

# Region 3 IRR Report, 2015

## Southwest Region (R3) Overview

**Reporting Instructions:** This is the Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR) Pilot Program report template for fiscal year (FY) 2015 (FY15). This template will be used to compile information for the final FY15 IRR Report to be posted to the Forest Service’s Restoration Website. **Regional responses are due to the Washington Office by November 13, 2015.**

*If you have any questions about the template, please contact Jessica Robertson at 202-205-1626 or [jessicarobertson@fs.fed.us](mailto:jessicarobertson@fs.fed.us).*

*The Secretary of Agriculture’s vision recognizes the role of healthy forests in enhancing water resources and maintaining resiliency within a changing climate. The Forest Service is aligning the budget structure to focus landscape scale restoration across deputy areas to support and accelerate the pace of a wide spectrum of restoration and resiliency enhancing activities. This emphasis merges programs previously separated out as 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). Regions 1, 3, and 4 were selected as part of an Agency pilot program to demonstrate the advantages of merging multiple budget line items (BLIs) into one—National Forest Resource Restoration (NFRR).*

*The regions participating in the IRR Pilot (Regions 1, 3, and 4) will report on program achievements at the end of each FY. The FY15 reports will include overall perspectives on pilot implementation of IRR to date as well as annual accomplishments.*

## **A. Accomplishment Reporting – Performance**

### **1. FY15 Accomplishments**

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

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Target	Total Units Accomplished	Percent Accomplished
Acres treated annually to sustain or restore watershed function and resilience	Acres	338,000	470,200	139%
Number of watersheds moved to an improved condition class	Number	1	2	200%
Miles of road decommissioned	Miles	69	94	136%
Volume of timber sold	ccf	320,000	409,700	128%
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced	Miles	120	177	148%

**2. Priority Watersheds and Watershed Action Plans**

**a) How many priority watersheds have been identified in the Region as of FY15?**

Thirty-five priority watersheds have been identified by the 11 forests in the region. The number of priority watersheds identified per forest varies from as many as 8 to as few as 1. The forests have Watershed Restoration Actions Plans (WRAPs) at various stages of completion, from approved and entered into the Water Improvement Tracking (WIT) system, which now includes a spatial component, to just in the draft. One WRAP being developed includes as many as 12 sixth code watersheds and spans across 2 forests (Apache-Sitgreaves and the Gila). The latter mentioned WRAP is scheduled for completion winter of 2016, and will include the EPA elements required to qualify it as a Watershed Based Plan, eligible for future Clean Water Act funding. The details and status of the WRAPs (planned activities, timelines, costs, partners, etc.) are posted online at: [Watershed Restoration Actions Plans \(WRAPs\)](#).

- b) List the FY15 accomplishments for restoration activities 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.)

A variety of restoration activities occurred across the region in priority watersheds. As NEPA is completed and resources are made available restoration activities are able to begin. Below is a partial listing of the types of essential projects and activities carried out in FY15:

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	UNIT OF MEASURE
Restore ponderosa pine acres awarded via National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) Stewardship Agreement (SA)	1,150 acres
Ponderosa pine acres thinned and harvested in FY15 from previously awarded NWTf SA acres in FY14	1083 acres
Rx Burn-piles	153 acres
Rx Burn- broadcast	521 acres
Restore pinion/juniper woodlands acres awarded via agreement with New Mexico State Forestry	72 acres
Level 3 road maintenance	35 miles
Road decommissioning	5 miles
Stock tank reconstruction	2 tanks
Reintroduction of fire to fire-adapted ecosystems	1582 acres

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	UNIT OF MEASURE
Vegetation treatments (thinning) to restore forest health, ecosystem resilience, and wildlife habitat	150 acres
Control invasive and noxious weeds infestations	acres

- c) **What kind of progress has your Region made in completing restoration activities leading to improved watershed conditions since IRR pilot authority was initiated in 2012? Did IRR contribute to these improvements or the process? If so, please give examples.**

The region exceeded expectations in FY15 by not only moving one, but two watersheds to improved condition classes, one each on the Kaibab and Prescott NFs. In general, completing the essential projects identified in WRAPs can be a slow process for a variety of reasons. For example one forest did not have any signed WRAPs until FY15, due to fire recovery efforts and other scheduled work. Fortunately for that forest, projects are set to begin implementation in FY2016. Planned projects are associated with vegetation management. Other restoration projects not associated with vegetation management were identified in the WRAPs and ready for implementation in FY16, however they are currently not funded. Most other forests continue to implement restoration activities; however, most acres of accomplishment are related to vegetation-related treatments.

**B. 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 Pilot 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 FY15's program of work.**

**1. Why and Where on the Landscape**

**a) How did your forests prioritize funding and work under IRR in FY15?**

Some forests developed an IRR workgroup or IRR criteria to select project from the traditional resource groups (timber/fuels, watershed, wildlife, fisheries, range and engineering). The Forest Leadership Team (FLT) provided broad priority categories, projects were developed within those categories, and this list went back to the FLT for final prioritization. They based their prioritization of projects on certain evaluation criteria (watershed condition framework action plan, partnerships, carry over projects, target accomplishment, implementation efficiency, etc) and collaboration between the FLT and Program Managers

Another method of prioritization was to focus on large landscape project areas such as the 4-Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI). This large landscape project area stretches into 4 neighboring forests in central Arizona. The resource conditions of the priority watersheds in these areas currently pose appreciable risks to one of more of the following human life and safety, property, water quality, TES species survival, ecosystem and watershed function. Landscape prioritization has been directly linked with the WCF by selecting and integrating priority watersheds within the priority landscapes. The 6th HUC priority watersheds are contained within the larger 5th HUC and 4FRI priority landscapes in an effort to expand (plan and implement) more restoration beyond the 6th HUC watershed and into a broader landscape. Watershed Action Plans have been developed in priority landscapes within 4FRI , focusing on WUI areas and priority watershed based.

An additional method used by forests was to define a priority restoration area at each sky island District. Funding and work was prioritized through the identification for each District restoration areas. This forest recognized that each district has diverse and distinct users; therefore some level of restoration at each district is needed to serve these publics. Very little work outside of these areas were identified and funded, with the idea that they need to focus funding to accelerate restoration within these priority areas. Once restoration is complete in these areas then the forest will prioritize new areas per Ranger District input. However, due to the size of the prioritized landscapes it will take 5 to 20 years to complete restoration needs in these areas.

One Forest was initially funded in NFRR at 85% of the level of funding received in FY2014 continued yearly decrease in initial funding has led the Forest to focus on funding non-

discretionary needs in NFRR, including personnel and fleet costs. Many small-scale district projects are implemented via non-discretionary funding as permanent Forest personnel continue to chip away at small on-going fuels projects that provide restoration benefits. The Forest Leadership Team made a decision to set aside \$35,000 for fuels prescribed fire. After this project was funded and the non-discretionary needs were met, there was a deficit in NFRR funds. The Forest reviewed the 5-year plan and evaluated all NEPA-ready projects across the Forest that would improve watershed condition, improve terrestrial habitat, mitigate uncharacteristic wildfire behavior, and contribute to the assigned WTRSHD-RSTR-ANN target of 13,500 acres. The Forest prioritized funding for projects that had a low cost/acre ratio, a high number of acres ready for treatment, and a high likelihood of successful implementation. Particular emphasis was placed on timber harvest projects and prescribed fire projects, where the resource objectives associated with watershed, wildlife, and hazardous fuels could simultaneously be met with a single project. In addition, the Forest placed a higher priority on projects where commitments were already in place and that were typically in our priority landscape restoration areas. These priority areas were not determined by priority watersheds, but rather by where partnerships had been built and in place for years prior. After the initial budget was received, the Forest received additional funds from other sources for fine scale projects. The Forest had identified these needs during the initial funding process in the event of additional NFRR allocations may become available. These dollars, combined with the initial funding, helped the Forest accomplish additional target work while meeting the projected WTRSHD-RSTR-ANN target.

Prioritization was also accomplished by one forest through FLT coordination with final decisions made by the Forest Supervisor. District offices submitted their proposed projects to the FLT. These proposed projects were rolled up into the 5 year restoration plan. This 5 year restoration plan is updated on a yearly basis. The FLT voted on what the top priorities were based off the 5 year restoration plan. The Forest Supervisor would break any possible ties that may come from the FLT vote. The forest submitted a list of our priority projects in Workplan to the Regional Office based on priority watersheds for the forest and the CFLR projects. Priorities were also based on projects proposed within municipal watersheds.

Finally, on another forest, the FLT prioritized remaining essential projects within the 3 approved WRAPs as high priority work in FY15. Projects that restore grasslands or other wildlife habitat that have funding and support from other State and Federal agencies were also implemented in 2015. These projects included juniper thinning, spring improvement, and implementation of wildlife-friendly fencing. Data collection for allotment management plan revision and range NEPA analysis was also completed in FY15 and remains a high priority for this forest.

