue to prioritize available funds toward higher use roads and safety issues. The roads program will also continue to work with available partners to obtain additional funding and efficiencies in the management and maintenance of the system.

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MINERALS

1) What did we accomplish?

Forest personnel were able to perform basic administration, minimize unnecessary surface disturbances, and inspect unauthorized mining operations.

During FY 2003:

- 17 non-bonded operations were processed and approved.
- 4 bonded operations were processed and approved.
- There are 23 bonded mining operations on the Forest.
- 37 operations were administered to standard.

During FY 2004:

- 14 non-bonded operations were processed and approved.
- 1 bonded operation was processed and approved.
- There are 21 bonded mining operations on the Forest.
- 36 operations were administered to standard.

2) What outputs and/or work were planned that did not get accomplished?

Red River RD: EMC Placer EA and This Is It Placer EA were both scheduled to be completed in FY 2004.

- The EMC Placer project was divided into exploration and development phases. Analysis of the exploration phase was completed in FY 2004. Analysis Development phase is scheduled to be completed in FY 2005.
- This Is It Placer EA was put on hold pending response of claimant to questions concerning reasonableness of his proposal.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- More efficient methods need to be developed to process and administer mining operations in anticipation of continuing shrinkage of the workforce, Forest priority projects and increase in complexity of issues. The Forest need to more closely coordinate with other federal and state agencies and the Nez Perce Tribe.

4) What is the current resource condition and trend compared to desired conditions?

- The current trend is toward the desired conditions. The Forest was able to keep up with basic administration of mining activities. A shrinking workforce, Forest priority projects and the increasing complexity of issues (such as consultation under the Endangered Species Act) combined with rights under the 1872 mining law, contribute to difficulties in meeting regulation timeframes for processing new plans, adequately inspecting ongoing operations, and assuring that bonds are revised or released on a regular basis.

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EFFECTS TO OTHERS

Public Involvement

1) What did we accomplish?

- The Nez Perce National Forest spent the majority of the past two years involved in the Red River Watershed and "Save Elk City" issues – forest health (specifically mountain pine beetle outbreaks resulting in dead and dying lodgepole pine), and possible local mill closures. This year also included another active fire season.

- There were numerous public involvement efforts related to other specific projects. Techniques ranged from media ads to traditional scoping letters, public information meetings and public comment forums. There were project-related displays, field trips, open houses and news releases.

- Several Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) projects were proposed with five projects completed in FY 2003, and seven projects either newly initiated or underway. The completed projects were: Red River Restoration (NEPA/EAWS), Idaho County Weed Control, Palouse Weed Control, Deer Creek Highway District Weed Control, and Seven Devils Road Rehabilitation. In FY 2004 seven projects were completed and ten projects were newly initiated or underway. The completed projects were: Rapid River Trail Head NEPA, Idaho County Weed Control, Deer Creek Highway District Weed Control, Adams Ranger House Restoration (Phase 1), Morrison Ridge Timber Project, Elk City Defensible Space, and Meadow Face Culvert Replacement.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- All targets were met.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- None.

4) What is the current resource condition and trend compared to the desired condition?

- The desire for public involvement is to include the public more in the planning process. This could be accomplished by developing public involvement plans for projects and by doing more collaborative project development. This approach ensures all interests are represented as we plan and/or implement high priority projects outlined in our annual Program of Work.

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ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

1) What did we accomplish?

- The Forest has plans on file to renovate a family residence at the Fenn Ranger Station for accessibility. Work has begun on conceptual plans for renovating a bunkhouse and a family residence for accessibility at each ranger station.

- The new accessible office and visitor center at Fenn Ranger Station was completed in the fall of 2003. We are now able to provide accessible visitor services and barrier free employment at all our administrative sites on the forest. The accessible visitor services at the Fenn Ranger Station include interpretive displays of local and forest service history.

- A new accessible warehouse at the Grangeville Air Center was built. We are still finishing the inside of this building. A sidewalk has been completed to one door and provides easy access. Other dirt/gravel walkways to the building provide difficult access. This building will be completed as funding becomes available. The sidewalk that provides access to a museum at the Slate Creek Ranger Station was completed in the spring of 2003.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- We were unable, again, to make progress on administrative site accessibility surveys and transition plans. However, all administrative site surveys and transition plans will be completed as soon as time permits.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- None.

4) What are current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- Forest-wide, three recreation sites (including a fishing area) are accessible at the Easy level, another four sites are accessible at the Moderate level, and twenty sites are accessible at the Difficult level. Red River District coordinates with Idaho Department of Fish and Game to provide a hunting program for mobility impaired hunters. Two other districts on the Forest, Moose Creek and Clearwater, should be prepared for accessible hunting for the 2005 hunting season. The goal is to provide accessible opportunities throughout the entire spectrum of Forest recreation. We are making progress, but much remains to be done.

- With the completion of the Fenn Visitor Center, the Forest headquarters office and all district offices now have accessible office space available. The goal to provide accessible offices and residences at all administrative sites is close to being achieved, we still need to provide accessible housing at the Fenn Ranger Station. The trend is positive.

- Introduction: The Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) of 1968 requires that all public buildings, facilities, and programs funded in whole or part with federal funds be accessible to and usable by physically disabled person. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1978,

states, "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States, shall solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by federal financial assistance or by any Executive Agency." The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 provides standards – even when no federal funds are involved – for addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, transportation, telecommunications, and services operated by private entities.

- In 1991, the Nez Perce Forest Human Resources Team identified the need to evaluate Forest facilities for accessibility to people with disabilities. In June 1991, a survey was initiated using a new Forest Service accessibility survey tool designed to determine Forest campgrounds/picnic area accessibility. A special emphasis program was created in 1992 to address issues concerning people with disabilities. During the initial facilities monitoring stages we realized the need for TDD (Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf) to provide better customer service. TTDs have been installed in all district offices and the Forest Headquarters. The TTD phone numbers are published in local telephone directories.

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HERITAGE RESOURCES

1) What did we accomplish?

- During FY2003, two new heritage-sites were reported for the Forest
- 144 acres were reported as surveyed for heritage resources
- Thirty-one sites were revisited and monitored to assess site condition

2) What outputs and/or work were planned that did not get accomplished?

- A change in the Heritage Forest Program Manger occurred in FY2003. The resulting discontinuity makes assessing unaccomplished outputs difficult, however, all MAR related targets were met.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- None

4) What is the current resource condition and trend compared to desired conditions?

- Compatibility with desired condition is generally good; however, the continuance of Forest Plan mandated "upward-trend" aquatic projects will continue to adversely affect heritage resources.

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LANDS AND SPECIAL USES

1) What did we accomplish?

- Maintained and monitored INFRA, the Special Use Data System
- Maintained Forest Boundary
- Processed most permit applications

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Several expired Special Use Permits were reviewed but processing was not completed.
- The Forest was unable to address unauthorized uses.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Additional funding and staffing are needed to address the number of unperfected right-of-ways to public lands in a timely manner. Additional funding and staffing is also needed to process permit renewals and applications.
- The Forest needs to prioritize unauthorized uses and prosecute cases under the statutes and title. County RS-2477 validations continue making Forest access management a potential problem.

4) What is the current resource condition and trend compared to desired conditions?

- The Forest's progress in dealing with unperfected right-of-ways is slow.
- The Forest is unable to address both expired permits and permit applications in a timely manner.

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NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT

1) What did we accomplish?

