



THE YEAR IN REVIEW



Eastern Region



**USDA Forest Service
EASTERN REGION**

2002

FROM THE REGIONAL FORESTER



Randy Moore
Regional Forester

In many ways, 2002 was both a rewarding and a challenging year for the Eastern Region. From the challenge of working side-by-side with our peers to combat an unprecedented fire season to the reward of working alongside partners to save a tiny alpine flower, Forest Service employees made important progress in many key areas.

This summer—while many of our people were working to reduce dangerous fuel build-up in the Eastern forests—scores of our employees volunteered to fight the wildfires that were ravaging the West. During one of the worst fire seasons in history, the Region not only sent firefighting crews but also returned millions of dollars

from our operating budget to help offset the enormous costs.

But that's only part of the story. Throughout the year we accomplished much to benefit the land and meet the needs of people. Many of our forests worked with the public to revise the forest plans that guide our work on the land. We're looking for opportunities to simplify the planning process without sacrificing elements that are crucial to its success. We are also taking steps to end the costly, confusing, and seemingly endless processes that divert our attention from where it is most needed.

As you turn these pages you will learn about far-reaching accomplishments that ensure

healthy forests and watersheds, as well as local success stories such as historic lighthouse restoration. Of course, there's nothing quite like seeing it for yourself. On behalf of the many Forest Service employees in the Eastern Region, I welcome you to visit these cherished lands that belong to us all.

USDA Forest Service
Eastern Region
310 W. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53203
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.

WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN bold new efforts to protect the 12 million acres of public lands in the East and Midwest. We accomplished critical work on projects ranging from preserving wildlife habitat to reducing the dangerous build-up of fuels resulting from trees blown down by storms.

We manage these natural resources with today's needs in mind, without compromising the needs of future generations. We believe that a revitalized forest planning process will allow greater flexibility and valuable public input on vital management issues. Together we can actively manage for forest health and resiliency, keeping in mind the plant and wildlife species that call our forests home.

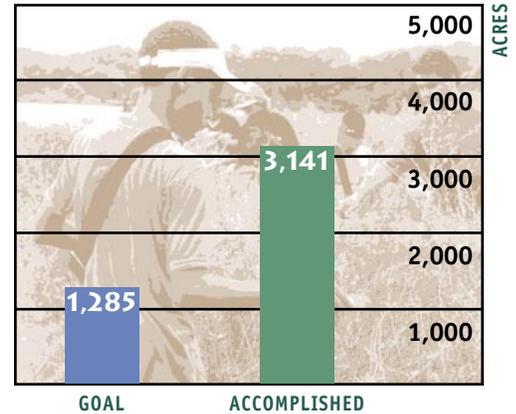
Along with invaluable assistance from our local partners, we continue to

- protect ecosystems by reducing the spread of noxious weeds and invasive species;
- protect the habitat that sustains animal and plant species—air, water, and land;
- protect historical sites—such as lighthouses, landscapes, original Civilian Conservation Corps camps and other aging structures—that make up our heritage resources.

HEALTHY FORESTS INITIATIVE

The President's Healthy Forests Initiative addresses the need to focus more attention on removing obstacles to restoring forest health. Forest restoration has been a consistent goal of the Eastern Region for most of the last century. We continue to identify and act on high-priority challenges, including non-native invasive plant species, destructive insects, and oak mortality. The Huron-Manistee National Forest in Michigan is part of a national demonstration project aimed at shortening the preparation time of environmental analysis for hazardous fuels reduction projects.

NOXIOUS WEEDS TREATED



FOREST PLANNING

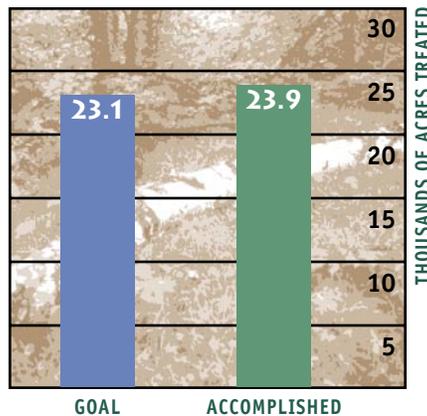
With substantial support and input from the public and employees, our forests continued revising their existing forest management plans. Five forests formally began their revision process in 2002 by publishing a Notice of Intent—the Green Mountain/Finger Lakes, Mark Twain, Shawnee, Monongahela, and the Wayne. In February 2002, the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie completed their first prairie plan. In 2003, all but one of our forests will be working on forest plan revision.

