

THE YEAR
IN REVIEW:
2005



USDA FOREST SERVICE
EASTERN REGION

FROM THE REGIONAL FORESTER



Randy Moore
Regional Forester

For the Eastern Region, 2005 was another year filled with challenges and rewarding accomplishments as we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Forest Service. Along with partners and retirees, we honored the contributions of previous generations of agency employees.

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, we sent employees to work on incident management teams, logistics and planning teams, and emergency response crews across the Gulf Coast.

We were pleased to assist at the NAACP national convention in July and at the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce national convention in September. These

events are in keeping with our dedication to expanding employment opportunities and strengthening diversity within our organization.

We developed a new Vision for the Eastern Region called "Courageous Conservation," a legacy of restoration and a sustainable future. This Vision will guide us to be more successful over the next fifteen years by providing direction to our natural resource management and business operations. Next year, we will report on our progress toward the new Vision.

A century ago, President Theodore Roosevelt wrote about the value of America's great outdoors and the need to conserve our natural resources for future

generations. Today, public lands in the East are thriving thanks to sensible management and a strong commitment from the public. These lands clean our air and water, sustain plant and animal life, and provide a variety of goods and recreation opportunities. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Randy Moore
USDA Forest Service
Eastern Region
626 E. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53202
414/297-3600

For recreation information,
call America's Outdoors at:
414/297-3693

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NATIONAL FORESTS OF THE EASTERN REGION · R-9



PROTECT THE NATURAL RESOURCES ENTRUSTED TO US.

THE FOREST SERVICE

commemorated 100 years of conservation and restoration of forest and prairie lands in 2005. We are entrusted to protect the health of twelve million acres of public lands in the East. During this Centennial year, we accomplished significant work on projects ranging from increasing passage for aquatic organisms to reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

The American public has contributed many valuable ideas to project planning and the forest plan revision process. Together, we are working toward a shared vision for protecting our public lands now and into the future.

Among our notable achievements in 2005 were:

- Continued work with partners and state agencies on the prevention, early detection, and control of the Emerald Ash Borer, a non-native pest that kills ash trees;
- Ongoing progress tracking the Canada lynx—a threatened and endangered species—through radiotelemetry and DNA analysis; and
- Completed forest plan revisions on the Mark Twain and White Mountain National Forests.

EMERALD ASH BORER

Numerous native and non-native insects threaten the health of our nation's forests. The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is one of the most deadly non-native species in recent memory. In 2005, the Region continued efforts to prevent, contain, and control the spread of this pest.



A tree-killing insect from Asia, the EAB was first discovered in the Detroit metropolitan area in July 2002. Fatal to all ash trees, the EAB has since been found in northwestern Ohio and northeastern Indiana. In the Lower Peninsula of Michigan EAB has already killed approximately 15 million ash trees.

All branches of the Forest Service, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and state departments of agriculture and natural resources throughout the northeastern U.S. are working together to prevent the further spread of this invasive insect, which corresponds with the goal of "Protect Ecosystems Across Boundaries" in our new Vision.

FIRES, FUELS, AND HEALTHY FORESTS



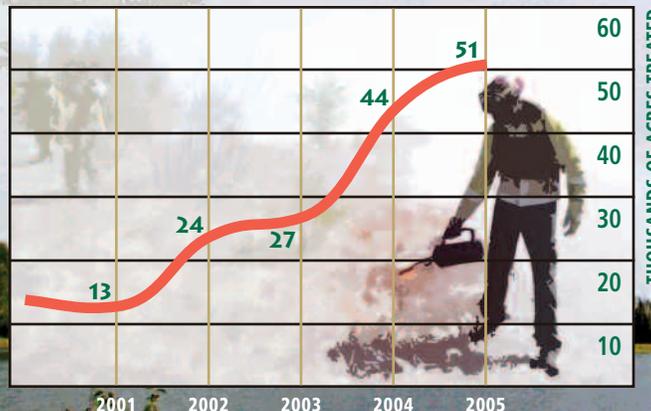
The Eastern Region's hazardous fuels reduction program has increased each of the last six years. The 51,472 acres treated in 2005—when combined with an additional 45,000 acres of restoration projects—met a variety of natural resource objectives while reducing risks to people, homes, and forested lands created by catastrophic wildfires.

The bulk of our hazardous fuels reduction work was concentrated near communities traditionally at risk from wildfires. In particular, the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin assisted many communities in developing community wildfire protection plans. Hazardous fuels reduction was also achieved through other vegetation treatments, such as salvage harvests.

