CFLR Project(Name/Number): Shortleaf-Bluestem Community/CFLR018

National Forest(s): Ouachita National Forest

Responses to the prompts on this annual report should be typed directly into this template, including narratives and tables:

1. **Match and Leverage funds:**
   a. **FY12 Matching Funds Documentation**

Fund Source	Total Funds Expended in Fiscal Year 2012($)
CFLR Funds Expended[1]	$316,318.88
FS Matching Funds (please include a new row for each BLI)[2]	$556,642.12
NFTM	$199,898.56
NFVW	$87,741.38
NFWF	$39,200.74
CWKV	$48,426.23
WFHF	$181,375.21
Funds contributed through agreements[3]	
Partner In-Kind Contributions[4]	$77,500
The Nature Conservancy	$11,500
Arkansas Game &Fish Commission	$43,500
National Wild Turkey Federation	$15,000
Audubon Arkansas	$1,500
Arkansas State University	$5,000
Monarch Watch	$1,000
Service work accomplishment through goods-for services funding within a stewardship contract[5]	$86,332

Approved by :_____

Forest Supervisor

[1] This amount should match the amount of CFLR/CFLN dollars obligated in the PAS report titled CFLR Job Code Listing and Expenditure Report – Detailed Analysis by Fiscal Year.

[2] This amount should match the amount of matching funds obligated in the PAS report titled CFLR Job Code Listing and Expenditure Report – Detailed Analysis by Fiscal Year minus the above carryover/HPRP funds.

[3] Please document any partner contributions to implementation and monitoring of the CFLR project through an agreement (this should only include funds that weren't already captured through the PAS job code structure for CFLR matching funds). Please list the partner organizations involved in the agreement.

[4] Total partner in-kind contributions for implementation and monitoring of a CFLR project. Please list the partner organizations that provided in-kind contributions. See "Annual Report instructions" for instructions on how to document in-kind contributions.

[5] This should be the amount in the "stewardship credits charged" column at the end of the fiscal year in the TSA report TSA90R-01.

b. Please provide a narrative or table describing leveraged funds in your landscape in FY2012 (one page maximum)

Project planning for the accelerated restoration activities did not occur during the initial FY 2012 budget planning phase, however, some of our planning (NEPA) projects did fall within the CFLRP project area. During FY 2012, NEPA project planning occurred within MA 21 (Old Growth Restoration), MA 22 (Renewal of the Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem Grass Ecosystem and Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) Habitat) and ABBA (American Burying Beetle Areas), at a cost of approximately $650,000. Both the RCW and American Burying Beetle (ABB) are federally endangered species, and their habitat is the basis of the Shortleaf-Bluestem Community Project area, along with our old growth stands. Planning activities included stand examinations, heritage resource surveys, biological and botanical surveys, specialist reports, preparation of silviculture prescriptions, development of alternatives, and effects analysis.

McCurtain County Wilderness Area (MCWA) is managed by Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC). MCWA which is almost completely surrounded by the Shortleaf-Bluestem Community project area, accomplished prescribed burning of approximately 4,190 acres to improve habitat for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) at a cost of approximately $100,000. This prescribed burn encompassed 3 compartments. Hand burning was initiated in 2 of the compartments on February 27, 2012, with initiation of the 3rd compartment burning on March 5, 2012. The prescribed burn over the entire area was completed on March 27, 2012 with the use of a helicopter. In addition, ODWC accomplished RCW habitat improvement work consisting of mid-story removal on approximately 400 acres and outfitted 3 new recruitment clusters, along with maintaining their existing cluster sites. ODWC's cost for the RCW habitat improvement work was approximately $50,000.

Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC), along with Forest Service personnel, accomplished 406 acres of prescribed burning in FY 2012 on private lands (6 different burn areas) within the CFLRP project area in Management Area (MA) 22 on the Poteau/Cold Springs Ranger District. Burn area size ranged from 16 acres to 121 acres. AFC's cost for this was approximately $10,000. In addition, the FS completed 2 acres of prescribed burning on Weyerhaeuser lands, using existing roads. Using the Weyerhaeuser roads eliminated the need to construct a fireline along the property line, which in turn reduced potential erosion problems.

