

WORKING TOGETHER USING THE 'ALL-LANDS APPROACH'

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SOUTHERN REGION OF THE FS

- ❖ Spans 13 States, 20 eco-regions, and 9 major river basins.
- ❖ Rainfall averages 30 to 90 inches per year
- ❖ Runoff averages from 2 – 50 inches across a diverse geologic foundation.
- ❖ Creates a hydrologic landscape that ranges from flashy headwater streams to coastal plain meanders which supports unique features such as karsts, wetland, and rainforest.
- ❖ This leads to a diverse set of physical, biological and social aspects for our managers to consider when addressing water resources.

❖ Our watersheds:

- Feed municipal supply
- Recharges aquifers
- Supports the habitat critical to more endemic species than any other region.

❖ Historical agricultural economy

❖ Growing industrial water uses, and weather variability are all factors

❖ Complex mission of providing and maintaining an adequate supply of high-quality water resources to support the public needs.

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- ❖ Population growth in some areas of the Region exceed 100% over a ten year period
 - ❖ Large southern population centers expanding and coastal communities intensely developing,
 - ❖ Conventional water sources such as reservoirs and groundwater supplies have proven to be a unsustainable to support this growth.

USDA- ALL LANDS APPROACH

- ❖ Forest Service-member of the National Cooperative Soil Survey 60+ years.
- ❖ Most soil surveys in the east have completed the once-over soil survey phase.
- ❖ “All Lands Approach” for improving Watershed Condition on a landscape scale.

NCSS THEME

“Soil Survey-interpreting and inventory in a DigitalWorld”.

- ❖ Embrace the development of new tools that provide clarity in the display of information.
- ❖ Enhance our long-lasting partnership to ensure the application is relevant to address today’s issues and concerns.

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- ❖ We look forward to working with you in the exploration of partnership opportunities and other instruments common to achieving our missions.
 - ❖ A range of partnerships opportunities are available and worth pursuing in order to accomplish our common goals.
 - ❖ Examples may include:

USDA-NRCS TYPES OF PARTNERSHIPS

- ❖ Local communities
- ❖ State and federal agencies
- ❖ NRCS Earth Team volunteers
- ❖ Agricultural and environmental groups
- ❖ Conservation Districts Employees
- ❖ Sportsman Groups

USDA-NRCS TYPE OF PARTNERSHIPS....

- ❖ Professional societies
- ❖ Resource Conservation and Development Councils
- ❖ Universities
- ❖ Conservation organizations
- ❖ Agribusiness
- ❖ Conservation Districts

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Conservation Districts are local units of government responsible for the soil and water conservation work within their boundaries. The districts' role is to increase voluntary conservation practices among farmers, ranchers and other land users.

JOINT FORESTRY TEAM

- ❖ Chartered in November, 2007, by NRCS, the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), and the USDA Forest Service (FS)
- ❖ Interagency delivery of forestry and conservation assistance for working forests, farms, and ranches.
- ❖ MOU signed in September, 2008 by the Chiefs of NRCS and FS and the Presidents of NASF and NACD
- ❖ Describes each organization's role and responsibilities to improve the delivery of forestry-related conservation assistance to private landowners.



CONSERVATION EFFECTS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

- ❖ CEAP is a multi-agency effort to quantify the environmental effects of conservation practices and programs
- ❖ Develop the science base for managing the agricultural landscape for environmental quality.
- ❖ Project findings will be used to guide USDA conservation policy and program development and help conservationists, farmers and ranchers make more informed conservation decisions.

OPPORTUNITIES

The CEAP Assessment and Watershed Condition Classification are closely related programs that provide an opportunity for NRCS and the Forest Service to partner on various levels.

FOREST SERVICE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- ❖ National Watershed Condition Classification
- ❖ New Planning Rule

WATERSHED CONDITION CLASSIFICATION

Watershed Restoration is not new to FS

- ❖ Organic Act “secure favorable conditions of flow”
- ❖ Watershed Condition assessments
- ❖ Watershed condition improvement performance measures

VISION FOR THE FOREST SERVICE



USDA will use the restoration of watershed and forest health as a core management objective of the National Forests and Grasslands.

