INTEGRATED RESOURCE RESTORATION FY 2013 REPORT

USDA FOREST SERVICE

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The cover photograph of the Tropic Reservoir watershed was taken from the reforestation site along the ridge top of Kings Creek by Keith Gustafson. Tropic Reservoir is on the Paunsaugunt Plateau in Southern Utah on the Powell Ranger District of the Dixie National Forest. Over the ridgeline (left side of the photo) is Bryce Canyon National Park. The Paunsaugunt Plateau contains red limestone and hoodoos that are characteristic of Bryce Canyon National Park. Adjacent to the reservoir is Kings Creek Campground hiding among the trees. The Focused Investment Funds have provided an opportunity to perform over 1200 acres of pre-commercial thinning some of which is planned to be conducted in the forested stands to the right of Tropic Reservoir.

INTRODUCTION

America's forests continue to face stressors such as a changing climate, invasive species, vulnerability to fire, epidemics of insect and disease, and hydrologic impacts to critical watersheds. Addressing these challenges requires an integrated approach toward maintaining the resilience of these systems and restoring where they have declined. Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR) is one of many tools the Agency has to mitigate these stressors. IRR works in conjunction with numerous Agency actions and initiatives that reinforce the Forest Service's broader commitment to restoration including the Accelerated Restoration Strategy, the Watershed Condition Framework, the Cohesive Strategy, the 2012 Planning Rule, the Climate Change Scorecard, and the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration program.

We are continuing to learn from the pilot and adjust our implementation strategy. IRR is designed to create flexibility and enhance the capacity of the Agency to increase the pace and scale of restoration activities.

– Chief Tom Tidwell

Four Forest Restoration Initiative. Region 3. Photo by Jeremy Marshall

This 2013 report assesses the Agency's success in implementing Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR) in its second year by examining whether the three pilot regions achieved their target outputs, enhanced outcomes, and gained flexibility and efficiencies. It also discusses the advantages and challenges of IRR and how it has affected internal and external collaboration.

Stand condition before restoration. Four Forest Restoration Initiative, R3. Photo by Jeremy Marshall

BACKGROUND

The Integrated Resource Restoration pilot program realigns the Forest Service's budget structure by consolidating several existing programs into a single budget line item (BLI). The intent of the authority is to provide the Agency the flexibility to focus maintenance and restoration activities on priority watersheds and/or other priority locations, and to facilitate integrated restoration outcomes on a landscape scale. IRR merges previously separated programs, forest products; vegetation and watershed management; fish and wildlife habitat management; non-WUI hazardous fuels; post-fire restoration and rehabilitation; and legacy roads and trails (including road decommissioning).

As part of the President's budget request, the Forest Service (FS) proposed IRR service wide in both the fiscal years (FY) 2011 and FY 2012 Congress approved a pilot study in the FY 2012 Consolidated Appropriations Act to be conducted in three FS regions over a period of three years. The three pilot regions include the Northern Region (Region 1), the Southwestern Region (Region 3), and the Intermountain Region (Region 4). These regions offer a diversity of collaborative efforts in landscape scale projects to test the IRR pilot. IRR funding and program implementation guidance was provided within 30 days of the FY 2012 Act's enactment.

At the end of the second year of the pilot, each region prepared a report with three to five case studies outlining the successes and challenges of implementing IRR. The next section provides key findings from these reports. Individual regional reports and case studies are found in the Appendices of this report.

KEY FINDINGS

Priorities, Outputs, and Outcomes

Priorities

The three pilot Regions used different approaches to prioritizing funding and work under IRR. Region 1 utilized an 11-step process that included Regional Office program managers and an increased use of collaboratives to set on-the-ground priorities. At the forest level, the experience gained in the FY 2012 pilot informed efforts in FY 2013.

Region 3 prioritized funding and work differently for each forest and found the projects (aside from two National Forests) were more integrated this year than FY 2012.

Region 4's Regional Office gave direction to the units that IRR funds should focus on the Watershed Restoration Action Plan projects. Forests in Region 4 were better positioned to set priorities due to program and staff adjustments they made in FY 2012 and early FY 2013 as they learned and adapted to IRR implementation.

FY 2013 IRR Accomplishments

Performance Measure	Northern Region (R1)	Southwestern Region (R3)	Intermountain Region (R4)	FY 2013 Total Accomplishment
Acres treated annually to sustain or restore watershed function and resilience	213,726	380,314	285,255	879,296
Percentage of Target	100.90%	152.66%	144.07%	133%[1]
Miles of road decommissioned	290.1	56	274	620
Percentage of Target	76.34%	82.35%	96.62%	85%[2]
Volume of timber sold (CCF) *(MBF)*	346,652 *169,261*	393,963 *206,359*	223,991 *123,370*	964,607 (CCF) *498,991 (MBF)*
Percentage of Target	63.49%	169.08%	98.46%	96%[3]
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced	502	216	268	988
Percentage of Target	139.44%	191.86%	103.71%	135%[4]
Number of watersheds moved to an improved condition class	4	1	1	6
Percentage of Target	400.00%	100.00%	100.00%	200%

[1] Rounding actual percentage of 133.44% to 133% subtracts 2900.98 acres of treatment.
[2] Rounding percentage from 84.77% to 85% adds 1.70 miles of roads decommissioned.
[3] Rounding actual percentage of 95.84% to 96% adds 1633 CCF of timber volume to the accomplishment totals.
[4] Rounding actual percentage of 134.89 to 135% adds 0.80 miles of stream.

Outputs

The IRR pilot exceeded two of the four planned target outputs with 133% of target acres treated and 135% of the targeted miles of stream habitat restored. The program nearly met the volume of timber sold target at 96 percent, and did not meet the road decommissioning target at 85 percent. This was due in part to two of the pilot Regions prioritizing other projects higher during their allocation of available funds. Three of the four output measures (acres treated, miles of stream habitat restored, and timber sold increased over the FY 2012 accomplishment levels (11.0%, 5.9%. and 12.9% respectively). Region 1 did not meet the volume sold target (63.49%) due to litigation or the road decommissioning target (76.34%) as the region's capacity to do road work is limited. Region 3 did not meet their road decommissioning target (82.35%), but almost all forests met or exceeded their assigned targets and outputs. Some forests did not meet their timber target because of market conditions (no one bid on the sale) or staffing vacancies In Region 4 planned accomplishments were achieved near or above 100% in all target areas. If forests did not achieve a particular target it was due to an active fire season, limited timber markets, and NEPA appeals and litigation.

Outcomes

One of the key outcomes associated with the Forest Service's restoration effort is restoring priority watersheds to an improved condition class as per the Agency's Watershed Condition Framework. The pilot program was able to move six watersheds to an improved condition class in FY 2013 (double the number of watersheds in FY 2012),

Region 4 reported that all forests succeeded in implementing essential projects in priority watersheds, and the Dixie National Forests moved one watershed to a better condition class. Forests reported they were able to focus restoration in concentrated areas instead of a dispersed approach typical of the legacy BLIs.

Efficiency, Flexibility, and Cost Savings

Efficiency

In addition to the targeted outputs and outcomes, regions also expected to improve the efficiency with which outcomes and outputs were realized, maintain existing partnerships, and increase the commitment of partnerships to achieve landscape scale restoration

goals.

The regions reported that some efficiencies were realized, some were likely but unknown at this point, and some were not found. Region 1 reported that “Some restoration outcomes will not be known until time passes and monitoring is conducted”. The region said there are likely efficiencies and some cost savings in project planning due to integration, and that there are possible efficiencies in implementation with the use of one contractor completing a variety of work, but this has not been analyzed. In Region 3, most forests reported some degree of realized efficiency due to the prior selection of projects. Timber and fuels programs gained efficiencies in general, but watershed and wildlife programs were less effective. Most forests felt that projects funded in FY 2013 would have been funded without the IRR authority, and several stated that some projects were not funded in FY 2013 because of the IRR authority. However forests that were successful in achieving planned results said they were becoming more integrated with time. In Region 4, “Efficiencies were realized on some forests and not in others”, but efficiency was found by working on a landscape level instead of an individual project level. In Region 4 the five assigned BLI targets were the major drivers which had mixed effects on outcomes.

Southwest Jemez Project. Region 3. Photo by Jeremy Marshall

Flexibility

The pilot regions are still reporting flexibility as an advantage with IRR, but recognized that base costs for their programs still limits overall flexibility. In Region 1 the IRR authority increased flexibility by eliminating the time spent reprogramming funds from one fund code to another to accommodate changing priorities. Nine out of 11 forests in Region 3 reported an increase in flexibility, allowing funds to move when priorities change and

allowing resource programs to integrate and share personnel. Most forests in Region 4 reported greater flexibility but stated it depended on the amount of available funds that went to base program needs and whether Focused Investment Funds were received.

The IRR authority also allowed some forests to complete projects in FY 2013 that would not have been funded without the authority. Generally, these were larger, more integrated projects that achieved multiple benefits. However, both Region 3 and Region 4 commented on the tradeoffs required to fund larger, multiple-benefit projects—other projects with single benefits or with a less focused watershed emphasis were not able to be funded. Region 1 reported that with or without IRR, the region would fund priority work.

Riparian area before and after restoration. Tropic Reservoir. Dixie National Forest. Region 4. Photos by Keith Gustafson

Focusing IRR on the Tropic Reservoir Focused Investment Project on the Dixie National Forest provided the opportunity to remove juniper and blue spruce that was encroaching on willow stands along the East Fork Sevier River. Removal of the tree overstory will allow the willow to re-establish and stabilize the water table and river channel. Forest biologists in partnership with conservation groups will be planting cottonwood and willow on suitable sites along the river channel in years to come.

Cost Savings

In Region 1, finding cost savings are difficult to measure, and thus unknown. All the forests in Region 3 found it difficult to quantify a cost comparison of IRR vs. individual BLIs. It is predicted by several forests that there will be savings in project design and planning costs as data collection and specialist input are more efficient when looking at areas together vs. individually. Most forests in Region 4 reported they are not finding cost savings and there is a concern that there is little ability to use financial data to track expenditures resulting in the inefficient use of cuff records. Moreover a reduction in one or two BLIs can negate any benefit of IRR. The large percentage of funds that are used for overhead and fixed costs is another concern.

Four Forest Restoration Initiative. Region 3. Photo by Jeremy Marshall

Advantages, Challenges, and Disadvantages

Advantages

The collective advantages of IRR appear to continue to yield projects that are more effective and efficient in restoring landscape attributes. As one forest describes it, "the authority…has emphasized restoration throughout the watershed in one moment in time, rather than sporadically addressing these issues as time and funding allow."

> *Accomplishing this much work with five or six budget line items (BLI's) with competing emphasis would likely not have been possible in previous years.* - Dixie National Forest

Advantages of IRR:

- Empowers local collaborative groups
- Provides direction to work within priority landscapes, priority watersheds, and priority fine-scale projects
- Enhances ability to collaborate both internally and externally
- Realization of mutual benefits through integrated planning across several resource areas
- Provides flexibility to meet target priorities via multiple activities
- Facilitates a better understanding of the linkages between resource issues on a landscape level
- Improves operational efficiencies

Flexibility, as stated previously, is a common denominator among the IRR Regions. The funding of multiple restoration priorities, planning integration, and supporting Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration projects (CFLR) funding by leveraging IRR are shared descriptions of how the IRR Regions used the budget line item. Increased coordination between many program areas resulted through the common IRR funding. Regions are in agreement that efficiencies were gained through dialogue between resource functions; however those efficiencies are still difficult to quantify. The IRR Regions continued to utilize the single BLI, reporting that planning and funding critical projects within a single fiscal year was more effective than a piecemeal approach for restoration activities over a period of many years.

Applying partnership funds in the implementation of integrated projects is characterized as more efficient as a result of IRR. The single fund code eliminated the complexity associated with creating the proper "mix" of funding with partners and coordinating agencies. Discussions with partners were stimulated by identifying the appropriate mix of restoration activities and the potential to realize the accomplishment of more projects.

Forests continued in the second full year of the pilot to leverage IRR funds for their CFLR projects. The flexibility that is inherent in a single budget line item establishes IRR as funding that can be used for the full range of restoration and monitoring, including CFLR projects. The funding for project level planning is another area of the flexibility within IRR for assisting CFLR. The matching funds and the appropriations for CFLR cannot be used for planning. In FY 2013, IRR funds were integral to the success of CFLR plan-to-project efforts.

> *We were able to see objectives of CWPPs accomplished, especially where cross-jurisdictional treatments had occurred and socio-economic impacts saw an increase in wood utilization and jobs associated with manufacturing and harvesting…Meaningful progress was also made in NEPA planning which will contribute towards restoration targets in the future.*
>
> - Region 3

Pole Creek before and after (with bridge). Sawtooth National Forest. Region 4.

Southwest Jemez CFLRP. Region 3. Photo by Jeremy Marshall

Challenges

Challenges of IRR:

- Availability of funds at the start of a FY
- Priorities were determined prior to implementation of IRR and did not involve communities
- Restoration priorities and timber volume targets do not align
- Perception of little incentive by individual programs to initiate and implement projects
- Base program requirements
- Unit cost accountability
- Quantifying efficiencies

The IRR authority for the Pilot Regions was available to the Agency at the beginning of FY 2013 for the full fiscal year. However, the fiscal year was characterized by an October to March continuing resolution and a 5 percent sequestration after which, the second continuing resolution reflected the 5 percent sequestration. (The 5 percent sequestration was across the Forest Service and the Federal Government as required under the Budget Control Act of 2011).

The Pilot Regions continued to face the challenge of tracking fund expenditures, calculating unit costs and matching expenditures to specific activities. The Agency in 2013 adopted a new financial management system known as the Financial Management Modernization Initiative (FMMI). Financial diagnostic reporting and accounting tools were slow to come on line in 2013 under FMMI. Tracking funds and outputs required cuff records.

One Pilot Region reported, “We are pushing a paradigm shift” with IRR, rather than measurable output tracking, focusing on the outcomes instead of the outputs. Another Pilot Region decided from the beginning that forests had to learn how to develop an IRR program of work (POW) unconstrained by targets. Given the sideboards of “desired conditions”, the Watershed Condition Framework, and a 5-year Restoration Plan to show the evolution of a POW, forests have begun to project outputs in a more integrated fashion. Forests tried to find the composition of projects that were NEPA cleared, maximized accomplishments, and had interest from external stakeholders. However, true priority driven accomplishments will not fully occur until the current “shelf stock” is settled.

In year two of the pilot, the challenge of administering a single BLI is that politically important issues such as administering the Air Quality Program or the scheduling for livestock grazing allotment analysis may not be considered a priority of the annual program of work if other restoration objectives are perceived as more important. Similarly, single-emphasis projects have the potential to be a lower priority and difficult to fund. Over time, if these projects are not in the same geographic location as larger integrated projects, they may be neglected. Region 1 reported that structured processes and an organizational framework do not exist to implement IRR to ensure that strategic national or regional priorities are met. They stated that some program leads may lose the ability to influence functional program direction through targets and budget processes if their resource is not deemed a priority by line officers. Forests in Region 4 reported that their NFRR program is still heavily driven by the five assigned NFRR targets, that base program needs consume a major part of available funds, that funding non-target base program needs is difficult, and that reductions in other program area BLIs is effecting the resources from NFRR to make up for the losses.

Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative. Idaho Panhandle National Forest. Region 1

Southwest Jemez, Region 3. Photo by Jeremy Marshall

Disadvantages

Difficulties are present in getting employees to move from traditional single focus concepts to working under the integrated and collaborative IRR concept. The IRR pilot program has had mixed results with increasing collaborative understanding with existing partners. Region 1 reported that national partners are skeptical about IRR diverting funds from their interests to other uses and Region 3 reported that prioritization was done without the public, decreasing collaborative understanding. One Region characterized priority watersheds receiving immediate attention as a disadvantage, as other watersheds with significant needs have to wait for comprehensive treatment.

Disadvantages of IRR:

- Lack of transparency
- Internal difficulties in moving from single focus issues to integrated outcomes
- Programs can become more regulatory, instead of proactive
- Inconsistency between the IRR target accomplishments and priority watersheds
- Prioritization of watersheds lack community values and involvement
- Output assignments are not decreasing in coordination with funding decreases

Region 1 reported that national partners were skeptical about IRR because they feared that funding for the program work they support would be diverted to other uses. For Region 3, the lack of “protected” funding for

specific resources or activities continues to cause anxiety and mistrust internally. One specialist observed that the wildlife program is becoming more regulatory in nature, primarily existing to write assessments and evaluations instead of actively managing a program. Region 3 reported that the IRR authority and the emphasis on working in priority watersheds do not coincide. “The majority of wildlife and watershed accomplishments in FY 2013 were ancillary to fuels reduction projects where prescribed fire or thinning was the principal tool…Target allocations seem to emphasize timber projects and prescribed burning projects with large acre accomplishments.” Region 3 reported that the work emphasized by the Watershed Condition Framework is at a fine-scale and does not result in large acre accomplishments. Vegetation plays a small role in the calculation of watershed impairment using the Watershed Condition Framework Guide thus it plays a minor part during the recommendation of projects to improve watershed condition. In addition, disadvantages are associated with not prioritizing initial watersheds for restoration through a process that incorporated public and community values and involvement. Disadvantages reported for Region 4 include a lack of assurance for base funding necessary for necessary traditional programs such as air, water rights, and invasive plant control, lack of funding for stand-alone projects that are limited in target attainment, and commitments to matching outside sources of funding. In addition, R4 expressed concern about the number of databases used for reporting and that they are not coordinated, borrowing funding from the fire program impedes target accomplishment and trust with partners, and that output assignments are not decreasing in coordination with funding decreases.