2**. Discuss how the CLFR project contributes to accomplishment of the performance measures in the 10 year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan**[6], dated December 2006. Please comment on the cumulative contributions over the life of the project if appropriate. This may also include a description of the fire year (fire activity that occurred in the project area) as a backdrop to your response (please limit answer to one page).

The overall activities of prescribed burning and timber harvest are moving the project area towards restoration, accelerating, achieving gains in performance measures of the 10 Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan. The project area encompasses 350,000 acres accounting for about 20 percent of the Ouachita NF land base. For 2012 45,000 acres were prescribed burned within the project area (40000 acres of matching burning and 5,000 acres CFLRP funded). All of these acres were to restore native landscape conditions. In cooperation with state agencies in Arkansas

[6] The 10-year Comprehensive Strategy was developed in response to the Conference Report for the Fiscal Year 2001, Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (Public Law 106-291).

and Oklahoma 4,190 acres of state lands that are surrounded by CFLRP lands were treated with prescribed fire, 406 acres of private lands were burned adjacent to the CFLRP project area. Annual fire occurrence in the last 10 years has ranged from 43 and 187 wildfires. For 2012, 99 wildfires occurred on the Ouachita National Forest: 59 of these were due to human causes and 40 were due to lightning. Of these 99 fires, 16 were with-in the CFLRP boundaries. All wildfires occurring from natural ignition sources on the Ouachita are evaluated for management strategies of multiple objectives, however due to the exceptional drought conditions this summer, and the State and County burn bans all wildfires this year were managed under a variety of suppression strategies. This resulted in none of the wildfire acres needing to be treated with post-wildfire restoration treatments. Additional limiting factors of the drought were restrictions on any prescribed burning during this time period, partially due to burn parameters but mostly due to a Forest Plan Design Criteria that does not allow prescribed burning in counties where a burn ban is in place. High KBDI's, though declining, remain in a receding western portion of the Ouachita National Forest, including a significant CFLRP area in Oklahoma and some acreage on Districts within the Arkansas CFLRP area.

Performance Measure	**Units**
Percent change from 10-year average for wildfires controlled during initial attack	No change
Percent change from 10 year average for number of unwanted human-caused wildfires	No change
Percent of fires not contained in initial attack that exceed a stratified cost index	0%
Number and percent of WUI acres treated that are identified in CWPPS or other application collaboratively developed plans	33,120 acres 68%
Number and percent of non-WUI acres treated that are identified through collaboration consistent with the *Implementation Plan*	16469 acres 32%
Number of acres treated per million dollars gross investment in WUI and non-WUI areas	
Percent of collaboratively identified high priority acres treated where fire management objectives are achieved as identified in applicable management plans or strategies	N/A
Number and percent of acres treated by prescribed fire, through collaboration consistent with the *Implementation Plan*.	44,805 acres 100%
Number and percent of acres treated by mechanical thinning, through collaboration consistent with the *Implementation Plan*.	0 acres 0%
Number of acres and percent of the natural ignitions that are allowed to burn under strategies that result in desired conditions	0 acres 0%
Number and percent of acres treated to restore fire-adapted ecosystems which are moved toward desired conditions	49,589 acres 100%
Number and percent of acres treated to restore fire-adapted ecosystems which are maintained in desired conditions	0 acres 0%
Number and percent of burned acres identified in approved post-wildfire recovery plans as needing treatments that actually receive treatments	0 acres 0%
Percent of burned acres treated for post-wildfire recovery that are trending towards desired conditions	N/A

3. **What assumptions were used in generating the numbers and/or percentages you plugged into the TREAT tool**?

Assumptions used for generating the TREAT model numbers that contracts and timber sale dollars assumed to remain within the impact area, did indeed stay within the area. Contract costs and workplans were used to estimate percentages and numbers plugged into the TREAT tool. Harvest volumes and products were based on historic and current utilization from timber contracts and sales.