**b) Any changes in your approach from previous years?**

The forests were split on their feedback to this question. Most forests indicated no changes were made in their approach from previous years, while a few forests indicated some changes to their approach in FY15 as well as FY16.

One forest indicated that FY 2015 marked a departure from previous years by the formation of a Forest Restoration Committee, updating the Five-year Restoration Plan in early FY2016, and a more strategic approach to focus our landscape partners and restoration projects. One other forest plans on funding priority NEPA planning to align with WRAPs and priority watersheds so they can partner with other interested parties for implementation. Another incorporated more effort and coordination with districts in the development of the 5-year plan. This plan was heavily used in the determination of which projects to fund in FY2015. One other forest indicated no significant changes to their approach in formulating priorities except for being more responsive to the New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse needs.

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

**a) How have priorities for on-the-ground work changed since IRR pilots were initiated in 2012?**

Forests in Region 3 reported a range of changes in how they approach prioritization.

Overall, there is greater awareness of watershed benefits from land and vegetation treatment activities. One forest notes, they've seen change in priorities to fund, and have had to add priorities due to the listing of endangered species. One forest also noted that essential projects within the WRAPs have been given a higher priority for completion since 2012. Finally one forest notes, that IRR has allowed them to refocus funding to help address shifting priorities.

Highlights of forest specific changes are provided below.

Priorities for on-the-ground work in FY12 were done differently than in FY15. NFRR was first used in 2012, when the forest shifted from traditional funding to NFRR after the first quarter. At that time the forest had not shifted to forest-wide prioritization of projects and the annual plan of work had already been set. As a result, all resource areas affected by NFRR (wildlife, fisheries, watershed, fuels, timber, etc.) met to look at funding levels, determine whether the plan of work was funded, and if it was, determined how to split the remaining funding among the resource areas. At that time all priority projects were fully funded, so the remaining allocated funding was split between the NFRR resource areas. As a result, resource areas including wildlife, fisheries, and watershed were allocated additional dollars for work in FY12.

In FY13 and FY14 and FY15, the forest-wide prioritization process was in place. Program managers (in coordination with the districts) and the Resource Allocation Team developed a preliminary list of funding needs within broad priority categories; including projects and administrative costs. This list was brought to the Forest Leadership Team who further prioritized work on a forest-wide basis. The vast majority of funding was focused on supporting the CLFRP Project (4FRI) and projects that provide accomplishments under that initiative. Those priority projects were funded first. As a result, some resource-specific on-the-ground projects in wildlife, aquatics, watershed and engineering were not funded. However, the added flexibility of IRR has allowed the Forest to dedicate funding to legacy roads

In FY 2015, a number of significant partnerships and project funding opportunities materialized as a result having NEPA and “shovel” ready projects. Contributions by these partners include: planning, cultural inventory, wildlife surveys, and implementation in the form of vegetation management, Rx burning, sagebrush treatment with herbicide, structural range improvement, wetland restoration, and stream channel restoration.

Forests have indicated more coordination between programs and the integrated accomplishment reporting has helped meet accomplishments even when we did not fund a traditional project to meet those accomplishments.

The same considerations in FY12 were used in FY15, however the FY15 strategy used a more focused budget and planning approach, similar to the criteria required by the CFRLP direction, to prioritize funding for planning, implementation and monitoring. The following were additional considerations for the FY15 program of work within restoration areas:

- 1) CFRLP remained as a Regional Priority
- 2) Joint Chief’s Initiative Project
- 3) Watershed Condition Framework and Prioritization
- 4) Status of certified Community Wildfire Protection Plans
- 5) Approved NEPA decisions
- 6) Existing partnerships and working groups consisting of tribes, agencies, NGOs, industries and economic development groups with a focus on restoration objectives along with local community needs.

Information gathered from the sources listed above, and through coordination with forest staff and specialists for mitigation for all impacted resources were used to pinpoint the right place at the right time.

All non-discretionary costs (salaries, vehicles, etc.) were funded first to the extent possible. Funded and unfunded projects were prioritized similar to FY14 through the process discussed in question 1 (above).

One of the more rural forests in the Region has experienced success in implementing large prescribed burns that provided accomplishments for the non-WUI fuels, terrestrial habitat, and watershed condition targets. Traditional wildlife, watershed, and timber targets remained small, as the Forest focused more on “Back 40” type burns. The smaller WF, VW, and TM targets were easily accomplished with the funding received in those BLIs, especially when matched with WFHF funds for prescribed fires. The remaining funding in these BLIs was then used to fund other traditional targets, as well as assisting funding of the Forest’s range program.

With the overall reduction in FY2015 initial funding, similar to FY2014, the Forest continued to focus on funding non-discretionary needs first, prior to funding on-the-ground work priority projects. This is essentially funding the base program, by funding the base personnel that work in these program areas, and ensuring the Forest remains in compliance with law, regulation and policy. The base program is able to accomplish some target work, although at a small, localized scale. A lesser amount of dollars were set aside in each of the base program areas to cover emergency needs and other basic needs related to fisheries, water rights, noxious weed treatments, and air quality.

The limited remaining funding did not allow Forest managers to pick and choose projects from all Districts that could meet targets as costs/acre varied across the Forest. Instead, the Forest had to fund the most cost-effective projects identified in the 5-year plan. This left many Districts without funding for their smaller projects similar to what they had implemented in past years. On-the-ground priorities in FY2015 involved some unplanned funding that was used to thin commercial and non-commercial material which was later sold as deck sales. Tier three dollars (WFHF) helped fund a seasonal timber crew. This increased the overall timber/restoration production on the forest.

One Arizona forest has given restoration of fire adapted ecosystems a very high priority for many years. The FY15 program of restoration work represents one 12 month period in a pipeline of projects that frequently span multiple years. The priorities for the various restoration projects implemented in FY15 were driven by resource needs, human needs, values at risk, and collaborative input.

**b) What were the expected outcomes (accomplishments) for FY15?**

**i. Were these outcomes achieved? To what extent?**

The majority of expected accomplishments were anticipated to be met or exceeded for FY15 by each forest. Accomplishments were tied to on the ground activities that resulted from project planning developed prior to the implementation of IRR. Prioritized projects and their locations were agreed on, utilizing mutually collaborative strategies. Most forests have been shifting towards a more integrated way of doing landscape treatment, while others are progressing toward more collaborative work. Guidance was given to Forests on how to meet traditional and IRR targets.

One forest did not plan or achieve the RD-DECOM-MI outcome as part of the IRR program planned with the FY 14 funding pending Travel Management NEPA compliance.

Similar to FY2014, prescribed fire projects were selected with the largest acres to help achieve this target. Smaller projects with 100+ acre increments were implemented using permanent Forest personnel funded with non-discretionary dollars. The projects included those that continued partnership commitments, noxious weed treatments, and fisheries improvement. Partnership dollars contributed significantly to this roll up accomplishment.

One forest reported to have reduced catastrophic wildfire potential, improved rangeland vegetation, terrestrial habitat, and reduced road density and proximity to stream channels through the collaboration of the ongoing 4FRI Project.

One forest's accomplishments may not be met partly because the NEPA Decision was not signed on a large landscape restoration project in time. Some of the WTRSHD-RSTR-ANN target for FY 2015 was dependent on getting a signed NEPA Decision and a subsequent contract award that would have helped the forest meet this integrated target. Invasive species treatment acres were also limited because there is not an invasive species EIS that would allow to use chemical treatments.

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

Implementing the high priority projects was enhanced through the IRR process as they tend to be funded completely. Lower priority work tied to some of our traditional programs done in more traditional ways, such as watershed improvement, habitat and fisheries work, are hindered as they are not funded. This will change over time with

projects being planned using a more integrated approach and development of Watershed Restoration Action Plans. However, IRR has helped by providing a set amount of funding annually for engineering legacy road work and District small projects that otherwise would not have been accomplished.

Meaningful partnerships have developed; with their participation and funding, the forests has leveraged allocated funding in priority watershed restoration in 2014 which further increased in 2015. Partnership opportunities have continued to expand and existing opportunities have matured, affording the Forest the opportunity to implement landscape restoration.

One forest applied an integrated approach prior to the IRR program so additional efficiencies have not been recognized as a result of NFRR. It was found to be more challenging to fund non IRR performance measures such as water rights and instream flow monitoring as a result of consolidating BLIs.

Another forest indicated that efficiency varied by project characteristics. Treatment acres were largely effective in reducing fuel loadings, maintaining stable watersheds, and creating openings for wildlife habitat. However, when relying on a prescribed burning program, these efficiencies and their effectiveness are largely dependent on windows of opportunity presenting themselves with the right burning conditions. The Forest was fortunate in FY2015 that these windows did occur. With prescribed fire being the Forest's bread and butter, weather will continue to play a large role in whether the Forest is successful in achieving target accomplishment on a year-to-year basis. The current size of the timber/mechanical treatment program on the Forest will never produce enough acres to meet a multi-thousand acre annual watershed restoration target.

