CFLR Project (Name/Number): ***Shortleaf – Bluestem Community/18***
National Forest(s): Ouachita

Little Rock, Arkansas, September ***4, 2019 – Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue (front right) and Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson (front left) sign the Shared Stewardship Memorandum of Understanding between the Ouachita and Ozark – St. Francis National Forests, NRCS – Arkansas, and the State of Arkansas, including the Arkansas Department of Agriculture – Forestry Division and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. From left to right in the back row, State Forester Joe Fox, Arkansas Game and Fish Director Pat Fitts, U.S. Representatives Bruce Westerman, French Hill, and Rick Crawford, Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen, and Arkansas Department of Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward.***

1. Match and Leveraged Funds:

a. FY19 Matching Funds Documentation

Fund Source – (CFLN/CFLR Funds Expended)	Total Funds Expended in Fiscal Year 2019
CFLN19	$480,321

This amount should match the amount of CFLR/CFLN dollars obligated in the FMMI CFLRP expenditure report. Include prior year CFLN dollars expended in this Fiscal Year.

Fund Source – (Funds expended from Washington Office funds (in addition to CFLR/CFLN) (please include a new row for each BLI))	Total Funds Expended in Fiscal Year 2019
NFTM	$740,951
NFHF	$384,556
NFWF	$599,785

This value (aka “core funds” “in lieu of funds”) should reflect the amount expended of the allocated funds as indicated in the program direction but does not necessarily need to be in the same BLIs or budget fiscal year as indicated in the program direction.

Fund Source – (FS Matching Funds (please include a new row for each BLI)	Total Funds Expended in Fiscal Year 2019
CFRD1819	$402,571
CFKV1818	$140,933
CFKV1819	$177,002
E2R01717	$13,804
E2R09A17	$16,136
E2R09B17	$26,761
E2R11A17	$7,173
E2R11B17	$5,312
E2R11C17	$10,760
E2R11D17	$9,033
E2R14B17	$13,705
E2R15817	$16,136
E2R22517	$43,167
E2R28917	$49,146
E2R43A17	$9,436
E2R71417	$18,873
E2R75717	$14,155
E2R7E417	$34,122
E2R97017	$10,756
E2RC5A17	$2,915
E2RC5B17	$2,960
E2RT1917	$20,121
E2RT2017	$2,215
E2RT2117	$13,294
E2RT3917	$7,096
E2RT4A17	$10,736
E2RT4B17	$12,685
E2RT4C17	$14,450
E2RT9A17	$13,218
E0111A19	$67,279

Fund Source – (FS Matching Funds (please include a new row for each BLI)	**Total Funds Expended in Fiscal Year 2019**
E0111B19	$19,631
E0120819	$16,333
E0179619	$33,027
E5q17C16	$21,230
E5q49C16	$11,048
CFHF1819	$271,685
CfTm1819	$923,575
CFwF1819	$326,685
CFCC1816	$53,751
CFHF1814	$86,757
Prior Year fund Codes	Prior Year Fund Codes
CFKV1814	$34,094
CFKV1817	$2,211
CFKV1819	$155,055

This amount should match the amount of matching funds in the FMMI CFLRP expenditure report, minus the Washington Office funds listed in the box above and any partner funds contributed through agreements (such as NFEX, SPEX, WFEX, CMEX, and CWFS) listed in the box below

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Fund Source – (Funds contributed through agreements)	**Total Funds Expended in Fiscal Year 2019**
	0

Please document any partner contributions to implementation and monitoring of the CFLR project through an income funds agreement (**this should include partner funds captured through the FMMI CFLRP reports such as NFEX, SPEX, WFEX, CMEX, and CWFS**). Please list the partner organizations involved in the agreement. Partner contributions for Fish, Wildlife, Watershed work can be found in the WIT database.

Fund Source – (Partner In-Kind Contributions)	**Total Funds Expended in Fiscal Year 2019**
Arkansas State University (wild turkey monitoring)	$19,544
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (wild turkey, quail)	$500
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (cooperative prescribed burning, RCW work)	$153,965
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Wichita Mountains, OK (prescribed burning in-kind)	$6,000

Total partner in-kind contributions for implementation and monitoring of a CFLR project on NFS lands. Please list the partner organizations that provided in-kind contributions.

Service work accomplishment through goods-for services funding within a stewardship contract (for contracts awarded in FY19)	**Totals**
Total revised non-monetary credit limit for contracts awarded in FY19	0$

Revised non-monetary credit limits should be the amount in contract's "Progress Report for Stewardship Credits, Integrated Resources Contracts or Agreements" in cell J46, the "Revised Non-Monetary Credit Limit," as of September 30. Additional information on the Progress Reports is available in CFLR Annual Report Instructions document. Information for contracts awarded prior to FY19 were captured in previous annual reports.

Please fill in the table describing leveraged funds in your landscape in FY2019. Leveraged funds refer to funds or in- kind services that help the project achieve proposed objectives but do not meet match qualifications.