The Healthy Forests Initiative has given the Forest Service valuable tools to help alleviate obstacles that might otherwise hinder our hazardous fuels reduction priorities.

Our work with hazardous fuels treatments meets the goals of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act and the Eastern Region's five-year strategy for fire-adapted ecosystems.

HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION



THOUSANDS OF ACRES TREATED



HEALTHY FLOWING WATERWAYS

Places where roads cross wetlands or waterways often prevent animals—such as turtles, mussels, salamanders, and other aquatic species— from moving up- or downstream. We are conducting inventories and assessments to determine where to remove physical barriers that limit the movement of aquatic animals.

In 2005, inventory and assessment training was completed across the Region. Additional training on how to modify road-aquatic system crossings was completed on two-thirds of the forests, with the remaining forests due for training in 2006. With the help of partners, other federal and state agencies, and tribal representatives, we have inventoried hundreds of road-aquatic crossings and installed new or improved culverts and bridges at numerous locations. These projects increase the survival of aquatic species, enhance water quality, and provide safer road systems.



FOREST PLANNING

A continuing priority in the East is to revise the land and resource management plans for our forests. With substantial participation from the public, we are nearing completion of these revised forest plans and meeting a goal in our new Vision, "Connect Citizens to the Land."

This year we completed final revised plans for the White Mountain and Mark Twain National Forests. In addition, we published draft environmental statements and proposed forest plans for nine national forests, and are now incorporating public comments in preparation for final decisions. These nine forests are working to complete plan revisions in 2006.



BURNED AREA EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Wildfires can present many challenges and threats to the land long after the flames are extinguished. The goal of the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) program is to rapidly stabilize the soil and protect remaining vegetation following larger fires (more than 300 acres) before damaging precipitation or runoff events occur.

In 2005, two BAER projects were approved in the Eastern Region: one in southern Ohio on the Wayne National Forest (Binion Fire) and one in northeastern Minnesota on the Superior National Forest (Alpine Fire). Following the fires, native vegetation of the burned areas was threatened by aggressive, non-native invasive species including multiflora rose, Tartarian and Japanese honeysuckle, Asiatic stilt grass, garlic mustard, and yellow hawkweed. Invasive species can quickly colonize burned areas due to increased sunlight and removal of native vegetation following fires.



After the removal of non-native invasive plant species following the Binion Fire on the Wayne National Forest.

RESTORE THE LAND TO PRESERVE OUR NATURAL HERITAGE.

THROUGHOUT 2005

we used management tools such as timber harvests and prescribed fire to restore healthy ecosystems. We tackled important projects that improved watersheds, rebuilt trails, and revitalized our public lands to ensure their viability for future generations. A number of Centennial projects in the East were funded through valuable support from partners who share our commitment to restoration. Forests are among the most tranquil places in our country, where clean air and water originate, and visitors come to relax and enjoy recreation opportunities.

The restoration of native habitat continues at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie outside Chicago, where a mosaic of different habitat types—including woodlands—is taking shape. In southern Illinois on the Shawnee National Forest, several key watershed projects were completed, and—thanks to a group of college volunteers—the White Pine Trail was rerouted and revamped to provide greater accessibility to visitors.

In keeping with another goal of our new Vision—“Walk the Talk for Sustainability”—we ensured that our new major buildings incorporated the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design standards established by the U.S. Green Building Council. These buildings are being constructed with biomass energy systems that are environment-friendly and powered by forest debris, helping reduce the accumulation of potentially hazardous fuels in the forest.



WALLEYE PIKE SPAWNING RIFFLE

Last year, the Chippewa National Forest—along with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and local partners—constructed two stone walleye pike spawning riffles in the Dunbar River. The objective was to improve walleye reproduction in the river, and meet a long-term partnership goal aimed at increasing the fish species’ reproductive success in the Round Lake watershed.

The spawning riffles are approximately 25 feet wide by 40 feet long, forming a rocky convex mound that gradually slopes downstream. Fish eggs deposited on the riffle have an increased chance of survival when water flow keeps the rocky surface clear of sediment. Post-project monitoring documents higher numbers of spawning walleye in the Dunbar River.