FY 2012 Jobs Created/Maintained (FY12 CFLR/CFLN/HPRP/Carryover funding only):

Type of projects	Direct part and full-time jobs	Total part and full-time jobs	Direct Labor Income	Total Labor Income[7]
Commercial Forest Product Activities	**28.2**	**67.9**	**$1,488,570**	**$3,057,870**
Other Project Activities	**0.5**	**0.7**	**$23,471**	**$30,956**
TOTALS:	**28.7**	**68.7**	**$1,512,040**	**$3,088,826**

FY 2012 Jobs Created/Maintained (FY12 CFLR/CFLN/HPRP/Carryover and matching funding):

Type of projects	Direct part and full-time jobs	Total part and full-time jobs	Direct Labor Income	Total Labor Income[8]
Commercial Forest Product Activities	**143.2**	**344.1**	**$7,525,954**	**$15,494,290**
Other Project Activities	**7.5**	**9.5**	**$279,964**	**$356,954**
TOTALS:	**150.7**	**353.6**	**$7,805,919**	**$15,854,244**

4. **Describe other community benefits achieved and the methods used to gather information about these benefits** (Please limit answer to two pages).

Community benefits of CFLRP funds will become evident in 2013 due to the ground work done in 2012. In 2012, CFLRP funds were committed to boost the local economies with agreements, contracts, partnerships and research and monitoring projects. These efforts will boost the revenue in rural counties in Arkansas and Oklahoma in many ways as well as increase the technical knowledge of the local workforce. This increased knowledge will allow for more competitive future employment opportunities. Hiring locals as well as pulling in other hires to the local community due to CFLRP funds will also create additional economic stimulus to the area. This stimulus is due to new hires being provided employment and being lodged in local motels as their extended temporary duty stations. These areas of lodging are within some of the poorest counties in the states of Arkansas and Oklahoma, with widespread low incomes of 20-25% of the population at or below poverty level. Other revenue stimulation will occur from the recent acquisition of additional vehicles, heavy equipment and contracting additional helicopters and the associated crews, all needed to accomplish the accelerated program.

Agreements also funded environmental educational training for local non-profit business as well as hiring of local high school students and area teachers. High school students will be teaching environmental education at community events, additional schools, nursing homes and other venues. Students will also assist in restoration efforts such as planting pollinator plants such as milkweeds for school yard habitats and to re-establish pollinator sites on the Forest. Educational trainings within the CFLRP area will also increase local technical knowledge allowing for better school performance and thus students will be more competitive for jobs in the future. This knowledge also instills in the community the importance of restoration and the support needed to continue to use the tools of fire and timber cutting. These benefits will be monitored of how well the community is learning from the environmental educational efforts by using metric assessment and outcome data. Knowledge will be tracked with questionnaires based on the

[7] *Values obtained from Treatment for Restoration Economic Analysis Tool (TREAT) spreadsheet, "Impacts-Jobs and Income" tab. Spreadsheet and directions available at http://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/CFLR/submittingproposals.shtml#tools.*

[8] *Values obtained from Treatment for Restoration Economic Analysis Tool (TREAT) spreadsheet, "Impacts-Jobs and Income" tab. Spreadsheet and directions available at http://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/CFLR/submittingproposals.shtml#tools.*

Blooms Taxonomy rigor and the relevant instructional strategies to reflect learning. Metric equations will be used for school project success. Metrics and data will be delivered on an annual basis beginning in FY 2013.
Monitoring the benefits of how well the community is learning from the environmental educational efforts will be accomplished using metric assessment and outcome data. Knowledge will be tracked with questionnaires based on the Blooms Taxonomy rigor and the relevant instructional strategies to reflect learning. Metric equations will be used for school project success. Metrics and data will be delivered on an annual basis beginning in FY 2013.

All of the economic stimulation activities of agreements, contracts, partnerships and multi-party monitoring and the related benefits will be evaluated for impact with the partnership efforts of SebaScott Development Council (non-profit) and the University of Arkansas at Monticello.

Monitoring with CFLRP funds also increased the ability to hire locals workers.

- Turkey monitoring: The Ouachita Mountains Shortleaf-Bluestem Alliance collaborative and the public voiced concerns of prescribed burning on the Eastern wild turkey. This collaborative contributed $95,970 and with an additional $40,000 from CFLRP funds, 7 part-time jobs were created and a PhD student funded.
- Vegetative monitoring: In 2012, 100 plots were established by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) within the CFLRP area in Arkansas and Oklahoma. These plots required 15 TNC employees and 4 volunteers, spending one week in local motels, stimulating the local economies.