Tree planting. Tropic Reservoir project. Dixie National Forest. Region 4. Photo by Keith Gustafson

THIRD-PARTY MONITORING

In June of 2013, the Forest Service entered into an agreement with Colorado State University (CSU) to conduct third-party monitoring of IRR. The University of Oregon (UO) also assisted CSU in the monitoring effort. Below is the executive summary from the results of the first phase of monitoring:

Third Party Monitoring Executive Summary

At the request of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), we are conducting a third-party review of the Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR) budgetary approach, which has been implemented on a pilot basis in USFS Regions 1, 3, and 4 since Fiscal Year 2012. Our objectives are three-fold: 1) Understand strategic planning approaches and whether improvements in efficiency, prioritization, flexibility, and achievement of restoration outcomes are occurring under the IRR pilot; 2) Assess internal perceptions of the pilot, current challenges, and opportunities for improvement; and 3) Determine the extent to which current performance measures and targets facilitate accomplishment and communication of outcomes under the pilot. Our evaluation will take place over two years in three phases and began in August 2013.

This report summarizes our findings from phase 1, which involved interviews with staff from the pilot regions. We found that, for the most part, the IRR pilot has:

- Resulted in greater emphasis and time spent on program integration and project prioritization at the regional and forest levels.
- Allowed staff to spend less time budgeting.
- Increased flexibility to move dollars between programs, enter into multi-year contracts, and focus on priority work.
- Changed strategic planning approaches and prioritization among forests. In Region 1, increased discretion has been entrusted to forest supervisors, whereas in Region 3, the Regional Office has taken a stronger role in determining priority restoration projects. In some regions, collaborative partners are viewed as essential for helping to set priorities, whereas other regions rely more on internal prioritization strategies.

IRR also raises some potential challenges that may require further discussion to decide if they are desired outcomes of IRR:

- With an integrated pot of money, a small number of hard targets, and declining budgets, IRR funds may be spent primarily on reaching hard targets rather than on objectives that are not targeted, are hard to quantify, and/or are expensive.
- The focus on priority landscapes and large projects may lead to less attention on smaller or less integrated projects.
- IRR is resulting in significant organizations changes, which may be desired by leadership but are creating some stress and anxiety at lower levels. This may require additional support and guidance to ease the transition. Staff may benefit from additional guidance on the purposes of prioritization and strategies to do it.
- Tracking costs per accomplishment appears to be more difficult with the current system.

Four Forest Restoration Initiative. Region 3. Photo by Jeremy Marshall

CONCLUSION

The IRR pilot exceeded two of the four planned target outputs with 133% of target acres treated and 135% of the targeted miles of stream habitat restored. The program nearly met the volume of timber sold target at 96 percent, and did not meet the road decommissioning target at 85 percent. The pilot program was able to move six priority watersheds to an improved condition class. The three pilot Regions used different approaches to prioritizing funding and work under IRR, and all regions reported that some efficiencies were realized, and others were likely but unknown at this point. The pilot regions are still reporting flexibility as an advantage with IRR but recognized that base costs for their programs still limits overall flexibility. The three regions found cost savings are difficult to measure; however the collective advantages of IRR appear to continue to yield projects that are more effective and efficient in restoring landscape attributes. Challenges include a lack of transparency, unit cost accountability, and the difficulty in quantifying efficiencies. Additional monitoring will determine if the IRR pilot is protecting water resources and maintaining resiliency in a changing climate. Overall, IRR provides regions with flexibility to focus on high-priority restoration needs without the limitation of individual budget line funding.

"…we like the flexibility that IRR has given us and we don't want to go back."

Gene DeGayner, Director of Renewable Resources, R1

Northern Region (Region 1) FY 2013 Annual Report

A. Accomplishment Reporting – Performance

1. FY 2013 Accomplishments
   a. Table 1 – *IRR Performance Measures* ***(These numbers will be pulled from PAS by the Washington Office)***

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Target[5]	Total Units Accomplished[6]	Percent Accomplished
Acres treated annually to sustain or restore watershed function and resilience	Acres	211,816	213,726	100.9%
Number of watersheds move to an improved condition class	Number	1	4	400.0%
Miles of road decommissioned	Miles	380	290	76.3%
Volume of timber sold	Ccf	546,000	346,652	63.5%
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced	Miles	360	502	139.5%

   b. *Priority Watersheds and Watershed Action Plans*
      i. How many priority watersheds have been identified in the Region as of FY 13?
         See below
      ii. List the type of restoration activities–and associated dollars–identified in the Watershed Restoration Action Plans (i.e. acres/miles of aquatic habitat improvement, acres of fuel treatments (thinning), acres of fuel treatments (prescribed burning), acres of meadow restoration, miles of road maintenance, miles of road improvement, acres of erosion control, miles of trail maintenance or realignment, acres of non-native plant removal).
      See below

      iii. List the restoration activities–and associated dollars–completed to date.

      Region 1 has identified 29 priority watersheds as recorded in the Watershed Condition Assessment Tracking Tool (WCATT) database. The region requested each forest/grassland to identify one (or more) additional priority watersheds, complete a Watershed Restoration Action Plan (WRAP) and enter the data into WCATT by June 30, 2014. There is a wide variety of work identified in the WRAPs. The Watershed Improvement Tracking (WIT) database contains proposed essential projects as identified by the WRAPs in priority watersheds which include 11 acres and 21 miles of aquatic

[5] Target should match the target recorded in the Databases of Record.
[6] Units accomplished should match the accomplishments recorded in the Databases of Record.

habitat improvement, 600 acres of fuels treatments (mechanical and prescribed burning), 262 miles of road decommissioning, 217 miles of road maintenance or improvement, 71 acres of erosion control, 33 miles of trail maintenance or realignment, and 27,000 acres of non-native plant removal. In FY13, Region 1 completed all essential projects in 4 priority watersheds. These included 2 miles of aquatic habitat, suppression of non-native trout in one stream system, 25 miles of road decommissioning, maintenance and/or improvement of 144 miles of road, 32 new Aquatic Organism Passage structures, 3000 acres of fuels treatments, 15 miles of trail maintenance or realignment, 3500 acres of terrestrial weed treatments, 1500 acres of native plant enhancement, and 100 acres of erosion control.

B. Accomplishment Reporting – Regional Summary

Narrative: Describe the decision-making process used to formulate priorities for FY 2013's program of work.

1. Why and Where on the Landscape

a. How did your forest prioritize funding and work under IRR?
Regionally, NFRR was seen as an important tool to address long-term restoration plans and objectives, particularly with respect to watershed conditions and aquatic and wildlife habitat. The Case Study projects reflect this focus and address specific programs and a wide range of resource needs.

Across the Region, the NFRR Authority was applied judiciously to those program or resource areas and projects where the Region and the units identified the most potential in terms of target accomplishments, beneficial outcomes not traditionally captured through hard target numbers, and where the Authority could be used to leverage partner or other program funding and opportunities. We followed an 11-step process that melded a top-down and bottom-up approach to allocate funding to our units. This approach consisted of the following steps:

b. The RO collected proposed funding and accomplishment data from the Units (January 2012). Data was collected for 3 scenarios.
   i. Scenario 1 is 5% reduction from FY 12 allocation (RO provides funding level and Units provide proposed accomplishment)
   ii. Scenario 2 is FY 12 allocation (RO provides funding level and Units provide proposed accomplishment)
   iii. Scenario 3 is max capacity (unit provides both funding and proposed accomplishments).

c. Budget coordinators presented proposed funding and accomplishment data collected from the Units to the appropriate RO program staffs (approximately May).

d. Data was distributed to RO program managers (approximately May). RO program managers evaluate data for accuracy and acceptable range of unit cost.

e. RO program managers (as a group) ranked the proposed NFRR accomplishments (WTRSHD-RSTR-ANN, TMBR-VOL-SLD, HBT-ENH-STRM, RD-DECOM and WTRSHD-CLS-IMP-NUM) for: 1) quality of investment; 2) opportunities of best outcomes; and 3)

meeting national targets. The ranking consisted of identifying the Unit as either a Scenario 1, 2 or 3 Unit. Also, wildlife, fuels and silviculture program managers evaluated proposed accomplishments (road decommission and timber volume) for providing restoration outcomes.

f. Net funding available to the Units was provided to all RO staffs by the Budget shop.

g. Budget coordinators used the net available (step 5) and rankings provided by program managers (step 4) to develop draft operating budget.

h. NFRR steering committee (RRM, ENG & FAA Directors) evaluated the draft operating budget resulting from step 6.

i. NFRR steering committee made adjustments to the draft operating resulting from step 7, if needed.

j. NFRR steering committee forwarded proposed operating budget to budget director for consideration.

k. Budget director presented proposed operating budget to RF. Adjustments were made to operating budget based on RF input.

l. Operating budget distributed to Units (approximately June).

This process resulted in Forest's proposing their priority work and the Region, in turn, funding it within fiscal constraints. The Region tended to fund work that met national goals, was supported by a strong collaborative, leveraged funds, and promoted partnerships. We found that step 4 was particularly useful where RO program managers (as a group) ranked the proposed NFRR accomplishments as described above. Also, wildlife, fuels and silviculture program managers evaluated proposed accomplishments (road decommission and timber volume) for providing restoration outcomes.

2. **Priorities, Outcomes, and Outputs**

a. How were priorities for on-the-ground work formulated in comparison to FY 12? (Consider how to incorporate funding of base programs in the response.)
We asked the field units to define their niche based on the intersection of social, economic, and resource considerations. Field units then proposed their priorities based on the unit's niche and on refined recent information on opportunities identified by partners and collaboratives. In general, our increasing use of collaboratives played a stronger role in setting on-the-ground priorities than the IRR approach. The IRR concept, however, empowered the collaboratives to provide input to the forests and region as to the appropriate mix of activities go a given landscape. The IRR approach complemented our increasing use of collaboratives, which is reflected in the Case Studies and in particular when combined with other large landscape-scale programs such as the CFLRP.

As the individual Case Study reports indicate, the authority was used to focus on the appropriate mix of critical habitat, watershed, and vegetation projects already in place, with

the goal of subsidizing allocated funding, or leveraging partnership contributions that would solidify the intended desired conditions and associated resource targets

b. What were the expected outcomes (accomplishments)?

i. Were these outcomes achieved? To what extent?
The 2013 Program generally met expectations except volume sold. Road decommissioning miles were not met due to higher priority IRR projects. In addition, our capacity for road accomplishments is going down. As we noted in the FY12 Summary, application of the Authority did not change or impact the expected project and application outcomes. It did, however, provide an opportunity to engage in more discussions with partners to determine the appropriate mix of land stewardship over a given landscape. It provided Line officers and RO staff more opportunities to approach potential partners with future opportunities for their involvement to generate increased accomplishments and on-the-ground results of their investments.

ii. In terms of outcomes vs. outputs, were efficiencies realized and activities effective?
Some restoration outcomes will not be known until time passes and monitoring is conducted. Restoration work is always based on best science and projected positive outcomes, so yes, activities should be effective. There are very likely efficiencies and some cost savings in project planning due to more integrated project design, and perhaps some efficiencies in implementation of having one contractor carry out a variety of types of work associated with one integrated project.

iii. Were the priority programs and/or priority work (targets/outputs) achieved? If not, why?
Region 1 has developed several tools such as Forest Niche identification and an Integrated Resource Protection Strategy to identify priority restoration opportunities on the units. This information is used in concert with other commitments such as CFLRP and Treasured Landscape work to ensure priorities are funded and achieved. We did not however meet our volume target due to the large number of restoration projects tied up in litigation.

iv. Were there projects that were completed in FY 2013 that would not have been funded without the IRR authority?
No. With or without the IRR funding mechanism, the Region makes every attempt to fund our priority work. Having the IRR funding flexibility reduced the need for reprogramming funds from one code to another to accommodate changing priorities.

3. **Flexibility, Advantages, and Disadvantages**

a. Did the IRR Authority increase or decrease flexibility in developing integrated projects?
Having the IRR funding increased flexibility and integration because it avoids time spent reprogramming funds from one code to another to accommodate changing priorities. As was noted in the FY12 Summary with respect to our Roads management, the Authority supported the latitude of decision makers to apply funding and resources to increase the magnitude of the beneficial outcomes of management activities.

b. Did you find cost savings under IRR? If so, where and how would you quantify them?
To date, change attributed to IRR is largely behavioral and is hard to measure. Change attributed solely to IRR difficult to quantify since it is confounded with changes due to declining budgets, increased collaboration, and accelerated restoration. We believe that IRR is leading to changes in the role of staff with increased emphasis on developing larger-scale well-integrated projects that compete well. We see the IRR authority as a time-saver, as staff can likely spend less time "doing budget".

c. For outcomes that are not well reflected by traditional output targets, was meaningful progress made? If so, how was this determined?
While we had no specific determination on this in our FY12 report, across FY13 we believe that in the simplest terms IRR is a tool for the Forest Service to fund its priority work. IRR has invigorated a healthy discussion on how to determine what priority work is and will facilitate Forest Service change. The larger decision-making tools, including Climate Change Scorecard, beetle-kill strategy, collaborative support, Watershed Condition Framework and Classification Map, as well as local criteria, were still used to find the most appropriate and advantageous application of the Authority.

The transitioning from reporting outputs to reporting outputs and outcomes is slow. Developing measures of effective collaborative or outcomes is programmatic. We have made some progress by modifying FACTS to track ecological restoration attributes of timber sales.

Special attention is required to adequately fund critical priority functional program components that may not be associated with direct target accomplishment (e.g., water rights, range NEPA, rare species issues). We recognize that the roles of the program managers, directors, and functional staff will change when implementing IRR. There will be a change in the traditional model.

- In some cases, we don't have the structured processes and organizational framework to implement IRR to ensure that strategic national or regional priorities are met.
- Forest Supervisors are responsible for funding mixes to meet integration priorities, program leads feel that their role is being minimized.
- Some program leads may lose the ability to influence functional program direction through targets and budget processes if their resource is not deem a priority by line.

d. Under IRR, what advantages and disadvantages did your forest find when working internally and/or with partners. Did the IRR approach increase or decrease collaborative understanding with existing/new partners?
National partners that lobby for program funds in DC were skeptical about IRR because they feared that "their" funds would be diverted to other uses. On the other hand, local collaboratives were empowered by the concept because it provided potentially more flexibility for the FS to accommodate their programs of work. In the Region 1 Case Studies, there are comments and information that speak to this question as well, from the local, project perspective in a more direct way.

e. Describe any reasons that the FY 2013 IRR report does not reflect planned accomplishments or the work plan. Were there any challenges that caused actual accomplishments to differ from those previously outlined in the work plan?

Initial observations indicate there were some shifts in planned target outputs when compared to planned accomplishments. For example, both the reforestation and timber stand improvement activities were substantially lower in overall accomplishment than what the region has experienced in previous years. The overall relationship of the use of NFRR and this observation is not completely clear.

Increased litigation reduced our level of outcomes, particular those associated with volume sold. This issue was prevalent across the Region, although it is not specifically addressed in the Case Studies on an individual project basis.

4. **Addressing Challenges Associated with FY 12 Implementation**

a. How were the difficulties in tracking funds and reporting accomplishments in FY12 addressed?
As reflected in the Case Studies and in answers to other questions here, in Region 1 we are pushing a paradigm shift in how we look at the function of the IRR Authority – rather than viewing the Authority as a funds tracking mechanism tied to a measurable output, we applied it as a decision-making measure similar to other tools mentioned in previous questions. It therefore provides the latitude to work with more flexibility with current, potential and non-traditional partners, to engage on future projects that satisfy more mutual outcomes across a large-scale landscape. It seems to be clearer in FY13 that the Authority is better viewed in that light, rather than as another funding mechanism against which we measure tangible outputs.

b. What cultural shifts are being and should be considered to bring units in more alignment with IRR?

NFRR will require additional external and internal trust.

- Clear restoration objectives/DFCs are not available in old forest plans. In the interim, as Region 1 Forests revise their Forest Plans under the New Planning rule, they may have to develop something to compensate.
- There is a need for additional capacity to report outcomes in addition to outputs externally.
- We need to improve our marketing the restoration program (tie to tracking outcomes).
- NFRR creates a need for additional strong collaborative efforts to provide support for the suite of activities or outcomes in a watershed or across other place-based collaborative projects.

c. How did units ensure that priorities drive accomplishments while simultaneously meeting traditional outputs?
Accelerated Restoration, place-based restoration, CFLR, Stewardship Contracting and collaboration are still in full force and drove priorities; IRR is simply a tool to support these initiatives in an efficient manner. The Authority facilitates and encourages engagement with

various partners, integration, addressing social and economic issues and meeting legal mandates, all of which contribute to supporting the Units' overall Program of Work. IRR assists Units in determining how this program of work can most effectively be accomplished. The Region is challenged to expand our use of Stewardship Contracting to fund priority restoration work and increase accomplishments under Accelerated Restoration. The Authority also empowers Forest Service leadership, working in conjunction with collaboratives, to more expediently and effectively debate and determine the appropriate mix of land stewardship activities for a given landscape.