THREATENED, ENDANGERED AND SENSITIVE SPECIES: WHAT WE'RE DOING TO HELP

THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES	FOREST SERVICE ACTIVITIES
INDIANA BAT	Forest Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service are collaborating on a revised recovery plan.
KARNER BLUE BUTTERFLY	Restoring habitat through prescribed fire on Huron-Manistee National Forest.
WEST VIRGINIA NORTHERN FLYING SQUIRREL	The Monongahela National Forest is proposing delisting due to successful habitat management and increasing populations.
CANADA LYNX	The Superior National Forest continues field studies and has radio collared 31 lynx to determine habitat use.
HINE'S EMERALD DRAGONFLY	Recovery team is developing a draft recovery plan to establish critical habitat.
REGIONAL SENSITIVE SPECIES	FOREST SERVICE ACTIVITIES
NORTHERN GOSHAWK	Nearing completion of a conservation assessment for the Lake States.
AMERICAN GINSENG	Currently reviewing plant collection policies to further protect species from over harvest.

CENTENNIAL OF SERVICE CHALLENGE PROJECTS

Throughout our Centennial year, we worked with state and local government agencies and private groups to jointly fund more than a dozen habitat restoration projects across the Eastern Region. Using cost-share funding methods we were able to significantly enhance forests, watersheds, and recreational services.

HABITAT RESTORATION LEGACY, CHEQUAMEGON-NICOLET NATIONAL FOREST ALONG WITH TEN PARTNERS, SEVEN PROJECTS WERE COMPLETED TO IMPROVE FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT.



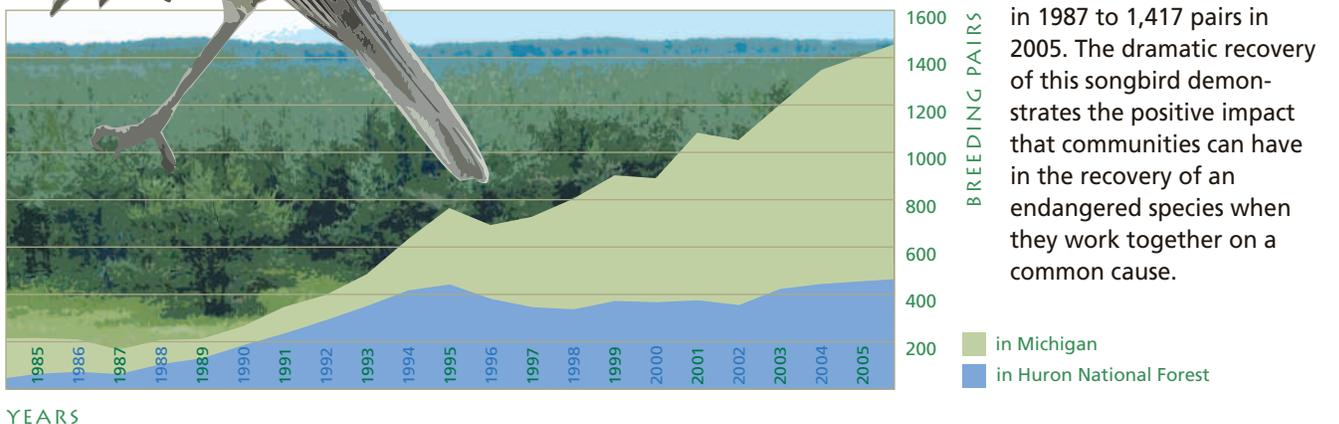
KIRTLAND'S WARBLER

Two Huron-Manistee National Forest employees received national honors in March for their work on behalf of the Kirtland's warbler, a federally endangered songbird with nesting habitat in Michigan's dense jack pine stands. The "Wings Across America" award for research reflects years of study in what is the first bird conservation project to span international borders.

In June, the 35th annual Kirtland's warbler census found increasing numbers of singing males on both the Forest and on state and private lands across Michigan. The growing numbers on the Forest reflect an overall population increase in the state. Since the census began, the numbers of Kirtland's warblers have risen from a low of 167 pairs in 1987 to 1,417 pairs in 2005. The dramatic recovery of this songbird demonstrates the positive impact that communities can have in the recovery of an endangered species when they work together on a common cause.



KIRTLAND'S WARBLER DISTRIBUTION



PROVIDE FOR PEOPLE, NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE.

VISITORS TO OUR

national forests witnessed a number of improvements in the delivery of services in 2005 resulting from the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. While more than half of the Eastern Region's recreation sites remain free of charge, the rest generated more than \$4 million in fees that allowed us to meet the continuing public demand for enhanced recreation facilities and services.



School-age kids in Detroit flocked to Greenfield Village to learn about nature firsthand as part of our Urban Connections program. Through this partnership, nearly 70,000 pine seedlings were given to young people to plant in their neighborhoods.

