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Forestry Report
R8-FR 21

Forest Pest Management

Strategic Plan for the South

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Dear Reader,

Forest Pest Management has been an integral active force in the 13 states of Region Eight, USDA Forest Service since 1961. Today, over 50 professional, technical and support personnel in two field offices and the Regional Office make up the FPM team.

This team is involved in a multitude of activities on federal, state and private lands. As we strive to address the many new challenges emphasizing overall forest health and a balanced multiple-use concept, it is imperative that our activities reflect the needs that exist between people and forests in the 1990's. With this in mind, I have asked FPM to develop the enclosed Strategic Plan.

The purpose of this Plan is to determine where FPM should be headed in working with its cooperators over the next ten years. Several state, private, federal and university cooperators helped prepare this Plan; early in developing the strategies, and later in the review process. I want to thank these cooperators for helping make this a dynamic, cooperative plan to guide our FPM activities.

Now our work begins: making the strategies happen. FPM will develop and perform their plans of work over the next ten years within the framework of these issues and strategies. I am confident that Region 8 FPM, together with our cooperators, will have many valuable accomplishments as we continue to work together through this decade.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John E. Alcock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

JOHN E. ALCOCK
REGIONAL FORESTER

FOREST PEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE SOUTH

Introduction:

The South has over 182 million acres of forests; approximately fifty percent of the total land acreage available. Forest Pest Management has an important role in protecting this forest land. The Forest Stewardship Act of 1990 charges Forest Pest Management with the responsibility for enhancing and maintaining the health of forests. Forest Pest Management is authorized and directed to work directly on the National Forest System lands, on other Federal lands in cooperation with other Federal agencies, and on state lands in cooperation with State Foresters or equivalent state officials. Forest Pest Management is also responsible for working with appropriate subdivisions of states, agencies, institutions, organizations, or individuals on non-federal lands to provide pest management assistance.

The 1990 Resources Planning Act Program sets the direction of Forest Service programs. Four high-priority themes are emphasized:

- Enhancing recreation, wildlife, and fisheries resources
- Insuring that commodity production is environmentally acceptable
- Improving scientific knowledge about natural resources
- Responding to global resource issues

The Forest Service will pursue these four themes with vigor because they address important emerging needs of the nation. Each theme emphasizes the long-term health, diversity, and productivity of the land.

This balancing of multiple-use will change Forest Pest Management's role; it will continue to enhance and maintain the health of the forests, but the mission will emphasize overall forest health as opposed to emphasizing timber alone. This theme is addressed in "Forest Health Through Silviculture and Integrated Pest Management - A Strategic Plan", a Washington Office Forest Service report which lists issues which Forest Pest Management should consider in performing its mission. Those issues include planning, public involvement, resource management, pest suppression, environmental analysis, pesticides, pest control technology, and forest health monitoring.

This Strategic Plan for the south is a guide and framework for Forest Pest Management's activities from 1991 to 2000. In addition to FPM's basic responsibilities on National Forest System and other Federal lands, the following six issues are considered the most important facing Forest Pest Management during these 10 years:

- Protection of State and Private Forestry Resources
- Effective Communication
- New Opportunities in Forest Pest Management
- Workforce
- Research Interactions
- Environmental Analysis

In order to accurately develop these issues, it was important to identify them with the mission and values of FPM, and the characteristics (skills, knowledge) of FPM personnel. These subjects are briefly described as follows:

MISSION

THE MISSION OF FOREST PEST MANAGEMENT IS TO ENHANCE AND MAINTAIN THE HEALTH OF THE SOUTH'S FORESTS

STAFF CHARACTERISTICS

The Forest Pest Management staff has a wide range of skills. As new areas of concern arise, we must be positioned to respond in a timely manner with the appropriate expertise.