The flexibility to use NFRR funding for a variety of restoration related tasks created the greatest efficiency. This includes funding for multiple and diverse projects. Activities on the ground have been effective. However, some of the theoretical IRR efficiencies such as being able to pool large amounts of funds for single projects at year end were not effective due to fire transfers.

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

All identified priority work was completed in FY2015. These targets were met mainly as integrated accomplishments; individual program needs while also accomplishing priority projects that are important to communities and stake holders.

**iv. Were there projects that were completed in FY15 that would not have been funded without the IRR authority?**

Yes, there were a number of projects that would not have been funded without IRR, unless the Forest had already developed an integrated program of work. These included road obliteration, lake restoration, tamarisk removal, PJ treatment, prescribed burning and restroom vent cover retrofits to protect migratory birds. IRR authority was a catalyst to formalize this integration. The ability to leverage internal and external funds has increased as a result of the IRR budgeting process and concept.

One forest indicated that they will not be as effective in meeting accomplishments in the future when the funding comes down through the traditional BLI's. It is expected that their funding will focus on NFTM and WHFHF with a very small amount to fund the baseline for the other BLI's. The IRR authority helped the forest achieve match funds from other sources to help complete projects. It also enabled them to receive match funds in the form of Habitat Enhancement dollars from State partners as well.

There were a couple of forests that indicated there were not any projects that would not have been funded without IRR authority. The funded projects would still have been priorities and funded with the appropriate BLI or integration of BLIs.

There continues to be projects that formerly were funded under separate BLIs that are no longer a high priority for funding under IRR, yet remain high priority activities on other forests. Within the watershed program, water rights issues continue to remain a priority. These dollars are no longer available unless end-of-year dollars become available. The air program is also located under the watershed program. The Forest has continued to set aside dollars off of the top to fund a minor amount of air quality work including the operation of three air quality monitors. Within the wildlife program fisheries work remains a high priority for the Forest, as this forest contains one of the highest numbers of listed aquatic species within its boundaries in the Region. However, IRR focuses more on acres of watershed (or landscape) restoration rather than miles of stream restoration. The wildlife program relies heavily on partnerships to help accomplish certain critical objectives.

### 3. Flexibility, Advantages, and Disadvantages

**a) Did the IRR Authority increase or decrease flexibility in developing integrated projects? In what way?**

Only one forest indicated there was no change in flexibility from previous integration method. Most forests agreed there is a greater flexibility in ensuring the highest priority work is accomplished, removing restrictions imposed by traditional EBLI guidance.

Forest priority projects tend to be fully funded, with all personnel and equipment needs being met. IRR has also allowed for survey and monitoring needs that could not previously be funded. Initially, it looks like more comprehensive, well rounded restoration projects are being developed, as it allows the use of the Watershed Condition Framework and other initiatives to set the stage to meet multiple resource needs while providing for social and economic needs, whereas in the recent past, only hazardous fuels reduction, forest health (tree density) and industry issues were fully satisfied.

The IRR authority has allowed consideration of more landscape level projects since the dollars have been combined into a larger BLI. NFRR funding can fund one or two projects in a landscape priority area a year. 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.

Working relationships between line officers, program managers and partners appears to be more relaxed and focused on common goals. Strengthening of partnerships and relationships with sister agencies, and external partners have allowed blurring of land ownerships to treat prioritized watersheds with multiple fund sources and leveraging of available funds. Making partners aware of the Forest's restoration projects in 2016 may allow for new partnerships to be developed in the future. The outcome results in funds going to the right work at the right time, instead of the traditional "shotgun" approach to funding projects that were program specific.

**b) Describe the advantages and disadvantages of a single, consolidated BLI (NFRR). Has this resulted in efficiencies? If so, please describe.**

Advantages:

The increased flexibility to move funding around and match dollars with external partners is the greatest advantage. The flexibility of funding work under IRR greatly increases efficiencies, cooperation and collaboration between resource areas. The single BLI allows for a level of

program integration that could not otherwise be achieved. It requires coordination between program areas that do not normally work closely together to achieve restoration goals.

High priority projects are funded first, ensuring they have every opportunity to be successful. The forest and region appear successful as accomplishments in restoration are generally exceeded in the watershed acres restored annually metric. Workforces are funded by high priority landscape scale projects are more stable as those kinds of projects are of long duration.

One BLI allows the Forest to more efficiently monitor expenditures, and create greater flexibility to address forest needs, and opportunities for completion of integrated restoration. This creates simplicity in charging fleet, personnel, and other associated costs. There has been an increased focus on the “right” areas, as well as developing a unified approach and voice across programs.

Overall, there has been increased region-wide approach to identifying work and resources, which is needed with reduced budgets. There are also savings in project design and NEPA–related costs versus having multiple small projects across the Forest. Resource concerns and data collection efforts are combined, thus providing more efficiency in the planning process. Partners that share mutual goals and objectives can also pool their dollars to fund the same projects that are being funded by NFRR.

Disadvantages:

With the strong focus on the CFLRP projects and resources needed to support them (funding and people), other potential District or partner projects cannot be supported. However, this would be even more difficult without the consolidated BLI.

Some important programs have diminished, such as CMLG and district projects not tied to the larger Forest Priorities. There are a lot of small project opportunities at the District level that may not be funded or have personnel available to work on them in the wake of large landscape scale priorities.

There is an overall perception that the NFRR BLI has more available funds than what really exist. The trend of having more activities/accomplishments included under the umbrella of NFRR substantiates this perception.

Some programs on the forests feel that they can’t respond to internal/external needs as readily. There are Ranger Districts that feel they will “miss out” when a higher priority project is not on their District.

Efficiencies have been improved in NEPA by developing proposed actions that address a broad range of restoration purposes and needs. Essentially NEPA is becoming integrated, which is resulting in less piece milling of designing and implementing projects. This reduces Specialist time working on multiple things and allows them to focus their time at looking and one project but in a broader context. The NEPA decisions we have signed under this concept are resulting in more efficient implementation since all program areas are focused on that area all at once.

Combining funds into one shared job code continues to mask the decline in overall budgets for specific program areas. Collectively, the amount decreases every year, but the loss in overall funding to the combined resource areas since 2011 is approaching 30%. This is hidden in the “it’s all in there” philosophy of IRR. Suffering the most are the small program areas of air quality, water rights, legacy roads and trails (CMLG), NFN3 long-term fire restoration, and fine-scale wildlife work. Target accomplishments in watershed and wildlife are relying on partnership funding and/or integrated targets.

Accomplishments continue to be reported as if there are four BLIs. It would be helpful to have one reporting mechanism for NFRR accomplishments so that there is no confusion or oversight when accounting for target completion.

It still remains an obstacle on some forests to fully shift thinking across the Forest from District level projects to a Forest priority project. Employees feel that they have lost ownership in project selection, budget responsibility, problem solving, and job value. A Forest priority project no longer provides the job satisfaction and pride that was felt with District level projects. Regardless of the fact that there is not enough money to be spread out to each District each year, the Districts would still like to see necessary work carried out in their back yards. This type of work is disappearing rapidly with declining budgets.

In some cases on other forests, it is harder to track spending with so many different areas being funded out of one BLI, so communication is critical. Though project funding is easier, target reporting via multiple cumbersome databases is time consuming. In one case, the forest implemented strict control of access to project Workplans so that expenditures are tracked properly.

**c) Did you find cost savings under IRR? If so, where and how would you quantify them?**

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. One forest has used integrated restoration concepts to engage with partner agencies and interest groups; leveraging common goals of ecosystem restoration to effectively plan, design and implement restoration projects. Partner funding is

used to further planning and project implementation where appropriate, i.e. Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation grant funding for implementation of prescribed burn activities.

Efficiencies were gained in planning, by grouping projects with partners, saving travel time, and leveraging dollars with partners, neighbors, and sister agencies. There is always more restoration work to be done than can be funded and Forests typically have a limited capacity to achieve needed work. Cost saving are not being realized on the Forest because NFRR funding is in a decreasing trend, as are most other BLIs. The ability to leverage funding to priority work allows the work to be completed in one field season instead of nickel and dimes the project over multiple years, is.

One forest said that cost savings are not immediately apparent under IRR as the cost/acre for the Forests' project has remained fairly steady. It may save money, overall, by eliminating smaller district projects and associated start-up costs. However, because of previous commitments, the Forest has continued to fund some smaller District projects where a partnership was already in place. In addition, the workforce has remained the same regardless of whether priority projects have shifted to other areas of the Forest. More travel dollars may be associated with moving personnel from one side of the forest to assist in implementation of another District priority project. Non-discretionary costs associated with IRR continue to be the largest items funded out of this BLI. Over time, the IRR authority is helping the Forests trim overhead costs that were hidden through the use of multiple BLIs.