- Forest personnel treated approximately 2000 acres of invasive weeds over two fiscal years.
- Insects were released for control of spotted knapweed
- Weed treatment continued in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness.
- The Forest continued implementing weed free forage requirements and washing of off-road logging equipment as prevention practices.
- The Forest continued integrating the noxious weed program with community based coordinated weed management efforts in the Salmon and Clearwater drainages.
- Forest personnel along with other federal and state agencies implemented an interagency Weed Management Strategy for Idaho.
- The Forest, University of Idaho, Forest Health Protection Group, and Nez Perce Tribe Bio-control Center monitored biocontrol agents for yellow starthistle and Spotted knapweed in the Salmon and Clearwater basins. The work included distribution, release and monitoring of approved insects.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Treated invasive weed acres are under 10% of the total infestations found on the Forest.
- Weed management off the Forest across all lands is far below the level necessary to slow the spread of many weeds. Limited funding requires weed managers to strongly prioritize management efforts.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- The coordinated implementation of prevention practices statewide (all lands) is poorly developed, causing ineffective and inconsistent results across a broad regional scale.
- More emphasis and time needs to be placed on coordinating practices and treatment across all ownerships.
- A long-term early alert system needs to be developed to track the introduction and spread new invasive exotic plants into the region and state.
- Additional funds are needed to manage and treat invasive weeds at a biologically significant level.
- Invasive weed management needs to be integrated into vegetation restoration strategies that are being implemented across all property ownerships.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- Many noxious and invasive weeds continue to spread across the Forest and on other lands. Low elevation grasslands, conifer savannas, and recently disturbed sites are at greatest risk for invasion by invasive weeds.

- Transportation corridors (trails and roads) and river systems continue to be the main pathway of weed spread.

- Broad scale partnerships resulted in more coordinated weed management across all properties.

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SENSITIVE PLANTS

1) What did we accomplish?

- Forest personnel continued to survey Sensitive plants in high probability habitats. Surveys were conducted within planned project areas.
- New occurrences of sensitive plants were found and documented.
- Monitoring continued on Puzzling Halimolobos, broad-fruit mariposa and Cluster lady-slipper.
- Biological Assessments (BA) and Biological Evaluations (BE) continue to be completed for proposed projects.
- Rare plants are being integrated into landscape and planning area assessments.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Monitoring data over the past few years has not been summarized.
- Suitable habitat inventory outside project areas continues to be low priority.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Rare plants need to be more integrated into project prescriptions and design. Many projects could be designed to improve sensitive plant habitats along with accomplishing other vegetation objectives.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- It appears at this time that the known populations of sensitive plants are secure. The probability of population viability loss over the short-term is considered low. Monitoring suggests there is significant yearly variation in population levels. This variation appears to be a common trait among herbaceous plants.

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AIR RESOURCES

1) What did we accomplish?

- A key component of the Region 1 Air Resource Monitoring Program is the monitoring of lake chemistry, which is quite reactive to atmospheric processes. In FY 2001, Phase III monitoring of wilderness lakes to determine trends in acid deposition and other atmospheric related changes to lake ecosystems were done. Shasta Lake in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness has stable to slight upward trends in pH, ANC, and conductivity.

- No active sampling of air quality was done on the Forest. However, Sula Peak, to the east of the Forest, monitored fine mass concentration of air that passed over the Forest.

- The Forest supported air quality forecasting through daily balloon launches during the fall burn period, and through coordinating smoke management reporting for North Idaho Airsheds.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Currently the Forest has completed all planned monitoring of air resources.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- None

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- Currently the air quality on the Forest is good and monitoring does not indicate any significant deterioration from desired condition.

- A national initiative to substantially increase hazardous fuels treatments in short fire return interval ecosystems on federal land would produce a corresponding increase in smoke and particulate matter, if the only treatment is prescribed fire. Future hazardous fuels project proposals should include tradeoff analysis of prescribed fire v. mechanical treatments to assess the smoke effects. Prescribed fire operations were occasionally constrained by the Airshed coordinator during the fall burn period.

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LIST OF PREPARERS

The following individuals authored the FY 2003 – FY 2004 Nez Perce Forest Monitoring and Evaluation Report.

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Mike McGee	Timber
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Laura Barrett/Bill Wilkinson	Fire
Randall Walker	Insects and Disease
Rainette Didler/Lois Geary	Economics
Lois Geary	Budget and Finance
Randy Borniger/Laurie Doman	Recreation, Wilderness, Trails
John Fantini	Rivers
Steve Lucas	Heritage Resources
Ester McCullough	Land Management Planning
Joanne Bonn/Michelle Godowa	Wildlife
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Joe Bonn/Mike Shoup	Facilities
Paul Christensen	Disabled Persons Access
Daryl Mullinix	Lands and Special Uses
Vern Bretz	Minerals

The Forest Supervisor, Forest Staff Officers and District Rangers reviewed the report.

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NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

16TH & 17TH ANNUAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR 2003 AND 2004

INFORMATION REQUESTS AND COMMENTS

Information requests or comments about the Nez Perce National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan and/or Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report can be directed to one of the following offices:

Salmon River
Ranger District
Slate Creek Ranger Station
HC01, Box 70
White Bird, ID 83554
Phone: (208) 839-2211
TTY: (208) 839-2328
FAX: (208) 839-2730

Moose Creek
Ranger District
Fenn Ranger Station
HC 75, Box 91
Kooskia, ID 83539
Phone: (208) 926-4258
TTY: (208) 926-7725
FAX: (208) 926-8925

Clearwater
Ranger District
1005 Highway 13
Grangeville, ID 83530
Phone: (208) 983-1963
TTY: (208) 983-0696
FAX: (208) 983-4042

Red River
Ranger District
Elk City Ranger Station
PO Box 416
Elk City, ID 83525
Phone: (208) 842-2245
TTY: (208) 842-2935
FAX: (208) 842-2150

Nez Perce National Forest
Headquarters Office
1005 Highway 13
Grangeville, ID 83530
Phone: (208) 983-1950
TTY: (208) 983-2280
FAX: (208) 983-4099

INTRODUCTION

This document highlights the major issues) that are reported in detail in the Forest's combined 16th and 17th Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report pertaining to fiscal years 2003 and 2004. Upon request, a copy of the Nez Perce National Forest's 16th & 17th Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report will be sent to you. Contact the Nez Perce National Forest Supervisor's Office for a copy. Copies are also available for review at any of the Forest offices listed on the previous page and on the Forest's web page at www.fs.fed.us/r1/nezperce/

This document is organized by resource. Four questions are addressed for each resource:

1. What did we accomplish?
2. What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?
3. What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?
4. What is the current condition and trend of the resource when compared to the desired condition?

The Nez Perce National Forest has continued the monitoring program in 2003 and 2004. A lodgepole pine beetle epidemic, increased by drought conditions, continues to affect the Nez Perce landscape and cause widespread mortality. Forest use and perceptions of the forest continue to be influenced by these types of events, which in turn are affecting both local and national policies. In addition to the standard Forest Plan requirements, we continued to monitor and evaluate these and other ecosystem and social trends in 2003 and 2004.

Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) are intended to provide long-range management direction for each National Forest. Forest Plans provide guidance for balancing the physical, biological, and social components of forest management in the form of goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines.

Continual Improvement is important to the Nez Perce National Forest. In 2003, the Nez Perce initiated the process to revise its Forest Plan. The current release date of the Revised Plan is September 2007. In conjunction with the Forest Plan Revision the Forest will be implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS) which will record the way the Forest completes various activities. In the mean time if you have any suggestions for improvement or comments regarding the current monitoring and evaluation report please let us know. Written comment may be sent to:

Jane L. Cottrell, Forest Supervisor
Nez Perce National Forest
1005 Highway 13
Grangeville, ID 83530

If you would rather speak with someone in person, please call us at (208) 983-1950, or visit any of the forest offices to share your comments.

__/s/ Jane L. Cottrell_____ ___7/24/06_____
JANE L. COTTRELL Date
Forest Supervisor

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WILDLIFE

1) What did we accomplish?

- We acknowledged unnatural stand-replacing fire risks particularly to old growth reserves in ponderosa pine and dry Douglas-fir cover types and initiated adaptive management to begin reducing the risks of future habitat losses. Forest personnel have begun designing and implementing high-intensity fire risk reduction and ecosystem restoration treatments incorporating timber harvest/thinning and/or prescribed fire plans as tools (i.e. Salmon River Canyon fire project, Meadow Face Stewardship Project, and Clean Slate Project).