Basic to FPM's mission is a core group of entomologists and plant pathologists to provide technical assistance. Many other areas of expertise are also covered by the staff (professional, technical, and support) including:

- Forest pesticides use, application, and risk assessment
- Vegetation management
- Nurseries and seed orchards
- Mycorrhizal fungi
- Hazard tree evaluation
- Resource loss assessment and inventory
- Wood-in use
- Tropical forest protection
- Air pollution damage assessment
- Pest resistance screening
- Biological control systems and ecosystem relationships
- Aerial photography and remote sensing
- Still photography and video productions
- Statistical and economic analysis
- Computer technology and applications
- Geographic information systems

VALUES

The basic FPM values are to:

- Provide high quality and cost effective service to our customers.
- Insure that our actions are environmentally sound and the results of our recommendations do not adversely affect ecosystems and non-target organisms.
- Be innovative in applying pest management principles.
- Be innovative and creative in maintaining and using expertise.
- Strive to keep the organization on the leading edge of technology development.
- Possess a work ethic demanding integrity, honesty, and high ethical standards.
- Be attentive to the values of, and need for, workforce diversity.
- Provide leadership and teamwork by emphasizing accountability and respect for the individual and the organization.

CUSTOMERS

FPM's customers come from a wide range of backgrounds, but they are all interested in how FPM contributes to the mitigation of the impacts of pests on the forest. The following list illustrates the diversity of the FPM clientele.

National Forest System
Research
State Agencies
Federal Land Managers (other than NFS)
Forest Industry
Universities
Elementary and High Schools
Extension Service
Conservation Organizations
Non-Profit Organizations

FPM also serves the news media and the general public in an information coordinating capacity.

ISSUES AFFECTING FOREST PEST MANAGEMENT

FPM must use its talents most effectively to serve its customers. During the next ten years FPM will work as a team to make significant progress in the south. To accomplish this FPM will concentrate on the following issues:

ISSUE - PROTECTION OF STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY RESOURCES

Rationale:

- States are unable to obtain funding to maintain FPM capability needed for the prevention and control programs on S&PF lands. Many states and other cooperators have limited data bases on forestry resources; limited opportunities to utilize models, GIS and other new technology; and data collection and display will continue to be critical issues.
- Increasing pressures as to where states allocate their limited resources may result in less information useful to Federal land managers. This, along with the need for more sophisticated data, will make the Forest Pest Management program more important to Federal land managers. The additional workload will further curtail the ability of federal pest management personnel to provide adequate technical assistance on state and private lands.

Strategies:

FPM will increase the efficiency of S&PF programs and thus, contribute to protection of the resources, by:

1. Implementing forest health monitoring in each state.
2. Developing long-range Forest Health Plans in each state.
3. Providing technical training for cooperators.
4. Assisting cooperators in gaining support for high priority needs.

5. Funding high priority FPM needs.

ISSUE - EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Rationale:

- Management may not be aware of the potential changes that can be caused by pests inhabiting the resources for which they have management responsibility. When pest-caused changes become apparent, management does not always know where to go for assistance.
- Many NFS and Forest Service Research personnel may not understand FPM programs or the role of the Forest Pest Management specialist.
- The general public does not have an adequate understanding about the relationships of insects and diseases in forest ecosystems.
- University, state, and other federal cooperators do not have an adequate understanding of Forest Pest Management's responsibilities or the limitations of their activities.
- Forest Pest Management specialists lack visibility by the scientific community and, in spite of their qualifications, are often not considered to be true scientists within the discipline where they are active.

Strategies:

FPM will communicate its role and information to customers by:

- 1. Using approaches that respond to clearly defined customer needs.**
- 2. Improving FPM personnel's communication skills.**
- 3. Producing high quality and timely publications.**
- 4. Encouraging more joint publications between FPM and other scientists.**
- 5. Maintaining close personal contact with cooperators.**

ISSUE - NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN FOREST PEST MANAGEMENT

Rationale:

- FPM is faced with a wide array of new issues and related initiatives that must be identified early and incorporated into the program of work.
- FPM workload is expected to increase. For example, to make decisions forest resource managers need more information on forest pest incidence, severity, and interrelations with other ecosystem components.
- Public opinion and Forest Service direction indicate an increased FPM role in urban forestry, recreation, tropical forestry, air pollution and acid rain, the forest health initiative, and forest land management plans and prescriptions.
- A much increased public sensitivity to the condition and treatment of federal lands indicates a heightened FPM role in surveillance and rapid response to pest outbreaks on public lands.

- Although budgets have been increasing over the years, the ability to hire enough additional personnel to handle the increased workload has not.
- The list of priorities and the workload should be reasonable, while the FPM program and the product for the customer should be of high quality.