The only cost savings that come into play are during the fire season as more and more of the permanent work force is being funded under NFRR. Fire savings that used to be seen by individual BLIs are now being seen under NFRR. Because so much of the workforce is attached to NFRR, these cost savings have been substantial in the last two years. However, these are difficult savings to account for with our current budget reporting methods.

IRR requires Staff areas to increase their level of communication and coordination. That increased communication and coordination resulted in increased efficiency in program delivery. It also reduced the "turf battles" that frequently accompany a less integrated and more functional funding approach, which further increases efficiency. These efficiencies undoubtedly result in cost savings, but it is difficult to quantify in dollars.

There are a few forests that have seen no evidence of cost savings with IRR. The pooling of so many funds into the single BLI requires more coordination; reaching out to engineering as well as the previously-integrated ecosystem resources. The increased coordination definitely requires more time and energy from personnel in developing, prioritizing, and tracking projects to ensure the program is fully implemented.

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

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. At the landscape scale, there will be improvements in Watershed Conditions. Unfortunately, a lot of restoration work may not be recognized or will go unreported as resulting in a change of watershed condition class because the Forest was not able to develop a WRAP prior to implementation of work planned prior to implementation of the watershed condition framework.

Another outcome not well reflected by traditional output targets is the continual increase in partnerships and the willingness to combine resources of time and funding to achieve meaningful improvements in watershed conditions. One Forest reported that without exception, every district on the Forest has experienced interest from existing and potential partners to engage in watershed restoration planning and implementation.

One forest was able to see objectives of CWPPs accomplished, especially where cross-jurisdictional treatments had occurred. Socio economic impacts- saw an increase in wood utilization and jobs associated with manufacturing and harvesting. They were able to partner with organization and agencies on new funding sources and programs, from the 2014 Farm Bill, that are accomplishing mutually benefits for multiple objectives

On another forest's the wildlife program, mandatory monitoring resulting from biological opinions must compete with restoration projects for funding and are often put aside.

In the past three years, the Gila NF has had several large wildland fires including the 2012 Whitewater Baldy Complex (300,000 acres), the 2013 Silver Fire (150,000 acres), and the 2014 Signal Fire (5,522 acres). Restoration efforts were funded primarily by BAER dollars, with successful implementation of multiple thousands of acres of seeding, mulching, and other rehabilitative work. While significant progress has been made in trying to maintain soil and water integrity, the Forest has certainly lost ground in healthy watershed condition due to these fires which have devastated large contiguous blocks of watersheds, habitats, and ecosystems. Several small fires that occurred on the forest in 2015 include the Moore Fire (3,670 acres) and the Pinyon Fire (3,285 acres) were "managed" fires providing secondary benefit by improving habitat for wildlife while also acres for fuel treatment accomplishments. The Forest continues to make concerted efforts towards reducing fuel loadings, enhancing

streams and terrestrial habitat for aquatic and wildlife benefits, and improving watershed conditions through its planning and implementation processes. The Gila NF intends to continue to assess priority areas across the landscape by considering what type of restoration needs are necessary in the areas of the Forest that have recently burned to enable rapid recovery of natural ecosystems, and what type of restoration needs are necessary in areas of the Forest that are at a high risk of losing high value ecosystems due to future catastrophic wildfire.

Biological diversity was improved or maintained as a result of our restoration work. Keystone species such as aspen were protected and regenerated with partners and partnership funding. 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. The Kaibab NF was successful in working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management (Arizona Strip) in signing the Paradine Plains Cactus Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) that addresses the conservation needs and will allow the parties to this CCA (Cooperators) to leverage knowledge and funding within a common conservation framework to reduce threats to and benefit the Paradine plains cactus. 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.

On other forests, several on-the-ground projects were accomplished that provided benefit to multiple natural resource programs. Through projects in WorkPlan and internal tracking and reporting mechanisms, one forest felt meaningful progress was made. For instance, the importance of obtaining instream water rights and management or water uses in watersheds is not adequately tracked by current output targets.

One forest indicated no meaningful progress because the reporting systems still don't accurately reflect the amount of work being completed. They do not reflect amount of biological assessments (BA's) completed and Section 18 Grazing Permit NEPA Reviews completed to name a few.

- e) **Under IRR, what advantages and disadvantages did your forest find when working internally and/or with partners? How have partners responded to IRR funding authority? To the emphasis on more integrated planning? To more focus on landscape scale restoration? Did the IRR approach increase or decrease collaborative understanding with existing/new partners?**

The advantages throughout the region related to focus, accomplishments and prioritizing. With the expectation of true restoration, not just providing wood to industry, forests believe that collaborators are more willing to support and become partners in restoration projects. In general, there is more integrated planning, more focus on landscape scale restoration, and the funding mechanism is more understandable to partners. Also, funding for formerly underrepresented specialists, especially wildlife biologists, is more dependable.

Examples of forest specific advantages and disadvantages are provided below.

**Cibola National Forest and Grasslands:** The Cibola's 5-Year Plan has allowed the Forest 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 FY2016. The IRR authority has enabled them 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 Forest organize and focus its priorities and identify opportunities much more efficiently into the future. The IRR authority made it more flexible to match dollars with externals. Our national partners (TNC) are aware of IRR and have organized larger groups around the concepts of integrated landscape scale restoration

**Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF):** On the ASNF when funds from several sections were combined it appears the total funding in the shared job code did not add up to the amount of monies which were found originally in separate job codes. With initially high fixed costs, mostly salary, it is a burden. When the agency requests all personnel be at 261 days funded, the shared fund code project money may be used to first fund salary expenditures leaving little to put on the ground. There is also the potential to fund high priority, high visibility projects, with some smaller, important programs lost or becoming ineffective. As an example, under IRR one of the disadvantages is with CMLG being incorporated into the NFRR BLI. Historically CMLG funds were competed for regionally and awarded based on viable projects that address watershed and species concerns. The funds received were used for implementation and not salary. Our forest was very successful in securing these funds due to:

- Past performance with timeliness of execution of the project;
- Project focus on critical watershed and T and E species;
- Obtaining matching funds through internal and external partners.

Increased usability of NFRR across the ASNF has eliminated creativity and hard work as incentives to continue the watershed program. However, being associated with a CFLRP project such as 4FRI has allowed the Forest to not lose the program completely as the same

projects can be funded as above base supporting the goals of the initiative although to a much more limited extent. In wildlife and fisheries, the Forest initially found IRR limiting when working with partners. However, it has provided the flexibility to continue existing agreements and initiate new agreements or long term contracts. The Forest has continued to partner with other agencies or utilize IRR as a match to grant funding sources.

Similarly, the loss of NFN3 long term restoration resulted in loss of emphasis in the restoration of the Wallow Fire and other opportunities traditionally associated with this code. No funds were specifically provided or allocated towards watershed protection, restoration or monitoring stream or soil conditions within the fire area in FY13 or FY14. In FY15, there was NFRR funding provided to begin this, and forest is relying on NFRR to fund personnel to monitor recovery (documentation of existing conditions) and identify long term restoration needs for the Wallow fire recovery.

**Gila National Forest:** The biggest internal disadvantage on the Gila NF with IRR is the continual decrease in funding. Not only were the BLIs of WF, VW, TM and non WUI HF combined, but NFN3 and CMLG programs have largely disappeared. These programs which used to bring the Forest in excess of several hundred thousand dollars yearly are now funded out of the overall NFRR budget (which is a reduction of the four previous BLIs). This has been a detriment as these programs have almost completely fallen by the wayside, unless over-planning occurs or fire savings are realized. Other smaller programs that typically implement fine-scale projects under NFRR face an uphill battle in competing with the large-scale projects that can produce acres. The Forest program managers will continually have to lobby for dollars to implement activities associated with finer-scale projects in watershed, wildlife, aquatics, and soils.

Another internal disadvantage on the Gila NF is that the 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 Forest's priority watersheds 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. However, it is important to note that in planning for FY2016, that core dollars are largely spent on non-WUI hazardous fuels activities. Wildlife accomplishments are primarily funded by means of partnership dollars and integrated acres. All soil and water resource improvement acres are planned as integrated acres.

**Tonto National Forest:** New partnerships for the Tonto were not developed with IRR funding in FY 2015. IRR funding was used to fund Pathways students for BMP monitoring, stream temperature sensor deployment, WRAP preparation, and road obliteration. Efficient use of IRR funding was also used via contracts.

Another disadvantage on other forests is that Partnerships typically do not respond to a funding authority, but rather to funding opportunities. Forests have indicated that local and state partners, who tend to be more resource specific focused are less concerned with the BLI the money comes from.

For example, in Grants & Agreements restoration work partners do not contribute a match based on a funding authority; they contribute a match based on funding they have available. Forests also indicate there has not been increased or decreased understanding externally, because partners do not fully understand the BLI. However, they feel they do see the forests taking a more focused approach to their work. This focus has in turn allowed communications with partners to be more effective.