Hiring with CFLRP funds will stimulate the local economies:

- **Partnership Agreement** with National Park Service (NPS). Without CFLRP funding, the local NPS at the Buffalo River would have laid off 7 employees due to budget cuts. Instead under the agreement, the NPS retained employees to outfit a 7 member wildland fire crew for 4-6 months. NPS is attractive because of their close proximity to the project area, giving them the ability to travel back home when bad burning weather conditions are forecasted. Under the Reimbursement or Advance of Funds Agreement, funds will be transferred directly to NPS, resulting in no travel cap being charged to the Ouachita NF. Total cost of this 7 person crew is $143,000.
- **Partnership Agreement** with the Oklahoma Native American Tribes for crews. There are approximately 70 people qualified for prescribed burning among the tribes in Oklahoma. The CFLRP will support 10 tribal members for 14 days at a cost of $60,000.
- **Partnership Agreement with BLM:** CFLRP funds will support a 6 person crew for 2 rotations of 14 days each plus travel. Support is for up to 4 rotations at a cost of $150,000.
- **CFLRP funded an additional helicopter for prescribed burning**: this helicopter (ship) and the associated crew will be used to burn additional acres. The cost of supplying an additional ship and crew is $150,000.
- **Partnership Agreement** with Native Expeditions: FY12, we began exploring using multiparty environmental educational workshops to train 20 plus teachers and other community leaders within the CFLRP area. Trainings will be geared to teach about the importance of our local ecosystems, the flora and fauna, and the tools needed to restore these native landscapes. These CFLRP funds of $16,000 hired 3 part time employees.

All of these hires will be temporarily stationed within the CFLRP area as needed. This will boost the local economy when crews are housed at local hotels and motels, and purchasing meals and supplies at local restaurants, stores, and gas stations. All of the efforts from above are geared to bring in revenue to the local communities.

In 2012, work was done adjacent to the CFLRP area to expand the goal of improving local communities through multi-party environmental education efforts. In 2012, the trails at the Mauldin Outdoor Classroom were improved to provide

ease of access as well as a gazebo for students during inclement weather and interpretative signage installed. This classroom is a 1 mile hiking trail through a diverse array of habitats such as cedar glades and old growth oaks. In 2012, we worked with local schools and the County as well as other partners within the community such as the local museum. This 65 acre plot was acquired in the 1990's and was a boom and bust logging community in the early 1900's. This classroom lends itself well in teaching how to manage resources for sustainability. About 150 students are observing this plot being converted from fescue to native grasses. Students are taught about the importance of restoring native landscapes and the tools used, such as fire.

Also to expand economic revenue, a grant valued at $169,375 was submitted to the Arkansas Highway Department in 2012 to relocate 6.3 miles of trail adjacent to the CFLRP area. The local county is a partner as well as the local non-profit SebaScott Development Council. Improvement of the 14 mile trail system for OHV's will bring in revenue as well as provide a safe enjoyable recreational opportunity for locals as well as out of state visitors.

In 2012, approximately 15-20% of the timber brought to the local sawmills came off the CFLRP area of the Ouachita National Forest. This timber from the CFLRP area is valued at over $2,000,000 on the stump and equates to over 69,000 ccf. These sawmills hire over 150 employees, have 80 loggers cutting the timber and another 20 transporting the timber to the mills for a total of 250 families benefitting directly from the timber industry. In FY 2012, all timber sold within the SBC CFLRP areas was bought by purchasers within the impact area. Timber purchases in FY 2012 are shown below:

Location of Purchaser	Volume of Timber Sale (ccf)	Sale Value ($)	Within CFLRP Impact Area?
McCurtain County, OK	22,577	$557,522	Yes
Scott County, AR	34,367	$1,225,155	Yes
Yell County, AR	12,262	$534,831	Yes
TOTAL	69,206	$2,317,508	

CFLR funding as well as matching funds provided funding for chainsaw treatments to move areas toward a restored condition. Contractors within the impact area of the project were awarded task orders as follows:

Funding Source	Location of Contractor	Amount of Contract	Within CFLRP Impact Area?
CFLN – Direct CFLR CFVW – matching funds	Garland County, AR	$33,500 $52,930	Yes
CFVW – matching funds	Scott County, AR	$93,800	Yes
CFWF – matching funds	Yell County, AR	$8,832	Yes
CFWF – matching funds CFKV – matching funds	Garland County, AR	$4,149 $19,246	Yes
Total		$212,457	

5. **Describe the multiparty monitoring, evaluation, and accountability process** (please limit answer to two pages).