Description of item	**Where activity/item is located or impacted area**	**Estimated total amount**	**Forest Service or Partner Funds?**	**Source of funds**
NEPA Planning – Includes inventories for heritage, biological, roads, and forest stand conditions (CSE); analysis and documentation; GIS support; support services and fuels	**Cold Springs – Poteau Ranger District: Dogwood, Jack Creek, East Newman, Peanut Mountain, Jack Pigeon, and Mill Creek.** **Choctaw-Kiamichi-Tiak Ranger District: Blackjack, Lennox, Billy Creek, and Pine Mountain Farm Bill** **Mena – Oden Ranger District: Farm Bill 2019, and Farm Bill 2020**	**$357,913**	**Forest Service**	**NFTM, NFVW, WFHF, NFWF**

Description of item	Where activity/item is located or impacted area	Estimated total amount	Forest Service or Partner Funds?	Source of funds
NRCS – Arkansas: Western Arkansas – SE Oklahoma Watershed Restoration 2019 - 2021	**Obligated EQIP practices in Arkansas in Scott and Polk Counties**	**$46,820**	**Partner Funds**	**Joint Chief's Landscape Restoration Partnership grant**

(Optional) Additional narrative about leverage on the landscape if needed:
The Forest continues to actively plan out treatments for the ***Shortleaf – Bluestem Community*** at the watershed level. The Forest first completes watershed assessments to get a laundry list of potential actions needed to move from the existing condition to the desired condition in the Forest Plan. The ***Shortleaf – Bluestem Community*** proposal is tied directly to the desired conditions for the Management Areas within the revised Forest Plan, so actions that ultimately become part of the decision (Decision Notices, Decision Memos) are moving toward a shortleaf – bluestem community where emphasized by MA.

The Joint Chiefs' project includes the Ouachita and Ozark – St. Francis National Forests and the NRCS in Arkansas. Approximately $46,820 was obligated in FY 2019 in EQIP funding for projects within the CFLRP project area that are restoring the land. Practices funded included tree/shrub site preparation and prescribed burning.

2. Please tell us about the CFLR **project's progress to date in restoring a more fire-adapted ecosystem as described in the project proposal**, and **how it has contributed to the wildland fire goals in the *10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan***.

FY2019 Overview

FY19 Activity Description (Agency performance measures)	**Acres**
Number of acres treated by prescribed fire	27,865
Number of acres treated by mechanical thinning	1,906
Number of acres of natural ignitions that are allowed to burn under strategies that result in desired conditions	0
Number of acres treated to restore fire-adapted ecosystems which are maintained in desired condition	30,727
Number of acres mitigated to reduce fire risk	64% (20,857)

Please provide a narrative overview of treatments completed in FY19

The Forest burned 27,865 acres within the CFLRP boundaries. The total burned across the entire Forest was

68,000 acres, with the high priority CFLRP burning making up only 41%. 64% of CFLRP acres were focused on the Wildland Urban Interface. 1,906 acres were mechanically treated for hazardous fuels reduction. This FY targets were plagued by several factors: the longest Government shut down in history, fatal agency helicopter crash and shut down, and the highest rainfall in the Region/State in recent history.

Please tell us whether these treatments were in "high or very high wildfire hazard area from the "wildfire hazard potential map.

While most of these treatments were not in the high or very high wildfire hazard area as depicted on the wildfire hazard potential map, the continued regular burning of these areas prevents woody sprouts from growing unchecked into the mid-story of the stand. If this happens, it makes the next prescribed burn more risky to over-story mortality and more difficult to reach prescribed burn objectives including the top-killing of most hardwood sprouts. This restoration project was visited by the Regional Leadership team in 2018 and it is now being recommended to the Region as a workshop for the RT300 class on "How to restore Shortleaf Pine".

Throughout the time the Forest has planned and implemented CFLRP prescribed burns, we've learned that short-term planning for burn execution must involve ground level burn area assessments with a quick response by the entire Forest (and even the Region) to support the burning of the prioritized landscape. In doing so, the highest priority areas that are ready to burn, based on site conditions, get the proper attention as the highest priority on the Forest.

Expenditures

Category	**$**
FY2019 Wildfire Preparedness[1]	*
FY2019 Wildfire Suppression[2]	*
The cost of managing fires for resource benefit if appropriate (i.e. full suppression versus managing)	0
FY2019 Hazardous Fuels Treatment Costs (CFLN)	$126,175
FY2019 Hazardous Fuels Treatment Costs (other BLIs)	$589,910

*****It is difficult to measure CFLRP cost, wildfire preparedness and wildfire suppression costs across a landscape or Forest. This Forest's fuel types have a natural fire return interval of 4-6 years. If our CFLRP annual target is 100,000 acres of prescribed burning and in every given year the condition class moves, going from 1-3 in 6 years, it is difficult to calculate the cost difference of CFLRP land and the year treated versus the severity of the fire/cost associated with wildfire.