NATIONAL FIRE PLAN

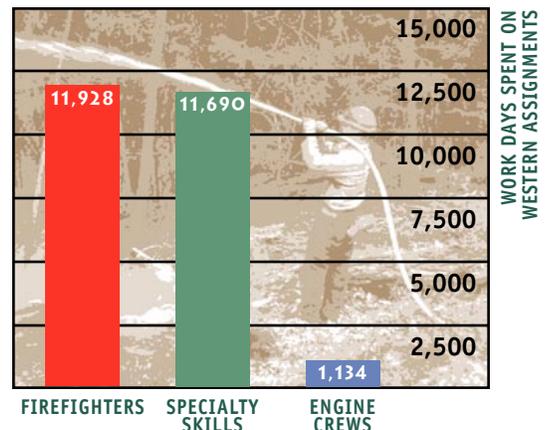
Funding provided by the National Fire Plan enabled the Eastern Region to reduce hazardous fuels in thousands of acres. We contributed substantial personnel and financial resources to assist our peers in the West, lending valuable assistance to help in the suppression of wildfires during one of the most severe fire seasons in recent history.



HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION



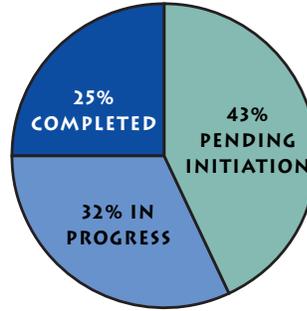
EASTERN ASSISTANCE IN FY02 WESTERN FIRE SUPPRESSION



CONSERVATION ASSESSMENTS

Conservation assessments compile information on Regional Forester Sensitive Species. We pay special attention to sensitive plants and animals to maintain viable populations in the forests and avoid trends that could lead to listing under the Endangered Species Act. Among the assessments completed in 2002 were 54 assessments for species that live in caves on the Hoosier, Mark Twain, Shawnee, and Monongahela National Forests.

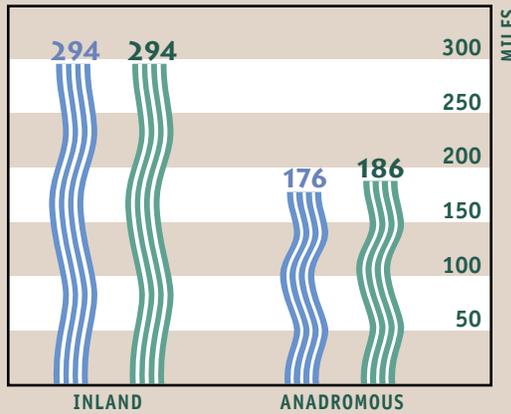
690 REGIONAL FORESTER SENSITIVE SPECIES ASSESSMENTS



FISHERIES PROJECTS

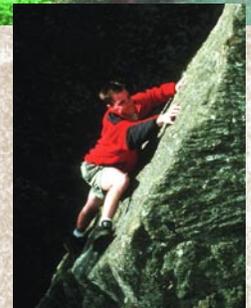
In cooperation with partners, we restored and enhanced streams to improve water quality, spawning habitat, and stream structural habitat. Inland streams are freshwater bodies that occur within national forests. Sixty-four percent of the region's 15,000 miles of inland streams are trout waters. Anadromous streams support fish such as salmon and steelhead that migrate from the ocean or Great Lakes to spawn.

STREAMS RESTORED AND ENHANCED



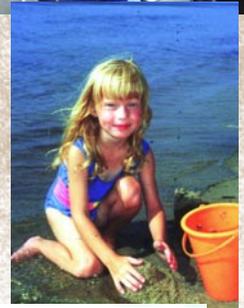
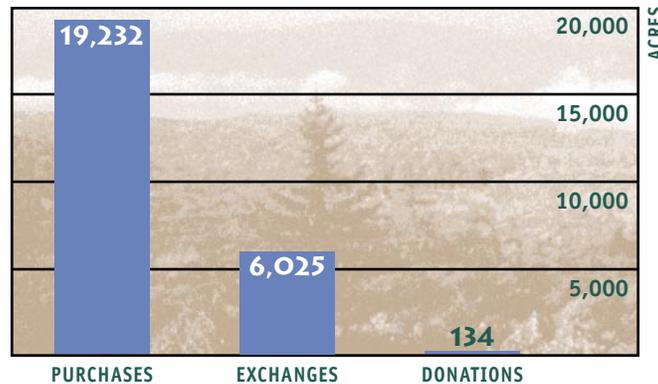
LEGEND:

GOAL=BLUE ACCOMPLISHED=GREEN



LAND ACQUISITIONS

Purchases, exchanges, and donations of land enabled the Eastern Region to protect additional natural resources and wildlife habitats, such as watersheds, sensitive plant and animal species, and scenic landscapes.



