



U.S. Forest Service National Forest System Briefing Paper

Date: August 2013

Topic: Integration of two existing Washington Office Technical Units to form the *National Stream and Aquatic Ecology Center*.

Issue: The Watershed, Fish, Wildlife, Air and Rare Plants (WFWARP) Program combined two of its Technical Units: the Stream Systems Technology Center and the Fish and Aquatic Ecology Unit. An executive Steering Committee and new Charter were developed to guide the integration of the units.

Purpose: The focus of the *National Stream and Aquatic Ecology Center* is on developing tools and science applications for the more effective management and conservation of watersheds, streams, riparian ecosystems, fisheries and aquatic ecosystems on National Forests and Grasslands.

Background: The *National Stream and Aquatic Ecology Center* was formed by integrating two existing Washington Office Technical Units: the Stream Systems Technology Center (STREAM Team) and the Fish and Aquatic Ecology Unit (FAEU). The FAEU was originally founded in the 1980s to assist forests with Forest Plan development and revision. The STREAM Team was established in 1992 for the purpose of coordinating development of needed technology to secure favorable conditions of water flows on public lands. In 2012, the Director of WFWARP combined these into a single Technical Unit to better utilize the multiple disciplines of both, resulting in more effective support to field units in the application of science-based technologies.

The program elements for the *National Stream and Aquatic Ecology Center* will focus on:

- Environmental flows and water resource management.
- Watershed, stream, riparian, and aquatic habitat restoration.
- Condition, trend, and effectiveness monitoring of watershed, channel, aquatic habitat, and riparian vegetation.
- Technology Development, Transfer and Application
- Technical Support and Training.

The Center will receive strategic guidance and advice from an executive Steering Committee representing different management areas of the Forest Service that have knowledge about national needs in watersheds, fisheries, and aquatic ecology. Members of the steering committee will include:

1. NFS Deputy Regional Forester
2. R&D Assistant Station Director
3. NFS Director WFWARP
4. NFS Director of Engineering, Director of Lands, or Director Range/Vegetation Ecology
5. WO R&D Director or Assistant /Deputy Director
6. NFS Assistant Director WFWARP (Committee Chair)

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