5. **Other Measurable Activities Contributing to IRR**

Accomplishments under the Native Plant Materials (NPM) program in FY13 included: maintenance of forest Seed Management Plans, Seed Transfer Zone activities for priority native plant revegetation species, development of the Region One Native Plant internet site and maintenance of the USFS Native Plant intranet site, and partnership and collaboration with agencies and organizations on native plant restoration. FY13 was the first year for comprehensive accomplishment reporting under FACTS for native plant material activities in Region One including seeding, planting, site preparation, and wildland seed collection of native plant materials. As noted in the table below, nearly 1300 acres were involved in native plant activities using both NFRR and carry-over NFN3 funding.

Table – Additional Activities Contributing to IRR

Activity that contributes to IRR and should be tracked as a performance measure	Unit of measure	Total units accomplished in 2013*
NFRR acres treated with native plant materials on Federal lands	Acres	602
NFN3 acres treated with native plant materials on Federal lands (carryover funds from prior years)	Acres	664

**FACTS activity codes were established for 14 native plant activities in 2012 with tracking of FACTS accomplishment reporting occurring for the first time in 2013 for these activities.*

IRR budget consolidation was not beneficial to the NPM program in 2013. Although the NPM Program benefits resource activities such as watershed improvement, road decommissioning, mining reclamation, BAER revegetation, wildlife and fish habitat improvement, trail and campground rehabilitation, and range improvement, forests provided limited funding for native plant materials development in 2013. Only three forests invested in development of plant materials across the region and funding expenditures fell 75% from average forest funding levels under NFN3 (FY04-FY11). In addition, the FY13 forest funding level of $80,000 represents less than 10% of the funding needs identified by forest Seed Management Plans, the Region One blueprint for development of plant materials for restoration work.

In addition, the Chief's goals for development of pollinator habitat projects were not met in FY13. Under the Chief's SHARE Initiative, forests and grasslands were instructed to develop native plant/pollinator habitat (such as pollinator gardens) on each administrative unit. In FY13, forests provided no funding for pollinator projects, a 100% decrease in funding from FY07-FY11 levels when an average of eight pollinator projects involving $35,000 were developed per year under NFN3.

In FY14, Region One will bring its Seed Transfer Zone (STZ) Initiative full circle with the grow out and increase of the first priority revegetation species using genetic guidelines developed from STZ common garden study. Ten new priority species will be available for grow-out and increase from FY14 to FY19 based on STZ results. The development of this material will provide forests and grasslands with cost-effective and readily available material for revegetation and restoration. Needs for the future of the NPM program include funding to implement forest Seed Management Plans and pollinator habitat projects, the inclusion of native plant accomplishment activities in PAS performance measures, and FACTS training for forest/grassland Native Plant Coordinators.

Table – Additional Activities Contributing to IRR with trackable measures.

Performance Measure	Unit of Measure	Total Units Accomplished[7]
Miles of high clearance system roads improved	Miles	59
Miles of high clearance system roads maintained	Miles	38
Miles of passenger car system roads improved	Miles	15
Miles of passenger car system roads maintained	Miles	154
Miles of system trail improved to standard	Miles	0
Miles of system trail maintained to standard	Miles	0
Stream crossings constructed or reconstructed for aquatic organism passage	Miles	46
Acres of lake habitat restored/enhanced (unified accomplishment)	Acres	3767
Acres of water/soil resources protected/maintained/improved (unified accomplishment)	Acres	17428
Acres of terrestrial habitat restored/enhanced (unified accomplishment)	Acres	141299
Acres of forest vegetation improved (unified accomplishment)	Acres	14212
Acres of forestland vegetation established (unified accomplishment)	Acres	23704
Acres of range vegetation improved (unified accomplishment)	Acres	170490
Acres treated for noxious weeds/invasive plants on NFS lands (unified accomplishment)	Acres	68088
Acres of hazardous fuels outside the WUI to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire (unified accomplishment)	Acres	107785

6. **Feedback from Partners**

a. What, if any, feedback did you receive from partners?
Generally, our regional partners and timber industry have been skeptical of the NFRR authority. Their issues revolve around the loss of funding transparency for individual performance measures (i.e. wildlife habitat improvement; timber volume sold) and the agencies continued commitment to these individual resource areas. The nine performance measures contained in the watershed restoration performance measure are a particular concern of those constituencies that previously had been funded with separate BLIs. Even with separate target assignments (i.e. timber volume sold), there is a concern that the

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

program will not be funded to meet the assigned target, and that there is no indication of gained efficiencies for any particular program area (forest management, wildlife, noxious weeds, etc.).

C. Case Studies

Southwestern Crown Collaborative Case Study

1. **Describe case studies that reflect landscape scale/cross boundary activities. How did the authority affect program integration? What were the issues and goals?**
   The Southwestern Crown Collaborative (SWCC) received some $3.8 million in CFLR and other BLI funding to implement watershed, timber stand and wildlife habitat restoration work and monitoring within the 1.5-million-acre Southwestern Crown of the Continent (SW Crown). The landscape of the SW Crown crosses three counties, three national forests, three ranger districts and multiple local collaborative restoration groups, all of whom hold to mutually desirable ecological, social and economic benefits.

2. **Describe how IRR affected project planning and implementation. Was the action or activity implemented and completed more or less efficiently or effectively? Include information on internal and external collaboration and public engagement. Did the activities have a greater or less impact to resource outcomes?**

   The IRR program provided more efficiency and flexibility than any other authority available to us, being applied in almost 160 activities. While NEPA planning accounted for the largest expenditure of NFRR funding ($493,000), the second largest expenditure was for stream habitat restoration and improvement projects ($452,000).

3. **Describe the outcomes or on-going status. Did the activity lead to an improved watershed condition within the context of the Watershed Condition Framework? If so, how? If not, why? Reports should provide qualitative as well as quantitative data.**

   The Big Blackfoot Chapter of Trout Unlimited (BBCTU) has undertaken 12 priority projects with the Forest Service to restore native fish habitat in the Blackfoot River watershed since 2010. The South Fork Poorman Creek project is a partnership effort where NFRR authority will directly aid the recovery of important native trout populations, restore aquatic habitat in an impaired watershed, and provide a long-term benefit for public recreation. The project includes relocating 2,400 feet of road out of the floodplain and eliminating five stream crossings. The five crossings will be replaced by a single bridge capable of handling a 100-year flood event. The existing stream crossings and road location in the floodplain currently contribute to excessive sediment delivery into Poorman Creek, impacting genetically pure westslope cutthroat and bull trout populations. The bridge was installed in FY13, while the new road was completed earlier. The historic road will be decommissioned and the four ford locations will be restored in 2014. When completed the project will eliminate the current road drainage problems, eliminate excessive sediment delivery and restore the natural channel morphology at each of the impaired stream crossings.

4. **Describe if the consolidation of BLIs (NFRR) changed the mix of outcomes and outputs. If so, how?**

   The SWCC had no difficulty investing under the NFRR authority, however the narrow and restrictive requirements for applying WFHF funding in conjunction with NFRR funding resulted in almost $75,000 of WFHF funds unusable. This apparent conflict – the lack of authority within NFRR to

supersede potential BLI requirements at the expense of on-the-ground needs - is one factor that should be reviewed for FY14 and beyond if the Forest Service is to maximize this Authority.

5. **Describe the advantages and disadvantages of the single BLI (NFRR). How has NFRR impacted efficiency?**

   See #2 above.

6. **How did the IRR authority change the way activities were selected?**

   A significant advantage of the NFRR authority is the potential to leverage contributions from partners on projects partially funded under the NFRR authority. Eleven different organizations contributed more than $400,000 to enhancements and restoration of lakes, streams, wildlife habitat, road decommissioning, stream crossing and aquatic passage improvements, trail maintenance, and fuel reduction projects.

7. **Suggest ways the use of this authority can be improved.**

   The previously-stated conflict – the lack of authority within NFRR to supersede potential BLI requirements at the expense of on-the-ground needs - is one factor that should be reviewed for FY14 and beyond if the Forest Service is to maximize this Authority.

8. **Illustrate the pros/cons of the IRR pilot from the team member perspective, with contact information for a team member who worked on the project.**

   Whitebark pines have been declining in the Northwest since white pine blister rust was introduced from Europe in the early 1900s. Added to mountain pine beetle issues in the last decade, whitebark is now nearly nonexistent in the Swan and Seeley areas.

   Clark's nutcrackers have developed specialized beaks designed to crack open the hard whitebark pine cones. The nutcrackers pack up to 150 pea-sized seeds in a sublingual pouch under their tongue and fly, often many miles away, to cache them where soil has been exposed from fires or other disturbances. This is the only way whitebark pine forests are sustained in nature, unless people help.

   While the nutcrackers can remember where they planted most of the seeds, the birds never reclaim all they stash. The seeds left behind germinate and create new forests. Clark's nutcrackers can survive on other tree seeds, but whitebark pines are unable to regenerate without them, or from programs like IRR and the SWCC.

   Forest Service crews collect cones from trees showing signs of resistance to blister rust and send them to the Forest Service tree nursery in Coeur d'Alene where they are stored and later propagated. The NFRR authority is invaluable in the restoration efforts of the Whitebark Pine.

9. **Include a list of partners and their contributions (if any) that were involved in the planning and/or implementation of your project.**

   Our list of partners on this collaborative includes Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, University of Montana, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Big Blackfoot Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, Montana Conservation Corps, Swan Ecosystem Center, National Off Highway Vehicle Association Coordinating Council, Backcountry Horseman and the Ponderosa Snow Warriors.

Selway-Middle Fork CFLR Project, Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forest Case Study

1. **Describe the case studies that reflect large scale/cross boundary activities (landscape level) or how the authority allowed for program integration that may not have been available in the past. What were the issues and goals?**

   The Clearwater Basin Collaborative (CBC), a local collaborative group that includes an extensive representation of local and tribal interests is working with the Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forests as part of the larger CFLR landscape project. Treatments are expected to enhance landscape resistance to severe wildfire, re-establish resilient and diverse vegetation communities, restore and maintain forest structure, function and ecological processes, improve water quality, promote fish and wildlife habitat, improve economic opportunities for local communities, eliminate or contain noxious weeds, and promote landscape conditions that allow fire to function as the primary ecosystem restoration agent.

   IRR Authority has funded NFMA/NEPA planning as well as implementation, in concert with a multitude of other funding sources. NFRR expenditures, in part, represent some of the Forest's matching contribution to the CFLN implementation funding that we receive.

2. **Describe how IRR helped to facilitate project planning and implementation. Was the action or activity implemented/completed more efficiently or effectively, including information on internal and external collaboration and public engagement? Did the activities have a greater impact to resource outcomes?**

   IRR authority did not affect the planning or outcome of this project. As described above, the Selway-Middle Fork project was conceived as an integrated project with Forest commitment to multi-finance (via previous individual BLI's) the planning and implementation efforts.

   Collaboration and public engagement that has been, and continues to be, a significant part of the project(s) independent of the funding mechanisms.

3. **Describe the outcomes or on-going status. Did the activity lead to an improved watershed condition within the context of WCF? If so, how? If not, why? Reports should provide qualitative as well as quantitative data.**

   This table shows FY13 accomplishments within the Selway-Middle Fork Project area that were wholly or in part attributable to NFRR expenditures. There were a multitude of other accomplishments within the project area that were not funded with NFRR so the list below is not a complete picture of all of our accomplishments within the project area.

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Total Units Accomplished	NFRR Funding	Other Funding (Combined)
Acres treated annually to sustain or restore watershed function and resilience	Acres	30,271.2	$	$
Manage noxious weeds and invasive plants	Acre	3,594.5	$66,867	$660,419
Miles of stream habitat	Miles	19.1	Integrated with	

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Total Units Accomplished	NFRR Funding	Other Funding (Combined)
restored or enhanced			culvert replacements and road decom	
Miles of road decommissioned	Miles	24.38	$47,467	$154,318
Miles of passenger car system roads improved	Miles	4	$9,000	$84,320
Miles of high clearance system road improved	Miles	3.25	$10,000	$2,000
Number of stream crossings constructed or reconstructed to provide for aquatic organism passage	Number	3	$58,697	$222,085
Acres of forestlands treated using timber sales	Acres	161	Associated with volume sold	
Volume of timber sold (CCF)	CCF	229.9	$115,000	NFRR
Volume of timber harvested	CCF	7,424.5	Associated with volume sold	
Green tons from small diameter and low value trees removed from NFS lands and made available for bio-energy production	Green tons	15	Associated with volume sold	

4. **Describe if the consolidation of BLIs (NFRR) changed the mix of outcomes and outputs. If so, how?**

   No.

5. **Describe the advantages and disadvantages of the single BLI (NFRR). How NFRR has impacted efficiency?**

   The advantage of having a single BLI is that the Forests have more flexibility in setting our priorities for resource work within the soft target resources as long as hard target commitments are met.

   One disadvantage is that as funding levels decline, it is becoming necessary to reduce or unfund some of the Forest programs (generally the smaller programs such as weeds, native plants and range) in order to fund higher priority programs. While we recognize this is a budget trend that is likely to occur with or without IRR, the original instruction to not eliminate any individual program is no longer realistic.

   Another unintended consequence is the fact that IRR has, in some ways, resulted in being a deterrent to integration. Program and funding managers that were once supportive of integration now view the process as competitive (all fighting for the same funding). Ultimately, management decisions that set priorities and funding levels inadvertently perpetuate this perception of competion.

   It is also important to note that several programs on the Forest are leveraging funds through sources such as CFLN and/or retained receipts. The effect of this leveraging has made NFRR funds available to

other resources. It is expected that this leveraging will continue into the foreseeable future but changes to our leveraging capability would have significant consequences to inclusive IRR/NFRR programs, particularly those in the soft target category.

6. **How did the IRR authority change the way activities were selected?**

   IRR authority did not play a role in the activities selected for the Selway-Middle Fork project.

7. **Suggest ways the use of this authority can be improved.**

   At the Forest level, the use of IRR authority could be improved by continuing to prioritize workloads and by identifying what we are not going to continue to do as a result of declining budgets. Programs obviously can't come and go so this is a long-term decision that has significant resource and social implications. By making these decisions, the limited funding can be distributed to the remaining resources to fund them at the level necessary to be successful.

   The lack of accountability of IRR makes management of the fund difficult. Forest IRR Program Managers can't accurately track their programmed costs throughout the year. The end result is that we have a difficult time identifying discrepancies in our planned vs. actual expenses that can ultimately lead to significant over/under expenditures at the end of the FY. The lack of accountability ultimately results in less efficient use of available funding. Accountability within the IRR/NFRR realm is beyond the control of the Forest with the current tracking mechanisms and, as such, would need resolution at the RO/WO level.

8. **A GIS map showing specific treatment areas and submit geodatabase files/shapefiles. Spatial data must also be recorded in the FACTS spatial data engine (SDE) and meet existing data dictionary standards.**

   This was done as part of the CFLR Program Annual Report for the Selway-Middle Fork Project.

9. **Illustrate the pros/cons of the pilot from the team member perspective, with contact information for a team member who worked on the project.**

   This response is captured in questions #5 and #7 above.

10. **List of partners, their contributions (if any) that were involved in the planning and/or implementation of your project.**

    - Clearwater Basin Collaborative
    - Nez Perce Tribe
    - Timber Industry
    - Conservation/environmental advocacy groups
    - County Commissioners
    - Local citizens
    - State agencies (IDF&G)
    - Community Groups
    - Motorized and non-motorized groups
    - Partnering with nearly 20 organizations, Universities and individuals.

- Monitoring Advisory Group (MAC) consisting of nearly 60 representatives from the local communities, contractors, the University of Idaho, interest groups, IDF&G, and the Forest and Regional USFS offices.

Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative Project, Idaho Panhandle National Forest Case Study

1. **Describe the case studies that reflect large scale/cross boundary activities. How did the authority affect program integration? What were the issues and goals?**
   The Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI), a local collaborative with broad membership and partners, is working with the Idaho Panhandle National Forests to broaden the scope of projects on the Lower Kootenai River Watershed CFLR project (KVRI 2011). The objectives are to improve water quality and wildlife habitat, improve economic opportunities for local communities, and enhance landscape resistance to severe wildfire, insects, disease, and the effects of climate change. Over time the project will treat nearly 40,000 acres and is expected to create approximately 144 jobs.

   Fiscal year 2013, the forest used the NFRR Authority, along with the forest's Five-Year Action Plan, CFLR project, Treasured Landscapes, WCF priorities, and ongoing program of work to identify improvements in specific areas including TS Acres, TSI, Reforestation Acres, Range Vegetation Improved, Soil and Water, Invasive Weeds, Wildlife Habitat, Stream Enhancement, Road Decommissioning, and non-WUI Treatments.

   Specific to the KVRI CFLR project, the Forest used NFRR to complete identified high priority work while simultaneously achieving integrated targets.

   a. **Describe how IRR affected project planning and implementation. Was the action or activity implemented and completed more or less efficiently or effectively? Include information on internal and external collaboration and public engagement. Did the activities have a greater or lesser impact to resource outcomes?**

      The flexible nature of NFRR funding meant the forest could match CFLN funding in a manner that targets the most-needed work. The combined BLI allows for a more efficient and effective footprint for comprehensive restoration. However, allocating funding to one resource could come at the expense of other restoration activities, including timber outputs.

   b. **Describe the outcomes or on-going status. Did the activity lead to an improved watershed condition within the context of WCF? If so, how? If not, why? Reports should provide qualitative as well as quantitative data.**

      This table shows the accomplishments met in the Lower Kootenai River Watershed project area where NFRR contributed in funding watershed improvements. The target outputs were achieved in fiscal year 2013. This funding was combined with other BLI's in an integrated fashion to target high priority watershed improvement projects.