[1] Include base salaries, training, and resource costs borne by the unit(s) that sponsors the CFLRP project. If costs are directly applicable to the project landscape, describe full costs. If costs are borne at the unit level(s), describe what proportions of the costs apply to the project landscape. This may be as simple as Total Costs X (Landscape Acres/Unit Acres).

[2] Include emergency fire suppression and BAER within the project landscape. Describe acres of fires contained and not contained by initial attack. Describe acres of resource benefits achieved by unplanned ignitions within the landscape. Where existing fuel treatments within the landscape are tested by wildfire, summary and reference the fuel treatment effectiveness report.

*Of the 1.8 million acres of NFS land on the Ouachita, approximately 130,000 acres are treated annually by prescribed fire. That is 7% and calculated over our fire return interval of 6 years, 43% of the Forest is treated. This 43% treated is misrepresented due to areas that naturally don't hold fire or may not be attainable. For example, river, lakes, and stream areas would decrease the overall burnable acres while increasing the % burned over a natural interval. Based on the previous statement, assume 70% or 1.2 million acres can burn bringing our % treated over 6 years to 65%. This inevitably has a significant impact to the large fire potential due to hazardous fuels from either human or natural ignition.

*If the funding for CFLRP is diminished, our treated acres will be reduced to half, leaving us to fight the uphill battle the rest of the Forests are facing with large wildfires.

How may the treatments that were implemented contribute to reducing fire costs?

We are entering the end of the CFLRP project and over the 10 years of the fire history, we have seen a significant decrease in acres burned due to wildfire. Approximately 20% of the Forest falls under the CFLRP project area, so a further study would have to explain the decrease in wildfire activity on Forest breaking it out spatially to only include project areas. We intend to implement Fuels effectiveness monitoring by adjusting our initial response pocket cards to include information that the IC's can convey for the FMO's to gain an accurate report annually.

Have there been any assessments or reports conducted within your CFLRP landscape that provide information on cost reduction, cost avoidance, and/or other cost related data as it relates to fuels treatment and fires? If so, please summarize or provide links here:

<u>When a wildfire interacts with a previously treated area within the CFLR boundary</u>:

If additional assessments have been completed since the FY2018 CFLRP annual report on fires within the CFLRP area, please note that and provide responses to the questions below. ***For projects finishing their tenth year****, if you have any additional insights from your cumulative work over the course of the project please share those here as well.*

Each unit is required to complete and submit a standard fuels treatment effectiveness monitoring (FTEM) entry in the FTEM database (see FSM 5140) when a wildfire occurs within or enters into a fuel treatment area. **For fuel treatment areas within the CFLR boundary, please copy/paste that entry here and respond to the following supplemental questions. Note that the intent of these questions is to understand progress as well as identify challenges and what didn't work as expected to promote learning and adaptation.**

- *Please describe if/how partners or community members engaged in the planning or implementation of the relevant fuels treatment.* Partners are engaged in the planning and implementation of prescribed burning through participating agreements for implementation and monitoring. Agreements with TNC,

Oklahoma Forestry Services (OFS), Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC), National Park Service – Buffalo River, Choctaw Nation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Wichita Mountains, and the BLM continue to supplement our work force executing prescribed burns. TNC is our major partner in monitoring vegetation in the CFLRP project area. In addition, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) is a significant partner carrying out fuels treatment on the McCurtain County Wilderness Area (MCMA) that is surrounded by National Forest System lands within the CFLRP boundaries in Oklahoma. This year the Choctaw – Kiamichi – Tiak (CKT) District in close coordination with ODWC executed an approximate 6,800 acre burn, with most of the acres located within the MCMA. The Choctaw Nation has been under a participating agreement for several years to provide dozer services for completing fire line construction and re-construction. As a leveraged activity, the Forest has agreements with the Cherokee Nation and other tribes for heritage surveys for project areas that include fuel treatments within the CFLRP boundaries.

- *Did treatments include coordinated efforts on other federal, tribal, state, private, etc. lands within or adjacent to the CFLR landscape?* In addition to state land burned in Oklahoma under the management of the ODWC, private lands are also burned using agreements authorized under the Stevens Act. These agreements allow for the efficient fuels reduction of private lands and, in many cases, reduces ground – disturbing control line blading or plowing.

- *What resource values were you and your partners concerned with protecting or enhancing? Did the treatments help to address these value concerns?* A significant portion of the *Shortleaf Bluestem Community* project is within the Habitat Management Area (HMA) for the Endangered (under the Endangered Species Act) red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW). There are two HMA's on the Ouachita, one in Arkansas south of Waldron and one in Oklahoma near Hochatown. Both commercial and non-commercial thinning along with prescribed burning is needed to maintain an open canopy with few woody saplings in the midstory and increased herbaceous species in the understory with woody stems being continually top-killed. These treatments, including the accomplishments in 2018, continue to gradually increase the active territories and breeding attempts by the RCW over time.