Desired condition of the SBC pine-bluestem woodland are open overstory canopies, mid-stories with little woody vegetation and native understory vegetation of grasses and forbes. These conditions can be achieved with timber harvesting, WSI/TSI, and effective prescribed burns. Long term perpetuation of the overstory shortleaf pine-bluestem community is accomplished by seedtree and shelterwood regeneration harvesting. Advanced stages of restoration (as

represented by Fire Regime Condition Class 1 (FRCC1)) are characterized by an open mid-story and a grass understory with a fuel loading of 2-4 tons/acre. With this in mind, we designed our vegetation and bird monitoring efforts to help track the responses of our management activities.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission (ANHC), and Forest Service (FS) are leading the vegetation monitoring effort to track movement of the Shortleaf-Bluestem Community (SBC) toward the desired ecological condition. The "Objectives-Based Vegetation Monitoring Program to Determine Project Success" plan was completed on 15 June 2012. The vegetation monitoring is quantitative and will address the question: Are project activities being implemented under the project plan restoring the desired range of ecological conditions to the shortleaf pine-bluestem community? The macroplots were installed in June of 2012 and baseline monitoring field work data collection was completed for the first 50 macroplots. Baseline monitoring will be complete in June of 2013 and a report completed by December of 2013. The plots will be monitored at three year intervals and the data and analysis provided to the collaborative partners.

In addition to the above mentioned vegetation monitoring, Audubon Arkansas (AA) will be monitoring the effects of bird responses of our restoration. The main priority for AA is within Important Bird Areas (IBA). An IBA is a site that provides essential habitat for one or more breeding, wintering, and/or migrating species of bird. Scientists supporting the IBA work to identify, monitor and conserve the most essential bird habitats. The Ouachita's Shortleaf-Bluestem Community is a national IBA, and is also a global IBA. Within the Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem IBA, habitat for Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow, Prairie Warbler, Northern Bobwhite and Yellow-breasted Chat is being restored. AA will be using the same plot centers established with the vegetation monitoring, to conduct bird point counts. Data will be collected at all points every year for 3 years (2013-2015), with 3 years of no data collection (2016-2018), followed by 3 more years of data collection (2019-2021). Central Hardwoods Joint Venture will be analyzing the bird data and submitting interim reports after each year, with more consolidated report after the first 3 years of data collection.

The Ouachita National Forest (SBC) is also collaborating with the Mark Twain NF (Missouri – Pine-Oak Woodlands Restoration CFLRP) and Ozark NF (Ozark Highlands Ecosystem Restoration (High Priority Project)) to share monitoring techniques and where possible implementing the same techniques on multiple forest projects. All 3 projects are conducting similar bird response monitoring. Both Arkansas forests are conducting the same vegetation monitoring protocol with TNC taking the lead, with the Mark Twain doing similar vegetation monitoring but continuing on to collect floristic data as well. Using the same protocol as neighboring forests will allow us to compare bird responses in different eco-regions of shortleaf pine.

Concerns from the collaborative of the Ouachita National Forest prescribed burning program on the Eastern Wild Turkey, resulted in a partnership effort to understand the potential impacts of our burning program on the ground nesting bird. Partners including Arkansas State University, National Wild Turkey Federation, Audubon Arkansas and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and USFS began researching the effects of prescribed burning on the Eastern Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) demography and habitat use in a Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem Grass Ecosystem in 2011. In FY12, we captured 56 turkeys, of which 46 hens (16 pre-adult and 30 adult) were outfitted with GPS and VHF transmitters and released at trap sites. This research will continue during FY13 and possibly FY14, with an annual progress report submitted to the Forest Service every year, and the final report (PhD dissertation) submitted approximately one year after field research is completed. Preliminary findings are showing that hen turkeys are nesting

immediately adjacent to or within a recent prescribed burn area. Hens are taking their young poults into the recently burned areas to forage.