      Though modest for FY 2013, approximately $334,000 of NFRR was expended within the project. Much of this expenditure was for out-year project NEPA that will contribute to watershed improvements.

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Total Units Accomplished[8]	Total Treatment Cost ($)	Type of Funds (CFLR, Specific FS BLI, Partner Match)[9]
Acres treated annually to sustain or restore watershed function and	Acres	2,440.7		

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

[9] 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[8]	Total Treatment Cost ($)	Type of Funds (CFLR, Specific FS BLI, Partner Match)[9]
resilience WTRSHD-RSTR-ANN				
Acres of forest vegetation improved FOR-VEG-IMP	Acres	124.5 **124.5** 200 35	37,350 **37,350** 60,000 10,500	CFLN **NFRR** RTRT SPS4
Manage noxious weeds and invasive plants INVPLT-NXWD-FED-AC	Acre	211 39.9 **78.6** 79.9	22,155 4,190 **8,253** 8,390	CFLN CWKV **NFRR** PTNR
Acres of rangeland vegetation improved RG-VEG-IMP	Acres	25.4 40.3 8.6 **70.5**	2,667 4,232 903 **7,403**	CFLN CWKV NFIM **NFRR**
Number of priority acres treated annually for native pests on Federal lands SP-NATIVE-FED-AC	Acres	0		

c. **Describe if the consolidation of BLIs (NFRR) changed the mix of outcomes and outputs. If so, how?**

Yes – The Authority was instrumental and outcomes were influenced by NFRR, particularly from the inception of planning to better target the high priority restoration treatment. See also response to #2.

d. **Describe the advantages and disadvantages of the single BLI (NFRR). How NFRR has impacted efficiency?**

Essentially, NFRR provides more latitude and responsibility to the forest to effectively plan and implement the highest priority restoration treatments within the side-boards of overall regional and national expectations. This creates the advantage of having a single BLI is that funding can be directed and targets set based on what work is needed on the ground.

The disadvantage of having a single BLI is that under-funded programs may lose their "protected" funding altogether if other objectives are perceived as being more important, and NFRR funds are diverted to those objectives. This could be especially true if the secondary objectives are not in the same geographic location as larger NFRR projects.

e. **How did the IRR authority change the way activities were selected?**

Yes – see responses above. NFRR was also instrumental in achieving multiple integrated targets.

f. **Suggest ways the use of this authority can be improved.**

Suggest that WUI and Non-WUI should be combined. Many of our WUI treatments would meet the definition of restoration.

g. **Illustrate the pros/cons of the pilot from the team member perspective, with contact information for a team member who worked on the project.**

We have described the expected and attained benefits of the NFRR Authority above.

The potential disadvantage we see is that allocating funding to one resource could come at the expense of other restoration activities. While the obvious advantage is that funding can be directed to priority work, the perception remains that under-funded programs may lose their "protected" funding if other objectives are perceived as being more important.

For example, to meet the standards in the forest plan's Grizzly Bear Access Amendment, roads need to be decommissioned. If large vegetation management projects do not occur in grizzly bear habitat, funding to decommission roads may not be available. Sufficient road dollars do not exist to address the Grizzly Bear Access Amendment. Therefore, scarce NFRR funding may be directed away from the chronically underfunded programs to meet the high priority projects.

h. **List of partners, their contributions (if any) that were involved in the planning and/or implementation of your project.**

- Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
- Boundary County - $4,700
- City of Bonners Ferry
- Private citizens
- Landowners
- Federal and state agencies
- Conservation/environmental advocacy groups
- Representatives of business and industry
- Aquatics Volunteer – $2,060
- KVRI Collaborative - $39,507.98

D. Planning Future Accomplishments – FY 2014 Accomplishments and Future NFRR Program Emphasis

1. FY 2014 Planned Accomplishments
   a. Table 3 – *IRR Planned Performance*

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Total Units Planned[10]
Total acres treated annually to sustain or restore watershed function and resilience	Acres	211,816
Number of watersheds move to an improved condition class	Number	1
Miles of road decommissioned	Miles	380
Volume of timber sold	Ccf	546,000
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced	Miles	360

Based on FY 2013 Experiences, how would you anticipate IRR affecting FY 2014 planning and accomplishments?

[10] Units planned should match the planned accomplishments recorded in the Databases of Record.

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E. Accomplishment Reporting – Performance

2. FY 2013 Accomplishments

Table 1 – IRR Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Target[11]	Total Units Accomplished [12]	Percent Accomplished
Acres treated annually to sustain or restore watershed function and resilience	Acres	249,128	380,315	153%
Number of watersheds move to an improved condition class	Number	1	1	100%
Miles of road decommissioned	Miles	68	56	83%
Volume of timber sold	ccf	233,000	393,963	169%
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced	Miles	113	217	192%

3. Priority Watersheds and Watershed Action Plans

The Forests have identified 22 priority watersheds across the region. There is a wide variety of work identified in the accompanying Watershed Restoration Action Plans, including over 497,000 acres and over 200 miles of aquatic habitat improvement, over 40,000 acres of fuels treatments (mechanical and prescribed burning), 72 acres of meadow restoration, 200 miles of road decommissioning, 204 miles of road maintenance or improvement, 2,774 acres of erosion control, 112 miles of trail maintenance or realignment, and 7,500 acres of non-native plant removal. The total estimated cost for the planned work is $20-30 million. In FY13, 2 miles of aquatic habitat, 72 acres of meadow restoration, 45 miles of road decommissioning, 14,227 acres of fuels treatments, 2.0 miles of trail maintenance or realignment and almost 700 acres of erosion control have been completed

F. Accomplishment Reporting – Regional Summary

1. Why and Where on the Landscape

No forest prioritized projects the same way. Most forests prioritized projects based on some set of criteria, based either on need for restoration, reduction of wildfire risk, the Watershed Condition Framework (WCF), partner funding, NEPA-readiness, ongoing commitment from a prior year, or some

[11] Target should match the target recorded in the Databases of Record.
[12] Units accomplished should match the accomplishments recorded in the Databases of Record.

combination. Projects were then prioritized for implementation according to these criteria by the FLT, an IRR interdisciplinary team, or some combination.

Several forests adopted a more tactical approach, prioritizing projects based on a cost per acre ratio to ensure meeting their WTRSHD-RSTR-ANN target, while others prioritized projects based on the ability to leverage partner dollars for implementation. Some forests adopted a more strategic framework, designating priority watersheds on the forest and concentrating project work that met their criteria in those areas. One forest identified a priority area on each district and funded projects in those priority areas.

2. Priorities, Outcomes, and Outputs

Most forests prioritized projects differently in FY13 compared to FY12; they established a set of criteria for evaluation forest-wide based on some restoration or resource need, as well as achievement of multiple benefits within the same project footprint. Most forests said that they were more integrated this year than in FY12, and that they had processes in place or being developed that allowed the forest leadership and IRR teams to focus on specific criteria. However, two forests said there was little change from FY12. One forest continued to fund in a similar fashion as in FY12, although in order to meet targets projects were not necessarily allocated to each district. Another forest had a forest-wide priority system in place that identified the fire-adapted systems most in need of restoration, and had a multi-year project pipeline in place prior to the establishment of the NFRR pilot. In terms of base program funding, most forests allocated non-discretionary costs first and then distributed additional funds based on their priority system. Some forests had evaluated their NFRR program areas and were designing future organizations more in line with the goals of the IRR program.

The expected outcomes were varied, but most forests expected to meet targets, maintain existing partnerships, and maintain the out-year planning for future projects. A few of the more integrated forests also expected to increase efficiencies by implementing projects that achieved multiple resource benefits, by taking advantage of the streamlining of the implementation process inherent in the reduction in BLIs, or both. Several forests set an expectation of increasing reported accomplishments, either through improved efficiency or through an improved understanding of the IRR reporting rules that would allow them to get credit for all the work that was accomplished.

Most forests had mixed results in meeting their expectations (generally the assigned targets). Among these forests, the reasons for not realizing the expected outcomes were varied, ranging from not being sure the complex reporting requirements and multiple databases allowed them to capture all of the work accomplished, to staff vacancies and implementation problems based on the weather. On some forests, program areas were still not fully integrated into the IRR framework, though this was improving with time. Among the forests that said they were fully successful, the consensus was that they were becoming more integrated with time.

Most forests reported some degree of realized efficiency, generally because project prioritization and hence funding decisions were more easily accomplished. This simplification was a result of prior selection of projects based on set criteria, but also due to simplified budget planning through reduction in BLIs. At least one forest noted that greater efficiency was also realized by the consideration of multiple resource benefits in prioritization.

A few forests had mixed results in terms of realizing efficiencies. Several pointed out that the effectiveness of the IRR in accomplishing resource benefits varied by resource, with timber and fuels

programs generally feeling that efficiencies were gained while watershed and wildlife programs generally felt that they were less effective in terms of meeting their resource objectives. One forest felt that the complex reporting systems and requirements negated any efficiencies gained because it potentially precluded the ability to get credit for all of the work actually accomplished.

Almost all forests met or exceeded their assigned targets and outputs. The most common assigned outputs not met were timber volume sold and miles of road decommissioned. The timber target wasn't achieved because of market conditions (no one to bid on the sale) or staffing vacancies. For road decommissioning it was generally because the forest determined other work was a higher priority work and there were not enough funds to do road decommissioning as well. Several forests also reported that they achieved the acres treated, but not all of the acres they treated rolled up into IRR because of the reporting rules.

Some forests reported that not all priority programs were fully implemented. Some forest reported that NFRR funds were insufficient to cover the non-discretionary FTE costs, requiring funding from other BLIs. Others reported that objectives for wildlife, watershed, and fisheries programs were not fully met due to those accomplishments being met as secondary considerations within project prioritization.

Most forests in the region felt that the projects funded in FY2013 would have been funded without the IRR authority, and several stated that the some projects were not funded in FY2013 because of the IRR authority. These forests felt that the emphasis on multiple benefits at the expense of single benefit projects did not fully consider the importance of the benefit.

The forests that did state that they funded projects that they would not have funded said this was because the focus on more integrated, multiple benefit projects allowed them to consider larger projects than would have otherwise been considered. One forest also stated that they were better able to leverage partner funds due to the efficiencies gained in funding projects.

3. Flexibility, Advantages, and Disadvantages

a) Flexibility and Cost Savings

Through the second year of the IRR pilot, most forests (9 of 11) report an increase in flexibility due to the single restoration budget line item. Forest priority projects tend to be funded fully, with all personnel and equipment needs being met. Working relationships between program managers and partners appears to be more relaxed and focused on common goals. Strengthening of partnerships and relationships with sister agencies have allowed blurring of land ownerships to treat prioritized watersheds with multiple fund sources (EQIP, HSP) and leveraging of available funds. NFRR increases flexibility in developing integrated targets because the overall landscape is considered as to where a project might be a best fit. The IRR authority has also increased flexibility in shifting funds to projects or resource areas that may suddenly become a top priority without having to burden several BLIs with raising the necessary dollars. Various resource programs across the Forest were able to integrate and share personnel for project implementation which added to increased funding flexibility and increased Forest efficiency.

For one Forest, IRR authority increased flexibility in two key ways. First, it provided flexibility for key specialists to opportunistically shift from work in one of the integrated program areas to

another without the need to reprogram time in another BLI. Secondly, NFRR project savings could be shifted to support other integrated restoration projects that may not have been directly related to the primary purpose of the project from which the savings were realized. Another forest reports, the biggest change under the IRR authority is that different resource managers work more closely to develop projects than they did under unique BLIs.

All the forests as well as the Region found it difficult to actually quantify a cost comparison to individual BLIs. Most forests sense cost savings are taking place or are predicted to occur in the future as projects develop.

Several forests predict that there will be significant savings at least in project design and NEPA, as compared to individual resource treatment plans. More resource concerns are brought to the table, allowing for more opportunities and ideas for resolving problems. Data collection and specialist input savings are much more efficient when looking at areas together vs. individually. Partners with mutual goals can be brought to the table to speed up restoration of high priority areas. Efficiencies were gained in planning, by grouping projects with partners, saving travel time, and leveraging dollars with partners, neighbors, and sister agencies.

Cost savings are anticipated to be primarily associated with increased efficiency and cross function coordination for project implementation, i.e. fuels employees implementing wildlife habitat improvement and soils projects. There appears to be cost savings due to an economy of scale (a tangential result of the IRR authority) – by focusing our efforts on fewer, larger landscapes, we are improving efficiency. One forest simply believes the greatest savings occurred in program and project management related to having a single BLI to track and balance, rather than four.

b) Outcomes and outputs

Forests saw both social and landscape elements improve under IRR. IRR and landscape approaches potentially allow outcomes such as being able to characterize large blocks of land with entire watersheds having reduced risk from uncharacteristic fire, habitats restored, or being able to confidently define a watershed as either in, or moving towards an improved condition class based on the completion of projects directly addressing watershed scale health through the use of watershed restoration action plans. One forest stated “we were able to see objectives of CWPPs accomplished, especially where cross-jurisdictional treatments had occurred and Socio economic impacts- saw an increase in wood utilization and jobs associated with manufacturing and harvesting.”

Biological diversity was improved or maintained as a result of our restoration work. Keystone species such as aspen were protected and regenerated. Vegetation species composition and diversity, especially native grasses and forbs, was enhanced by our grassland restoration program, noxious weed management program, timber stand improvement program, and commercial timber harvest program. Productivity and diversity of insects and other animal species was also enhanced. These effects are readily evident through our monitoring or supported by research evidence. It’s also likely that water yields and seeps/spring productivity were also enhanced by our restoration program, but we don’t have hard data to show that.

The IRR concept has enhanced the Forests' ability to respond to local political pressures arising from past management actions. Opportunities for collaborative efforts at the local level have been realized.

Accomplishment reporting under IRR is more resource outcome based and oriented toward watershed restoration and/or change in watershed condition class (e.g., identifying abandoned mines that potentially contribute to water quality issues, pursuit of instream flow water rights, validating water use that may be adversely affecting stream and riparian resources, integrating accomplishments for road and trail maintenance, etc.).

Meaningful progress was made in NEPA planning, which will contribute towards restoration targets in future years. A number of NEPA projects are undergoing analysis and numerous NEPA decisions have been made related to restoration. Using an ID/IQ contract, the Santa Fe NF made significant progress in surveying and protecting cultural resource sites by removing hazardous fuels from them. This work will facilitate implementation of future prescribed fires.

c) Advantages and disadvantages

Advantages to IRR include clear direction and focus for work on integrated resource restoration within priority landscapes, priority watersheds, and priority fine scale projects. While not available for FY2013 planning, the completion of the 5-Year Plan in January 2013 has allowed Forests to streamline its prioritization process, allowing projects that meet more of the IRR objectives to rise to the top. The Forest is using the IRR authority, the 5-Year Plan and partnership opportunities to determine ahead of time where discretionary funding may be best spent in FY2014. This process will enable us to work with our external partners to coordinate activities at the landscape level that best fit restoration goals. While still in its infancy, this process should help the Forests organize and focus its priorities and identify opportunities much more efficiently into the future.

For the most part, IRR has enhanced the Forests' ability to collaborate both internally and externally. Using a more integrated approach than in the past, several program areas have found mutual benefits in integrated planning across multiple resource areas. Fuels specialists are gaining a better understanding of wildlife habitat needs, as wildlife specialists are of the fuels program. More discussions seem to be occurring in an effort to identify and resolve potential conflicts between range, wildlife, watershed, fuels and timber program objectives. Externally, the IRR approach has enhanced the Forest's ability to increase collaborative understanding with multiple new and existing partners.

The lack of "protected" funding for specific resources or activities, namely NFTM, NFVW, NFWF, NFN3 and CMLG continues to cause some consternation and mistrust internally. One specialist observed that the wildlife program is becoming more regulatory in nature, primarily existing to write biological assessments and evaluations rather than actively manage a program. From this point of view, it appears that projects that integrate restoration accomplishments will always rank higher than a project solely designed for wildlife. At issue is whether or not vegetation management projects align with high-priority wildlife (or watershed) projects. Where they do not, it is less likely that the wildlife priority will be funded.

From another point of view, because the accomplishments for NFRR are lumped together, the perception is that there is little incentive on the part of individual programs to initiate and carry

out projects. "When the program belongs to everyone, it belongs to no one," was one comment made. The majority of wildlife and watershed accomplishments in FY 2013 were ancillary to fuels reduction projects where prescribed fire or thinning was the principal tool. IRR authority and the emphasis on working in priority watersheds do not coincide. IRR emphasizes working across landscapes to accomplish objectives that line up with hazardous fuel reductions, terrestrial habitat improvement, watershed restoration, and timber management activities. Target allocations seem to emphasize timber projects and prescribed burning projects with large acre accomplishments. The Watershed Condition Framework focuses more on water quality improvement, aquatic habitat improvement, road reductions and some vegetation improvement. This type of work is often at a fine-scale and does not result in large acre accomplishments. The essential projects within the two priority watersheds identified for the Gila NF do not include timber management projects, and very little vegetation management projects. Vegetation plays a small role in the calculation of watershed impairment using the Watershed Condition Framework Implementation Guide, thus it plays a minor part during the recommendation of projects to improve watershed condition. This leads to a conflict during the allocation of NFRR dollars as to whether to fund essential watershed projects with little associated acreages to meet target, or to fund vegetation treatments with large acreages that will meet target.