In addition to this, it is also difficult to get folks to move from traditional concepts to working under the IRR concept. The new integrated program requires much more communication and coordination between what were formerly more independent programs. Organizational structure on some forests is still built on a fairly traditional model of functional program areas, so sharing a budget between several programs has brought some new challenges in terms of program prioritization and perceived equities or inequities. They strive to provide a balanced program of restoration work. They developed integrated funding requests to accomplish important work in each of our traditional program areas in an effort to avoid creating winners and losers. The IRR funding pilot has not been a topic of discussion with partners in some cases.

- f) **Describe any reasons that the FY15 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?**

The IRR report reflects most accomplishments in the region. Specific exceptions from individual forests are described below.

The Apache-Sitgreaves NF feel they are getting better at identifying integrated targets due to more informative instruction from the Regional Office. The difficulty lies with the IRR Report being restricted to only certain BLIs. For example, SRS2 and CMRD do not roll up into the IRR Report. Therefore, many partnership (internal or external) projects and their total accomplishments are not accurately reflected in the IRR Report due to all the funding sources utilized. Funding was delayed again in FY15 and fire borrowing impacted our ability to complete contract obligations, which did not allow the forest to fully implement projects.

Other forests agreed when they are managing fires for multiple objectives, they do not get any credit for watersheds sustained. A good example was the Camillo Fire on the Santa Fe NF that took place within an area that had signed NEPA that addressed managed fires and we were able to meet the low intensity level as analyzed in the NEPA. They met management objectives and reduced hazardous fuel accumulations that are the largest threat to sustaining watershed health in the Southwest.

They had some non WUI Rx burns planned but were unable to accomplish due to lack of Rx burn windows. The Kaibab NF agreed they were not able to claim beneficial resource acres improved that were accomplished by managed wildfires even though the forest did do the process of going through the WO to certify these acres. Much of the Tonto NF's Fuel hazard reduction work was also completed in WUI areas and these acres treated could not be included in IRR target accounting.

Issues have arisen in the IRR rollup when multiple districts are entering accomplishments into multiple databases. In particular, some range improvement work rolled up into the WTRSHD-RSTR-ANN that was not anticipated by program managers. With multiple programs using the same BLI, it is challenging to oversee what is being reported at the last minute. The forests have suggested the Regional Program managers develop a checklist (with examples) of what can and cannot be counted as rollup acres; that can be shared to all personnel with reporting responsibilities. Even in the fourth year of the IRR authority, rollup accounting can still be confusing to Forest and District program managers. The WIT reporting process may clarify this process. It continues to be a challenge with the IRR rollup calculator in that it is not transparent which projects are contributing to the rollup acres. A single reporting system is highly encouraged that provides traceability to all reported acres. The forest has found it more difficult to plan accomplishments in IRR because they are not as clear as they were under the former multiple BLIs. It has been unclear as to how activities would roll up into accomplishments.

Other issues were identified, such as WFSU dollars used for BAER implementation also resulted in watershed improvement on the Gila NF, and these acres do not contribute to the IRR rollup, but are counted as acres of water /soil resources improved. As well as the Biological Opinion from the USFWS, that took more time than anticipated to obtain, for the Southwest Jemez Mountains Landscape Restoration Project on the Santa Fe NF. Resulting in the NEPA decision to be put on hold and making it difficult for the Forest to meet assigned accomplishments.

#### **4. Addressing Challenges Associated with IRR Implementation**

##### **a) Were there any new or continuing issues or difficulties in tracking funds and reporting accomplishments?**

At the forest level, with many resource areas drawing from the same fund code it is difficult to know how to determine if another section has overspent their allocation. Budget tracking for IRR accurately could easily require a position unto itself. With experience, this may correct itself; however, it still seems insurmountable to accurately keep track of spending. Planned and accomplished target reporting is somewhat cumbersome with multiple databases of record that do not communicate. It takes a high level of communication between resource areas at the Forest and District levels and sharing of information to complete accomplishment reporting and tracking. The WIT Data base is the data base of record for Wildlife, Fish and Rare Plants (WFRP) and soil and watershed resource improvements. There are several other data bases where accomplishments are recorded for the roll- up (FACTS, Work plan, INFRA, and TIM). S&W Resource improvement is now reported in WIT, which has added significant time to reporting accomplishments this year. Forests felt there were many new activity classes and clarifications to activity classes so it was difficult to know which types of projects would count as accomplishments during development of Plan of Work. Reporting and tracking of accomplishments is not completely clear for business rules in soil and watershed. There is still a little bit of a learning curve about how to report, and get credit for accomplishments at the Forest level.

It was identified which accomplishment codes roll up into the calculator in FY2015, but it is still unclear how the IRR calculator determines which acres are the same. The Gila NF developed a tracking spreadsheet in FY2014 to try to eliminate some of the confusion related to reporting accomplishments. This has helped keep track of what to report where, but takes all program managers working together several times a year, with all of the databases open to make sure it is done correctly. Another difficulty the Forest expressed is that most of the Forest personnel are increasingly being funded out of NFRR. Regardless of careful tracking over the year, once fire season hits and costs savings run rampant across the Forest, it becomes more difficult to

see or know where the savings are. In FY2015, it became somewhat of a best-guess scenario as to how much money was left in NFRR by August and September 2015.

The Kaibab NF had fewer workplans with NFRR, which made the tracking easier for them. We tried monitor expenditures given the number projects and personnel funded with one BLI and the estimated accrual system used at the very end of the fiscal year (plus fire borrowing). They experienced difficulties reporting certain FY15 accomplishments (FACTS and WIT primarily) but they were eventually overcome through sheer persistence and tenacity. The Forest believes they are duplicating their effort in reporting accomplishments for projects in multiple databases of record. They feel this process is very cumbersome and an inefficient use of personnel time. They suggested a radio button be created for an activity code to be used in the various databases to receive credit for integrated resource restoration projects.

On the Prescott, it is a continuing challenge to track the combined expenditures for dozens of projects and employees funded out of one code. The program direction on what can and cannot roll-up into the integrated accomplishments seems to change from year to year. There appears to be disparity as to what constitutes an IRR accomplishment measure. The budget direction for some accomplishments allows for reporting completion when the contract to do the work is awarded, but the accomplishment to some resources cannot be reported until the work is actually done. For instance, road decommissioning projects are reported as completed when a contract is awarded for the work, but integrated accomplishments for terrestrial habitat improved and soil and water resources improved are not reported until the work is accomplished. This creates some tracking difficulty from one fiscal year to the next. The competitive funding process in Region 3 has also created obstacles for planning, tracking, managing, and implementing IRR projects.

In addition to the database to be cumbersome to master, these databases can be down during critical times or have annual changes requiring a time consuming learning period. One forest also indicated that working under continuing resolutions (CR's) has led to uncertainties and FMMI is not very consistent.

**b) What cultural shifts are happening and what further changes should be considered to bring units in more alignment with IRR concepts?**

There is a need for all levels of the region to embrace that restoration is more than thinning trees. The shift from functional area planning/implementation to collaborative planning/implementation is ongoing. There is a strong need to determine what the Forest Service vision for restoration is, what it means, and how we are going to get there. Without this, it's likely we'll continue to move in the same direction we always have (single project,

single resource focused, commodity focused, small scale, short term gains with limited long term value, etc.).

The IRR authority gives us the opportunity to begin focusing our work on landscape scale, multiple resource objective restoration (including production of commodities), with long term benefits. Unless leadership is able to truly implement this, communicate it to internal and external partners, and develop internal and external acceptance and understanding at local and national scales, there is little chance that the intent of the IRR authority will be fully achieved.

There is a sense of loss of independence as single program entities to a collaborative process of planning and treating priority watersheds. 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.

Traditional ways of running individual programs with current budget trends is not feasible, culturally we must come to terms with the fact we cannot do all the needed work, or provide the same level of service we once did. We must be able to explain this to our partners and somehow still develop mutually beneficial projects within the prioritized areas.

IRR has resulted in an emphasis on timber management activities, and/or vegetation management activities. This cultural shift of emphasizing large scale activities through integration of budgets will rely on program managers not overlooking the fine scale needs on the Forest.

As mentioned previously, it has been difficult to perform a mind shift across the region that moves away from district-by-district projects to a Forest project. There has been resistance to this concept in that personnel feel they are losing ownership in what the Forest is doing. The sentiment is that District priorities are becoming devalued, subsequently diminishing District input.

It also continues to be apparent that IRR authority and the Watershed Condition Framework do not fully align themselves with completing the same types of projects. These two concepts should be revisited and united somehow to achieve integration. Currently, the vegetation component of the Watershed Condition calculator comprises a mere 2% of the watershed condition calculation. NFRF would have to place more significance on acres that focus on improving the heavily weighted indicators of watershed condition before these two concepts can fully align. Again, all acres are not created equal.