6. **FY 2012 accomplishments**

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Total Units Accomplished [9]	Total Treatment Cost ($)	Type of Funds (CFLR, Specific FS BLI, Partner Match)[10]
Acres of forest vegetation established	Acres	140	$8,248.40	NFVW
Acres of forest vegetation improved	Acres	500 662 168	$70,000 $90,100 $29,191	CFLN NFVW CWKV
Manage noxious weeds and invasive plants	Acre	23.2	$6,692.04	NFVW
Acres of terrestrial habitat restored or enhanced	Acres	5,048 4,176 718 1,450 7,912 38,633	$110,000 $156,435 $94,140 $178,002 $399,508.37 $818,488	CFLN NFWF NFTM NFVW CWKV WFHF
Acres of rangeland vegetation improved	Acres	500	$12,500	NFVW
Miles of high clearance system roads receiving maintenance	Miles	21.67 20.30	$10,835 $10,150	Timber Sale Purchaser CMRD
Miles of passenger car system roads receiving maintenance	Miles	217.6	$43,520	CMRD
Miles of road decommissioned	Miles	19.3	$7,000	WFHF
Miles of passenger car system roads improved	Miles	6.93 0.10	$415,800 $11,180	Timber Sale Purchaser CMLG
Miles of high clearance system road improved	Miles	7.4 1.8	$367,500 $99,112	Timber Sale Purchaser CWKV
Acres of forestlands treated using timber sales	Acres	160*	$92,800	SSSS *an additional 4,806 acres accomplished but not included in the 11/9/12 PAS report for a total of 4,966 acres of accomplished forestlands treated using timber sales, 534 ac-CFLN, $5,340; 3,697 ac-NFTM,$23,660; 575 ac-SPFH, $3,400
Volume of timber sold (CCF)	CCF	13,546.20 53,724.8	$73,854.88 $292,911.57	CFLN NFTM *An additional 1,935 ccf has been sold through salvage sales within the CFLRP area, but not included in the 11/9/12 PAS report for a total of 69,206 ccf sold.

[9] Units accomplished should match the accomplishments recorded in the Databases of Record.

[10] Please use a new line for each BLI or type of fund used. For example, you may have three lines with the same performance measure, but the type of funding might be two different BLIs and CFLR/CFLN.

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Total Units Accomplished [9]	Total Treatment Cost ($)	Type of Funds (CFLR, Specific FS BLI, Partner Match)[10]
Green tons from small diameter and low value trees removed from NFS lands and made available for bio-energy production	Green tons	1,055.2 4,335.7		
Acres of hazardous fuels treated outside the wildland/urban interface (WUI) to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire	Acre	1,650 9,506 2,119 45 165 1,211 1,579	$47,013.12 $249,172 $61,326.56 $2,451 $4,620 $25,07 $133,237	CFLN WFHF CWKV – WF CWKV – VW NFVW NFWF NFTM, NFVW
Acres of wildland/urban interface (WUI) high priority hazardous fuels treated to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire	Acres	3,398 19,301 4,302 95 335 2,678 3,205	$95,451 $451,700 $124,505.36 $8,293.4 $9,380 $55,443 $275,734	CFLN WFHF CWKV – WF CWKV - VW NFVW NFWF NFTM, NFVW

7. **FY 2012 accomplishment narrative** (summarize key accomplishments and evaluate project progress) (please limit answer to three pages).

During FY2012, the Ouachita National Forest made progress toward overall project objectives, as shown above.

Accomplishments directly related to the three main restoration treatments aligned with proposed project progress with the exception of prescribed burning:

- Approximately 4,966 acres of timber harvesting was accomplished in FY2012 within the CFLRP area, exceeding our project proposal estimate of 4,000 acres, or nearly 25%.
- Treatments designed to reduce the density of non-commercial trees within the forest communities totaled 3,660 acres, exceeding our initial estimate of 3,000 acres, or a little over 20%. Also, 140 acres were prepared for regeneration using prescribed burning. Other integrated activities combined to achieve nearly 58,000 acres of terrestrial habitat improvement.
- The Forest prescribed burned a total of 44,805 acres within the CFLRP area, well short of the estimate in the proposal of 55,000 acres. Other integrated activities combined to give upwards of 50,000 acres of treatments that reduced hazardous fuels within the CFLRP area. Drought conditions and associated county burn bans across Arkansas and Oklahoma during the last half of the fiscal year prevented additional approved prescribed burns, and the severity of the drought made any management of naturally ignited fires impossible.