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack

USDA Strategic Plan for FY 2010 – 2015

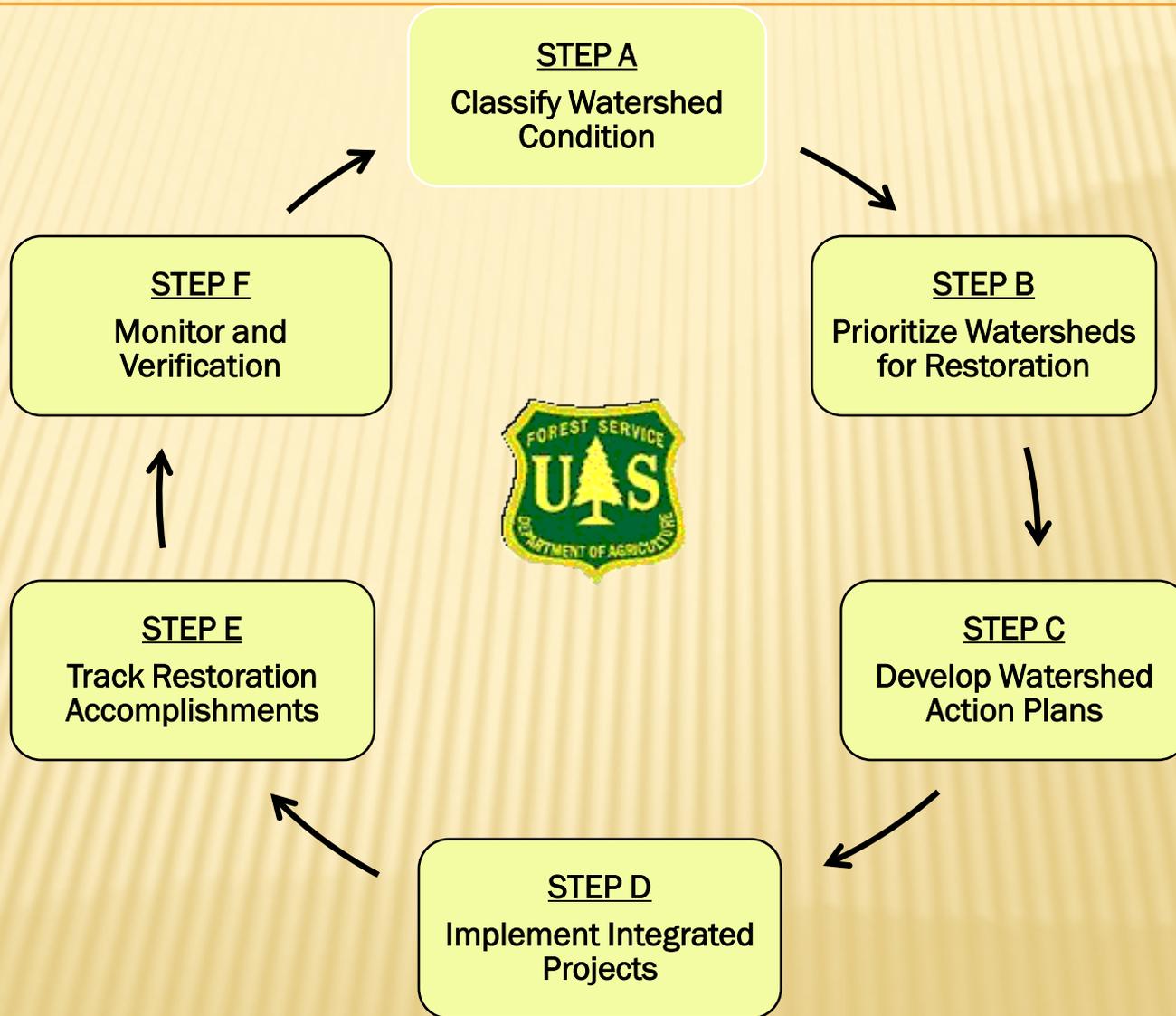
CHALLENGES

- ❖ Comprehensive approach for strategically implementing integrated restoration on watersheds on National Forests and Grasslands
- ❖ Outcome-based performance measure for documenting improvement to watershed condition at Forest, Regional, and National scales

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Establish a systematic process for determining Watershed Condition Class
- ❖ Improve Forest Service reporting and tracking of watershed condition
- ❖ Strengthen the effectiveness of Forest Service watershed restoration
- ❖ Enable a priority-based approach for the allocation of resources for restoration
- ❖ Enhance coordination with external agencies and partners

Watershed Condition Framework



DEFINITION OF STEPS

STEP A: Classify the condition of all of the Forest's 6th code watersheds using existing data layers, local knowledge, and professional judgment.