The budget is integrated but the way some forests are organized is less so. Having separate program areas (e.g., fire and stewardship) each with their own set of interests and needs, there are some barriers to a truly integrated restoration effort on these units. They work together to share the funding and cooperate, but there is some occasional tension due to limited funding.

Some forests indicated there is greater awareness of watershed benefits from multiple resource activities and greater integration of project planning would improve alignment with IRR concepts. The cultural shift is the increased focus on integrated projects within defined priority watersheds leading to a definable improvement within that watershed. The integration of all program areas to provide projects that can serve to improve the priority watershed is a change for the better and has led to enhanced communication between program areas, but this could be accomplished under separate BLIs as long as the program direction for achieving targets remains based on priority watersheds.

Some forests also say that cultural shifts haven't occurred with the IRR concept in some cases. These forests have already been integrating and prioritizing focused program work for years. The diverse opinions from each forest on cultural shifts show that they vary throughout the region.

**c) How are units ensuring that priorities drive accomplishments while simultaneously meeting traditional outputs? Please give examples of successful programs.**

**The Carson NF** has identified and agreed on priority watersheds and landscapes. Data collection and NEPA planning are on-going to identify needed restoration actions while still providing traditional forest products. There has been flexibility in changing the order of planning and implementation of restoration projects and priority watersheds. In addition to the watershed scale planning and implementation, critical fine scale projects are an integral part of our annual program of work to ensure our public needs and expectations are met. Examples of traditional needs met in 2015 are: stream habitat enhanced for native fisheries, acequia infrastructure NEPA, community fuel wood and small products, and livestock grazing. These products and outputs are able to be met because they are allowed for in the critical fine scale aspects of our five year restoration plans. Traditional outputs were compromised due to Fire Transfer (stream habitat enhanced and Wild Horse removal). Lack of capacity has reduced ability to provide traditional Forest products.

**The Coconino NF** develops priorities for the year and the districts roll up their projects that meet these needs. This is pulled together in a large meeting at the Forest level and they fund the projects with their prospective accomplishments until the funding runs out. They ensured this by developing multi-funded workplans that had clear and concise descriptions of what was to be accomplished while providing multiple benefits to program areas. Their key is to develop

this in a fully integrated manner that ensures priorities are being done but in such a way that the work meets traditional output definitions.

**The Coronado NF**'s priorities contributed to accomplishments and traditional outputs; however, the focus was not on treating the most acres. The priority projects focused on treating the right acres (i.e., most susceptible to losing key ecosystem components). Forest priorities include projects such as Forest Plan Revision and Travel Management. Funding levels in NFRR severely curtailed the amount of traditional outputs the Forest was able to produce.

**The Gila NF** continued to place emphasis on those projects that would meet the overall IRR rollup target, while at the same time emphasizing long-term programs on the Forest such as noxious weed treatment, core acres of watershed improvement, fuelwood program, non-commercial forest products, and partnership opportunities to improve acres of terrestrial habitat improvement. Current priorities and accomplishments and meeting traditional outputs continue to remain similar as to before the IRR authority.

**The Kaibab NF** has an integrated program of work that is driven by a clearly communicated set of priorities set by forest leadership. The accomplishments reflect the priorities and also provide traditional outputs.

On **the Tonto NF**, vegetation improvement benefits watershed conditions and provides traditional timber targets. Road obliteration projects also provide these benefits.

**The Santa Fe NF** is more focused on meeting forest priorities and not as concerned with meeting accomplishments or targets.

**The Prescott NF**'s FLT prioritizes projects based on their occurrence in priority landscapes or watersheds.

## 5. 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. Has accomplishment of these activities been affected, either positively or negatively, by IRR? If so, how?**

Fuel hazard reduction treatments in WUI areas are outside of the current IRR performance measures but can be funded through NFRR. Accomplishment of this activity has been positively affected by IRR.

Road maintenance activities are not being included which have a major impact on improving the restoration of the watershed. IRR does not give the complete picture of these types of restoration work being completed on the Forest.

**In addition to the narrative, please list those activities and their FY 15 accomplishments. Below is a list of suggested activities. Add rows to the table below, as necessary, to accommodate all activities.**

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

Performance Measure	Unit of Measure	Total Units Accomplished
Miles of system trail improved to standard	<b>Miles</b>	<b>263</b>
Miles of system trail maintained to standard	<b>Miles</b>	<b>2,156</b>
Stream crossings constructed or reconstructed for aquatic organism passage	<b>Each</b>	<b>From PAS report</b>
Acres of lake habitat restored/enhanced (unified accomplishment)	<b>Acres</b>	<b>125.1</b>
Acres of water/soil resources protected/maintained/improved (unified accomplishment)	<b>Acres</b>	<b>7,835</b>
Acres of terrestrial habitat restored/enhanced (unified accomplishment)	<b>Acres</b>	<b>158,523</b>
Acres of forest vegetation improved (unified accomplishment)		<b>From PAS report</b>
Acres of forestland vegetation established (unified accomplishment)		<b>From PAS report</b>

**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.) Has accomplishment of these activities been affected, either positively or negatively, by IRR? If so, how?**

Forest-specific accomplishments are described below.

**The Apache-Sitgreaves** continued implementation and effectiveness monitoring of BMPs as well as monitoring of effects to fisheries habitat from salvage, restoration and grazing activities. Instream flows were measured towards acquiring Instream Flow water rights certification. BO and NEPA wildlife monitoring requirements for restoration and grazing activities were monitored as well. Data collection to support current year Range NEPA grazing decisions was accomplished. Out-year data collection is not well funded. A large effort to support reintroduction of grazing after the Wallow fire was partially funded through NFRR by way of ensuring deferment of fire damaged landscapes and pasture fences and tanks repaired. These activities at a base level were approved. Funding levels for some activities (such as grazing allotment data collection, water rights inventory maintenance, and most small project identification and NEPA) do not allow much to ensure these kinds of programs will be successful in future years.

In addition to those activities previously listed, **the Coronado NF** is also developing and working with partners, climate change scorecard and cooperation with LCC, input to various NEPA projects, on the ground surveys and NEPA to generate IRR outputs, water rights validation, review and input into other agency planning documents. Additionally, USFWS has added a number of new species under ESA, resulting in the need to reinitiate consultation on a large variety of ongoing activities. These new listings also bring along an inventory and monitoring workload.

Several of these types of activities occurred in FY2015 on **the Gila NF**. The Forest continues to move, track, and acquire water rights as the need arises. Several water rights applications were filed outside of the Gila – San Francisco basin for new stock tanks and water wells in FY2015. Water rights within the Gila – San Francisco basin remain a high priority due to recent State orders and decisions. Personnel continue to dedicate time and effort to track the effects of these orders while working with legal counsel to form strategies. Water quality efforts continue with Forest personnel coordinating with the New Mexico Environment Department on efforts to ensure compliance with State water quality standards, including those streams listed in non-attainment of state water quality standards, and with activities that occur near or adjacent to Outstanding National Resource Waters. Air quality monitoring remains a priority for the Forest as E-Samplers were used to collect smoke data during prescribed or managed fires in 2015. The Forest currently has 3 E-Samplers which are kept current with the Airsis, Inc. realtime monitoring telemetry and website. National BMP monitoring (7 sites) was conducted in August and September 2015 as required in the FY2015 Regional Office budget direction and the information collected was entered into the national database. Riparian assessments occurred on five allotments in the Escudilla East (Luna) planning area, and the South Fork Allotment (6 sites), in

FY2015, of which information will be contributed to range analysis and environmental assessments. Funding was allocated to several trail maintenance projects that included the , Redstone Trail (#206), Rain Creek Trail (#189), and Holt Mt/Apache Trail (#181). There was also road repair completed as a result of the Signal Peak Fire. However these activities are not accounted in any IRR rollup. Approximately \$70,000 of NFRR dollars were allocated towards post-fire fencing needs, including range fences for the Silver and Signal Peak Fires.

**The Kaibab NF** does a lot of activities that are not tracked currently by IRR performance measures including:

- Sycamore Air Quality monitoring station
- Water quality monitoring on all our major recreational reservoirs
- Pre-NEPA work on the Anita/Cameron Allotment
- Implementation of Best Management Practices on eight different projects (range, chemical use, (2) mining, (2) prescribed burning, roads, and timber. These BMP's were added to R3 BMP Monitoring database).
- Threatened & Endangered species occurrences included Mexican Spotted Owl, Fickeisen cactus surveys, Arizona Bugbane surveys, Kaibab bladderpod surveys, Disturbed Rabbitbush, Paradine plains cactus, and rare plants surveys in the North Kaibab Ranger District's meadows.
- Dust samplings and associated weather data at the Canyon Mine site to evaluate potential off-site effects to natural resources per the Uranium Mine decision.