The Forest also accomplished 19 miles of road decommissioning, exceeding the estimate of the projected 10-year total in the first year. In addition, non-native invasive species treatment totaled 23 acres, including treatment of invasive species along roadsides. Lastly, a bi-product of the restoration treatments included over 69,000 ccf volume of timber sold, most of which is high value southern yellow pine sawtimber sold to local mills within the impact area of the project.

The role of partners is critical in the success of restoring habitat on the 350,000 acres of the CFLRP area on the Ouachita National Forest. During FY12, the turkey project continued into the second year. With our partners we continued to monitoring the effects of our prescribed burning on Wild Turkeys. With the majority of the project area associated with the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW), we continued to see a rise in RCW population numbers from 28 in 1990 to over 140 in 2012, along with a continued increase in active clusters (currently 59 active).

8. **Describe the total acres treated in the course of the CFLR project** (cumulative footprint acres; not a cumulative total of performance accomplishments). What was the total number of acres treated?[11]

Fiscal Year	Total number of acres treated (treatment footprint)
FY12	53,718
FY10, FY11, and FY12	53,718

9. **In no more than two pages (large landscapes or very active fire seasons may need more space), describe other relevant fire management activities within the project area** (hazardous fuel treatments are already documented in Question #6):

Opportunities for management of natural ignition wildfires for multiple objectives are limited on the Ouachita NF with only about 20% of fires having natural ignition as a source of cause. This year no unplanned ignitions were managed for multiple benefits. There were no cost changes due to different management of wildfires. Opportunities for other than full suppression of wildfires were also limited due to the onset of exceptional drought that occurred in Arkansas and Oklahoma this summer. All fires were controlled at initial attack and remained relatively small resulting in no BAER treatments.

Treatments in the project area have been ongoing for several years with an approximately 180,000 acres having been treated to move towards restored conditions. One third of these acres having achieved FRCC condition class one. The treatments are reliant on timber management to remove the mid-story, and reduce the overall basal area then utilizing prescribed fire to further reduce the fuels. Implementation of burning is on a three-four year rotation. Three rotational burns are needed to fully restore the landscape. Burning on rotation maintains the desired condition. The exceptional drought experienced in Arkansas and Oklahoma this summer limited the number of burn days available for implementation. The Forest Plan Design Criteria does not allow prescribed burning in counties where a burn ban is in place. Most counties in the project area initiated burn bans off and on during the spring burning season, then bans were continuous from early May though the summer. Wildland fire size has not shown a significant reduction, but intensity and resistance to control has been reduced.

[11] This metric is separate from the annual performance measurement reporting as recorded in the databases of record. Please see the instructions document for further clarification.

Forest-Wide Design Criteria AQ004 was identified during a five-year review by the Forest as a limitation to prescribed burning. This design criteria states "burning will not be conducted when county burn bans are in effect." The Forest staff plans on addressing the extent of limitation associated with this design criteria in FY 2013, including a possible amendment.

10. **Describe any reasons that the FY 2012 annual report does not reflect your project proposal, previously reported planned accomplishments, or work plan**. Did you face any unexpected challenges this year that caused you to change what was outlined in your proposal? (please limit answer to two pages)

The summer drought of 2012 was one of the hottest and driest on record for the Ouachita Mountains. These conditions resulted in burn bans across the Southeast restricting prescribed burning activities. Within the SBC project area, the Ouachita NF planned to burn 55,000 acres. Due to the burning restrictions, only 44,805 acres were burned. Although the forest did strive to accomplish the proposed work, these conditions (all weather related) were out of our control.

Since the forest barely exceeded 100,000 acres under the drought conditions, it would not be inaccurate to state that possibly another 40,000 acres could have been done under a more moderate spring/summer. In an average year, the largest section of the CFLRP area burns approximately 60 days per year. In 2012, this was limited to approximately 35-40, a reduction of about 33% due to the drought. Most of the difference in days occurred between June through September.

Planning for the accelerated restoration activities did not occur during the FY12 planning phase in late FY11. Without this early planning on the Forest and with continued drought, it was difficult to achieve the CFLRP accomplishments planned in the proposal and work plans. The Forest is planning to accomplish additional burning acres in the future to make up for the shortfall in FY12. However, since burning is so dependent on weather conditions, this may not be possible. With this in mind, the Forest has already accomplished additional acres in WSI/TSI, volume sold, invasive treatment, and road decommissioning beyond what was planned in FY12.