- We continue supporting the prudent, careful application of biocontrol agents to suppress noxious weed infestation affecting native plant communities and big game winter range.

- We reviewed the effect of land management activities on federally listed and Forest Service sensitive species and prepared over 40 biological assessments and evaluations to meet Endangered Species Act and Forest Service policy requirements. We maintained protections and habitat conditions for threatened and endangered species through informal consultations and good working relations with U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- We continued broad-scale neotropical migrant bird habitat inventories. Forest personnel continued coordination and data sharing across the Northern Region to help improve landscape-scale monitoring and international biological diversity issues related to land birds.

- We continue population monitoring of Forest Management Indicator Species to the extent possible with available funding, staffing and assigned work priorities.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Big game winter range improvements funded by wildlife dollars fell short of Forest Plan prescribed burning objectives by about 5,000 acres for FY2003, due principally to priority placement of people and resources to wildfire emergencies. However, we have met or exceeded the 5,000 acres through wildland fire use.

- Timber harvest treatment on big game winter ranges fell short of Forest Plan goals for FY2003 and FY2004.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- In times of severely low budgets and limited personnel, monitoring resources must be focused on a reduced number of priority ecological indicator species.

- Population trend monitoring of elk, big horn sheep, and moose should be dropped as Forest Service monitoring items since these species are regulated principally through hunting and are carefully managed and monitored by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. These species were originally selected as management indicators principally due to their featured status as hunted species rather than serving as ecological indicators. None of these species is even remotely considered rare or in jeopardy of population viability risk.

- Some federally listed Forest Plan management indicator species (bald eagle, wolf, grizzly, and peregrine) should be de-emphasized and monitored intermittently or dropped entirely as management indicators since: 1) They are monitored across larger landscapes by multiple agencies, 2) Most have made substantial progress toward recovery and have been down-listed or are essentially recovered, and 3) Local populations status and recovery information far exceeds available information on other less studied species whose habitats have been severely reduced.

- Reduce the number of individual management indicator species, based on information above.

- Incorporate and formally adopt the North Idaho old-growth standards in the Forest Plan revision process.

- Change snag monitoring to become a coordinated, joint effort among wildlife, timber, fire and fuel wood administration disciplines to ensure greater integration.

- Change road density monitoring (i.e. open/closed roads and trails) to a multi-resource monitoring element using GIS technology to track it. Consider adapting habitat effectiveness monitoring for elk (summer), forest carnivores, grizzly bear habitat, and other human-activity-adverse species to use this single variable.

- Incorporate habitat diversity (vegetation communities/successional stages status) as a new, GIS-tracked, multi-resource monitoring element Forest-wide to track structural diversity to better determine quality of wildlife habitat.

- Drop grand fir/Pacific yew (designated management area #21 in the Forest Plan) monitoring due to major shifts in forest management and harvest strategies away from clear-cut/burn techniques.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- Lower elevation habitat types and "protected" old growth areas in ponderosa pine and dry Douglas-fir habitats are generally too heavily stocked and fuel-rich. These conditions can lead to stand replacing fire regimes instead of the historic non-lethal or mixed fire regimes. Active fuel reduction by using fire of mechanical methods (or a combination of methods) may help prevent conversion of late successional habitat to early succession resulting from artificially high intensity fires. Habitats of some Nez Perce Forest sensitive, Management Indicator Species (MIS) and Neotropical birds are transitioning from highly suitable open late succession conditions to lower quality dense late succession habitats. Understory condition, canopy cover and forest composition shifts are occurring as a result of fire exclusion. Recent trends in wildland fire use are helping reverse these artificial habitat transitions.

- Most federally listed terrestrial species with the exception of lynx are in relatively good condition with upward trends or are essentially recovered. Recovery for bald eagles and wolves is on schedule or ahead of schedule. Peregrine falcons were de-listed in 1999.

Grizzly bear reintroduction and recovery is uncertain and has been temporarily shelved by the Department of the Interior.

- Big game winter range condition imbalances and forage distribution is being cited along with declining summer forage conditions as key factors in slow recovery of local elk population numbers from heavy hunting pressure and effects of current predator populations. In the longer term, species such as wolverine, wolf, and potentially lynx depend on the proper amounts and distribution of early seral habitats in the forest landscape which support key species used as prey and carrion. Forest carnivores including wolverine, wolves, lynx, and other species have likely been indirectly affected by past fire exclusion and unchecked forest succession in many habitat types. Current wildland fire use trends are helping to reverse the negative effects of fire exclusion in our fire-adapted habitats. These trends are helping to reestablish and sustain appropriate successional stage and forest type distributions. See Table 1 below.

- Over the past 10 years, timber harvest that has increased big game forage has averaged approximately 807 acres per year (18 percent of the Forest Plan projection). Prescribed burning has averaged 2,366 acres over the past 10 years (47% of the Forest Plan projection). Though timber harvest and prescribed burning have fallen short of projected acreages, wildfires have compensated for the shortfall. Wildland fires have averaged 15,452 acres per year over the past 10-years (329% of the Forest Plan projection). Combined, these activities have altered an average of 18,625 acres per year over the past 10 years (130% of the Forest Plan projection).

Table 1: Nez Perce Forest timber harvest, prescribed fire and wildland fire acres from 1988-2004.

Year	Regeneration Timber Harvest Acres	Prescribed Fire Acres	Wildland Fire Acres	Total Acres
1988	2,911	1,000	105,943	109,854
1989	2,544	2,800	8,888	14,232
1990	2,521	6,898	643	10,062
1991	2,931	2,600	2,207	7,738
1992	2,616	2,325	44,966	49,907
1993	2,304	690	4,700	7,694
1994	2,554	620	9,118	12,292
1995	1,454	550	26	2,030
1996	2,416	1,500	40,132	44,048
1997	489	2,530	29	3,048
1998	721	400	233	1,354
1999	495	4,850	1,278	6,623
2000	292	1,090	33,097	34,479
2001	514	1,950	18,160	20,624
2002	168	798	15,741	16,707
2003	411	1,035	44,689	46,135
2004	1,105	8,958	1,136	11,199
Total Acres	26,446	40,594	330,986	398,026
Average	1,556 acres per year	2,388 acres per year	19,470 acres per year	23,413 acres per year

- Forest Plan direction to limit timber harvest to 5 percent per decade has been followed. No harvesting occurred in MA 21 acres in FY2004. Harvest in moose winter range in FY2003 amounted to about 0.5% of Forest Plan identified moose winter range.

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FISHERIES

1) What did we accomplish?

- Forest projects resulting in a fish habitat condition improvement were accomplished (see monitoring element 1f).
- Cooperative restoration work with the Nez Perce Tribe continued in Meadow Creek, Newsome Creek, Red River and Mill Creek watersheds.
- Support to other resource activities minimized negative effects and provided positive benefits to the aquatic resource.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- In general, the planned work was accomplished.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- The results of monitoring continue to be used to adjust the priorities and activities on the Forest to contribute, to the extent possible, to the aquatic resource condition on the Forest. There are no monitoring results available at this time that identifies the need to make large-scale changes in practices on the Forest.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- The fisheries resource on the Nez Perce Forest has long been recognized as a very valuable and important resource. The Forest Plan established fish/water quality objectives for Forest subwatersheds (6^{th} code hydrologic units) considering each areas relative potential and value with respect to aquatic and other resources. The Forest Plan also recognizes that some areas do not meet established objectives, or desired conditions. These conditions are a result of many factors, including historic activities. There are a large number of opportunities on the Forest to restore aquatic resource conditions, many of them complimentary with other Forest resource priorities.

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TIMBER

1) What did we accomplish?