A water rights inventory being conducted on the **Tonto NF** has been negatively impacted by not being included in an IRR performance measure. Water rights work in general has been negatively impacted because it has become lower priority work. Implementation of Best Management Practices has improved because we have been able to fund Pathways students to implement some of the practices.

In addition to the examples, **on the Santa Fe NF**, stand exam work and reconnaissance work do not get tracked which are time consuming and is a necessity to having a thriving program that can achieve accomplishments. Also, BMP monitoring for which the forest accomplished 6 BMP monitoring activities does not get accounted for within the IRR authority.

## 6. Feedback from Partners

**What, if any feedback did you receive from partners?**

Stakeholders are concerned with tangible, quantifiable outputs focused upon acres treated, ecological resilience or forest product deliverables. If they perceive IRR as a way to reduce overhead and increase funding to the ground they are in favor, but generally they are not as much concerned with the budget process as the actual work being accomplished.

Observations from partners include that IRR principles and philosophies align well with objectives of watershed restoration that grants and funding programs aspire to fund. Partners continue to ask for comprehensive listing of cleared restoration projects to consider for funding in 2015 and beyond. RO and WO levels of the agency are now involved in partnerships for investments of hundreds of thousands of dollars for planning and implementation. Some Partnerships may struggle to continue as funding streams for grant monies and other funding sources become increasingly more competitive.

Some partners do not fully understand the BLI and Agency budget process however; they do see the region taking a more focused approach to our work. This focus has in turn allowed communications with partners to be more effective.

Bat Conservation International (BCI) supports the watershed condition framework approach, but hasn't commented on IRR funding model. Local representatives of The Nature Conservancy, Sky Island Alliance and the University of Arizona support IRR in concept, but are frustrated with funding levels for the Coronado. They perceive a bias in funding in favor of timber programs and large landscape scale restoration projects elsewhere in the region.

Some feedback has occurred from fisheries partners indicating some uncertainty and/or distrust of how the IRR authority will improve or benefit aquatic species and their habitat. These partners representing some of the smaller programs and fine-scale work that the Forest does have yet to be convinced that the IRR authority will not overlook smaller resource areas that cannot provide large scale treatment acres for upward reporting. Some partners have expressed concern with ability to actually determine what is actually being accomplished and how accomplishments are counted. Watershed partners were largely uninformed and surprised by the change in funding. Their comment has been that the Forest Service seems to change its method of doing business every three years and it is difficult and frustrating for them to keep their priorities aligned with ours.

### **C. Lessons Learned**

***Narrative: Each pilot region is expected to draw on experiences to date to describe lessons learned since beginning the IRR Pilot Program in 2012. Please provide narrative responses to the following questions and include specific examples:***

- 1. Describe how IRR has affected project planning. Include information on internal and external collaboration and public engagement. Did the activities have greater impact on resource outcomes?**

Forest-specific accomplishments are described below.

**The Carson NF** has been involved in project planning at the landscape level in 2015 working with both internal and external collaborators such as CFRP (planning Rio Tusas/San Antonio) and planning Taos Valley Watershed Coalition. It appears that watershed health is becoming a consideration in many types of project planning. There are increasing amounts of watershed improvement and restoration considerations integrated into project planning such as trail heads erosion control, stream crossings, and road decommissioning. Partners such as New Mexico Game and Fish have collaborated with the Carson NF to fund planning and the implementation of vegetation management projects with the desired outcome of enhanced wildlife habitat.

On **the Cibola NF** the Isleta Collaborative Landscape Restoration Project was initiated prior to IRR authority however; the integrated concept was a key goal of the project. By applying the concept, there was an increase in efficiencies and effectiveness. The development of IRR helped the Cibola NF 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, Rio Grande Water Funds (a program sponsored by the Nature Conservancy) and Resource Conservation Partnership Projects a new program administered by NRCS to be invested into the project area. For external collaboration- The Isleta Project received second year funding as one of 13 original Joint Chief's Initiative. The Chilili Land Grant is also a partner in the project but due to EQIP regulations were unable to receive any of the Joint Chief's funding. To resolve that issue and meet objectives of the cross-jurisdictional restoration project The Nature Conservancy and the Edgewood Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation Districts awarded \$27,000 to Chilili to conduct treatments and the Cibola funded \$64,000 for treatment on Chilili via an agreement under the Wyden Amendment Authority.

The trend on **the Coronado** even before consolidation of BLIs was for a more collaborative style reaching out to stakeholders and partners. This has not changed since NFRR was put in place.

On **the Gila NF** selection of current planning areas for future work is now based on whether the area has the potential to meet the larger landscape objectives. The project has to have sufficient treatable acres of vegetation or there is no incentive to move it forward. Areas are also considered more favorable if our partners have mutual interests and objectives in the area. It is clear that without partnership dollars the fine scale/smaller wildlife and/or watershed projects would not be accomplished. The switch to one job code has made the accounting simpler; however reporting out accomplishments remains confusing as there are several reporting mechanisms to report for different resource areas. External collaborators that have provided funding for large acreage projects are pleased when Forest dollars are spent on the same project. Other collaborators are struggling with the swinging pendulum of planning and funding. Resource outcomes on larger scale projects remain the same for the most part as the Gila NF generally pooled dollars prior to NFRR to achieve multiple objectives. Fine scale resource outcomes have lessened due to lack of emphasis.

One of the priority landscapes on **the Kaibab NF** continued to be Bill Williams Mountain in FY15. This peak is adjacent to the city of Williams, AZ and is entirely on the 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 pack, 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 consequences would be catastrophic. In addition to a severe impact to values already mentioned the threat of post-fire mudslides and debris torrents damaging the town and 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); which was signed in February 2014. The KNF is working on an FEIS to reduce fuels and restore forest conditions in response to these threats, with the decision expected in 2015. The proposed action will reduce fuels, protect wildlife habitat, protect soil and watershed, improve forest health, and provide forest products. The project may lead to an improved watershed condition within the context of the Watershed Condition Framework. With IRR, the KNF avoided the traditional debates over what the appropriate shares of mainhead (NFNF) (i.e., 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 the wildland urban interface (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. There are no other sources of funding at the current time for this project. Once planning is completed the Forest will pursue further partnerships and grant funding for implementation. The preferred alternative for this project includes reducing crown bulk density via conventional ground based harvest methods and helicopter yarding on steep slopes, so there will be a need to find supplemental funding to accomplish this expensive work. It is expected that the IRR advantages described above will continue through project implementation, and perhaps be even more advantageous.

**On the Prescott NF**, planning for future landscape scale projects will require more internal collaboration with other resource areas earlier in the process with a focus on watershed restoration. For instance, a project that may in the past have been focused solely on vegetation treatments to improve watersheds may now integrate improved parking for a recreation area to reduce sedimentation. External partners may be identified that are more location-focused within priority watersheds.

Internally, programs now look for ways to integrate projects and priorities. Unfortunately, this has not had a greater impact on resource outcomes. Externally, the IRR authority has made it easier to find matching funds so this is where forests have been most positively impacted.

**2. How has the way activities/projects were selected for funding changed since the IRR pilot was established?**

Forest-specific accomplishments are described below.

**The Carson NF** has developed a tiered system to evaluate projects for program of work development and prioritization.

**The Cibola** evaluates projects based on the following criteria:

- Values at risk and how are they protected
- Degree of collaboration and local support for the restoration
- Economics of the project, including job creation/maintenance and support for local infrastructure
- What's the strategic nature of the project (how does it fit in the Forest's or Region's larger context)
- How does the project fit into the Forest's vision for restoration
- Is the project ready to go
- What is the status of the District's current "pipeline" of projects ready to go? What are the pipeline needs? Is the District out ahead? How does the project contribute to filling the pipeline?

**The Coronado NF** has been integrating watershed, vegetation, timber, fuels and wildlife treatments for several years now, the on-the-ground work priorities were formulated in a similar way as past several years.

**The Gila NF** has now gone almost completely to selecting projects that can roll up into the overall Watershed Restoration target in NFRR. This includes developing a 5-year plan that pre-calculates which projects can roll up into the most acres. Smaller projects that cannot be counted towards multiple targets are less likely of becoming a forest priority, or being funded unless partnership dollars are available.

On **the Tonto NF**, IRR has created a greater emphasis for fuels projects as multiple accomplishments can be reported from one project.

Previously program managers on **the Santa Fe NF** had a larger role in selecting what projects get funded. The IRR authority has shifted that decision-making to the Forest Leadership Team.

**3. Has the use of consolidated BLIs under IRR enabled projects to be completed more efficiently or effectively to meet the desired resource goal(s)? If so, how?**

The answer to this question varied by forests. The consolidation of the BLIs has primarily changed which projects are getting funded. The larger, landscape scale projects have raised to the top and the smaller fine-scale projects are less of a priority. Projects were completed efficiently and effectively by reducing the “shot gun” approach. Prior to IRR, it was difficult to corral each program into taking a unified approach to treating watersheds or landscapes. The result was many small projects scattered across the forest.