11. **Planned FY 2014 Accomplishments**

Performance Measure Code[12]	Unit of measure	Planned Accomplishment	Amount ($)
Acres of forest vegetation improved	Acres	320	$60,000
Manage noxious weeds and invasive plants	Acre	17	$4,100
Acres of terrestrial habitat restored or enhanced	Acres	99,900	$1,382,800
Miles of high clearance system roads receiving maintenance	Miles	88	$40,000
Miles of passenger car system roads receiving maintenance	Miles	178	$35,000
Miles of road decommissioned	Miles	2	$2,000
Miles of passenger car system roads improved	Miles	3	$180,000
Miles of high clearance system road improved	Miles	18	$900,000
Acres of forestlands treated using timber sales	Acres	5,800	$1,160,000
Volume of timber sold (CCF)	CCF	41,500	1,305,000
Green tons from small diameter and low value trees removed from NFS lands and made available for bio-energy production	Green tons	10,000	
Acres of hazardous fuels treated outside the wildland/urban interface (WUI) to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire	Acre	35,000	$980,000
Acres of wildland/urban interface (WUI) high priority hazardous fuels treated to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire	Acres	65,000	$1,820,000

12. **Planned FY 2014 accomplishment narrative** (no more than 1 page):

The FY14 program of work is projected to achieve our original planned activities in the grant proposal. In order to achieve these goals, several ongoing NEPA projects will need to be accomplished in FY13. Planned projects for FY14 (and

[12] Please include all relevant planned accomplishments, assuming that funding specified in the CFLRP project proposal for FY 2014 is available. Use actual planned funding if quantity is less than specified in CFLRP project work plan, and justify deviation from project work plan in question 13 of this template.

FY13) include 100,000 acres of prescribed burning, 6,000 acres commercially thinned, sale of over 40,000 ccf and 5,000 acres of WSI/TSI, funded both with CFLN and matching funds.

In addition, herbicide treatment of invasive species, road decommissioning, improvement and maintenance, growing plugs and re-establishment of milkweed and other native species will occur, along with possible continuation of turkey research are planned for FY14. Also in FY14, RCW habitat improvement work will consist of providing artificial inserts for nesting and roosting, improving nesting and foraging habitat by commercially thinning stands and accomplishing mid-story removal through contracts and stewardship work, removing flying squirrels from cavities and periodic prescribed burning to maintain the open park-like stands needed for the endangered species.

13. **Describe and provide narrative justification if planned FY 2013/14 accomplishments and/or funding differs from CFLRP project work plan** (no more than 1 page):

At this time, the Ouachita National Forest, has no plans to deviate for planned accomplishments and/or funding levels as outlined in our CFLRP proposal and work plan. However, if funding is reduced either in grant of appropriated funds, the accomplishments projected for FY13/14 would need to be adjusted accordingly. The majority of our accomplishments are prescribed burning. This accomplishment is primarily weather dependent. If drought conditions continue in Arkansas and Oklahoma, this could greatly affect our accomplishments. If we see that prescribed burning activities would be affected by bad weather conditions (drought, too much rain, high temperatures, etc.), we would look at increasing accomplishments in other areas where we have already achieved our target.

The majority of our improved roads and maintenance of high clearance roads has been accomplished through timber sale purchases during FY12. With roads funding being reduced over the last few years, these accomplishments continue to be funded through this source. However, with the cost of road maintenance and improvement greatly increasing over the past few years, the cost of maintaining and improving our roads associated with timber sales may be at a cost approaching or exceeding the cost of the sale. This has resulted in fewer dollars available for Knutson-Vandenburg Trust Fund (KV) work planned within the project. With this reduction in KV funds, we would need to look at other sources (appropriated funds) to accomplish our planned work. If appropriated funding is not available, the Forest may have to deviate from planned activities. Also, the high cost of road work within a timber sale could exceed the cost of the sale, resulting in the timber sale not being sold, which in turn would affect our planned accomplishments.

Also, when FY13 work plan was submitted, funding for trail maintenance was uncertain. Since then,the sale unit has closed, resulting in availability of KV funds to accomplish approximately 15 miles of trail maintenance work within the CFLRP project in FY13.