- In FY 2003, 1088 acres were pre-commercially thinned and 767 acres in FY 2004.
- In FY 2003, 1016 Acres were planted and 208 acres in FY 2004.
- In FY 2003 there were 1257 acres Harvested or 14,189 MMBF (27,795 CCF), and 2467 acres or 34,535 MMBF (65,358 CCF) in FY 2004.
- In FY 2003 the Nez Perce National Forest sold 1068 MMBF (2740 CCF) of non-chargeable (not part of ASQ) component such as firewood, post and pole material, and pulp. In FY 2004, 1306 MMBF (3,343 CCF) was sold.
- In FY 2003, the Nez Perce National Forest sold 15,913 MMBF (30,569 CCF) of chargeable (part of ASQ) component. In FY 2004, 7412 MMBF (13,957 CCF) was sold.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- None.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Vegetation management acres need to be increased if the Forest Plan objectives are to be met.

4) What is the current resource condition and trend when compared to desired conditions?

- Higher than historical stocking is contributing to increased insect and disease incidence, as well as contributing to potentially higher fire intensities. The trend needs to change to lower density and create more shade intolerant seral species stands.

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SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES

1) What did we accomplish?

- In FY 2003 the Forest accomplished 169 acres of soil and water improvement projects using a variety of funding sources. Thirty-one acres were improved using appropriated watershed funds, against an assigned target of 40 acres. In FY 2004, the Forest accomplished 123 acres using a variety of funding sources. Twenty-three acres were improved using appropriated watershed funds, against an assigned target of 9 acres. The Forest Plan goal is 200 acres per year.

- Water quality and stream flow monitoring was conducted at eight gauging stations. Data analysis was initiated in 2003 to detect trends in streamflow and sediment yield at two stations. This study was completed in 2004.

- Implementation monitoring was documented on one timber sale in 2003 and two timber sales in 2004.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Most project monitoring was qualitative rather than quantitative due to the funding constraints and work priorities. There are a number of watershed improvement projects that are cleared for implementation, but are waiting for funding and staff time for implementation. In FY03, a heavy fire workload precluded accomplishment of some projects.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- The Forest's watershed improvement program is limited by available funds to implement identified projects. The program rebounded somewhat in FY03 and FY04, partially due to the implementation of several projects funded by the Bonneville Power Administration through the Nez Perce Tribe.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- Watershed condition has probably improved gradually in most watersheds over the past decade, because of marked reductions in road construction and logging, and reduction of mining and grazing impacts. With some exceptions, there has also been a relative absence of large-scale stand-replacing wildfires recent decades. Recovery has been primarily natural. Watershed improvement projects within the last few years have become more ambitious in scope, including road obliteration and decommissioning, as well as mine reclamation projects and channel and valley bottom restoration projects. Staffing and funding limitations have limited accomplishments, as has priority of other work.

- Subbasin-scale assessments identify the need to more highly emphasize restoration in certain key watersheds to recover aquatic habitat potential. Developing a coordinated strategy could increase recovery effectiveness. Recovery rates could be improved by giving higher priority to restoration in program planning and implementation.

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RANGE

1) What did we accomplish?

- Basic permit administration was accomplished on active allotments.
- Implementation monitoring of the Annual Operating Instructions was accomplished.
- Allowable use levels were monitored on active allotments.

2) What outputs and/or work were planned that did not get accomplished?

- Scheduled allotments were not assessed in the NEPA process.
- Additional effectiveness monitoring sites along sensitive stream channels are needed.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Improve administration and inspections of existing range improvements to ensure that required maintenance is completed.
- Improve communication between fish biologists, range specialists, and permittees concerning effective grazing practices and riparian habitat management for federally listed fish.

4) What is the current resource condition and trend compared to the desired condition?

- From visual assessments and implementation monitoring, riparian areas generally appear to be improving or maintaining conditions within active allotments. There remains isolated areas where grazing is affecting specific riparian attributes. Long-term effectiveness monitoring is needed to validate these assessments.
- Upland (non-forested) vegetation is generally in stable condition. However, many low elevation grasslands have a significant component of annual grasses or exotic forbs. Little change is expected in the condition of non-forest vegetation over the next five years.

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RECREATION

1) What did we accomplish?

- The Forest continued use of a new financial reporting system that required completion of a new trail and recreation database.
- Forest personnel continued conducting a physical inventory of recreation and trail assets (20 percent per year) per Forest Service direction. At the end of 2003, condition surveys were completed for 100 percent of our facilities.
- Continuation of the Recreation Fee Demo Program. This includes all the current fee campgrounds and the cabin rental program.
- In FY 2003 a Vegetation Management Plan for the Red River Campground was completed. This is the first campground vegetation management plan completed in R-1 during the past 10 years.
- Implementation of the Red River Camp Ground Vegetation Management Plan was begun with the removal of hazard trees from the site in FY 2003.
- In FY 2003 and FY 2004 the Forest cooperated with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho County Snowmobile Advisory Committee, and local snowmobile clubs of Elk City, Dixie, Kooskia, and Grangeville, to groom 330 miles per year of snow trails in State Snowmobile grooming Areas 25 A and 25 B.
- The Forest worked with a variety of volunteer groups to complete trail maintenance, trail reconstruction and rehabilitation, signing, campground maintenance, and visitor contacts. These volunteers were members of organizations representing motorized trail vehicles and stock users. Many individuals not associated with organized groups also volunteer their skills to assist with the accomplishment of many recreation-associated tasks. In FY 2003, volunteers and partnerships, including Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation and State Trail Rangers Program, completed approximately 14 percent of our trail maintenance, and in FY 2004 they completed about 11 percent or 126 miles.
- Cooperated with Idaho Parks and Recreation in the Park N' Ski program to provide for seven miles of groomed and tracked cross-country ski trails at the Fish Creek Recreation Area in FY 2003 and in FY 2004.
- The Forest administered 40 recreational special use permits per year for outfitter/guides, recreation events and resort programs.
- Maintained developed recreation sites including campgrounds, boat ramps and swimming areas.
- In FY 2003, in conjunction with Idaho Parks and Recreation Dept., the Forest completed installation of new water systems at O'Hara and Johnson Bar Camp Grounds.
- Reconstruction of the Square Mountain Trailhead was completed in FY 2003.
- Reconstruction of the Moore's Station Trailhead was completed in FY 2004.
- Reconstruction/Construction of 30.8 miles of trail was completed in FY 2003 and 13.2 miles in FY 2004.

- Maintenance of 1,430 miles of trail was completed in FY 2003 and 1,172.2 miles in FY 2004.

2) What outputs and/or work were planned that did not get accomplished?

FY 2003

- Slims CG was closed the majority of the use season due to fire closure.
- Lookout Butte rental cabin was closed awaiting SHPO clearance and necessary repair work.
- Red River CG fees were not charged due to problems with the water system.
- Available funding and personnel limited new recreation special-use permits to 1-3 day events.

FY 2004

- Red River CG fees were not charged due to problems with the water system.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- The Forest needs to inventory trail and cross-country vehicle impacts, particularly those created by Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs).
- A new system providing better estimates of the number and kinds of recreation users needs development.
- Conduct a comprehensive Forest review of changes in ROS classification areas.
- Unmanaged OHV recreation is a big concern. The current use of single-track trails by OHVs is creating a difficult situation for access management. The new national OHV rule may help the forest mitigate that problem.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- While the national trend for National Forest recreational use continues to increase, recreation budgets for the Nez Perce National Forest have declined or remained flat over the past several years. Factors such as increasing fixed overhead costs and other resource management priorities in the agency continue to negatively affect the amount of funds available to unit recreation programs. The result has been the loss of permanent and seasonal recreation positions, reduced maintenance of recreational facilities, a smaller recreation special-use program, and fewer miles of trails maintained to standard.
- Despite our funding problems, the forest managed to keep most of our recreation facilities open during FY 2003 and FY 2004. This was due in part to dedicated employees, grant money, partnerships, and volunteer assistance.
- It is a reasonable assumption that recreational use of the Nez Perce National Forest will continue to increase in the near future. Increased use will present a challenge as recreation budgets are projected to decrease over the next few years. Our recreation and trails program could be affected in the following ways:

- Operation and maintenance of recreational facilities will have reduced service levels
- Some campgrounds could be closed
- Fewer miles of trails will be reconstructed and maintained.
- The ability to process recreation special-use permits will be reduced
- Given the circumstances, it will be important for the Forest to determine public needs and manage our organization to meet those needs to the best of our abilities.