  Two American Burying Beetle (ABB) Conservation Areas (ABBAs) have been established on the Forest and are included in the Shortleaf Bluestem Community project. There is one ABBA in Arkansas and one in Oklahoma, and the habitat thought to be good for the ABB is similar to that of the RCW. As with the RCW HMA's, prescribed burning along with thinning, both commercial and non-commercial, is necessary to provide good habitat for the Endangered beetle. Fuels treatments like those mentioned continue to provide the best know habitat conditions for the ABB, although monitoring results are mixed.

  Over the last decade or so, there has been a marked increase in construction of summer rental cabins on private lands intermingled with National Forest Service lands in the vicinity of Hochatown, Oklahoma. The combination of thinning and prescribed burning within this WUI complex has helped to reduce fuels in the vicinity of structures that have been built. The district is planning to implement a decision to intensively reduce fuels in the future, including the treatments mentioned as well as permanent fire breaks, which will also reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the area.

  The treatments being implemented in this CFLRP project, including commercial thinning, non-commercial thinning (midstory reduction, pre-commercial thinning, release), has promoted better

habitat for bobwhite quail and wild turkey, both demand hunting species that are in decline in Arkansas and southeastern Oklahoma. Well
– known "hot spots" for the bobwhite include the RCW HMA near Waldron, Oklahoma, that continues to attract hunters for these species as well as white-tailed deer, providing this rural community with added economic benefits related to this dispersed recreation attraction.

- *Did the treatments do what you expected them to do? Did they have the intended effect on fire behavior or outcomes? Please include a brief description.* Yes, the prescribed burning provides the top-killing of woody stems across the burn area and perpetuates the restored pine – bluestem community or provides an incremental improvement in the area as it transitions to a fully restored condition. The other two treatments, commercial thinning and non-commercial thinning, create a short-term challenge for implementing prescribed burning due
to the temporary increase in forest floor fuels. In addition, sometimes timber purchasers essentially "lock up" the area in terms of prescribed burning because they wait until the latter part of the contract life to finish the harvesting and burning cannot proceed until the payment units with painted trees are completely harvested. Specific to FY 2018, treatments had the intended effect on any fuels. One area in Oklahoma was burned too hot and had to be salvaged later in the year.
- *What is your key takeaway from this event – what would you have done differently? What elements will you continue to apply in the future?* As stated in other places in this document, the prescribed burning preparation and logistical support needs to change in order for the Forest to successfully treat this pine – bluestem landscape of about 320,000 acres. We need to recognize when and where burn units are coming within parameters and then react aggressively to provide personnel, equipment (including engines, dozers and helicopters) to get the high priority work on this landscape completed.

- *What <u>didn't</u> work as expected, and why? What was learned?* As stated above, a part of one of the prescribed burns from last year heated up and killed trees on about 175 acres in Oklahoma. This was burned using a helicopter and a plastic sphere dispenser, and one lesson learned was simply patience. In hindsight, the width of the lit (with plastic spheres from the helicopter) lines was too wide in this part of the burn block and the fire gained too much momentum too fast and ended up killing trees instead of top-killing the understory and midstory.

  Please include the costs of the treatments listed in the fuels treatment effectiveness report: how much CFLR/CFLN was spent? How much in other BLI's were spent? If cost estimates are not available, please note and briefly explain. This Forest hasn't participated in the fuels treatment effectiveness report. We plan to introduce the concept in a training this spring. The Forest Fire Staff Officer is new to their position but plans to include some of the data needed for the annual report in the Incident Response card the Incident Commanders carry to Initial Attack. Last fiscal year there were very few fires, (no large fires) in the CFLRP boundary due to unusual amounts of moisture around the state.

When a wildfire occurs within the CFLR landscape on an area <u>planned</u> for treatment but not yet treated:

- Please include:

  - *Acres impacted and severity of impact:* As a total, the Ouachita National Forest had 22 wildfires that burned 644 acres, or an average of 29 acres per wildfire. There was little to no overstory kill from these wildfires, and most did not top-kill the midstory component of the stand.

- *Brief description of the planned treatment for the area:* In all cases, the treatment will be the same as an unburned stand: commercial timber sale of thinning, midstory reduction treatment, and then three prescribed burns over the next decade or so. In some cases, wildfires can act to reduce the prescribed burning treatments necessary for full restoration to a pine – bluestem community from three to two, although because of the time needed for commercial thinning contracts and midstory reduction treatments, this is usually not the case.
- *Summary of next steps – will the project implement treatments elsewhere? Will they complete an assessment?*
  As stated above, the full pine – bluestem restoration treatment process will continue.
- *Description of collaborative involvement in determining next steps.* Our collaborators are well aware of the burn pattern and intensity across the CFLRP project area and the conditions this past year. No specific meetings or discussions are necessary based on the FY 2018 wildfires other than the planned collaboration meetings sponsored by TNC annually.