Disadvantages continue to be associated with not prioritizing initial watersheds for restoration through a process that incorporated public and community values and involvement. Future priority landscapes for planning, and prioritized watersheds for restoration, on the Forest will involve broader consideration for community and public values and economics in the decision making process.

In the past, partners have traditionally been focused on one resource or one program area such as wildlife habitat or forest health improvement. Integration of multiple resources under one BLI has not kept pace with our external dialogue with communities. It will take time to communicate the change in the way the agency prioritizes and implements project work and how to effectively incorporate community interest in outcomes which maintain resiliency or improve resource functionality.

d) Challenges

In spite of another year of challenges of large fires and an unprecedented loss of life (both R3 employees and the Granite Mountain Hotshots), the Region was able to meet or exceed all targets except for road decommissioning. While some forests did not meet all their targets, other forests exceeded so made up the difference.

NFRG does not contribute to the IRR roll up. Approximately 29,000 acres of severely burned pastures that had been seeded in FY2012 were fenced and excluded from livestock grazing with these dollars. As NFRG is not part of the summation of IRR acres, these 29,000 acres were not included the watershed acres restored accomplishment. If the dollars had been received in NFRR, the Forest would have been able to count these acres as part of this target accomplishment. In addition, WFSU dollars used for BAER implementation resulted in close to 20,000 acres of seeding and mulching that resulted in watershed improvement. These acres also do not contribute to IRR rollup, but are counted as acres of water/soil resources improved.

Toward the end of the fiscal year, we were able to issue an additional 14,000 acres of task orders under the Phase 1 4FRI Contract. It had been uncertain throughout the year whether this would happen so they were not consistently planned in workplan. The accomplishments were claimed as appropriate and contributed to the Region's overall target accomplishment.

The transition to the new accounting system, FMMI, resulted in a limited ability to obtain reliable budget tracking information for most of the fiscal year. As a result, work plans were not updated to reflect actual budget execution. This made it impossible to predict end-of-year projections in time to make needed shifts in funding of personnel and projects.

Data entry into the various databases of record for some functions has been a continuing frustration and challenge. Employees struggle to enter data reflective of actual Forest accomplishments, working with databases that are not fully functioning. Some databases, such as the WFRP database, have proven to be fraught with instability. The database is frequently down or so slow as to be unusable. Employees try almost daily, sometimes for weeks to enter data, often without success. Employees actually resorted to off hours and/or weekend attempts to enter accomplishments. Other issues were also encountered with WCATT; the application was not working for weeks due to contract company and developer changes in October.

An additional challenge comes when there is funding available during the year for projects that would be funded under NFRR. The agency only has a certain amount of authority for NFRR so cannot take carryover from one of the legacy BLIs and change it to NFRR. With the interpretation that the pilot regions cannot use the legacy BLIs, it makes funding these projects a challenge.

4. Addressing Challenges Associated with FY 12 Implementation

The agency's shift from FFIS to FMMI caused major challenges in tracking expenditures and making reasoned adjustments throughout the fiscal year. As several sections drew from the same fund, fiscal control proved problematic. The Wildlife WFRP database proved largely to be a failure both in FY12 and this year. Many managers worked weekends inputting accomplishments. What should have taken a day or two of work was spread out over three months of sporadic functionality.

Program managers learned more effective ways to communicate with each other. Forests began to develop and institutionalize integrated budget and planning processes. The RO-IRR program reviews helped forests reaffirm the business rules, stay on track and not get into trouble. Through communication and oversight, the Region and forests feel we are in a better position to manage the IRR compared to a year ago. Reporting accomplishments remains a challenge. Most forests would like to see one database such as Work Plan for planned and FACTS for actual accomplishments supported. Modules for FACTS could be developed to support programs such as Wildlife and Engineering.

Restoration is more than just thinning trees. The shift from functional area planning/implementation to collaborative planning/implementation will be ongoing. The Region's push to develop "desired conditions" will prove essential to begin focusing our work on landscape scale, multiple resource objective restoration (including production of commodities), with long term benefits. A cultural shift that should be considered is how to better integrate and coordinate with non-IRR programs such as recreation, minerals, and grazing management in the planning and implementation of activities that enhance overall watershed conditions. Unless leadership is able to truly implement this, communicate

it to internal and external partners, and create buy-in both internally and externally at local and national scales, there is little chance that the intent of the IRR authority will be fully reached.

A number of forests call for a new "can do attitude" that will be required in order to address the enormity of the job ahead of us. The tools to do that job are slowly coming together and being understood on how to use.

The Region decided in the beginning that the forests had to learn how to develop an IRR program of work (POW) unconstrained by targets. Given the sideboards of "desired conditions", Watershed Condition Framework, and a 5-year Restoration Plan to show the evolution of a POW, forests have begun to project outputs in a truly integrated fashion. Forests tried to find the composition of work that were NEPA cleared, maximized accomplishments, and had interest from external stakeholders. True priority driven accomplishments will not fully occur until the current "shelf stock" is liquidated.

5. Other Measurable Activities Contributing to IRR

Some very important parts of the broader restoration activity that are not captured in the NFRR reporting items are road and trail maintenance and improvement, pest treatments (both native and invasive), stream crossings modified to allow for aquatic organism passage, and threatened and endangered species conservation activities. Also, the accomplishments that roll up to create the Watershed Acres Restored item only includes part of that work. The remaining work is critical to getting a full picture of the amount of restoration being done in the year. This is work funded by stewardship credits, CWKV, RTRT, Secure Rural Schools Title II grants, managed fire, prescribed fire in the WUI, and other sources. Most of the Region's reforestation work is accomplished with Reforestation Trust Fund dollars (RTRT) which do not roll-up. Most fuels reduction work within WUI's have restoration principles integrated into the prescriptions yet do not count as IRR.

Table 2 – Additional Activities Contributing to IRR with trackable measures.

Performance Measure	Unit of Measure	Total Units Accomplished[13]
Miles of high clearance system roads improved	Miles	131
Miles of high clearance system roads maintained	Miles	1,431
Miles of passenger car system roads improved	Miles	100
Miles of passenger car system roads maintained	Miles	2,527
Miles of system trail improved to standard	Miles	153
Miles of system trail maintained to standard	Miles	1,568
Stream crossings constructed or reconstructed for aquatic organism passage	Each	3
Acres of lake habitat restored/enhanced (unified accomplishment)	Acres	215
Acres of water/soil resources protected/maintained/improved (unified accomplishment)	Acres	114,478
Acres of terrestrial habitat restored/enhanced (unified accomplishment)	Acres	273,810
Acres of forest vegetation improved (unified accomplishment)	Acres	35,866

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

Performance Measure	Unit of Measure	Total Units Accomplished[13]
Acres of forestland vegetation established (unified accomplishment)	Acres	11,390
Acres of range vegetation improved (unified accomplishment)	Acres	103,849
Acres treated for noxious weeds/invasive plants on NFS lands (unified accomplishment)	Acres	13,012
Acres of hazardous fuels outside the WUI to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire (unified accomplishment)	Acres	52,546
Acres of hazardous fuels within the WUI to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire	Acres	93,350
T&E species for which recovery actions accomplished	Each	0
Priority acres treated for invasive species on Federal lands	Acres	0
Priority acres treated for invasive species on Coop lands	Acres	800
Priority acres treated for native species on Federal lands	Acres	4,805
Priority acres treated for native species on Coop lands	Acres	1,643

In addition to the items that we track, there are numerous activities which occur within a restoration program, funded by NFRR or by other BLIs, that contribute to the overall restoration program. The Region has actively been monitoring instream flow in order to obtain instream flow water rights. In the Southwest, water is often a limiting factor in species distribution and health. Ensuring that we maintain a minimum flow in our streams helps protect many listed fish and aquatic species, as well as protecting our riparian areas.

The Region did not track the work that was accomplished under Burned Area Emergency Response in any of our reporting databases. While some of the work may not be specifically considered restoration, it often stabilizes an area so that long term restoration work (which often would be funded by NFRR) can occur. Since this provides some very important restoration benefits, it will be important to include those accomplishments, as long as they do not affect the region's target.

Monitoring work on all projects is not tracked but is an integral part of our restoration program as management is adaptive. In order to efficiently implement future restoration projects, we must monitor the effectiveness of the current ones. In addition to the implementation and effectiveness monitoring of projects, monitoring of T&E species is critical to our implementation of restoration projects, including restoration and protection of listed species. This work is not tracked in any of our databases.

6. Feedback from Partners

Most forests report little if any reaction from external partners. When asked for feedback, several collaborators did not have an interest in our fiscal complexities. Most Partners, from their perspective, are not seeing a huge difference in how the forests are approaching landscape restoration since we have been striving toward landscape scales now for over five plus years. Representatives from the

National Wild Turkey Federation said they liked the concepts of IRR and that it fit with what we were already trying to accomplish, and that they appreciated having a broader spread of BLI's that could come to bear on any one project.

G. Case Studies

Compañero Landscape, Carson National Forest

Compañero Landscape is the first priority watershed planned and implemented on the Carson National Forest. It consists of four sub-watersheds located on the southern end of the Jicarilla RD. Land ownership of this area is shared with the Jicarilla Apache Reservation, Bureau of Land Management, State of New Mexico, and private land owners.

- IRR authority affected program integration by creating a mindset of ranger district staff surrounding restoration of watershed function. By addressing key watershed indicators which were found be functioning at risk during the Watershed Condition Assessment, ID Team members and partnership relationships were enhanced, funding was leveraged for large projects which could not be funded exclusively by the Forest at a scale where treatments could facilitate change in condition at the sub-watershed scale.

- Issues included soil erosion (sheet and gully) which threatens soil and site productivity, un-desirable vegetation conditions (brush) which limits use of watershed areas by wildlife and domestic ungulates, flooding and erosion damage to the road system, degraded riparian conditions and loss of native riparian vegetation, establishment and spread of non-native invasive species, and alteration of the natural fire regime for woodland and forest vegetation communities.

- Goals of this case study included: 1) decrease runoff and erosion, 2) improve vegetative and hydrologic components of riparian zones, 3) maintain and improve species composition and structure for the desired plant communities needed to protect the soil and support land uses, 4) reduce salt loading into the Carrizo Arroyo, and eventually into the San Juan River, 5) reduce density of invasive shrubs/weeds, 6) maintain self-sustaining economically feasible ranching operations 7) increase carbon sequestration by improving ground cover, 8) maintain and improve habitat for wildlife, and 9) retain as much water in the uplands as possible.

Embracing IRR encouraged district staff and partners to think at a watershed scale and develop project proposals appropriate to the scale and various land ownerships involved. Decisions were broader and were completed more efficiently. The line officer felt that planning cost efficiencies were significantly achieved. There was a significant incentive to partners willing to participate when goals and objective for a watershed scale restoration were agreed upon. A larger, more collaborative group including the Bureau of Land Management, Jicarilla Apache Nation, NRCS, San Juan Soil and Water Conservation District, NM Game and Fish, grazing permittees, and wildlife advocacy groups came together to discuss priority areas and needed treatments. The outcome so far reflects a vastly different vision than a unilateral effort by the Forest Service would produce.

Outcomes include brush management and re-seeding of native grasses, forbs and shrubs over approximately 500 acres. This treatment has enhanced watershed response and terrestrial habitat conditions as well as decreased soil erosion and runoff. Increases in herbaceous vegetation have enhanced these arid sites despite a severe and ongoing drought. Erosion control structures have also

been constructed in several of the smaller canyon bottoms. This has led to an improved watershed condition and has helped stabilize tributaries in Cottonwood, Vigas, Ahogadero, and Jaramillo Canyons. Much remains to be done.

It is the line officer's observation that the integrated BLI contributed to increased and more integrated outputs. This is attributed to shelf stock projects and partner groups knowing where to go to next and being able to leverage funding on a larger, focused area as opposed to small random projects spread out across the district. NFRR has encouraged improved integration among multiple resources and this has resulted in a common focus. The advantages of a single BLI include:

a. fostering of a team approach;
b. leveraged funding;
c. and having a mechanism to absorb decreased budgets and their impacts on singular programs.

Disadvantages include: Priority watersheds get relatively immediate attention while other watersheds with pressing needs have to wait for comprehensive treatment.

IRR authority changed the way activities were selected through focus on a priority watershed and treatment areas most in need of attention. An interdisciplinary approach internally and externally, with sister agencies, and partners became the necessary reality.

Possibilities for improvement include adding more BLI's, - in particular Grazing Management and incorporating this forest use as a partner in landscape restoration. In this particular landscape/priority watershed the grazing permittee is engaged, but in other areas this type of activity is viewed as a potential threat to grazing permittees.

From a team member perspective, some of the pros include an increase in focus and direction, a greater prioritization of work, and an increase in partnerships. Cons include the impression that priority watershed projects may take away from other important work. Also, there is a thought that if budgetary declines continue, that the same frustrations of lack of dollars for individual programs could become a reality.

Partners involved in the project and their contribution are shown on the following table:

Partner	Accomplishment	Funding/In-kind
Conoco Philips	3 miles of road reconstruction and surfacing, 2 low-water crossings, 10,000 cubic yards erosion control structures	$570K
Grazing Permittees	130 acres (seeding)	$10K
Jicarilla Road Committee	13,000 cubic feet of erosion control structures	$26K
Natural Resources Conservation Service/EQIP	110 acres (sage treatment)	$25K
NM Department of Game &	345 acres (seed purchase)	$34K

Fish – Big Game Enhancement Funds		
NM Department of Game & Fish – Habitat Stamp Program	254 acres (sagebrush treatment)	$15K
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	1 water development	$8K
Secure Rural Schools	66 acres (sage treatment/seeding)	$11K
Sportsman for Fish & Wildlife	4 water developments	$40K
Williams Four Corners	2,000 cubic feet of erosion controls structures	$4K

Isleta Landscape Restoration Project, Cibola National Forest

The Forest used IRR to conduct NEPA as well as for project preparation and partial implementation for a wide variety of outcomes including, forest vegetation improvement, wildlife habitat and watershed improvement, fuels reduction and range vegetation improvement. Since a large investment of IRR went into the project we also recognized the need to fund landline surveys, road maintenance and partial treatment with hazardous fuels money. Each of these accomplishments were completed with the primary job code from those programs. Primary issues and goals are to complete landscape scale restoration with multiple benefits while complimenting completed and ongoing treatments of the adjacent Pueblo of Isleta jurisdiction.

This project was initiated prior to IRR authority however; the integrated concept was a key goal of the project from the beginning. By applying the concept we witnessed an increase in efficiencies and effectiveness. The development of IRR helped the Cibola to stay focused on the concept of integration for this project. The activities conducted through IRR have had a greater impact on resource outcomes, in addition by showing the investments made by IRR the Cibola was able to compete for and receive additional funds such as WFHF to be invested into the project area.

To date project activities are on-going and monitoring will start in FY15 to determine overall effectiveness related to watershed improvement. This project is just a piece of the larger landscape and projects on other jurisdictions are occurring that will also lead to overall watershed improvement, the Cibola will have to coordinate with those partners for larger scale monitoring.

The advantages of IRR are increased focus, accomplishments and prioritizing. The primary and biggest internal disadvantage is the difficulty in getting employees to move from traditional concepts to working under the IRR concept. Externally it has not increased or decreased understanding because they do not fully understand the BLI however; we feel they do see us taking a more focused approach to our work. This focus has in turn allowed communications with partners to be more effective.

Since the project was developed with an integrated expectation, the use of IRR did not significantly affect the activities selected. Those selected were those that offered the most “bang for the buck” and accomplished outcomes related to traditional performance measure definitions.

Improvements in IRR would be to allow WUI fuels treatments of all types to roll up into overall accomplishment- not just Non WUI fuels treatments. For years the National Direction has been to treat

WUIs, the Forest have designed and committed to these projects, the treatments also have a direct benefit for restoration and watershed improvement.

The Pueblo of Isleta conducted NEPA and implementation, Chilili Land Grant conducted NEPA and implementation, SWCA Environmental Consulting Firm assisted with NEPA, NM State Forestry assisting with treatments on private property adjacent to project, multiple Soil and Water Conservation Districts assisting with treatments on private property adjacent to project

Bill Williams Mountain Restoration Project, Kaibab National Forest

One of the priority landscapes on the KNF is Bill Williams Mountain. This peak is adjacent to the city of Williams, AZ and is entirely on the National Forest. The city's municipal watershed is located on the north side of the mountain. Other values include the scenic viewshed and backyard to the city, a Mexican spotted owl Protected Activity Center (PAC) and a multi-million dollar communications site on the mountain top. This area is a priority landscape identified through a collaborative process due to the values at risk from uncharacteristic fire. The likelihood of such an event is currently high and the consequences would be catastrophic. In addition to severe impacts to values already mentioned, the threat of post-fire mudslides and debris torrents damaging the town is of great concern.

The Bill Williams Mountain landscape was identified as a priority for restoration treatment in the 2009 Kaibab Forest Health Focus. This collaboration with diverse stakeholders was facilitated and supported by faculty from Northern Arizona University, which is a highly respected, credible, and neutral third party. The objectives were to identify agreed upon priority areas needing restoration Forest wide and also to inform our Forest Plan revision efforts (desired conditions). Of all the areas considered and agreed upon on the Kaibab, the Bill Williams Mountain landscape clearly had the most agreement among the diverse stakeholders regarding the need for restoration treatments.