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RIVER RECREATION RESOURCES

1) What did we accomplish?

- Routine river patrols were conducted throughout the control seasons on the Main Salmon and Selway Rivers in both FY 2003 and FY 2004. Two patrol crews were employed on the Main Salmon River (one from Slate Creek and one from North Fork Ranger Stations). The availability of Fee Demonstration funds allowed for river patrols before and after the Control Season. Shoulder season patrols were conducted as long as flows permitted on the Selway included before and after the control season. While shoulder season patrols on the Main Salmon began in mid-April in FY 2003 with a trail crew support float and continued through November in order to contact as many hunters and fisherman as possible.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Funding levels did not permit staffing the temporary backcountry ranger position to provide a Forest Service presence in the Rapid River Wild and Scenic area.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Efforts to provide river users with information regarding requirements need to be emphasized at river portals. This includes public and outfitted river users. Methods employed will included launch ramp briefings, outfitter and guide meetings, launch site information boards and participation at outdoor conventions

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- Generally, resource conditions on the Forests designated rivers are excellent. River patrols report increased incidents of micro-litter at lunch and campsites, human and pet waste deposits and camp/cooking fire debris.

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FIRE

1) What did we accomplish?

- The Forest continued successful implementation of the Federal Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy in FY 2003 and FY 2004. This included using appropriate management response, wildland fire use, and management ignited prescribed fire to meet Forest Plan goals, standards, and expectations. The Forest met its goal to prevent, suppress and manage fire commensurate with resource values to be protected, while recognizing fire's ecological role. We implemented five key points of the National Fire Plan: firefighting, preparedness, restoration, and rehabilitation of burned areas, hazardous fuels treatment, community assistance and accountability.

- National Fire Management Analysis was completed in 1997, establishing a most cost efficient level (MEL) for the Nez Perce Forest. This analysis helps establish the annual fire protection funding level. In FY 2003 the Forest was funded at 95 percent of MEL, slightly up from FY2002. In FY 2004, the Forest was again funded at 95 percent of MEL, which was slightly up from FY2003.

- Above average wildfire acres were recorded on the Forest during the summer of 2003 and below average in 2004. Drought conditions that have affected the Clearwater region since the fall of 1998 continue to moderate some, but long-term precipitation deficits continue. Weather patterns across the northern Rocky Mountains were strongly influenced by El Nino conditions beginning in 1998 and continued through the winter of 2003. These El Nino conditions diminished to neutral by the end of 2003 and remained neutral through the summer of 2004. A northwest flow aloft dominated the weather over the Pacific Northwest into Northern Idaho in the Fall and Winter of 2003 and continued into the summer of 2004.

- The hot dry summer of 2003 set the stage for large and long duration fire events beginning in early July. The Forest was slightly touched be several large storms that hit Western Montana hard in mid to late July. The Forest received a full share of lightning ignitions in early August. All Districts received many new starts and several large fires resulted.

- The Clearwater/Nez Perce Forest area utilized 14 incident management teams in 2003 to manage large fire events. From August 11 to September 12 seven incident management teams were managing fires on the Nez Perce Forest; one was a wildland fire use team. For the first time, we had an Area Command Team stationed in Grangeville to coordinate the efforts of the various incident management teams. We made Resources assigned to the Zone were extensively used to suppress the large fires. Fire Management Officers agree there would have been more large fires without ready access to available crews and helicopters. Expanded dispatch was staffed in Grangeville for 57 consecutive days to support large fires.

- Precipitation the first week of September brought a dip in Energy Release Component (ERC) to below the 90th percentile for the first time in two months only to see a rebound to record setting levels again by the first of October. The rebound was short lived as some moisture associated with shorter days and good humidity recovery limited further fire activity.

- All indications by early spring of 2004 were that 2004 would be a challenging fire season similar to the record setting 2003 season. Conditions were mild and generally dry through March into April with widespread moisture episodes moving across the Clearwater region in May and June, these decreasing somewhat in July. The effect of spring moisture resulted in a fire danger that was slow to move above normal values. Temperatures in mid July tended to dry all fuel classes and by late July Energy Release Component (ERC) values had moved above the 90%+ range. Wet thunderstorm activity the second week of August quickly lowered fire danger back to below normal levels and record setting precipitation in September resulted in a much below average fire season overall. Kelly Cr. received 30+ inches of precipitation between May and October while Powell experienced 19+ inches for the same time

- There were no large wildfire events requiring an incident management team on the Forest in 2004. Wildfire activity remained below average across the entire Northern Region despite the continuation of precipitation deficits.

- The periodic rain events followed by only short drying periods both helped and hindered the prescribed burning program on the Clearwater Forest. The large landscape scale burning projects designed to treat natural occurring fuels never came back into prescription after the initial wetting rain events in August. A "green up" of live fuels occurred in September further reducing the ability to ignite natural fuels. As a result the Forest never reached its planned target. The burning of activity fuels created by timber harvest actually surpassed expectations on the Forest. Heavy fuel loadings with large quantities of freshly cured fine fuels found in harvest units ignited and burned readily. Fuels consumed rapidly and a rain event soon eliminated any risk, quickly allowing additional units to be ignited. This cycle continued through September and into October, greatly reducing a backlog of activity fuels treatments.

Figure 1: Clearwater/Nez Perce Forest Fire Management Zone Energy Release Component

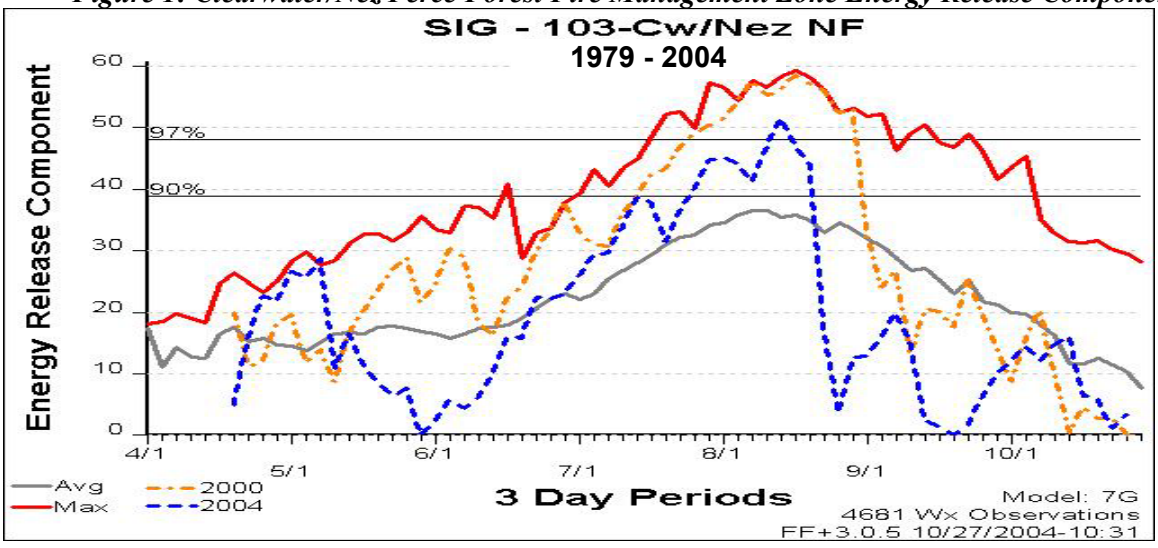

Table 2: Nez Perce National Forest FY 2003 Large Fires

Fire	Administrative Unit(s)	Acres
Bear	Moose Creek	2,174
Pettibone Creek	Moose Creek	11,833
Pinchot	Moose Creek	2,434

Slims	Moose Creek	12,011
Poet	Red River	2,574
Sapp*	Red River	9,686
Berg	Salmon River	2,102
Fiddle	Salmon River	708

*The Sapp Fire started on Payette National Forest and burned onto Red River District, Nez Perce Forest

Table 3: Nez Perce National Forest FY 2004 Large Fires

Fire	Administrative Unit(s)	Acres
Three Links 2 (WFU)	Moose Creek	153
North Battle (WFU)	Moose Creek	882

- All wildfires on the Forest were successfully managed under appropriate management response policies. Lightning fire starts and, therefore, total fire starts and total acreage were above average, with Moose Creek RD having more than double the 10-yr average number of fires in FY 2003. Human caused fire starts were about average. In FY 2004 Lightning fire starts were 70% of the 10 year average, while person caused fire starts were about 1½ times the 10-year average. A total of 119 fires occurred on the Forest in 2004, Almost 30% of these fires were managed for resource benefit (WFU).