Please include acres of fires contained and not contained by initial attack and acres of resource benefits achieved by unplanned ignitions within the landscape, and costs.

Due to the lack of natural ignitions and weather conditions that the Forest faced, we didn't have any natural fires that resulted in resource benefit. All fires were contained by initial attack this year. No BAER assessments were completed.

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

1. Due to the consideration of the Enterprise Group as a non-local contractor (see the 2018 annual report, page 8), the costs associated with implementation work that took place within the FY were counted as contracts. The Enterprise Group (TEAMS) cost $386,495 for accomplishments within the CFLRP project area.
2. Some timber sales straddled the CFLRP boundary, and so only units within the boundary were counted for volume and acres accomplished.

FY 2019 Jobs Supported/Maintained (FY19 CFLR/CFLN/ WO funding):

FY 2019 Jobs Supported/Maintained	Jobs (Full and Part-Time) (Direct)	Jobs (Full and Part-Time) (Total)	Labor Income (Direct)	Labor Income (Total)
Timber harvesting component	14	18	799,348	1,013,756
Forest and watershed restoration component	5	7	109,796	185,028
Mill processing component	18	35	1,143,854	2,020,668
FS Implementation and monitoring	21	26	1,088,237	1,267,150
Commercial firewood and contracted monitoring	0	0	0	0
TOTALS:	57	85	3,141,235	4,486,603

FY 2019 Jobs Supported/Maintained (FY19 CFLR/CFLN/ WO and matching funding):

FY 2019 Jobs Supported/Maintained	Jobs (Full and Part-Time) (Direct)	Jobs (Full and Part-Time) (Total)	Labor Income (Direct)	Labor Income (Total)
Timber harvesting component	30	40	1,776,323	2,252,783
Forest and watershed restoration component	6	8	147,456	240,094
Mill processing component	40	78	2,570,962	4,508,488
FS Implementation and monitoring	47	58	2,199,862	2,561,533
Commercial firewood and contracted monitoring.	0	0	0	0
TOTALS:	123	183	6,694,603	9,562,898

4. **Describe other community benefits achieved and the methods used to gather information about these benefits**. **How has CFLR and related activities benefitted your community from a social and/or economic standpoint?** (Please limit answer to two pages).

Indicator	Brief Description of Impacts, Successes, and Challenges	Links to reports or other published materials (if available)
# Cross-institutional agreements/policies	In FY 2019, the Forest worked toward a Shared Stewardship MOU with state and federal partners. This collaborative effort included the Arkansas Department of Agriculture – Forestry Division, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, NRCS – Arkansas, and both the Ozark – St. Francis and the Ouachita National Forests. This was the first such agreement including the NRCS, and the MOU was signed by the Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, and AGFC Director Pat Fitts. This agreement will create a binding pact with not only state agencies but also the NRCS to work on priorities into the future, including the cross-over benefits of the JCLRP and CFLRP grants.	https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2019/09/04/usda-and-arkansas-sign-shared-stewardship-agreement-improve-health
Tribal connections	The Forest worked throughout FY 2019 on the Programmatic Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Offices and the tribes in both Arkansas and Oklahoma. This agreement will streamline many projects and reduce paperwork for all agencies and tribes involved in planning, mitigating and implementing treatments.	N/A

Indicator	Brief Description of Impacts, Successes, and Challenges	Links to reports or other published materials (if available)
Ease of doing business	The Ouachita worked with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture – Forestry Division throughout the FY to develop a Supplemental Project Agreement for starting a Good Neighbor Authority timber sale program. This SPA is nearing completion, and along with a modification to the Master GNA, will allow the Forest and ***Shortleaf – Bluestem Project*** to efficiently prepare, advertise, sell, and administer timber sales as well as potentially get other service work completed.	N/A
Duration of jobs	The Ouachita hired numerous people into permanent positions across the Forest, many of which have and will contribute to the accomplishments in the CFLRP project area. This benefit should be especially strong in the prescribed burning treatments where long-time vacancies were filled on districts and the Forest.	N/A

5. Based on your project monitoring plan, **describe the multiparty monitoring process. You may simply reference your ecological indicator reports here if they adequately represent your multiparty monitoring process**. If further information is needed, please answer the questions below.

The ecological monitoring report for 2019 is included as a separate attachment in the submission to the Washington Office.

The Nature Conservancy Vegetation Monitoring

Virginia McDaniel (Forest Service) and McRee Anderson (The Nature Conservancy) take plots for the biannual vegetation monitoring on the Shortleaf – Bluestem Community project, summer, 2019

In 2019, The Nature Conservancy coordinated the effort to collect new plant community monitoring data from CFLRP monitoring plots (50 plots) on the Oklahoma Ranger District. The Nature Conservancy worked alongside USFS staff from the Mena-Oden Ranger District to complete data collection in a timely and efficient manner. These data will be combined with 2018 monitoring data – collected on Management Area 22 in Arkansas – to produce a new report that summarizes the effects of management on the shortleaf pine-bluestem community and progress made towards the desired ecological condition. The report is expected to be completed by the end of 2020. As such, no new plant community monitoring efforts are planned for the CFLRP on the Ouachita National Forest in 2020.