Strategies:

FPM will address the issues, while maintaining high quality work and customer satisfaction by:

- 1. Evaluating forest health monitoring data to help identify emerging issues.**
- 2. Activating cooperators and groups to:**
 - determine the scope, priorities, needs and responsibilities associated with the issue.**
 - provide timely information and progress associated with the issue.**
- 3. Establishing a Technology Transfer Team made up of FPM cooperators to insure that the customers needs are met.**
- 4. Serving as a clearinghouse for information and activities associated with new and emerging issues.**
- 5. Stimulating responsive research, new technology, and training necessary to address emerging issues.**
- 6. Monitoring public values and sensitizing employees to address these values.**
- 7. Streamlining economic and environmental analysis procedures.**
- 8. Strengthening pest management expertise on state cooperators' staff.**

ISSUE - WORKFORCE

Rationale:

- Forest Pest Management is faced with rapidly changing needs for new and different skills and expertise such as computer system development, program analysis, geographic information systems and air pollution effects expertise, and expertise in urban forest pest management.
- Forest Pest Management is striving for more diversity; viz., minorities and women, in its workforce which is more representative of the workforce population.
- Since about one-third of Forest Pest Management's professional and technical workforce is over 45 years old, FPM will be losing much of its current expertise within the next ten years; this will open new doors for younger talent. It will allow FPM to hire the proper mix of specialized talent to meet anticipated future needs.
- The number of forest entomologists and pathologists entering the workforce appears to be decreasing, and there is a decreasing interest in federal employment due to salary differences between the federal government and other employers.

Strategies:

FPM will achieve a highly qualified diverse workforce by:

- 1. Identifying workforce skill needs and updating them periodically.**
- 2. Initiating an intern employment program targeted to high school and college students.**
- 3. Developing an aggressive coordinated outreach program with universities and other recruitment sources.**

4. Developing meaningful career ladders for FPM personnel.
5. Conducting active work/study programs.
6. Providing career education opportunities for existing staff.

ISSUE - RESEARCH INTERACTIONS

Rationale:

- Constraints on the use of pesticides are increasing while available silvicultural options used to mitigate pest problems are restricted by management objectives and other factors. There is also increased concern over air pollution, urban forestry, endangered species, and biodiversity; and increased public interest in non-commodity resources. These issues are affecting the way the Forest Service does business, and consequently changing the information needed from research.
- As existing tools and control techniques become obsolete, new information is needed to do the FPM job. However, Forest Service Research (particularly FIDR) funds and personnel assigned to work on new aspects of these traditional problems are decreasing.
- Forest managers and pest management specialists are in need of information, regarding: 1) options for pest suppression, chemical and non-chemical pesticides, and mechanical and biological methods of control; 2) pest management options in uneven-aged systems; 3) information on hardwood management; 4) better evaluation and survey methods; 5) methods for analyzing the economics of non-commodity resources; and 6) adequate and accurate forest management models which include pest management.

Strategies:

FPM will work with partners to help establish direction by:

- 1. Identifying and prioritizing long-term and short-term needs based upon the needs of the cooperators and land managers.**
- 2. Articulating research needs to research scientists through active participation in research work unit descriptions and annual project reviews.**
- 3. Clearly defining forest health monitoring roles with Research and aggressively implementing the program.**

ISSUE - ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Rationale:

- Forest pest management recommendations can affect the environment.
- Considerable time is spent by FPM personnel in addressing environmental issues, normally through technical assistance or the more formal National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) process.
- FPM assistance includes developing pest management alternatives, evaluating the environmental consequences of these alternatives, assessing risks of proposed pesticide use, and providing information on the fate of pesticides in the environment.
- During the public involvement process and scoping, FPM provides technical expertise by responding to technical questions about pests and their treatment.

Strategies:

FPM will strengthen environmental analysis capabilities by:

1. Identifying and training key FPM and cooperator staff in the NEPA process.
2. Streamlining administrative and review procedures for Environmental Assessments.
3. Providing and coordinating specialized staff assistance to comply with NEPA requirements.
4. Strengthening public involvement in the scoping and review process.
5. Establishing teams to prepare documents to expedite the NEPA process.
6. Monitoring results of actions.

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