- The 10-year trend for managing natural ignitions for resource benefits shows an increase. Approximately 7,072 acres were burned for resource benefits in FY 2003. A total of 1,153 acres burned on the Forest in 2004, this is less that 8% of the 10-year average. 1,108 acres of the total burned acreage on the Forest occurred on fires being managed for resource benefit.

- The Brush Disposal MAR target of 600 acres was met, with 606 acres treated in FY 2003 and 1,167 acres treated in FY 2004.

- Clear/Nez Fire Zone met with Fire Cooperators on a number of issues and programs, including the development county disaster plans, community protection, hazardous fuels treatment around communities, and on economic development strategies.

- The primary hazardous fuels treatment accomplishment of 14,908 acres was 142% of the assigned target in FY 2004.

- FY 2004 was the first year the Forest was required to track secondary fuels treatments. These included approximately 550 acres of precommercial thinning and 350 acres of commercial thinning of overstocked stands, and 1,300 acres of activity fuels treatment. WFU acres burned are considered a secondary fuels treatment that totaled 1,100 acres.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- The natural fuels program target of 9687 acres (7840 non-WUI + 1847 WUI) was not met in FY 2003. Actual accomplishments were 2132 acres (2035 non-WUI + 97 WUI). Spring and fall weather caused conditions exceeding prescription parameters. The Forest accomplished 5663 acres with Wildland Fire Use in FY 2003.
- The Grangeville based National Air Tanker never arrived here due to the grounding of the PB4Y segment of the fleet. However, Idaho Department of Lands positioned two single engine air tankers at Grangeville, which saw wide spread Forest use in FY 2003.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Activity fuel treatment and hazardous fuels treatment monitoring should be done in an interdisciplinary setting to ensure all resource objectives are being identified and met.
- The monitoring of acres treated by fire need to be improved across the Forest (Wildland Fire Use and prescribed fire). Monitor by Land Type Association to see if we are meeting objectives to maintain and sustain healthy ecosystems. Monitoring of burn severity needs to occur.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

Appropriate Management Response

- Suppression oriented responses to wildland fires are generally successful; this continues the past trend of wildland resource protection.

- Fuel accumulation has occurred, increasing the risk of larger more intense fires. The trend toward higher intensity fires is a departure from historic variable fire intensity patterns on the landscape.

Prescribed Fire

- Fewer acres are being burned today from both planned and unplanned ignitions that burned historically (before fire exclusion policies began). The recommendations from Subbasin assessments and watershed analysis are for increased prescribed fire and/or natural fire in most ecosystems. The need is greatest in short fire return interval ecosystems. The Forest has been increasing hazardous fuels treatments.

- The passage of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act and Healthy Forest Initiative will be useful tools and may expedite the NEPA process for qualifying projects.

- Field reviews indicate prescribed burning objectives are being met.

- Despite increases in prescribed burning, the need for fire disturbance processes identified in Subbasin assessments will be difficult to meet.

- The trend for prescribed fire projects is for increasingly complex objectives, constraints, and mitigations (i.e. air quality, noxious weeds) potentially constraining future accomplishments.

Wildland Fire Use

- Natural fires in wilderness areas are returning some areas to a more historic vegetative condition. However, fires are burning fewer acres than were burned in the pre-exclusion era and current fire intensities are often higher than in the past. The desired condition would be a return to historic fire regimes with greater acreages burned at lower fire intensities; recognizing that some areas do need to burn at higher intensities (i.e. mosaics).

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Insects and Disease

1) What did we accomplish?

- Insect and disease conditions on the Forest were monitored via aerial detection flights and field reconnaissance. This contributes to the historic conditions data set.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- All planned insect and disease associated work was accomplished.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Monitoring results indicate the Forest is experiencing outbreaks of at least three insects that may require a shift in management priorities in order to protect and restore forest, wildlife, and aquatic resources. As this information is incorporated into watershed assessments, it will help identify specific needs.

4) What is the current resource condition and trend when compared to desired conditions?

- Insects and diseases are an integral part of forest disturbance regimes and contribute to the makeup and structure of our forests. Current outbreak levels of Douglas-fir beetle and mountain pine beetle are above desired levels. Losses of whitebark pine to white pine blister rust and mountain pine beetle are far beyond desired conditions. Mortality of subalpine fir caused by the balsam wooly adelgid and the western balsam bark beetle are increasing and could become a larger concern in the future.

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FACILITIES

1) What did we accomplish?

Facilities on the Nez Perce National Forest include buildings, administrative sites, property boundaries, and the forest road and trail transportation system. Construction and maintenance of all facilities improves the safety and health of both forest employees and the visiting public.

- **Buildings and Administrative Sites**

  - Monitoring the health and safety of forest buildings and administrative sites is not a monitoring requirement of the Forest Plan. Federal, state, and local laws and regulations govern the construction, maintenance, and use of structures, potable water systems, and sewage treatment systems.

  - The forest has three "public community" water systems that serve the Fenn, Red River, and Slate Creek Ranger Stations. Bacteriological monitoring of all operational water systems is completed monthly. If any systems fail quality requirements, the problems are corrected or the system closed to use.

  - Sanitary surveys are conducted on schedule to ensure water systems are capable of providing quality water.

  - The consumer confidence report is published and distributed annually in accord with State law to disclose water quality testing results and issues.

  - The forest maintains three sewage treatment plants, one each at Fenn, Red River, and Slate Creek Ranger Stations. Effluent from these plants is tested monthly in accordance with each site's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements. The information from these tests is forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency.

  - Drinking water was monitored monthly for bacteriological contamination at all 13 operating potable water systems managed directly by the Forest Service. Drinking water chemical testing was performed. Nitrate tests were conducted in all campgrounds except Castle Creek Campground. Safe drinking water was provided at all systems where potable water is available.

  - Wastewater discharges were monitored at all three sewage treatment plants.

  - 2003 construction work included the Moose Creek District visitor information/office building and water at O'Hara, Johnson Bar and Spring Bar Campgrounds.

  - 2004 construction work included the installation of a Travel Trailer Sanitary Station at Cedar Flats and communications site work at High Camp, Iron Mountain Remote, the O'Hara Radio Site, and Slate Point.

  - Routine maintenance assured all used buildings met basic structural and public health standards.

- Radon and asbestos monitoring continued in 2003. There is still some friable asbestos in a few buildings, but radon and asbestos are not known current health hazards at any Forest Service residence.

- Micro particulate Analysis was completed as required by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to ensure that our wells were not under the influence of surface water. Micro particulate Analysis was completed on waters systems that serve the Fenn, Red River, and Slate Creek Ranger Stations.

- A total of eight potential Shallow Injection Wells were inventoried and reported to the Idaho Department of Water Resources as required by the Environmental Protection Agency.