On a Regional level, tier 3 funding competition, an innovation for funding of NFRR/WFHF restoration work, ensures that projects with Regional scope and significance are funded. One forest suggested the Regional office emphasize projects with an invasive weed treatment component and bring about Regional accomplishments where there had been minimal forest accomplishment in recent years.

One forest expressed that IRR enabled projects to be completed more efficiently or effectively, only that IRR allowed the Forest to fund projects that would have otherwise gone unfunded without this authority. One other forest indicated there was no increase in efficiency or effectiveness.

**4. Based on your experience, how could use of IRR authority be improved?**

There needs to be some good examples developed or shared of ways to plan, track and control spending within the big CFLRP bucket. On non-CFLRP forests, funding is extremely limited to the point that critical resource specialists’ positions are not filled.

There should be more integration of the range management program and fuels program into the IRR program. Work with Range Staff Areas to better understand integration and benefit. The best way to improve it is to make sure the authority continues.

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.

It takes time for an initiative to take hold. This is the right direction, give it time.

IRR should fully fund the organization charged with planning and carrying out implementation.

The authority still needs to come into alignment with the Watershed Condition Framework for it to have meaningful impact to watershed conditions. Heavier weight should be given to acres that provide direct and immediate benefits to aquatic habitats, water quality, riparian resources, soil resources, etc.

The Forests will also have to have some target incentive to allocate dollars to the fine-scale work needed in improving watersheds and habitats. For example, water rights work is only funded when there is a crisis looming on the horizon. Inventory should be allocated as a yearly target so that forests are not caught sleeping when the crisis occurs.

Improve (simplify) database reporting. Provide more transparent tracking in and out of the Regional Office.

**5. Illustrate the pros/cons of the IRR pilot from different team member perspectives. Are perceptions different for Regional Office program managers, staff officers on the forests, or technical staff on the districts?**

From a Forest-level NFRR perspective, some of the pros include a potential to increase 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.

Perceptions at the forest and district level are that, as long as base level funding is adequate, the IRR pilot has supported integrated project planning.

The pros from a team member perspective include being able to work seamlessly across program areas without having to negotiate how many dollars are going to come from different program areas. They are all the same (NFRR). This makes funding simpler. The cons from a team member perspective include not feeling that as much value is placed on resource areas and activities that do not have the ability to produce acres. There has also been little to no direction on balancing projects for communities (i.e. timber sales) versus projects for watershed improvement (i.e. fire rehabilitation).

Staff officer input indicates that the initiative is there to help out the roads program on the Forest, but the limiting factors include overall NFRR funding and the delay of implementing the Forest's TMR decision until calendar year 2016.

As stated earlier in the document, some think Watershed, Range, and Wildlife get less benefit than other program areas such as Timber and Hazardous Fuels. There is a loss of individuality in program areas and a sense that certain program areas are not getting their due achievement.

One forest indicated IRR to be complicated and difficult; great in theory but difficult in application.

**6. What are the greatest benefits you have seen associated with IRR authority?**

Forests across Region 3 reported the following benefits:

- The better integration of personnel for a common restoration objective to improve National Forest lands at the priority watershed/landscape level with the added benefit of critical fine scale projects.
- Having one BLI to track funding and accomplishments is another benefit.
- Partners and potential partners see that there are minimal boundaries between programs and are more likely to want to work with us.
- The increased focus on integrated projects, reducing “Shot Gun” approach to projects, targeting areas that give the biggest bang for the buck and allow for better communication/description of our projects to allow for partnering and leveraging of funds
- Cooperation among resource areas has been occurring on the Coronado NF for a number of years. The IRR authority reaffirms our approach.
- The greatest benefit is that Forests have been able to survive the budget reductions over the last several years. Additionally, it has helped move the forest towards a landscape planning area that benefits more of the resources that are covered under IRR.
- Some projects like the cleanup of 3 cannabis plantations may have never been funded without the use of the IRR Authority.
- implement since there are so many different resources competing for the same pot of funds. Critical fine scale projects are not appropriately recognized for the benefits they contribute.
- People’s inherent dislike for change has also been a challenge with IRR.
- Reduced program area autonomy.
- Funding levels, target tracking and year end reporting
- Forests report IRR could be improved through more transparency in how funds pass through the Regional Office and improved communication between forests and the Regional Office on annual target expectations.

**7. What have been the biggest challenges in implementing IRR?**

- The challenge centers on the FLT identifying forest priorities. To date the highest FLT priorities are those tied to vegetation improvement projects that in part help to sustain the local forest products industries. While this may appear to be a win-win approach without additional program funding to support IRR, watershed, wildlife and fisheries will continue to be relegated to integrated targets. With limited funding overall, vegetation projects with elevated acres become the priority to meet the overall WTRSHD-RSTR-ANN target. The key point is that individual resource objectives need not be mutually exclusive or independently funded to achieve ecological or economic benefits. Working together at the table to develop more effective business models for implementation reduces administrative costs, promotes ownership and a willingness to find solutions.

- Another challenge is competing for internal funding with other forests in the region that have higher priority landscapes/CFLRP funding. It requires considerably more coordination to implement since there are so many different resources competing for the same pot of funds. Critical fine scale projects are not appropriately recognized for the benefits they contribute.
- People’s inherent dislike for change.
- Reduced program area autonomy.
- Funding levels, target tracking and year end reporting
- Non-transparent tracking of funds through the Regional Office. Poor communication from RO and forests regarding annual target expectations.

**8. What guidance would you offer non-IRR regions in moving toward integrated resource restoration with or without IRR?**

- The need to embrace well-aligned partnerships in order to accomplish the needed magnitude of watershed restoration that needs to be done.
- Everyone has a stake in the end point and outcome; have deliberate conversations at all levels of the organization about what it means and how everyone can all contribute.
- Spend more time and energy making it work than fighting the change or complaining about it.
- Don’t be resistant; see the positives in increased efficiencies, landscape treatments and unification.
- Encourage interdisciplinary planning and funding focused on restoration. Tie projects together that are on the same landscape.
- Regions will have to rally up more partnership dollars to accomplish smaller scale watershed/water quality/riparian work and wildlife projects. Partnerships dollars are becoming the primary source of funding for the smaller scale resource projects. In addition, roads and trails program managers will need to be persistent in requesting a share of IRR related funding so as to not be lost.
- Communicate early with proposed IRR integrated BLIs and programs
- Get ready for an increased workload as you adjust to the integrated approach. You may want to task a single program analyst to manage this budget and reporting requirements.
- Forests should have a list of priority unfunded projects developed that can be funded during the year as other projects falter or use less funding than anticipated.

**D. Planning Future Accomplishments**

**FY16 Accomplishments and Future NFRR Program Emphasis**

**1. FY16 Planned Accomplishments**

**Table 3 –FY16 IRR Planned Performance**

Performance Measure	Unit of measure	Total Units Planned
Total acres treated annually to sustain or restore watershed function and resilience	Acres	340,000
Number of watersheds move to an improved condition class	Number	1
Miles of road decommissioned	Miles	264
Volume of timber sold	ccf	323,000
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced	Miles	92

**2. Based on FY15 Experiences, how would you anticipate IRR affecting FY16 planning and accomplishments?**

- To meet restoration goals set forth under IRR, in FY16, the forests are expected to “ramp up” outputs in forest land vegetation treatments, which in part help to support the demand for wood products and provide protection from uncharacteristic fire. This in effect allows for much less “traditional” work to be accomplished as the primary focus is on the restoration projects associated with IRR and large landscape projects. Increases in NEPA for restoration projects outside these areas are expected. Project prioritization will continue based upon forest, regional and national goals. Limited funding requires local units to consider return on investment more closely and balance the tradeoffs of some work being delayed. This scenario will not change under any budget strategy; IRR however does provide a mechanism to promote an environment of resource accountability and cooperation.
- FY 2016 budget planning is currently underway. Declining budgets have made planning and accomplishments a challenge. Due to the large number of resources funded with NFRR, forests anticipate having difficulty tracking people’s time and actual accomplishments based on FY15 experience.

- Continue unified and integrated approach to FY 2016 planning of target accomplishments versus specific resource project planning. The 5-Year Plan has become a tool that has helped develop efficiencies for this task. This method provides focus as to how the Forest initiates planning projects and implements landscape restoration projects into the future.
- One forest anticipates fewer acres being treated that qualify as IRR target accomplishments.
- Establish and schedule quarterly meetings to track progress and performance of IRR projects throughout the year. The IRR process itself requires more regular coordination between program areas, and it requires close budget oversight by the Forest Natural Resources Staff to ensure expenditures are adequately tracked. The funding levels received in NFRR have more influence on the program of work than the integrated budgeting process.