The Brown-Headed Nuthatch Translocation

Brown-headed nuthatches (*Sitta pusilla;* BHNU) are a non-migratory resident bird of pine woodlands that were extirpated from Missouri in the late nineteenth century when pine forests were logged. There is growing interest in the reintroduction of brown-headed nuthatches to Missouri because of an increasing focus on pine woodland management in Missouri over this timeframe and current partner support.

The opportunity to reintroduce BHNU in Missouri is driven primarily by the renewed availability of habitat. The U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) Mark Twain National Forest (MTNF) and Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) have been focusing on management of pine woodland natural communities across the Ozark Highlands through forest harvest and burning. These two agencies and additional partners are collaborating on the Missouri Pine-Oak Woodland Restoration Project, which is supported by the USFS Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). The project area in the CFLRP project includes 345,710 acres of public land across the Ozarks with 115,860 planned pine-oak woodland restoration treatment acres, which includes 15,500 acres on MDC lands and 88,400 acres on MTNF.

This effort is supported by funding from the Mark Twain National Forest and the Northern Research Station and data from the USFS Southern Region landbird monitoring program on the Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis National Forests. The Ozark-ST. Francis and Ouachita National Forests detected 111 BHNU at 7342 points from 1997-2017. Additional surveys were conducted on the Ozark and Ouachita National Forests in the spring of 2019 to estimate current population sizes and potential suitable donor populations. The estimates concluded that the Ouachita population could serve as the donor population of an approximate 100 individuals over a 2-year period. Translocations of 55 birds annually will likely take place over the next two years, 2020-2021.

6. FY 2019 Agency performance measure accomplishments:

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Total Units Accomplished	Total Treatment Cost ($) *(Contract Costs)*
Acres of forest vegetation established FOR-VEG-EST	Acres	374	$45,931
Acres of forest vegetation improved FOR-VEG-IMP	Acres	1,091	$131,518
Manage noxious weeds and invasive plants INVPLT-NXWD-FED-AC	Acre	0	N/A
Highest priority acres treated for invasive terrestrial and aquatic species on NFS lands INVSPE-TERR-FED-AC	Acres	0	N/A

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Total Units Accomplished	Total Treatment Cost ($) *(Contract Costs)*
Acres of water or soil resources protected, maintained or improved to achieve desired watershed conditions. S&W-RSRC-IMP	Acres	87	No service contracts
Acres of lake habitat restored or enhanced HBT-ENH-LAK	Acres	0	N/A
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced HBT-ENH-STRM	Miles	0	N/A
Acres of terrestrial habitat restored or enhanced HBT-ENH-TERR	Acres	47,307	$249,178
Acres of rangeland vegetation improved RG-VEG-IMP	Acres	0	N/A
Miles of high clearance system roads receiving maintenance RD-HC-MAIN	Miles	1.2	N/A
Miles of passenger car system roads receiving maintenance RD-PC-MAINT	Miles	430	$309,519
Miles of road decommissioned RD-DECOM	Miles	0	N/A
Miles of passenger car system roads improved RD-PC-IMP	Miles	0	N/A
Miles of high clearance system road improved RD-HC-IMP	Miles	0	N/A
Road Storage *While this isn't tracked in the USFS Agency database, please provide road storage miles completed if this work is in support of your CFLRP restoration strategy for tracking at the program level.*	Miles	0	N/A
Number of stream crossings constructed or reconstructed to provide for aquatic organism passage STRM-CROS-MTG-STD	Number	0	N/A
Miles of system trail maintained to standard TL-MAINT-STD	Miles	0	N/A
Miles of system trail improved to standard TL-IMP-STD	Miles	0	N/A
Acres of forestlands treated using timber sales TMBR-SALES-TRT-AC	Acres	1,397	No service contracts
Volume of Timber Harvested TMBR-VOL-HVST	CCF	33,562	No service contracts
Volume of timber sold TMBR-VOL-SLD	CCF	59,589	$386,495
Green tons from small diameter and low value trees removed from NFS lands and made available for bio-energy production BIO-NRG	Green tons	3,486	See TMBR-VOL-SLD
Acres of hazardous fuels treated outside the wildland/urban interface (WUI) to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire FP-FUELS-NON-WUI	Acre	9,472	No contract

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Total Units Accomplished	Total Treatment Cost ($) *(Contract Costs)*
Acres of wildland/urban interface (WUI) high priority hazardous fuels treated to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire FP-FUELS-WUI	Acres	21,255	No contract
Acres mitigated FP-FUELS-ALL-MIT-NFS	Acres	N/A	N/A
Please also include the acres of prescribed fire accomplished	Acres	27,865	No contract
Number of priority acres treated annually for invasive species on Federal lands SP-INVSPE-FED-AC	Acres	N/A	N/A
Number of priority acres treated annually for native pests on Federal lands SP-NATIVE-FED-AC	Acres	N/A	N/A

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

[4] The accurate volume within the CFLRP project area is 36,559 ccf. Two large sale areas in FY 2019 were straddling the CFLRP boundary, and due to TIM's inability to dissect sales by payment unit, the inflated sale volume of 59,589 ccf includes several payment units that are located outside the CFLRP project area.