- Sewer Sludge Disposal Permit applications were completed for Sewage Sludge Disposal Treatment at three sewage treatment sites as requested by the Environmental Protection Agency. Sewer Sludge Disposal Permit applications were completed at the sewage treatment plants that serve the Fenn, Red River, and Slate Creek Ranger Districts.

- Sanitary Surveys and Building Surveys were completed at 100% for the five year Infra reporting cycle.

- Water distribution lines for the Four-plex at the Red River Ranger Station were renovated to replace leaking water distribution lines on the exterior of the Four-plex.

- Pump replacement for well #2 was completed at the Slate Creek Ranger Station.

- Painted residences and bunkhouses at Red River and Elk City (2003).

- Constructed a new accessible district office facility at the Fenn Ranger station.

- Re-roofed the fire office and ranger's garage at Fenn Ranger station (2004).

- Completed Forest Facilities master plan (2004).

- **Road system**

  - Passenger car roads (level 3 thru 5) receiving maintenance = 730 miles (level 3 thru 5) (2003)

  - Passenger car roads (level 3 thru 5) receiving maintenance = 735 miles (2004)

  - High clearance roads (level 1 and 2) receiving maintenance = 250 miles (2003)

  - High clearance roads (level 1 and 2) receiving maintenance = 250 miles (2004)

  - Aggregate placement and road drainage improvements on 7 miles of the seven devils road (road #517) in partnership with RAC funding (2003).

  - Rehabilitation of 12 miles of the Indian Hill road (road #290) following Slim's fire impacts (2003)

- Aggregate placement and drainage improvements on over 9 miles of roads #463 and #2028 in the Skookumchuck drainage. (2003)
- Decommissioned 8.6 miles of road (2003)
- Decommissioned 12 miles of road (2004).
- Aggregate placement and drainage improvements on the Selway river road (#223) (ongoing).
- Replaced East Fork Crooked River Bridge, road #233 (2004)
- Constructed Fourth of July Creek Bridge, road #222C (2004)
- Replaced existing culvert at Corral Creek on Hungry Ridge road #309 with stream simulation structure to provide for improved aquatic passage in cooperation with the Nez Perce Tribe (2004).
- Performed roads program deferred maintenance surveys and reporting as scheduled.
- Performed bridge inspections and reporting as scheduled.

- **Property Boundaries**
  - There are approximately 450 miles of boundary between forest land and private landowners. As of 2003 370 miles had been posted. This increased to 372 miles as of 2004 leaving 78 miles remaining to be posted.
  - In addition to the property lines, there is an estimated 350 miles of wilderness boundaries on the forest. As of 2004 there is 12.5 miles of Wilderness boundary posted.

- **Right-of-Ways**
  - Although no new roads or trails are planned across private property, the Forest has a substantial backlog of roads and trails, which have been managed under prescriptive/appropriated rights. The Forest continues to work on clarifying these situations.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Deferred maintenance needs in the facilities program continues to substantively exceed available funding. As work is identified it is regularly evaluated and prioritized against available funding.
- Funding levels precluded fully maintaining the entire transportation system in both 2003 and 2004. Maintenance of aggregate surfacing, and some bridges continues to be deferred. Some roads have been closed or restricted due to weather damage and will remain so until sufficient funds can be programmed to repair. Maintenance needs continue to be evaluated and prioritized on both an annual basis and as weather events dictate.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Buildings and administrative sites do not have Forest Plan monitoring requirements. Facilities management utilizes existing laws and policy to assess and manage these assets. When problems are discovered during inspections or monitoring they are corrected as funding allows.

- The efficiency of operations in the roads program will continue to be pursued. Efforts to work with partners and to perform work through most efficient means will continue to be pursued.

4) What is the current condition and trend of the resource when compared to the desired condition?

- Currently, the occupied Nez Perce National Forest buildings, water systems, wastewater systems, and administrative sites are in acceptable condition, with few exceptions. However, as buildings and systems age, they require more upkeep each year. Since maintenance funding has not increased with inflation, it becomes a greater challenge each year to maintain structural, health, and safety standards. The Forest Service is addressing this issue nationally and it is hoped that maintenance funding will increase in the future. The Forest is evaluating needs and costs on an ongoing basis to assure that we are not maintaining unneeded facilities. Opportunities for ongoing cost savings are continually pursued.

- Incremental deterioration of the road system can be expected to continue. The roads program will continue to prioritize available funds toward higher use roads and safety issues. The roads program will also continue to work with available partners to obtain additional funding and efficiencies in the management and maintenance of the system.

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MINERALS

1) What did we accomplish?

Forest personnel were able to perform basic administration, minimize unnecessary surface disturbances, and inspect unauthorized mining operations.

During FY 2003:

- 17 non-bonded operations were processed and approved.
- 4 bonded operations were processed and approved.
- There are 23 bonded mining operations on the Forest.
- 37 operations were administered to standard.

During FY 2004:

- 14 non-bonded operations were processed and approved.
- 1 bonded operation was processed and approved.
- There are 21 bonded mining operations on the Forest.
- 36 operations were administered to standard.

2) What outputs and/or work were planned that did not get accomplished?

Red River RD: EMC Placer EA and This Is It Placer EA were both scheduled to be completed in FY 2004.

- The EMC Placer project was divided into exploration and development phases. Analysis of the exploration phase was completed in FY 2004. Analysis Development phase is scheduled to be completed in FY 2005.
- This Is It Placer EA was put on hold pending response of claimant to questions concerning reasonableness of his proposal.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- More efficient methods need to be developed to process and administer mining operations in anticipation of continuing shrinkage of the workforce, Forest priority projects and increase in complexity of issues. The Forest need to more closely coordinate with other federal and state agencies and the Nez Perce Tribe.

4) What is the current resource condition and trend compared to desired conditions?

- The current trend is toward the desired conditions. The Forest was able to keep up with basic administration of mining activities. A shrinking workforce, Forest priority projects and the increasing complexity of issues (such as consultation under the Endangered Species Act) combined with rights under the 1872 mining law, contribute to difficulties in meeting regulation timeframes for processing new plans, adequately inspecting ongoing operations, and assuring that bonds are revised or released on a regular basis.

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EFFECTS TO OTHERS

Public Involvement

1) What did we accomplish?

- The Nez Perce National Forest spent the majority of the past two years involved in the Red River Watershed and "Save Elk City" issues – forest health (specifically mountain pine beetle outbreaks resulting in dead and dying lodgepole pine), and possible local mill closures. This year also included another active fire season.

- There were numerous public involvement efforts related to other specific projects. Techniques ranged from media ads to traditional scoping letters, public information meetings and public comment forums. There were project-related displays, field trips, open houses and news releases.

- Several Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) projects were proposed with five projects completed in FY 2003, and seven projects either newly initiated or underway. The completed projects were: Red River Restoration (NEPA/EAWS), Idaho County Weed Control, Palouse Weed Control, Deer Creek Highway District Weed Control, and Seven Devils Road Rehabilitation. In FY 2004 seven projects were completed and ten projects were newly initiated or underway. The completed projects were: Rapid River Trail Head NEPA, Idaho County Weed Control, Deer Creek Highway District Weed Control, Adams Ranger House Restoration (Phase 1), Morrison Ridge Timber Project, Elk City Defensible Space, and Meadow Face Culvert Replacement.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- All targets were met.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- None.

4) What is the current resource condition and trend compared to the desired condition?

- The desire for public involvement is to include the public more in the planning process. This could be accomplished by developing public involvement plans for projects and by doing more collaborative project development. This approach ensures all interests are represented as we plan and/or implement high priority projects outlined in our annual Program of Work.

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ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

1) What did we accomplish?

- The Forest has plans on file to renovate a family residence at the Fenn Ranger Station for accessibility. Work has begun on conceptual plans for renovating a bunkhouse and a family residence for accessibility at each ranger station.