The KNF is working on an FEIS to reduce fuels and restore forest conditions in response to these threats, with the decision expected in 2014. The proposed action will reduce fuels, protect wildlife habitat, protect soil and watershed, improve forest health, and provide forest products. The project spans two priority watersheds. The project will lead to an improved watershed condition within the context of the Watershed Condition Framework

With IRR we avoided the traditional debates over what the appropriate shares of NFXX (ie, WF, TM, VW) funding for this project should be. This helps build a unified team working toward the shared goal of restoration in a highly integrated and more efficient fashion. However, because much of the project is located in WUI, we still had the debate over the appropriate shares of NFRR and WFHF for this project.

As the project planning took shape, both the local city government officials and community leaders have expressed high support and interest in the project moving forward. We've heard numerous comments to the effect "it's about time!" from the local community. There are no other sources of funding at the current time for this project. Once planning is completed we will

pursue further partnerships and grant funding for implementation. The proposed action includes reducing crown bulk density via skyline and helicopter yarding on steep slopes, so there will be a need to find supplemental funding to accomplish this expensive work.

We expect the IRR advantages described above will continue through project implementation, and perhaps be even more advantageous.

Southwest Jemez Mountains Landscape Restoration Project, Santa Fe National Forest

Using NFRR to fund the NEPA analysis, implementation, and monitoring for this large-scale restoration project has improved program integration and internal harmony. Using one BLI to fund the project is simpler than attempting to carve out portions of BLIs with different initial allocations. The match requirement associated with this project has the biggest impact on the Santa Fe NF's program of work. Because of the match requirement, projects in the SWJM area are ranked at the top, whereas an equivalent project on another district might not be funded at all.

The IRR authority has not affected the efficiency of implementation. An internal challenge has been to ensure that personnel are charging to the correct matching job code for SWJM CFLRP project. The IRR authority has not affected public engagement or collaboration in any way.

Improvements to the watershed have been made by implementing projects that already had NEPA completed prior to the CFLRP award. The focus for the last two years has been completing the landscape-level NEPA, which is almost entirely funded out of the NFRR BLI, and will result in restoration treatments. The activities are or will be leading toward improved conditions in context of WCF in our priority watershed as well as other watersheds within SWJM. The consolidation of BLIs is not likely to have a major impact on the mix of outcomes because the initial project development preceded the existence of NFRR.

Besides simplifying the accounting (one BLI instead of several), the pooling of many funds into a single BLI requires increased coordination among resources and projects are evaluated for integrated benefits more than before. This tends to reduce territorialism between program managers. Tracking costs was difficult with separate BLIs, and is slightly more difficult with a single BLI, but not as much as initially expected.

The IRR authority allows the Santa Fe NF to move funding to its highest priority projects without entirely draining a smaller BLI. "Other resource" projects with integrated benefits may get funded when historic program funding levels would not have been sufficient. In the case of the SWJM project, even "smaller" projects (e.g., those that benefit only wildlife, like placing a trick tank) are funded. We anticipate, however, that once the EIS is completed the vegetation management projects will again be the highest priority, thereby encountering the same dynamic described at the forest-wide level.

The simplified accounting and multiple resource aspect of IRR has been a benefit. The business rules for reporting accomplishments may complicate the selection and funding of projects in order to meet accomplishments. For example—the broad definition of WUI encompasses huge portions of the Santa Fe NF, and projects need to be balanced between WFHF and NFRR to meet separate reporting guidelines. They should better complement each other. It would be better if other restoration-appropriate BLIs (RTRT, CWKV, etc.) contributed to target attainment. For example, it is puzzling that partnership contributions

count when the matching funds may not. It would also be helpful if there should be a way to "tag" the funds to specific projects so that we can more precisely track real project costs.

It has been a significant paradigm shift to go from having several BLIs where program managers handle their "own pot of money" to one BLI where the program managers and the FLT have to work closely together to decide how the funding should be allocated. Having the single BLI requires more internal collaboration; program managers need to work together with each other and the FLT to effectively agree on a prioritized program of work, how to handle "extra funding", or where to focus end-of-the-year spending. The IRR authority results are more time-consuming for program managers, but also helps create a more integrated program of work. The single BLI works very well to fund the large restoration program, but is less handy at meeting training and supply needs, or at funding smaller projects that do not fit neatly under the rubric of restoration.

A partial list of partners is Santa Clara Pueblo, The Nature Conservancy, WildEarth Guardians, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Jemez Pueblo, National Park Service, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute, and New Mexico State Forestry. They have been involved in the development of the proposed action and alternatives, implementation, and monitoring.

Please see the website at http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/santafe/landmanagement/projects/?cid=fsbdev7_021043 for more information.

H. Planning Future Accomplishments – FY 2014 Accomplishments and Future NFRR Program Emphasis

2. FY 2014 Planned Accomplishments

Table 3 – IRR Planned Performance

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Total Units Planned[14]
Total acres treated annually to sustain or restore watershed function and resilience	Acres	263,127
Number of watersheds move to an improved condition class	Number	1
Miles of road decommissioned	Miles	107
Volume of timber sold	ccf	356,280
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced	Miles	109

[14] Units planned should match the planned accomplishments recorded in the Databases of Record.

3. Based on FY 2013 Experiences, how would you anticipate IRR affecting FY 2014 planning and accomplishments?

   The National Forests in R3 are becoming more proficient managing IRR. Initially, integration of forest staff areas was inconsistent. These gaps have narrowed through bottom to top POW development the Region prescribed. Employees appear to be gravitating toward the notion that project planning and implementation can be more rewarding when there is a mutual understanding and shared goals and objectives among the various resource areas involved.

   Unless our existing databases of record are refined to manage IRR, reporting accomplishments will continue to be an ordeal providing limited reliability. Data collection and analysis protocols can be improved to provide landscape scale, integrated resource information. Technologies like LiDAR, E-cognition, and remotely sensed cruises must be supported and refined. Stewardship contracting must remain in our tool bag. Work Plan is a good tool to plan spending, yet the ability to track expenditures will remain a challenge.

Intermountain Region (Region 4) FY 2013 Annual Report

I. Accomplishment Reporting – Performance

4. FY 2013 Accomplishments

a. Table 1 - *IRR Performance Measures* ***(These numbers will be pulled from PAS by the Washington Office)***

Table 1

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Target[15]	Total Units Accomplished[16]	Percent Accomplished
Acres treated annually to sustain or restore watershed function and resilience	Acres	198,000	285,255	144%
Number of watersheds move to an improved condition class	Number	1	1	100%
Miles of road decommissioned	Miles	284	274	96%
Volume of timber sold	Ccf	227,500	223,991	98%
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced	Miles	259	268	103%

b. Priority Watersheds and Watershed Action Plans

Answers to these questions are in WCATT, which is not available at this time.

i. How many priority watersheds have been identified in the Region as of FY 13?

Region 4 has thirty (30) priority watersheds. This is an estimate because WCATT is not available for use.

ii. List the type of restoration activities–and associated dollars–identified in the Watershed Restoration Action Plans (i.e. acres/miles of aquatic habitat improvement, acres of fuel treatments (thinning), acres of fuel treatments (prescribed burning), acres of meadow

[15] Target should match the target recorded in the Databases of Record.
[16] Units accomplished should match the accomplishments recorded in the Databases of Record.

restoration, miles of road maintenance, miles of road improvement, acres of erosion control, miles of trail maintenance or realignment, acres of non-native plant removal).

This information cannot be provided at this time because WCATT is not available.

iii. List the restoration activities—and associated dollars—completed to date.

This information cannot be provided at this time because WCATT is not available.

J. Accomplishment Reporting – Regional Summary

The intent of consolidating multiple BLIs into NFFR is to provide the Agency the flexibility to focus (maintenance, enhancement, and restoration activities on priority watersheds and/or other priority locations using a more efficient, integrated approach. Regions 1, 3, and 4 were selected to participate in the IRR Pilot Program to test this hypothesis. The focus on integrating various programs complements other ongoing efforts such as the Planning Rule revision, Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration projects, travel management, and the Watershed Condition Framework, which are similarly anticipated to promote integration of various resource activities. The other regions were not authorized to consolidate BLIs, but will continue to integrate programs within the existing limits of authority.

The following questions are designed to help evaluate whether the Regions gained flexibility, efficiencies, enhanced outcomes, and increased internal and external collaboration; and to highlight and understand any potential consequences or adverse impacts.

Narrative: Describe the decision-making process used to formulate priorities for FY 2013's program of work.

7. Why and Where on the Landscape

m. How did your forest [Region] prioritize funding and work under IRR?

The Regional Forester continued use of the Regional Office (RO) organization established in FY2012 relative to managing IRR and the NFRR BLI. The Director of Natural Resources is responsible for coordination with other affected staffs, principally Engineering and Fire. The Region made allocation decisions based on recommendations from the Budget Advice and Review Team (BART).

The RO gave specific direction that all units were to focus use of NFRR funds on implementation of essential projects in Watershed Restoration Action Plans. The RO expected field units to direct funding to achieve priority work in the most important places at the most meaningful scale. The RO recognized that not all IRR objectives could be met in each project and not all NFRR funds would be spent on direct restoration actions. The RO direction intended NFRR to give land managers increased flexibility to accomplish priority resource objectives while still maintaining or performing other necessary program work accomplished with the traditional BLIs.

The Region allocated $33M in NFRR funds to Forests. The RO directed $2.11M to focused investment projects selected through a competitive process. Successful Forests

were awarded FY2013 funds and promised FY2014 funds in order to better commit to accomplishing multi-year work. Our focused investment process is summarized in two attached documents.

Forests adapted around Regional direction and guidance depending upon individual unit needs, using a variety of approaches. One Forest allocated funds based on traditional (legacy) BLIs, primarily because recent active fire seasons (FY2012 and FY2013) have not allowed the Forest time to reorganize around an IRR model. A few Forests allocated funds using existing planning documents, such as Forest Plans, 5-year action plans, Aquatic and Wildlife Conservation Strategies, and Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Plans. Four Forests developed new models that drove priorities and allocation of funds (Table 2).

Table 2. New IRR Models Developed by Four R4 Forests

Ashley	Dixie	Sawtooth	Humboldt-Toiyabe
Program Management (30%)	Base Work Plans Representing Overhead (60%)	Off-The-Top	Category 1 – Watershed Condition Framework Priority Watersheds
Restoration Assessments (2%)	Project Implementation for Target Attainment (17%)	Program Management	Category 2 – Priority Landscapes (Pinyon-Juniper and Sagebrush Ecosystem Restoration/Sage Grouse Habitat Improvement and Maintenance
Restoration Project Planning/NEPA (14%)	Focused Investment Supplemental Target Attainment Project Implementation (15%)	Focused Investment Watershed Projects	Category 3 – Landscape Restoration Efforts (Invasive Plants, Wild Horses and Burros, TES, etc.)
Restoration Project Implementation (44%)	NFMA/NEPA Project Analysis (6%)	Priority Watershed Projects	
Monitoring/Studies (10%)	Region Commitments (2%)		

8. **Priorities, Outcomes, and Outputs**

n. How were priorities for on-the-ground work formulated in comparison to FY 12? (Consider how to incorporate funding of base programs in the response.)

Forests were better positioned in FY2013 to set priorities more in line with IRR goals and objectives because they were able to make program and staff assignment adjustments in FY2012 and early FY2013 as they learned from and adapted to IRR implementation. In FY2013, all Forests used a team approach that varied from a few to several members. Team recommendations were typically shared with and approved by Forest Leadership Teams. All Forests capitalized on partnership opportunities and targeting landscapes or watersheds where there were opportunities to accomplish multiple objectives.

Forests have noted they are moving from legacy BLI approaches to more integrated, teaming efforts. They also noted though that their NFRR program is still heavily driven by

the five assigned NFRR targets, that base program needs consume a major part of available funds, that it is hard to fund non-target base program needs, and that reductions in other program area BLIs, with associated hopes and desires to tap into NFRR to make up for the losses, is having unacceptable effects. The most notable example of this is a decision at the national level that NFRR is to be used for maintenance of Level I and II roads because of significant drops in CMRD funds.

o. What were the expected outcomes (accomplishments)?

The overarching expected outcome was moving watersheds to a better condition class through implementation of essential projects in priority watersheds. Other expected outcomes included:

- Improve terrestrial and aquatic habitat conditions to provide for habitat connectivity
- Retain and/or create local forest products jobs and businesses in rural communities
- Improve forest health and resiliency at a watershed/landscape scale
- Improve the efficiency with which outcomes and outputs are realized
- Increase commitment of partnerships to reach restoration goals at a landscape/watershed scale
- Collaboration forums and existing partnerships are functioning and other indications of social capacity exist

a. Were these outcomes achieved? To what extent?

All Forests were successful in implementing essential projects in priority watersheds. One Forest, the Dixie, successfully moved one watershed to a better condition class, allowing the Region to meet the assigned WTRSHD-CLS-IMP-NUM target of one. Several Forests expect to be able to move one or more watersheds to a better condition class in FY2014, in part because they were able to implement numerous essential projects in FY2013.

Forests reported they were able to focus restoration work in concentrated areas rather than having a more shot-gunned approach that was typical of the legacy BLIs. They also reported they were able to complete much larger projects due to contracting efficiencies, working with partners, and focusing the workforce and funding.

b. In terms of outcomes vs. outputs, were efficiencies realized and activities effective?

Forests generally reported they met or overachieved in terms of target accomplishment. Efficiency was realized on some Forests but not on others. No efficiency was realized relative to NEPA workload and timelines, but efficiency was realized relative to being able to work on landscape rather than individual project

level scales. The five assigned BLI targets were a major driver relative to outputs, which had both negative and positive effects on outcomes.

c. Were the priority programs and/or priority work (targets/outputs) achieved? If not, why?

For the most part, priority programs and work were achieved. Some Forests were unable to meet timber volume target but for reasons outside of IRR, while other Forests under-achieved due to an active fire season.

Concerns exist with having to use NFRR for road maintenance and with no longer having the NFN3 BLI, particularly in-light of experiencing large landscape-size fire seasons the last few years. Many post-fire recovery needs simply are not being satisfied due to lack of funding, resulting in ecosystem and social/economic concerns. The Payette Forest was able to meld NFRR with CFLN and better accomplish work identified in their CFLRP, but they were unable to claim credit for this work under WTRSHD-RSTR-ANN because accomplishments were recorded in FACTS under GSRV. Forests that received Focused Investment Funds were better positioned to complete priority work than were Forests that did not receive these funds, which was an expected result of the Focused Investment process we used in R4.

d. Were there projects that were completed in FY 2013 that would not have been funded without the IRR authority?
Most Forests answered affirmative to this question but a few answered in the negative. Some Forests were able to fund larger, more integrated or more expensive projects through IRR. Other Forests were better able to capitalize on partner funding or other sources of funding. At the same time, it was noted that needed projects outside of priority areas were not completed due to the focused watershed emphasis.

9. **Flexibility, Advantages, and Disadvantages**

p. Did the IRR Authority increase or decrease flexibility in developing integrated projects?

Most Forests reported greater flexibility but the amount depended on several factors. Factors include how much of the available funds go to base and whether or not Focused Investment funds were received.

q. Did you find cost savings under IRR? If so, where and how would you quantify them?

Most Forests reported they are not necessarily realizing cost savings but it is easier to plan fixed costs and develop work plans for projects, there are fewer budget meetings, whole projects can be done at once allowing for implementation to occur in a single year versus being spread out over a number of years, and it is easier to incorporate partners.

There are several concerns as well. There is little ability to use financial data to track expenditures so many managers have to use cuff records, which is inefficient. The large

percentage of funds that goes to overhead and fixed costs is a concern. Additionally, tradeoffs exist, and a handful of reductions in one or two BLIs have a ripple effect that negates any benefits or opportunities available under RR.

r. For outcomes that are not well reflected by traditional output targets, was meaningful progress made? If so, how was this determined?

No. Forests have noted their NFRR program is still heavily driven by the five assigned NFRR targets, that base program needs consume a major part of available funds, that it is hard to fund non-target base program needs, and that reductions in other program area BLIs, with associated hopes and desires to tap into NFRR to make up for the losses, is having unacceptable effects.

s. Under IRR, what advantages and disadvantages did your forest find when working internally and/or with partners. Did the IRR approach increase or decrease collaborative understanding with existing/new partners?

Internally, advantages of IRR are a NFMA planning format that more readily includes multiple output projects, flexibility to meet target priorities via multiple activities, and better understanding of linkages between resource issues on a landscape level. Disadvantages include ensuring base funding of traditional programs that need to continue such as air, water rights, and invasive plant control, project-specific stand-alone implementation of projects which are difficult to fund due to limited target attainment, commitments to matching outside sources of funding, lack of funding to accomplish all Forest needs, especially on-going needs outside of priority areas, and receiving mixed messages from program managers at the Regional and National level.

Externally, IRR provides for better collaborative efforts in some situations but decreased efforts in others, depending upon the nature of the collaborative effort and the intent of special interests. As with other BLIs that allow for external collaboration, e.g., CFLRP, partnerships can be a double-edged sword. Partners allow for increased access to knowledge of an area and the ability to stretch funds to accomplish more work. But, collaborative efforts can also result in conflicting goals and disparate understanding of issues between them and the agency. Also, training and organizing partners is often difficult due to schedules and timing.

t. Describe any reasons that the FY 2013 IRR report does not reflect planned accomplishments or the work plan. Were there any challenges that caused actual accomplishments to differ from those previously outlined in the work plan?