HISTORIC LIGHTHOUSES PRESERVED



Above: Point Iroquois Lighthouse.
Right: East Channel Lighthouse.



The Hiawatha National Forest in Michigan was honored for protecting two historic landmarks on the Great Lakes. Through community assistance programs, the East Channel Lighthouse on Grand Island National Recreation Area and the Point Iroquois Lighthouse were preserved for future generations.



RESTORE THE LAND TO CONSERVE OUR NATURAL HERITAGE.

OUR WORK IN 2002

showed dramatic progress in restoring critical components of forest and prairie ecosystems. Thanks to volunteers in New Hampshire, a rare alpine wildflower is again flourishing in its natural habitat, and has been removed from the federal register of endangered plants. A unique new project involving filters made of wood fiber shows great promise for helping eliminate acid mine runoff from streams on the Wayne National Forest in Ohio. While these examples of resource conservation are encouraging, there is still work to be done.

When the East was first settled, forests were cleared, rivers were straightened and dammed, and wetlands were drained. Today we are joining with our neighbors and partners to

- restore watershed health;
- restore native ecosystems nearly lost when the East was first settled;
- restore native vegetation in places where fast-growing trees were planted earlier to stop erosion.



RARE PERENNIAL NO LONGER ENDANGERED



A celebration was held in August in New Hampshire to recognize the de-listing of Robbins' cinquefoil, a unique plant that

grows exclusively in the alpine zone of the White Mountain National Forest. A member of the rose family, it is a small, nearly stemless perennial that bears a yellow flower. Prior to Endangered Species Act protection in 1980, the known population of Robbins' cinquefoil had fallen to 3,700 plants. Today the population totals more than 14,000. The US Fish & Wildlife Service, Appalachian Mountain Club and New England Wildflower Society partnered with the Forest Service on the recovery of Robbins' cinquefoil, only the second plant ever to be successfully removed from the endangered species list.

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

THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES	FOREST SERVICE ACTIVITIES
INDIANA BAT	Gating caves to protect winter habitat.
PIPING PLOVER	Managing critical shoreline habitat.
KARNER BLUE BUTTERFLY	Restoring habitat through prescribed fire.
KIRTLAND'S WARBLER	Providing young jack pine for nesting has increased breeding population.
WEST VIRGINIA NORTHERN FLYING SQUIRREL	Habitat management and population monitoring resulted in revised national recovery plan.
CANADA LYNX	Superior National Forest documented first sighting in Minnesota since 1993.
AMERICAN BURYING BEETLE	Wayne National Forest may reintroduce species.
PRAIRIE FRINGED ORCHID	New plantings in tallgrass prairie habitats.
REGIONAL SENSITIVE SPECIES	FOREST SERVICE ACTIVITIES
NORTHERN GOSHAWK	Inventory & monitoring of nests, habitat improvement in coniferous forests.
CERULEAN WARBLER	Habitat improvement in mature forests, collecting data region-wide.
WOOD TURTLE	Inventory & monitoring, habitat protection & improvement along sandy banks of streams.
AMERICAN GINSENG	Protecting from over-harvest.



HEALTHY WATERSHED PROJECTS

To ensure healthy watersheds for future generations, some of our projects correct erosion and sedimentation problems that occur when roads and trails cross streams. Other projects clean up and reclaim the land and streams affected by mining that took place long ago in Ohio and New Hampshire.

MIDWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE — IN PARTNERSHIP FOR ECOLOGICALLY-BASED RESTORATION OF PRAIRIE CREEK



REDUCED WILDFIRE THREAT IS SILVER LINING IN MISSOURI TORNADOS

After two tornadoes ripped through southeast Missouri in April, the Mark Twain National Forest mounted intensive recovery efforts to protect both public and private property. Fredericktown and Poplar Bluff Ranger Districts were hardest hit among 10,000 acres affected by the storm. With downed pine and oak stands heightening the threat of wildfire, crews constructed 40 miles of fire lines in record time, protecting roughly 450 homes.