STEP B: Prioritize watersheds for restoration based on ecological, economic, social considerations, partnership opportunities, and potential benefits.

STEP C: Develop Watershed Action Plans for the priority watersheds that identify the suite of essential project needed to change condition class and estimate their costs

STEP D: Implement Watershed Action Plans. A watershed is considered to have moved to an improved condition class when all of the essential projects indentified in Step C are completed.

STEP E: Project costs and watershed condition class will be tracked for both annual reporting and 5-year evaluations using the Agency financial management and Work Plan software programs.

STEP F: Monitor the effectiveness of treatment and assess if condition class was actually improved

WATERSHED CONDITION FRAMEWORK

- ❖ Interdisciplinary effort (2006)
- ❖ Four pilot tests & numerous revisions
- ❖ October 20, 2010 memo from Chief of the Forest Service kicked off the program
- ❖ Step A- watershed assessments COMPLETED on all National Forests by March 30, 2011!

NEW PLANNING RULE

- ❖ On February 10, 2011, new Forest Planning Rule released for public comment
- ❖ Establishes a new national framework to develop land management plans that protect water and wildlife and promote vibrant communities

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE RULE

An all-lands approach to assessment would feature collaboration engaging the public early and often

to build a common understanding of the roles, values and contributions of NFS lands within the broader landscape.

This phase would include evaluation of existing assessments to understand the condition and trends of natural resources

across the region, social/economic indicators in the relevant landscapes,

and the management intentions of neighboring landowners.

EXAMPLES OF EXISTING ASSESSMENTS

- ❖ State forest resource assessments
- ❖ State wildlife assessments
- ❖ Regional scientific assessments
- ❖ Regional types and availability of recreational access
- ❖ State and local government plans
- ❖ Tribal management plans

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- ❖ The proposed rule is the result of an open, collaborative rulemaking process that began in December 2009.
 - ❖ This proposed planning rule seeks to conserve our forests for the benefit of water, wildlife, recreation and the economic vitality of our rural communities

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- ❖ The proposed rule will provide the tools to the Forest Service to make our forests more resilient to many threats, including pests, catastrophic fire and climate change.
 - ❖ Healthy forests and economically strong rural communities form a solid foundation as we work to win the future for the next generation.

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- ❖ Outcome of an open and transparent development process
 - ❖ Forest Service has gone to extraordinary lengths, reaching well beyond normal practices, to help the public understand and comment including:

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- ❖ Hosting 29 national and regional public forums to provide stakeholders with information about the proposed rule and respond to questions.
 - ❖ Providing a 90-day comment period, which is 45 days more than the review and comment period required by National Environmental Policy Act regulations for draft environmental impact statements.
 - ❖ Providing multiple options for members of the public to submit comments including two websites, by hard copy mail, and by facsimile and,
 - ❖ Ensuring that our planning rule website contains background information on the proposed rule as well as summaries of the various collaboration and public involvement activities held during the preparation of the proposed rule.

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- ✘ The Forest Service appreciates your participation throughout the rule development process as well as all of the comments received thus far. Comments can be viewed at:
 - ✘ <http://contentanalysisgroup.com/fsrd/>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ❖ Where do our individual agency priorities overlap?
- ❖ What are the major components of a successful collaboration?
- ❖ What does each organization bring to the table?
- ❖ What outcome(s) can we achieve together that we cannot achieve individually?
- ❖ What efforts have been completed to identify priority landscapes?
- ❖ What priority landscapes have been identified?
- ❖ Are there any priority landscapes?
- ❖ What priority landscapes have been identified?

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KEY CONTACTS