Regionally, this report reflects planned accomplishments were met. Some Forests were able to overachieve while others under achieved, but the net effect was near or above 100% accomplishment in all target areas. The Forests that underachieved on any one

particular target did so for reasons outside their control, such as having an active fire season, limited timber product markets, and NEPA appeals and litigation.

Additionally, Forests expressed concern with having either too many databases to report to or databases that do not communicate across each other, output assignments are not decreasing consistent with funding decreases, and fire borrowing precludes target accomplishment and commitments and trust with partners.

10. **Addressing Challenges Associated with FY 12 Implementation**

u. How were the difficulties in tracking funds and reporting accomplishments in FY12 addressed?

Little if any progress was made. Forests continue to find it difficult to track funds unless they keep cuff records and meet often. Tracking funds and outputs to specific activities is particularly difficult because of issues with FMMI implementation and corporate databases such as WFRP and WCATT not always being available when needed.

v. What cultural shifts are being and should be considered to bring units in more alignment with IRR?

Coaching and training on how to integrate program areas are desired and necessary. Communicating a consistent message from upper levels in the organization is critical. Specialists need to recognize that equity will be achieved over the long-run needs. Consistent and adequate budgets are necessary.

w. How did units ensure that priorities drive accomplishments while simultaneously meeting traditional outputs?

Forests that were practicing integration prior to IRR are adjusting to IRR much better than Forests that were not practicing integration. Even with that however, there is concern with the dominating effect the “Big 5” targets are having on driving priorities and overall accomplishments. Addressing program management needs and restoration priorities first seems to be an important factor in that assigned targets can be met under several different combinations of projects.

11. **Other Measurable Activities Contributing to IRR**

It is important to emphasize programs that are outside of the current IRR performance measures, but are funded through NFRR. In a short narrative, please highlight those activities that do not currently fall under an IRR performance measure, but whose performance is tracked by the Agency. In addition to the narrative, please list those activities and their FY 13 accomplishment. Below is a list of suggested activities. Add rows to the table below, as necessary, to accommodate all activities.

We added two rows to the following table based on feedback from the Forests.

Table – Additional Activities Contributing to IRR with trackable measures.

Performance Measure	Unit of Measure	Total Units Accomplished[17]
Miles of high clearance system roads improved	Miles	92
Miles of high clearance system roads maintained	Miles	1,491
Miles of passenger car system roads improved	Miles	168
Miles of passenger car system roads maintained	Miles	3,459
Miles of system trail improved to standard	Miles	171
Miles of system trail maintained to standard	Miles	7,764
Stream crossings constructed or reconstructed for aquatic organism passage	Each	12
Acres of lake habitat restored/enhanced (unified accomplishment)	Acres	362
Acres of water/soil resources protected/maintained/improved (unified accomplishment)	Acres	61,266
Acres of terrestrial habitat restored/enhanced (unified accomplishment)	Acres	179,165
Acres of forest vegetation improved (unified accomplishment)	Acres	10,823
Acres of forestland vegetation established (unified accomplishment)	Acres	17,613
Acres of range vegetation improved (unified accomplishment)	Acres	55,607
Acres treated for noxious weeds/invasive plants on NFS lands (unified accomplishment)	Acres	58,954
Acres of hazardous fuels outside the WUI to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire (unified accomplishment)	Acres	80,244
Acres covered by travel management implementation plans	Acres	31,965,771
Grazing allotments with signed decision notices	Each	26

In a short narrative, please highlight those activities that do not currently fall under an IRR performance measure, and whose performance is **not tracked** by the Agency (i.e. water rights acquisition, Instream flows, air quality monitoring, water yield monitoring, pre-NEPA survey work to support Range NEPA grazing decisions, implementation of Best Management Practices, T&E occurrences, vegetation conditions, biological diversity, etc.)

One performance measure that has been challenging to address under the IRR program is Miles of High Clearance Roads Receiving Maintenance (RD-HC-MAINT). In the Program Direction for IRR this performance measure was not identified as one that would be assigned a target to measure accomplishments under IRR. However, each year the Region is assigned a RD-HC-MAINT target. For example, in 2013 Region 4 was assigned a target of 1,020 miles in RD-HC-MAINT.

Forests are being directed that this target cannot be accomplished using CMRD funding due to CMLG being put into NFRR and the allocation for CMRD being significantly reduced over the last several years. NFRR allocations are woefully inadequate to cover

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

Level I and II road maintenance needs. This CMRD budget direction needs to be addressed.

On another note, projects that are not tracked in NFRR but are accomplished through NFRR include: Water right acquisition, pre-NEPA survey work to support range Rescission Act grazing decisions, implementation of the National Best Management Practices Program, T&E and Regional sensitive species occurrence surveys, vegetation condition surveys, wetland assessments, outreach and hiring, and public education. Volunteer programs are also very active and are partially funded out of NFRR.

12. **Feedback from Partners**

x. What, if any, feedback did you receive from partners?

Some partners have indicated IRR authority is a positive change for the Forest Service and are pleased to see the emphasis on watershed protection and improvement. Other partners have indicated the agency needs to remove the barriers or otherwise accomplish NEPA work more efficiently in order to provide greater on-the-ground restoration opportunities. Yet, other partners express concern they cannot assist with projects because the work they would like to help with is not in a current high priority area or not a priority for the respective line officer(s).

K. Case Studies (~1,000 words or less)

See the three attached case study documents as provided by the Payette, Dixie, and Sawtooth National Forests.

Narrative: Each pilot region is expected to provide three to five case studies. Each case study will highlight a project in which IRR funding enabled the project to be completed more efficiently, to meet the desired resource goal(s). If case studies exist where IRR did not meet those objectives, it would be useful to include them as well.

i. Describe case studies that reflect landscape scale/cross boundary activities. How did the authority affect program integration? What were the issues and goals?

j. Describe how IRR affected project planning and implementation. Was the action or activity implemented and completed more or less efficiently or effectively? Include information on internal and external collaboration and public engagement. Did the activities have a greater or less impact to resource outcomes?

k. Describe the outcomes or on-going status. Did the activity lead to an improved watershed condition within the context of the Watershed Condition Framework? If so, how? If not, why? Reports should provide qualitative as well as quantitative data.

l. Describe if the consolidation of BLIs (NFRR) changed the mix of outcomes and outputs. If so, how?

m. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of the single BLI (NFRR). How has NFRR impacted efficiency?

n. How did the IRR authority change the way activities were selected?

o. Suggest ways the use of this authority can be improved.

p. Illustrate the pros/cons of the IRR pilot from the team member perspective, with contact information for a team member who worked on the project.

q. Include a list of partners and their contributions (if any) that were involved in the planning and/or implementation of your project.

L. Planning Future Accomplishments – FY 2014 Accomplishments and Future NFRR Program Emphasis

4. FY 2014 Planned Accomplishments

a. Table 3 – *IRR Planned Performance.*

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Total Units Planned[18]
Total acres treated annually to sustain or restore watershed function and resilience	Acres	250000
Number of watersheds move to an improved condition class	Number	1
Miles of road decommissioned	Miles	227
Volume of timber sold	Ccf	227500
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced	Miles	259

5. Based on FY 2013 Experiences, how would you anticipate IRR affecting FY 2014 planning and accomplishments?

FY2014 will be our third year of the IRR pilot. Based on our experiences in FY2012 and FY2013, we expect improvements in program delivery in FY2014. With that, as outlined in this FY2013 report, as well as our FY2012 report, we have issues and concerns that need to be resolved if IRR is to be moved from a pilot concept to full implementation in FY2015.

Forests are seeing a cultural shift to focused restoration. Districts are planning projects in priority watersheds as integrated teams. IRR is providing flexibility to adjust funding to accomplish goals and objectives,

[18] Units planned should match the planned accomplishments recorded in the Databases of Record.

as well as meeting assigned targets. IRR is bringing program leads together to think strategically about landscape level planning and project implementation. Projects are becoming more fully integrated at inception. Pre-NEPA brainstorming sessions are including opportunities for integrated restoration, and new restoration oriented projects are far more likely to provide for restoration efforts that address most of the Watershed Condition Classification indicators of concern in any one particular priority watershed.

But with this, the potential benefits and opportunities that are being gained are being off-set to varying degrees by expected or unintended consequences. Because IRR is resulting in focused efforts, managers are concerned about how to maintain or accomplish necessary and important work in other, non-focused areas. This other important work is not going away, or cannot be postponed or foregone, while focused efforts proceed. This fact is probably the most challenging issue related to IRR program delivery.

There are concerns with focusing outputs around the “Big Five” targets and the effect this has on program outcomes. As an example, and to reiterate a suggestion we made in our FY2012 report, we encourage agency leaders to consider removing “Regular program timber volume sold” (TMBR-VOL-SLD) as an IRR performance measure. This measure does not necessarily work as a good measure or proxy for watershed restoration. Our Forests indicate they typically cannot meet this measure entirely within a priority watershed; that they must go to non-priority watersheds to find sufficient volume. Additionally, this measure is too much of a driver in that it places “cutting boards” as a higher priority than some other type of watershed restoration work, e.g., restoring gullies or removing small diameter conifer encroachment to reduce catastrophic wildfire risk. That portion of TMBR-VOL-SLD that truly is a restoration proxy can be included in “Number of acres treated annually to sustain or restore watershed function and resilience” (WTRSHD-RSTR-ANN).

Similarly, IRR direction does not emphasize non-WUI fuels accomplishment even though there is a non-WUI target (within the FUELS-ALL target) that should be accomplished by the NFRR BLI. The non-WUI target is not one of the five performance measures of NFRR. When non-WUI accomplishment does not occur, the WUI portion of the target is forced to make up the deficiency. The FUELS-ALL target was reduced for IRR in 2011 and has been going down each year. However, it may not be low enough since WUI acres are more expensive to treat, NFRR is not producing as much non-WUI accomplishment as WFHF did, and funds decreased by 30% but the costs did not.

We have a two-fold concern with the amount of NFRR that goes to fixed costs. Some Forests report this is having a significant effect on program delivery. Other Forests note having such a high percentage going to fixed costs better allows them to determine priority work, as they have to be more efficient in expenditures.

We are very concerned with decreases in other BLIs and efforts by other program areas to look to NFRR to make up shortfalls. The most notable example of this is the FY2013 budget direction shift in funding portions of road maintenance from CMRD to NFRR. There is, quite simply, not enough NFRR to allow for this type of activity, even when justifying it under the auspices of watershed restoration. We are realizing that gains in watershed health in priority watersheds are being offset or completely negated by watershed health declines in non-priority watersheds due to continual unraveling of the road system within those watersheds. Ultimately, we may actually be going backwards because Forest-wide road maintenance is not being done simply because there is not enough CMRD, NFRR, timber receipt, County agreement, et cetera dollars to keep on top of deferred road maintenance. The agency and Congress needs to come to grips with this.

Relative to the WFHF BLI, we are seeing more cost with IRR because not all fixed costs and salaries for the fuels program are being split between NFRR and WFHF equitably. For example, if a non-WUI fuels project is not selected as a priority by a Forest then the fuels specialists associated with that project are not funded by NFRR and WFHF is forced to pick up the cost even though the personnel were doing non-WUI work. With a 30% decrease in funding, the WFHF BLI cannot sustain picking up fixed and salary costs that should be paid by NFRR. This is an example of the complications of splitting a program between two BLIs. And this is one of the issues that make allocating funds and tracking spending so difficult.

Mill Creek-Council Mountain Landscape Restoration Project, Payette National Forest Case Study

a. **Describe case studies that reflect landscape scale/cross boundary activities. How did the authority affect program integration? What were the issues and goals?**

The Payette NF was selected to receive $700,000 total for FY 2013 and FY 2014 as part of the Intermountain Region IRR NFRR 5% Allocation Project. The 5% NFRR funds are to be used decommissioned 50 miles of unauthorized Forest Service System roads and install Aquatic Organism Passage bridges within the 800,000 acre Weiser-Little Salmon Headwaters CFLRP.

In April 2012 the Forest completed the first CFLRP NEPA the 51,975 acre Mill Creek-Council Mountain Landscape Restoration Project . The Watershed Condition Class rating is Class 3 on five of the six subwatersheds within the project area. The upper portion of the East Fork Weiser River subwatershed is listed in the Forest Plan as an Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) priority area - given the presence of an ESA listed fish species (bull trout). Roads are the major source of management-induced sediment in the project area. Road densities range from 2.8–6.5 miles per square mile with 89.3 miles of road within RCAs with density ranges from 5.1–10.9 miles per square mile. In June 2010, a flood damaged roads and, consequently, streams on the Forest. Many of the road failures were associated with plugged culverts and failure of road fill into stream channels.

b. **Describe how IRR affected project planning and implementation. Was the action or activity implemented and completed more or less efficiently or effectively? Include information on internal and external collaboration and public engagement. Did the activities have a greater or less impact to resource outcomes?**
The Mill Creek-Council Mountain Landscape Restoration Project FEIS was completed in April 2012 and was funded using a combination IRR NFRR funds (i.e. NFTM, NFWF, NFVW, etc.) and WFHF- Hazardous Fuel funds. This allowed the NFMA and NEPA portion of the project to be funded using on two BLI without the debate on who or what resources should be paying an integrated CFLRP project.

Consistent with the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP), the Payette National Forest (Forest) used a collaborative process, working with the Payette Forest Coalition (PFC) in the development of this project. The PFC, formed in June 2009, is a coalition of citizen stakeholders who have come together to collaborate with the Forest Service to develop and propose landscape restoration projects within the Project area. Its members represent stakeholders from a broad range of outside interests, including the environmental community, livestock permittees, timber industry, recreational groups, and State and County government. Over a 2-year period, the PFC met on a regular basis to gain an understanding of the existing landscape conditions and restoration opportunities within the Project area.

c. **Describe the outcomes or on-going status. Did the activity lead to an improved watershed condition within the context of the Watershed Condition Framework? If so, how? If not, why? Reports should provide qualitative as well as quantitative data.**
The 5% NFRR funding allowed 24 miles of road decommissioning/restoration and two AOP bridges to be installed in FY 2013 within the CFLRP. Treatment included: 1) Removal of culverts and all fill in stream channel; 2) De-compaction of road surface; 3) Re-contouring of road prism; 4) Planting of native vegetation at stream crossings or where needed; 5) Seeding with native seed and / or mulching of exposed cut or fill slopes. Implementation occurred using the Forest Heavy Equipment Crew and the Forest Watershed Restoration Crew. Cost = $10,000/mile.

The activity led to improvements in the soil and water resources within the CFLRP, but did not lead to an improved Watershed Condition Class upgrade to any specific Priority WCF subwatershed. There are several common sense reasons why the Forest has not upgraded a Watershed Condition Class including; 1) The Forest has not completed a Watershed Restoration Action Plan for all the identified Priority watersheds or completed the associated NEPA 2) Current restoration is being done on multiple watersheds across the Forest and CFLRP due to past Record of Decisions and commitments, 3) Large landscape scale projects are just beginning and it will take years to fully implement.

d. **Describe if the consolidation of BLIs (NFRR) changed the mix of outcomes and outputs. If so, how?**
The extra $350,000 5% NFRR funding was used to match the CFLN funding for the projects within the CFLRP.

e. **Describe the advantages and disadvantages of the single BLI (NFRR). How has NFRR impacted efficiency?**
Advantages: Easier budget planning, i.e, less arguments on primary purpose for project.
Disadvantages: Difficult to track dollars because different projects, resources, and activities are all lumped as NFRR. For example as of 11/13/13 the Forest Draft Program of work in Project Work Plan is 2 million over planned in NFRR.

f. **How did the IRR authority change the way activities were selected?**
IRR authority has not changed how traditional or appropriate activities are selected. The Traditional NFRR program is just lumped together under a common BLI.

g. **Suggest ways the use of this authority can be improved.**
Clearly define primary purpose. Give examples of what is appropriate and what is not appropriate.

h. **Illustrate the pros/cons of the IRR pilot from the team member perspective, with contact information for a team member who worked on the project.**
Pros: Ability of Forest to prioritize NFTM, NFWF, and NFVW projects and move funds to those priorities.
Cons: Difficulty in planning to allocation because of blurring of lines between traditional resource areas.

i. **Include a list of partners and their contributions (if any) that were involved in the planning and/or implementation of your project.**
Input from interested members of the public and from recommendations received in comments provided by the Payette Forest Coalition (PFC) to the Forest Supervisor. The PFC, formed in June 2009, is a collaborative group convened by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Its members represent stakeholders from a broad range of outside interests, including the environmental community, timber industry, recreational groups, and State and County government.

Pole Creek Watershed Project, Sawtooth National Forest Case Study

r. Describe the case studies that reflect large scale/cross boundary activities (landscape level) or how the authority allowed for program integration that may not have been available in the past. What were the issues and goals?

The Pole Creek Watershed historically supported bull trout and currently supports numerous ESA listed and candidate species, including Chinook salmon and steelhead trout (in lower sections) and lynx, wolverine, greater sage-grouse and whitebark pine. The watershed also contains habitat for numerous Region 4 sensitive species (i.e. westslope cutthroat, northern goshawk). Current watershed conditions are functioning at risk due to sedimentation, stream alteration from irrigation diversions, and other impacts from poorly designed system roads, unmanaged dispersed recreation, user-created travel routes, fish barriers, livestock grazing and noxious weeds. Additionally, forest health conditions in aspen and whitebark pine stands are degraded due to long-term fire exclusion, grazing impacts and conifer encroachment and are functioning at risk.