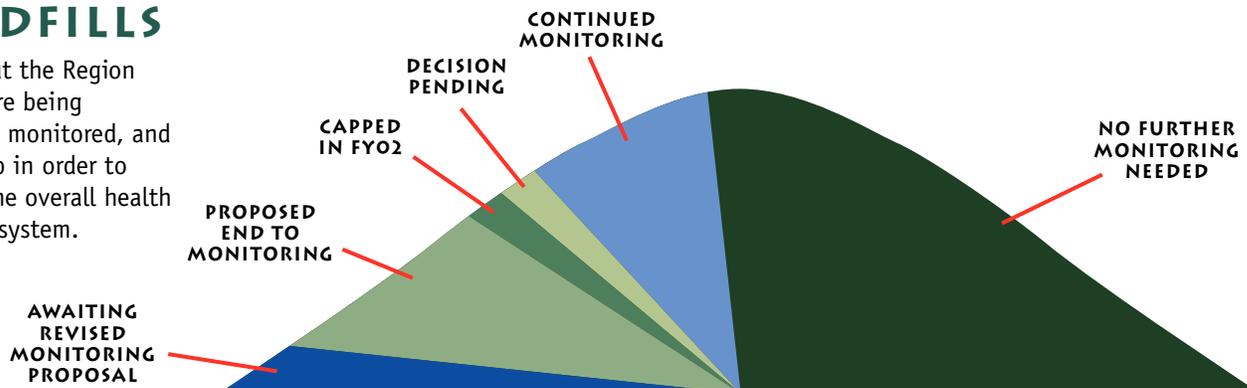
Forest Service crews from Colorado and Vermont pitched in to help. To further expedite recovery efforts, 21 contracts were awarded to Missouri timber companies to remove fallen trees on more than 4,500 acres in the tornado-damaged areas. With these aggressive fuel-reduction efforts, the danger of catastrophic wildfire has been greatly reduced.



The threat of wildfire increased greatly after tornados blew down pine and oak stands in southeastern Missouri.

LANDFILLS

Throughout the Region landfills are being evaluated, monitored, and cleaned up in order to improve the overall health of the ecosystem.



PROVIDE FOR PEOPLE, NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE.

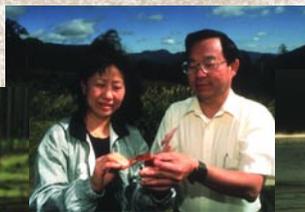
WE REMAIN COMMITTED

to providing sensible forest management to ensure that our public lands in the East are available for all who wish to use and enjoy them. These natural resources are used for many different purposes, and are important to the people who depend on them. Our mandate is to balance human impact with nature's capacity to grow and regenerate the components of the forest ecosystem, both now and in the future.

Through our urban outreach programs we are building partnerships and connecting with residents in big cities. Although the East is home to more than one-third of the national population, many urban constituents are unfamiliar with the national forests that are within a few hours' drive from their homes.

National forests are a rich source of renewable resources, and they

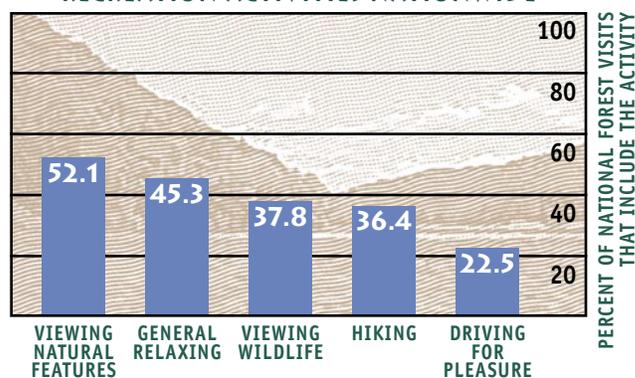
- provide recreation opportunities, including fishing, camping, and wildlife viewing;
- provide critical natural resources—timber, oil and gas—in an environmentally responsible manner;
- provide facilities and information to enhance visitor safety;
- provide opportunities for employment;
- provide a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