With its focus on improving forest health and providing benefits to communities, stewardship contracting is helping control the spread of oak wilt disease, restoring habitat for the endangered Kirtland's warbler, and improving forest and watershed health.

As a rich source of renewable resources, national forests:

- Provide recreation opportunities, including fishing, camping, and wildlife viewing;
- Provide critical natural resources—timber, oil, and gas—in an environmentally responsible manner;
- Provide employment opportunities; and
- Provide a sense of our rich cultural history and a connection to the natural world.

PARTNERSHIPS

Many of the projects that maintain and improve our tallgrass prairie and national forests are made possible through the generous assistance of our many partners and volunteers. Within the past four years, shared partnership funds in the Eastern Region have grown from \$8 million to more than \$27 million.



We celebrated Arbor Day by planting trees in partnership with students at 50 public schools in Chicago. Along with the city's forestry department, we helped plant nearly 2,000 trees throughout the metropolitan area.

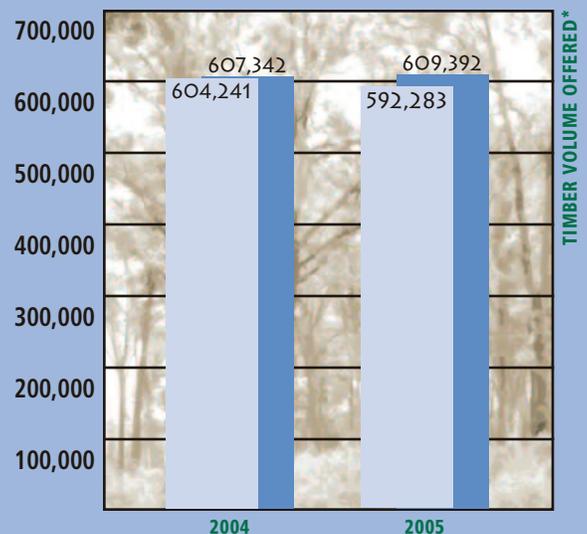
Americans value their public lands as a source of clean air and water, wildlife habitat, scenic beauty, and recreation opportunities. In an era of tight budgets, it is essential that we develop and nurture partnerships while looking for innovative ways to accomplish our work.

TIMBER SALES PROGRAM

Timber sales help sustain local and regional economies while reducing hazardous fuels and improving wildlife habitat. In 2005, the Eastern Region's timber program increased in both timber volume offered for sale and in receipts collected. National forests in the East continued to provide firewood, wood used for energy production at biomass facilities, and special forest products such as boughs, greens, mushrooms, and berries.

■ = TARGET
■ = ACCOMPLISHED

*in cubic feet



URBAN CONNECTIONS



Our Urban Connections program made further inroads across the East in 2005. We embarked on a new partnership with Future Pathways, a group that shares our commitment to reaching out to underserved communities

in Boston. With outreach building in Boston and Detroit, we are excited about upcoming projects in Minneapolis, Chicago, and New York City that will engage even more urban dwellers in shared stewardship of our natural resources.



FOREST SERVICE CENTENNIAL

In January 1905, the first American Forest Congress assembled in Washington, D.C. President Theodore Roosevelt challenged the delegates to find a way to use the nation's resources without irreparably

damaging them. At that time, America's forested lands had been dramatically altered and drastically reduced through unrestricted logging, grazing, and mining.



Centennial events at Greenfield Village included reenactments featuring a 1905 mounted forest ranger and the initiator of the Penny Pines program.

Within a few months of that historic gathering, the U.S. Congress created the Forest Service. By the time President Roosevelt left office in 1909, more than 150 million acres were designated as the National Forest System. The decimated "lands that nobody wanted" became the national forests of the East, and over the last 100 years these lands have been transformed into lands treasured by millions of Americans.

Our Centennial celebrations included a reenactment of the first Forest Congress in January; screenings of the "The Greatest Good," a feature-length film tracing the history of

American conservation; participation in the Smithsonian's annual Folklife Festival on the mall in Washington, D.C.; a series of Centennial Forums across the country; and a musical account of the Forest Service's first 100 years in "The Over and Under Story of the Forest Service" by the Big Top Chautauqua from northern Wisconsin.

Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the Forest Service, defined conservation as "the greatest good for the greatest number over the longest time." In order to do the greatest good, we must manage the land for long-term ecosystem health while engaging the American public in our decision making. Our Vision of "Courageous Conservation" is in keeping with Pinchot's definition and will hold our organization to the highest standards as we move forward into a new century of service.

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