[5] For the same reasons given above in footnote 4, the green tons of payment units actually within the CFLRP boundaries is 1,546 tons made available for bio-energy production.

7. FY 2019 accomplishment narrative – Summarize key accomplishments and evaluate project progress *not already described elsewhere* in this report. ***For projects finishing their tenth year***, if you have any additional insights from your cumulative work over the course of the project please share those here as well. (Please limit answer to three pages.)

The three main treatments our proposal planned include: 1) commercial (timber sales) and 2) non-commercial thinning (mid-story reduction, pre-commercial thinning and release) usually followed with 3) prescribed burning on a three-year rotation. The table below summarizes the current accomplishments to date, from the inception of the project in 2012 to the present.

Treatment	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	**Cum. Total**	**Proposed Accomp. Through 2019**	**% of Proposed Accomp. To present**
Prescribed Burning (Acres)	44,805	54,461	43,532	25,678	71,033	52,290	58,603	27,865	378,267	755,000	50%
Non-commercial thinning (ac) (WSI, TSI)	3,660	7,021	5,416	4,947	1,707	2,715	1,324	1,338	28,128	39,000	72%

Treatment	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	**Cum. Total**	**Proposed Accomp. Through 2019**	**% of Proposed Accomp. To present**
Volume of timber sales sold (ccf)	69,206	71,700	79,828	55,237	59,153	64,117	27,401	36,559	463,201	320,305	145%
Timber harvest (ac):											
Accomp. -	5,066	4,673	8,801	4,456	5,870	5,294	2,458	2,941	39,559	46,000	86%
Complete -	160	2,465	4,195	3,137	3,521	3,182	6,429	2,225	25,314	46,000	55%

- Timber treatments, including thinning as well as some regeneration and salvage efforts, are at 145% of the Year 8 proposed volume awarded levels, and have long-since exceeded the lifetime proposal targets. Timber harvest acres that are shown accomplished as each timber sale is awarded are at 86%, displaying an apparent over- estimate in volume per acre that was calculated for the initial proposal in 2011. The completed sale acres, recorded in the FACTS database much like the accomplished acres, is at 55%, and is to be expected since this accomplishment is at the prerogative of the timber purchaser and sometimes payment units take 2-5 years or more to cut out.
- Prescribed burning was the second-lowest in the 8-year span of time during the CFLRP effort. A stand-down after a helicopter crash combined with very wet conditions for a good portion of the main burning season combined to cause a huge reduction in this accomplishment. The stand-down took place during a time span that an estimated 20,000 – 30,000 acres could have been accomplished.
- Midstory reduction treatments also continued to decline as land managers became more conservative at committing acreage to an activity that would open them up while not confident that maintenance of this condition through prescribed burning would occur.
- Districts started treatments on small acreages with herbicides to reduce woody resprouting. This could change the vegetative composition over the next couple decades to a flashier, grassy fuel bed that may advance restoration toward a pine – bluestem condition, thereby reducing the number of prescribed burning treatments necessary to obtain a fully restored stand(s).

8. The WO (EDW) will use spatial data provided in the databases of record to estimate a treatment footprint for your review and verification. The estimate from EDW is incorrect, so we have described the total acres treated below.

Fiscal Year	**Footprint of Acres Treated (without counting an acre of treatment on the land in more than one treatment category)**
FY 2019	6,347 acres
Estimated Cumulative Footprint of Acres (2010 or 2012 through 2019)	238,986 acres

If you did not use the EDW estimate, please briefly describe how you arrived at the total number of footprint acres: what approach did you use to calculate the footprint?

In FY 2019, the Ouachita calculated the footprint using local databases of record. Acres which overlapped treatments from previous years were subtracted from the total. The results showed that the footprint for FY 19 was 6,347acres.

9. Describe any reasons that the FY 2019 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).

As detailed under question 7, FY 2019 was again a disappointing year for prescribed burning. As detailed under Question 7, a helicopter stand down at peak burning conditions combined with an overall wet calendar year limited gains in accomplishing burning, which is the core activity for moving stands from an intermediate restoration level to fully restored and then maintaining these forest communities in a restored pine – bluestem condition.

The wildlife stand improvement treatment called midstory reduction was down substantially for a second straight year, indicating that land managers don't have confidence in the prescribed burning capacity or cannot implement the treatment due to delays in cutting out timber sale payment units.