This authority has allowed the Sawtooth NRA to emphasize restoration throughout the watershed in one moment in time, rather than sporadically address these issues as time and funding allow. Focused restoration and continued collaboration with private land owners would allow substantial recovery of terrestrial and aquatic environments, leading to improvement of this Condition Class 2 watershed. Projects would address the issues identified above and provide opportunities to enlist partners with these restoration efforts.

s. Describe how IRR helped to facilitate project planning and implementation. Was the action or activity implemented/completed more efficiently or effectively, including information on internal and external collaboration and public engagement? Did the activities have a greater impact to resource outcomes?

Being selected as an IRR focus investment watershed allowed the majority of projects within the Watershed Restoration Action Plan (WRAP) to be implemented or significantly advanced within an accelerated timeframe (e.g. 2 years instead of potentially a 5-8 year time frame). Taking an integrated approach to watershed restoration, considering all resources areas of concern, allowed important projects to be prioritized and implemented when they may have otherwise been difficult to implement on the Forest, due to higher cost per acre for treatment. Opportunities to collaborate with partners were capitalized due to available funding and implementation ready projects. Because dependable funding over the two year window was made available to implement the WRAP,

resource improvements were realized in a shorter timeframe, rather than being phased in over numerous years or potentially not at all. However, even after these projects are implemented over the two year IRR focus investment timeframe, important work with the watershed will remain and will require the Forest to continue investing in the watershed's restoration action plan in order to move the watershed condition forward in a long-term, meaningful way.

t. *Describe the outcomes or on-going status. Did the activity lead to an improved watershed condition within the context of WCF? If so, how? If not, why? Reports should provide qualitative as well as quantitative data.*

The WRAP is not fully complete and so the watershed has not yet moved up in its WCF score. Still, many improvements have been made with the completed restoration work. To date, implemented projects within the WRAP include removal of two culverts/fish barriers, one which was replaced with a road bridge and one with an ATV trail bridge; removal of 3 acres of heavily impacted dispersed campsites adjacent to streams; restoration of Rainbow Creek, which was impacted from user-created ATV routes; closure and stream rehabilitation of 10 stream vehicle/ATV fords with continued access provided at two new ATV bridges; removal and rehabilitation of 10.6 miles of user-created roads and ATV trails; designing and developing a sustainable ATV trail system; establishment of a new trailhead and sustainable dispersed campsites at Rainbow Creek; installing riparian fencing to reduce impacts from dispersed recreation use; ongoing and deferred maintenance of existing livestock riparian fence; whitebark pine restoration treatments (1500 acres); wildlife habitat enhancement (over 3000 acres); stream restorations and enhancements (6 miles); whitebark pine planting (15 acres), noxious weed treatments (75 acres); and aspen stand inventory and assessment.

Project planning and partner collaboration is ongoing for the Pole Creek water diversion modification and special use permit – the core Pole Creek restoration objective. This complex objective involves development and implementation of innovative strategies to address the connectivity of Pole Creek to the upper Salmon River where currently limited by irrigation withdrawals. Planning is expected to be concluded in 2014 with design and implementation phases becoming the focus. Planning for the Pole Creek Road realignment will conclude and be implemented in 2014. The initial planning and feasibility studies for the Pole Creek stream channel restoration will occur in 2014.

u. *Describe if the consolidation of BLIs (NFRR) changed the mix of outcomes and outputs. If so, how?*

The consolidation of BLIs had a moderate effect on the mix of outcomes and outputs. Combining BLIs allowed for a more holistic approach to restoration needs in the drainage. Design and planning for many of the projects identified in the WRAP were already completed or underway prior to the WRAP being completed. However, completing the WRAP allowed for the consideration of additional restoration opportunities that may have been overlooked due to cost or capacity. It is important to note that while a WRAP was completed for this watershed, many other areas of the Unit still require important work to continue. Having to reduce the amount of important work accomplished in other locations has become a significant trade-off of this process, and often simply creates more work and challenges for the Unit. Similarly, some brief *opportunities* for watershed improvements during the period have been lost due to WRAP obligations.

v. *Describe the advantages and disadvantages of the single BLI (NFRR). How NFRR has impacted efficiency?*

This was alluded to in the response above. Within the context of this project, advantages included secured funding to complete priority projects identified within the WRAP and addressing restoration in a holistic manner. Disadvantages include the loss of individual resource program areas; some important restoration work cannot be completed in a holistic large scale manner, and that is not to say that it is not very important work. Another would be the fact that there are now more hands in the cookie jar, which leads to a much more complex prioritization and budgeting process. And since funding obviously does not cover all the need across the Forest in the combined program areas, combining all the BLIs had led to forgoing important work in favor of focusing most assets in a watershed or two, which may not be the area of highest need for all resource areas. Simply stated the trade-off is forgoing other similarly important work.

w. *How did the IRR authority change the way activities were selected?*

For this project, the IRR authority allowed for a holistic look at the watershed and the completion of meaningful restoration work in a condensed timeframe. Typically a project of this scale would be planned and implemented over a longer duration of time, perhaps as many individual projects, and would often be restricted to available funding while needing to compete with other projects on a Forestwide basis. The IRR focus watershed investment has allowed the Forest to move forward with the watershed action plan as a more integrated approach with the worry of funding available to implement the project in a timely manner.

x. *Suggest ways the use of this authority can be improved.*

Although this authority has done some positive things for the watersheds where money has been directed, it has come at some tradeoffs to the following:

1. Other priority areas on the forest in need of treatment that may not have as much public attention but still rate very high for resource management are getting little to no attention.

2. Historic BLI's that have become a part of IRR have been compromised to some degree by watering down programs and projects that would have been implemented with funds. The Integrated BLIs' don't have more money so to speak , it was just all pulled together to look like more money. The Focus Watershed yielded a good infusion but was promised to do so in 3-5 years and it is turning out to be more like 1-2, which is unrealistic. In order to get the Focus Watersheds done in that timeframe, there is little time for anything else. There appears to be no give to programs and projects outside of the focus watershed which are still being held as "targets" and "must dos". Capacity is a real issue and contracting and/or hiring is not a useful solution.

3. Historic BLI's that have become a part of IRR have compromised things like: employee training and personal satisfaction in their jobs. This leads to the ongoing morale issue being brought to the forefront as of recent. There is barely enough money to fund all the employee's salary much less any discretion for training and recognition.

Without sounding ungrateful, by just adding 1-2 years of funding, or by "pooling" multiple BLI's into one does not solve the bigger issues within the agency about capacity and hiring, lack of employee training, successional planning for an aging workforce, support and morale. Most agree the watershed itself is the "pat on the back" but a big tub of money over a short period of time has simply forced the already dedicated employees to work harder and longer than they already do without any recognition, compensation, or tools to get the help they would need (hiring and contracting).

Basically it is a huge investment for a District, or Forest, to put together a WRAP and begin concentrating planning and implementation (on a landscape scale) to move a watershed in a meaningful way into a restored condition. What makes this difficult is that none of the other important work or program needs on the District/Forest go away, we've just simply added more. Even if we are attempting to find efficiencies by integrating our program areas, we are still adding more. Not all program areas always overlap nicely on the landscape regarding what their high priority areas and needs are. This then becomes a serious capacity issue, basically we have too much to accomplish with too few folks. A two year commitment of funding is definitely helpful but it is not there when the planning phase begins and then only supports two years of implementation, meanwhile we are still attempting to complete all the other "must-dos". I have definitely experienced this frustration. Perhaps it would work better if there was a longer commitment of funding or more flexible with planned accomplishments

recognizing that we work in a dynamic environment and things are constantly changing and we need to be able to adjust to these changes.

Additionally, to address watersheds holistically this authority should be better integrated with current vegetation condition and terrestrial habitat and areas of concern. Although we integrated this aspect within our project the initial assessment seemed to be very heavily favored to water and stream conditions. It did not even address climate change or fire in the ranking matrix.

y. A GIS map showing specific treatment areas and submit geodatabase files/shapefiles. Spatial data must also be recorded in the FACTS spatial data engine (SDE) and meet existing data dictionary standards.

- **Maps (5) and geodatabase may be found at:**
  T:\FS\NFS\Sawtooth\Project\SawNRA\2310PoleCrkTravelMgmt\GIS\Workspace\PoleCrIRRRpt

z. Illustrate the pros/cons of the pilot from the team member perspective, with contact information for a team member who worked on the project.

Team Member's Comments:

- *Pro was getting adequate funding to complete several needed projects; con was lack of input from staff on the initial planning (it was rushed) making implementation more difficult than it should have been (should be). This likely would not have been as bad if we had better direction about how authority would be utilized in the long term. Planning, Design and Implementation. It had very vague and unrealistic objectives in relation to timelines. An "infusion" of money within a very short period of time is not something we do well with within our own legal framework.*
- *We had a few limiting factors well defined, and a few implementation ready projects -- and they overlapped only slightly. The WRAP simply funded all of these. That is, projects or objectives that were ready to plan or implement were acted upon (and we have done good things with the funds). But those WRAP objectives without this advantage have lingered or haven't even been engaged.*
- *It forced one watershed as being the "most important" because it had some planning done, some partnership support and some wheels already in motion. That does not mean that Pole Creek was the highest or most important watershed for restoration over the unit nor does it mean it was the most important to partners. Any work on the ground is meaningful but perhaps in some cases, areas were selected because it was where the planning had been done and was "shelf ready" for that infusion or "authority" of money described above.*

- *In my simple terms, the original premise for the objectives and cost estimates were: in the 5 YEARS (2013-2017), what is wrong; what will it take to fix it; and when will it be fixed = plan, design, implement. We cobbled something together, but then everything got crushed and moved up a year (2012). If we hadn't just happened to have had Pole Creek Travel ready to go, we would have accomplished little but planning during the crush. As is, we are still trying to accelerate 5 years of objectives into the crush – our 2014 Pole NFRR workplan excess is exactly that – objectives proposed for 2014 that were anticipated in the plan to have been funded in the out years. In my opinion, if we had/have no hope for out-year funds as described in the plan, we should/should have taken a broader view of our planning priorities beyond Pole Creek.*

aa. List of partners, their contributions (if any) that were involved in the planning and/or implementation of your project.

Idaho Parks and Recreation, Sawtooth Society, Magic Valley Trail Association, Blaine County Recreation District, and Custer Trail Riders are expected to remain key partners in support of the Travel Management projects through trail construction grants and maintenance partnerships. Trout Unlimited have financially supported the replacement of one of the two barrier culverts that have been replaced.

Other partners include the private landowners (Salmon Falls Land and Livestock Co.) that are key to achieving the core in-stream flow and stream restoration goals. Idaho Department of Water Resources has been assisting the Sawtooth NRA side-by-side with the overall landowner collaborations. Active participation of NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, and the Idaho Office of Species Conservation, and USFS Intermountain Region has been ongoing to provide technical guidance in defining the instream objectives. The Custer Soil and Water Conservation District is providing coordination and funding to the many study and design objectives. NRCS and the Bureau of Reclamation are providing design and engineering services and funding. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes have funded and implemented the first initial objectives on private land (riparian fencing). Grants from the Bonneville Power Administration and Pacific Salmon Recovery Fund have funded (and/or are expected to yet fund) many of the defined objectives. Idaho Rivers United and the Western Rivers Conservancy have been active in seeking additional funds and partners. Finally, Western Watersheds have provided thoughtful criticism. The Sawtooth Society has provided funding and volunteers and Idaho Juvenile Corrections has provided a crew, which together have assisted with the implementation of a fencing project at the newly designed trailhead and will help plant rehabilitated areas in the spring of 2014.

Tropic Watershed Project, Dixie National Forest Case Study

bb. Describe case studies that reflect landscape scale/cross boundary activities. How did the authority affect program integration? What were the issues and goals?

The focus in FY13 was in the Tropic Reservoir watershed in the East Fork Sevier River drainage. Emphasis in this watershed contributed to outputs relating to stream habitat improvements, forest vegetation management, mixed conifer and aspen timber sale offers, AOP work and restored watershed acres. This project has implemented a more diverse mix or outputs in one focus area than any other project over the last five years on the forest.

cc. Describe how IRR affected project planning and implementation. Was the action or activity implemented and completed more or less efficiently or effectively? Include information on internal and external collaboration and public engagement. Did the activities have a greater or less impact to resource outcomes?

By utilizing the watershed condition framework analysis, the forest recognized the efficiency of combining implementation efforts involved in more cohesive watershed condition improvement. Internal collaboration with all specialists included a diverse mix of implementation goals necessary to improve the watershed condition class in our IRR focus area. NEPA decisions were already in place.

dd. Describe the outcomes or on-going status. Did the activity lead to an improved watershed condition within the context of the Watershed Condition Framework? If so, how? If not, why? Reports should provide qualitative as well as quantitative data.

The Tropic Reservoir Focused Investment Project was awarded funding for FY2013 and FY 2014 to improve watershed conditions within the Tropic Reservoir and East Fork Sevier Headwaters watersheds. For 2013, the Dixie NF focused on aquatic passage work and implementation of vegetation management activities associated with the Blue Fly and Paunsaugunt Vegetation Management Projects. The Sieler Stewardship Proposal was awarded through an agreement in July to the Mule Deer Foundation.

It included a commercial timber harvest of 247 acres with a volume of 2,466 CCF. 600 acres of pre-commercial thinning, 71 acres of natural aspen site preparation, machine piling of fuels on 99 acres, hand piling of fuels on 477 acres, 420 acres of tree control within upland meadows, and 181 acres of riparian thinning and cleaning.

The Split Timber Sale was added via a modification with an additional 411 acres of timber harvest, a volume 5,873 CCF and aspen site prep of 170 acres.

The Crawford/Podunk Fish Passage Project had the contract offered and awarded. The project is now in winter shutdown due to furlough contract work stoppage, but expected to restart in spring.

The district range staff accomplished 20 acres of noxious weed treatments and inventories within the focused investment project area.

Performance Measure	Code	FY2013 Projected	FY2013 Accomplished	Project
Acres of water/soil resources protected/maintained/improved	S&W-RSRC-IMP	40	625	Sieler Stewardship= 601 Crawford Road & Podunk GS AOP= 4 Noxious Weeds = 20
Acres of terrestrial habitat restored/enhanced	HBT-ENH-TERR	1,500	1,859	Sieler Stewardship
Acres of forestlands treated using timber sales	TMBR-SALES-TRT-AC	500	658	Sieler Stewardship
Acres of forestland vegetation improved	FOR-VEG-IMP	600	600	Sieler Stewardship
Acres of forestland vegetation established	FOR-VEG-EST	100	241	Sieler Stewardship
Acres of rangeland vegetation improved	RG-VEG-IMP	20	601	Sieler Stewardship
Acres treated for noxious weeds/invasive plants on NFS lands	INVPLT-NXWD-FED-AC	20	20	Noxious Weed Treatment
Acres of hazardous fuels treated outside the wildland-urban interface (WUI) to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire	FP-FUELS-NON-WUI	266	2,435	Sieler Stewardship
Regular program timber volume sold (CCF)	TMBR-VOL-SLD	4,000	8,339	Sieler Stewardship
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced	HBT-ENH-STRM	6	9	Sieler Stewardship= 3 miles Crawford Road & Podunk GS AOP= 6 miles

ee. Describe if the consolidation of BLIs (NFRR) changed the mix of outcomes and outputs. If so, how?

All of the consolidation of BLIs increased the outputs in one area. Accomplishing this much work with 5 or 6 BLIs with competing emphasis would likely not have been possible in previous years.

ff. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of the single BLI (NFRR). How has NFRR impacted efficiency?

Advantages

- *More defined projects at a watershed scale.*
- *Less budget work.*
- *More cooperation in analyzing projects.*
- *Fewer larger size projects with multiple target attainment.*

Disadvantages

- *Less projects overall.*
- *Implementation may take more than one year.*
- *High cost activities do not compete well*
- *Contributions from non-forest vegetation activities are overlooked in the reporting scheme (RG-VEG-IMP).*
- *Detailed efficiency gains are not yet evident.*

gg. How did the IRR authority change the way activities were selected?

The forest is moving toward larger scale watershed evaluations with multiple target attainment. This likely lowers the overall number of projects we implement but focuses our investment in focused areas. The concern about adequate site specific NEPA disclosures at these large scale levels continues as an uncertainty.

hh. Suggest ways the use of this authority can be improved.

- *Allow NFRR funding to be utilized for range vegetation improved acres. This resource improvement is under-represented in the new IRR emphasis due to this restriction.*
- *Anchor NFRR to a single program lead in the RO*
- *Determine where fuels should reside. Discontinue the fuels funding split.*
- *Transition to outcomes. Presently the process is output driven.*

ii. Illustrate the pros/cons of the IRR pilot from the team member perspective, with contact information for a team member who worked on the project.

Pro's

- *Target Attainment exceeded initial estimates.*
- *Two year funding emphasis will attain watershed restoration goals.*

Con's

- *Staffing was not also available to complete accelerated work; R1 timber "strike team" support was needed.*

jj. Include a list of partners and their contributions (if any) that were involved in the planning and/or implementation of your project.
Stewardship Agreement – Mule Deer Foundation.