- The new accessible office and visitor center at Fenn Ranger Station was completed in the fall of 2003. We are now able to provide accessible visitor services and barrier free employment at all our administrative sites on the forest. The accessible visitor services at the Fenn Ranger Station include interpretive displays of local and forest service history.

- A new accessible warehouse at the Grangeville Air Center was built. We are still finishing the inside of this building. A sidewalk has been completed to one door and provides easy access. Other dirt/gravel walkways to the building provide difficult access. This building will be completed as funding becomes available. The sidewalk that provides access to a museum at the Slate Creek Ranger Station was completed in the spring of 2003.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- We were unable, again, to make progress on administrative site accessibility surveys and transition plans. However, all administrative site surveys and transition plans will be completed as soon as time permits.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- None.

4) What are current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- Forest-wide, three recreation sites (including a fishing area) are accessible at the Easy level, another four sites are accessible at the Moderate level, and twenty sites are accessible at the Difficult level. Red River District coordinates with Idaho Department of Fish and Game to provide a hunting program for mobility impaired hunters. Two other districts on the Forest, Moose Creek and Clearwater, should be prepared for accessible hunting for the 2005 hunting season. The goal is to provide accessible opportunities throughout the entire spectrum of Forest recreation. We are making progress, but much remains to be done.

- With the completion of the Fenn Visitor Center, the Forest headquarters office and all district offices now have accessible office space available. The goal to provide accessible offices and residences at all administrative sites is close to being achieved, we still need to provide accessible housing at the Fenn Ranger Station. The trend is positive.

- Introduction: The Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) of 1968 requires that all public buildings, facilities, and programs funded in whole or part with federal funds be accessible to and usable by physically disabled person. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1978,

states, "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States, shall solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by federal financial assistance or by any Executive Agency." The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 provides standards – even when no federal funds are involved – for addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, transportation, telecommunications, and services operated by private entities.

- In 1991, the Nez Perce Forest Human Resources Team identified the need to evaluate Forest facilities for accessibility to people with disabilities. In June 1991, a survey was initiated using a new Forest Service accessibility survey tool designed to determine Forest campgrounds/picnic area accessibility. A special emphasis program was created in 1992 to address issues concerning people with disabilities. During the initial facilities monitoring stages we realized the need for TDD (Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf) to provide better customer service. TTDs have been installed in all district offices and the Forest Headquarters. The TTD phone numbers are published in local telephone directories.

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HERITAGE RESOURCES

1) What did we accomplish?

- During FY2003, two new heritage-sites were reported for the Forest
- 144 acres were reported as surveyed for heritage resources
- Thirty-one sites were revisited and monitored to assess site condition

2) What outputs and/or work were planned that did not get accomplished?

- A change in the Heritage Forest Program Manger occurred in FY2003. The resulting discontinuity makes assessing unaccomplished outputs difficult, however, all MAR related targets were met.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- None

4) What is the current resource condition and trend compared to desired conditions?

- Compatibility with desired condition is generally good; however, the continuance of Forest Plan mandated "upward-trend" aquatic projects will continue to adversely affect heritage resources.

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LANDS AND SPECIAL USES

1) What did we accomplish?

- Maintained and monitored INFRA, the Special Use Data System
- Maintained Forest Boundary
- Processed most permit applications

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Several expired Special Use Permits were reviewed but processing was not completed.
- The Forest was unable to address unauthorized uses.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Additional funding and staffing are needed to address the number of unperfected right-of-ways to public lands in a timely manner. Additional funding and staffing is also needed to process permit renewals and applications.
- The Forest needs to prioritize unauthorized uses and prosecute cases under the statutes and title. County RS-2477 validations continue making Forest access management a potential problem.

4) What is the current resource condition and trend compared to desired conditions?

- The Forest's progress in dealing with unperfected right-of-ways is slow.
- The Forest is unable to address both expired permits and permit applications in a timely manner.

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NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT

1) What did we accomplish?

- Forest personnel treated approximately 2000 acres of invasive weeds over two fiscal years.
- Insects were released for control of spotted knapweed
- Weed treatment continued in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness.
- The Forest continued implementing weed free forage requirements and washing of off-road logging equipment as prevention practices.
- The Forest continued integrating the noxious weed program with community based coordinated weed management efforts in the Salmon and Clearwater drainages.
- Forest personnel along with other federal and state agencies implemented an interagency Weed Management Strategy for Idaho.
- The Forest, University of Idaho, Forest Health Protection Group, and Nez Perce Tribe Bio-control Center monitored biocontrol agents for yellow starthistle and Spotted knapweed in the Salmon and Clearwater basins. The work included distribution, release and monitoring of approved insects.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Treated invasive weed acres are under 10% of the total infestations found on the Forest.
- Weed management off the Forest across all lands is far below the level necessary to slow the spread of many weeds. Limited funding requires weed managers to strongly prioritize management efforts.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- The coordinated implementation of prevention practices statewide (all lands) is poorly developed, causing ineffective and inconsistent results across a broad regional scale.
- More emphasis and time needs to be placed on coordinating practices and treatment across all ownerships.
- A long-term early alert system needs to be developed to track the introduction and spread new invasive exotic plants into the region and state.
- Additional funds are needed to manage and treat invasive weeds at a biologically significant level.
- Invasive weed management needs to be integrated into vegetation restoration strategies that are being implemented across all property ownerships.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- Many noxious and invasive weeds continue to spread across the Forest and on other lands. Low elevation grasslands, conifer savannas, and recently disturbed sites are at greatest risk for invasion by invasive weeds.

- Transportation corridors (trails and roads) and river systems continue to be the main pathway of weed spread.

- Broad scale partnerships resulted in more coordinated weed management across all properties.

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SENSITIVE PLANTS

1) What did we accomplish?

- Forest personnel continued to survey Sensitive plants in high probability habitats. Surveys were conducted within planned project areas.
- New occurrences of sensitive plants were found and documented.
- Monitoring continued on Puzzling Halimolobos, broad-fruit mariposa and Cluster lady-slipper.
- Biological Assessments (BA) and Biological Evaluations (BE) continue to be completed for proposed projects.
- Rare plants are being integrated into landscape and planning area assessments.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Monitoring data over the past few years has not been summarized.
- Suitable habitat inventory outside project areas continues to be low priority.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- Rare plants need to be more integrated into project prescriptions and design. Many projects could be designed to improve sensitive plant habitats along with accomplishing other vegetation objectives.

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- It appears at this time that the known populations of sensitive plants are secure. The probability of population viability loss over the short-term is considered low. Monitoring suggests there is significant yearly variation in population levels. This variation appears to be a common trait among herbaceous plants.

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AIR RESOURCES

1) What did we accomplish?

- A key component of the Region 1 Air Resource Monitoring Program is the monitoring of lake chemistry, which is quite reactive to atmospheric processes. In FY 2001, Phase III monitoring of wilderness lakes to determine trends in acid deposition and other atmospheric related changes to lake ecosystems were done. Shasta Lake in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness has stable to slight upward trends in pH, ANC, and conductivity.

- No active sampling of air quality was done on the Forest. However, Sula Peak, to the east of the Forest, monitored fine mass concentration of air that passed over the Forest.

- The Forest supported air quality forecasting through daily balloon launches during the fall burn period, and through coordinating smoke management reporting for North Idaho Airsheds.

2) What outputs and/or work was planned that did not get accomplished?

- Currently the Forest has completed all planned monitoring of air resources.

3) What practices need to be changed based on monitoring results?

- None

4) What are the current resource conditions and trends compared to desired conditions?

- Currently the air quality on the Forest is good and monitoring does not indicate any significant deterioration from desired condition.

- A national initiative to substantially increase hazardous fuels treatments in short fire return interval ecosystems on federal land would produce a corresponding increase in smoke and particulate matter, if the only treatment is prescribed fire. Future hazardous fuels project proposals should include tradeoff analysis of prescribed fire v. mechanical treatments to assess the smoke effects. Prescribed fire operations were occasionally constrained by the Airshed coordinator during the fall burn period.

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