Additionally, job codes for direct funding other than CFLN were not properly coded to unique job codes until late in the fiscal year, delaying the use of the funding or masking the presence of the funding (out of sight is out of mind) for the CFLRP grant.

10. *Project selected in 2012 and 2013 ONLY* - Planned FY 2020 Accomplishments

Performance Measure Code	Unit of measure	Planned Accomplishment for 2020 (National Forest System)	*Planned Accomplishment on non-NFS lands within the CFLRP landscape*[3]
Acres of forest vegetation established FOR-VEG-EST	Acres	320	900[4]
Manage noxious weeds and invasive plants INVPLT-NXWD-FED-AC	Acre	34	
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced HBT-ENH-STRM	Miles	1	
Acres of terrestrial habitat restored or enhanced HBT-ENH-TERR	Acres	99,000	
Miles of road decommissioned RD-DECOM	Miles	2	
Miles of passenger car system roads improved RD-PC-IMP	Miles	3	
Miles of high clearance system road improved RD-HC-IMP	Miles	18	
Volume of timber sold TMBR-VOL-SLD	CCF	41,500	
Green tons from small diameter and low value trees removed from NFS lands and made available for bio-energy production BIO-NRG	Green tons	5,000	
Acres of hazardous fuels treated outside the wildland/urban interface (WUI) to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire FP-FUELS-NON-WUI	Acre	35,000	6,000[1]
Acres of wildland/urban interface (WUI) high priority hazardous fuels treated to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire FP-FUELS-WUI	Acres	65,000	500[2]

Please include all relevant planned accomplishments, assuming that funding specified in the CFLRP project proposal for FY 2020 is available.

[1]McCurtain County Wilderness Area in Oklahoma, work completed cooperatively by the ODWC.

[2]Steven's Agreement acreage burned by the Forestry Division (Arkansas) and Oklahoma Forestry Services.

[4]Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership project acres accomplished using EQIP funding through the NRCS – Arkansas.

[3] As we shift to more emphasis on sharing results across all lands within the CFLRP projects – if relevant for your project area – please provide estimates for planned work on non-NFS lands within the CFLRP areas for work that generally corresponds with the Agency performance measure to the left and supports the CFLRP landscape strategy. Give your best estimate at this point; if it's unknown how much work will occur off NFS lands, simply state unknown.

11. *Project selected in 2012 and 2013 ONLY* - Planned accomplishment narrative and justification if planned FY 2020 accomplishments and/or funding differs from CFLRP project work plan (no more than 1 page): The Ouachita will be trying to prescribe burn 100,000 or more acres in the ***Shortleaf – Bluestem Community*** boundaries, and may increase funding from the over-accomplished timber treatments in to burning to do so. This change will only be made if necessary, judged as we move through the main burning season of February through May, and so is not shown in the table above.

12. Please include an up to date list of the members of your collaborative if it has changed from previous years. If the information is available online, you can simply include the hyperlink here. If you have engaged new collaborative members this year, please provide a brief description of their engagement.

Collaborative members are the same as last year. A list with links to their websites can be found in the 2018 Annual Report of the ***Shortleaf – Bluestem Community.***

13. Media recap. Please share with us any hyperlinks to videos, newspaper articles, press releases, scholarly works, and photos of your project in the media that you have available. You are welcome to include links or to copy/paste.

	Article		**Link**
1	USDA and Arkansas Sign Shared Stewardship Agreement to Improve Health of Public and Private Lands	USDA.gov	https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2019/09/04/usda-and-arkansas-sign- shared-stewardship-agreement-improve-health
2	Weterman joins Perdue, Hutchinson for shared stewardship agreement signing	Cong. Westerman office	https://westerman.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/westerman-joins-perdue-hutchinson-shared-stewardship-agreement-signing
3	Pact bonds state, federal forestry efforts	Southwest Times	https://www.swtimes.com/news/20190906/pact- bonds-state-federal-forestry-efforts
4	Governor Hutchinson and U.S. Secretary Perdue sign shared-stewardship agreement	KARK-4 News	https://www.kark.com/news/governor-hutchinson-and-u-s-secretary-perdue-sign-shared- stewardship-agreement/
5	USDA Secretary Perdue Speaks With Arkansas Agricultural, Political Leaders	KUAR - NPR	https://www.ualrpublicradio.org/post/usda- secretary-perdue-speaks-arkansas-agricultural- political-leaders

Zambian and Columbian delegations visit the shortleaf pine – bluestem grass project area on a tour sponsored by The Nature Conservancy along Buffalo Road on the Poteau – Cold Springs Ranger District of the Ouachita National Forest in April, 2019.

Signatures:

Recommended by (Project Coordinator(s)):

Steven N. Cole
Integrated Resources Staff Officer

Approved by (Forest Supervisor(s)):

for *Norman L. Wagoner*
Forest Supervisor

Draft reviewed by (collaborative chair or representative):

McRee Anderson
Director, Interior Highlands and Fire Restoration Programs
The Nature Conservancy