

February 2009



STATE & PRIVATE FORESTRY

Redesign Update

A Message from the Deputy Chief for S&PF

State and Private Forestry Redesign continues to move forward into its second year of implementation and is demonstrating positive results. States have completed their second round of the competitive funding process and have begun their statewide forest resource assessments.

The national assessment tool is near completion and will help states and the Forest Service by providing data layers to identify conditions and issues for use in focusing investments. Both the states and the Forest Service stand to benefit from exchanging information about forest resources, demonstrating results and innovation, as well as coordinate management goals and priorities. Our approach to program delivery is addressing improvements to landscapes of national interest.

Stimulus Bill Update

The Forest Service has the opportunity to be part of the 2.5year Economic Stimulus Plan. Opportunities to create jobs through natural resource and infrastructure, the quantity and mix of projects and activities and expectations will be available to partners of State and Private Forestry. The focus of the economic stimulus will include:

- Hazardous fuels reduction, forest health protection rehabilitation and hazard mitigation activities on Federal lands (\$250 MM)
- Hazardous fuels reduction, forest health and ecosystem improvement activities on state and private lands (\$250 MM);
- Facilities reconstruction (recreation, administrative sites, bridges, roads, dams, fish passages, etc) (\$650 MM), and;
- Wood-to-energy grants that will focus on assisting the development of alternative energy through increased use of biomass from federal, state and private lands (up to \$50 MM).

Based on this tradition, we look forward to generating additional employment opportunities and building job skills as we care for the Nation's forests and grasslands and support the communities where we work and live.

A Message from the NASF President

When the Redesign Implementation Council met recently in Washington, DC, part of our discussions dealt with building on what we have achieved to date and what the future holds for State and Private Forestry. As Redesign has shifted from concept to implementation, the work that has gone into developing the process is now unfolding in interesting and positive ways on the landscape. With state assessments underway and resource strategies and the national assessment tool on the horizon, Redesign is no longer a novel idea – it's a new way of doing business.

FY '09 Competitive Process Critique

Last year, the FY '08 competitive funding process underwent a substantive critique and review. Surveys completed by State Foresters provided important information that was used to polish and refine the process.

The RIC will conduct a similar review of the FY '09 competitive process. A survey, consisting of a brief set of nationally-focused questions, has been sent to State Foresters and USFS Directors. The responses will be used to identify refinements to the process, and further develop any national guidelines for the competitive process that may be needed.

Survey responses are due back on March 6th. An analysis report of the critique and any national guidance recommendations will be reviewed by the RIC in mid-April.



Redesign Report Card

The 2009 S&PF Redesign Report Card is planned for release electronically the first week of March with hard copies available later in March. This year's Report Card not only exceeds expectations, it will be of use to many organizations and partners for many purposes. It highlights the progress of three regional projects as it did last year and it also includes short briefs about all of the projects (*searchable by State*) that received FY08 competitive allocations.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/redesign/index.shtml>

FY '10 Percentage of Competitive Allocation to Remain at 15%

The Redesign Implementation Council decided February 2nd to hold the percentage of State and Private Forestry federal funding available for competition at 15 percent for FY2010. Although incremental increases to the percentage were originally planned by the Redesign Board in 2007, the 2009 RIC believes that given the economy and the Economic Stimulus Package, there are several justifications as to why the percentage should remain the same for FY10. Maintaining the percentage of competitive funding at 15 percent will allow for the continued application of improved efficiencies learned during FY '08 and FY '09 cycles. This will also allow states to focus on completing their State Assessments. In addition, it will allow more time for the USFS and the states to better determine the impact of the competitive process and the implementation of Redesign to their programs as FY08 and FY09 projects are completed.



Demonstrating and Communicating Results Team: A Framework for S&PF Performance Management and Evaluation

During the summer of 2008 the *Demonstrating and Communicating Results* Redesign Team was tasked with developing and piloting performance measures for competitively funded Redesign projects. At the same time, State and Private Forestry began a review of all of the performance measures across its programs. At the Redesign Implementation Council's (RIC's) August meeting, the *Demonstrating and Communicating Results* Redesign Team presented the results of the performance measures pilot tests. Based on that work, it was agreed that the Forest Service would develop a Performance Management Framework for all of State and Private Forestry. A Working Group, consisting of both Forest Service and state partners, was established to work on developing that Framework. At the end of January, this Working Group met for 2 days in Washington, D.C. to begin crafting the Framework. The outcomes from this meeting were presented at the RIC's February meeting:

- ◆ The Framework Working Group came to the conclusion that there should be **ONE CORE SET** of measures that relate to the National Themes and Objectives to tell the story of **ALL S&PF WORK** at a national level (though other measures will still be necessary, especially those for program management at local levels and those required by statute or policy).
- ◆ The Framework Working Group agreed that these measures **DON'T** have to capture **EVERYTHING** S&PF does – qualitative methods of telling S&PF's story are also important.



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The Working Group began developing a set of core performance measures—organized by each Desired Outcome, under each National Theme. The Working Group agreed on the following principles regarding the core set of measures: (1) they should be small in number; (2) they should be those measures that best express the most significant indicator(s) for each Desired Outcome; (3) they should be simple and realistic, but with the recognition that they must also be effective and credible; (4) they should be drawn from existing measures, combinations of existing measures, or data already being collected—as much as possible; and (5) they should be relatable to State-determined priority areas, but capture contributions from activities/programs in all areas. Draft core measures for 8 of the 11 Desired Outcomes were presented at the February RIC meeting. The RIC agreed to the Framework concept as proposed by the Working Group and requested a final set of draft core measures for review by March 6th. After a core set of measures is agreed to by the RIC and S&PF leadership, significant work will still be required to complete definitions, business rules, and calculation instructions for each measure and continued investment in spatial accomplishment reporting systems will be necessary.



State Assessment Assistance on Web Site

While longer term changes are in queue for the USFS website layout, a short-term fix is needed to the Redesign website found as a link on the S&PF website to make information more available to different audiences and more user-friendly for practitioners using the site for technical purposes. In particular, to assist states working on state assessments, the following link on the site administered by the Redesign Data Strategy Team will include growing lists of data links that contain national and regional data categories:



http://svinetfc4.fs.fed.us/clearinghouse/state_private/nationaldata.html

Also, for states needing immediate access to National Assessment data layers in order to begin or complete their State Assessments, the Data Strategy Team has been made available for one-on-one assistance to the states. States requesting this support may contact Frank Sapio at fsapio@fs.fed.us or 970-295-5840.