RECREATION

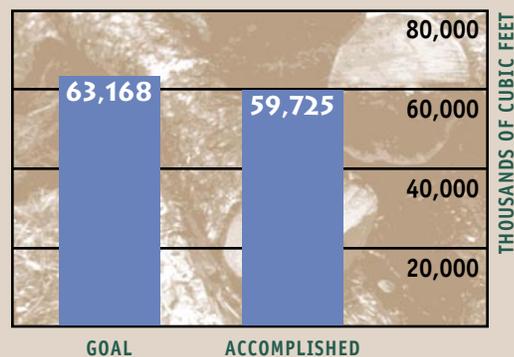
Ensuring that recreation on our public land is possible for all, last year we invested nearly \$4 million in improving accessibility for people with disabilities at 195 different sites. More than one-third of our facilities and programs are now fully accessible to all visitors. Last year, nearly 12 million visitors spent time on national forests in the Eastern Region.

FIVE MOST POPULAR RECREATION ACTIVITIES NATIONWIDE



TIMBER SALES PROGRAM

National forests are a source of wood used for homes, paper, and many other products that people depend on every day. Each year the Forest Service identifies a quantity of timber to be made available for sale. Besides playing a vital role in vegetation management, timber sales contribute to the revenue of states and local communities, which receive 25 percent of the proceeds. In 2002, shared revenues totaled \$5,267,500.



URBAN CONNECTIONS

A new Eastern Region effort in Boston and other cities aims to better connect urban groups and constituents with nearby national forests. Called "Urban Connections," this project involves state and local partners such as the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Healthy Boston, and University of Massachusetts Extension 4-H, which support efforts to better connect urban residents with their natural

environment. Recently, 20 citizens of Boston spent a weekend learning about natural resources management on the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont. Plans for 2003 include a workshop on natural resources jobs for urban youth, a public dialogue on mountain safety, and discussions with community groups on a possible site for a demonstration forest or an "Urban Tree House" in the heart of Boston.

PARTNERSHIPS: STRENGTHENING OLD TIES, BUILDING NEW ONES

We could never accomplish all our natural resources work if not for the countless partners who provide labor, materials, money and ideas. From maintaining trails to implementing new ideas—it takes people working toward a common cause to make a difference.

During the past year, we strengthened ties with existing partners—many of whom have often worked with us over the years—and established new partnerships. This broad involvement of people dedicated to resolving complex land and water issues is an extraordinary example of what we can achieve together.

For example, our national forests in the Northeast—along with the State Rural Development Councils of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, The Conservation Fund, and the Community Foundation—led valuable training in “Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities” to provide tools for public land managers and community leaders to develop and promote their own initiatives for growth and tourism.



In West Virginia, we worked closely with The Nature Conservancy to acquire over 200 acres of railroad inholdings on the Monongahela National Forest. Partnering with local groups, we performed important clean-up work on the Hoosier National Forest. The Minnesota national forests—working with the state’s Forest Resources Council—are working to promote long-term sustainable management of Minnesota’s forests.

These cooperative efforts are bearing fruit, and are examples of what we can accomplish when partners join with us in caring for our natural resources.



Kids enjoy outdoor activities at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie during an eight-week summer day camp co-sponsored by the Forest Service and Chicago’s nationally recognized Hispanic community center, El Valor.

GETTING BACK TO BASICS FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION

The job of protecting natural resources, restoring the land and providing for people is a responsibility the Forest Service takes seriously. It requires an effective organization to fulfill that responsibility.

One measure of effectiveness within an organization is the amount of respect it fosters both internally and in its dealings with the public. This is the starting place for developing the value-centered leadership needed to work successfully with individuals and communities. When people and groups respect one another, collaborative efforts flourish.

Across the Eastern Region, students and older Americans are learning crucial work skills through unique programs that provide

on-the-job experience to trainees. Upon completing the programs, graduates are better prepared to compete for jobs either within the Forest Service or their local communities.

For the first time in many years, the Forest Service received a “clean” financial opinion in 2002 from USDA’s Office of the Inspector General. Accounting for government assets leads to more productive results for forest projects.

We are exploring new ways to simplify our basic decision-making processes. Our goal is to simplify analysis while meeting the law’s intent, so that we can concentrate on the fundamental work of maintaining the health of the forests.

Credits: Moose photo on cover, Robbins’ cinquefoil photo and Karner blue butterfly photo on p. 5, US Fish & Wildlife Service. Fire photos on pp. 3 and 4, National Interagency Fire Center.

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