

Watershed Condition Framework

USDA Forest Service





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.

USDA Strategic Plan for FY 2010 – 2015





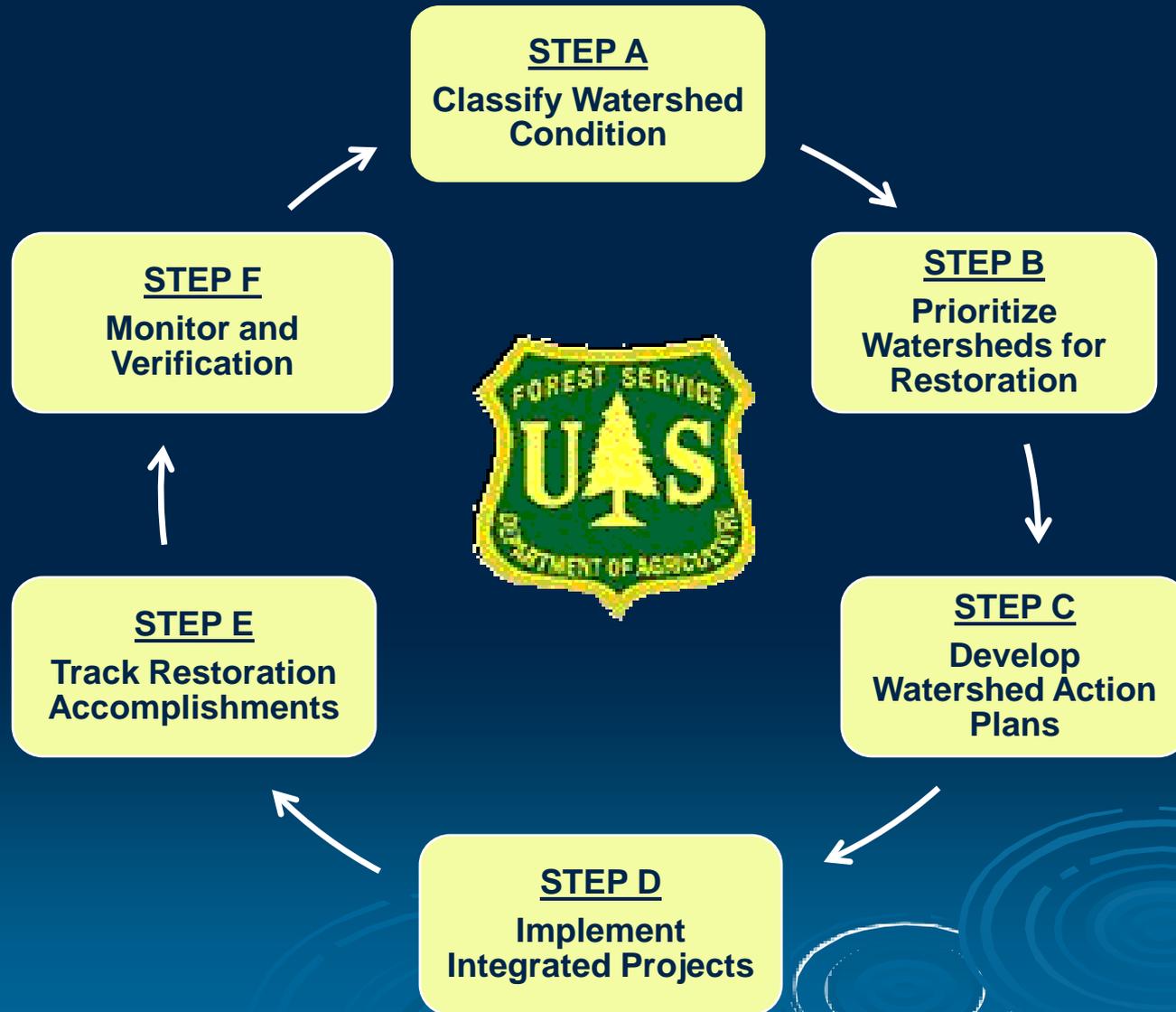
Watershed Condition Framework

A process for a nationally **consistent**, **comparable**, and **credible** approach

- to evaluating watershed condition
- to prioritizing watershed improvement projects
- to measuring what has been accomplished
- to increasing Forest Service accountability in watershed restoration.



Watershed Condition Framework





Step A – Classify Watershed Condition



- Establishes baseline for the future
- Completed March 2011
- **Updated annually for watersheds known to have experienced changes**



Watershed Condition Model



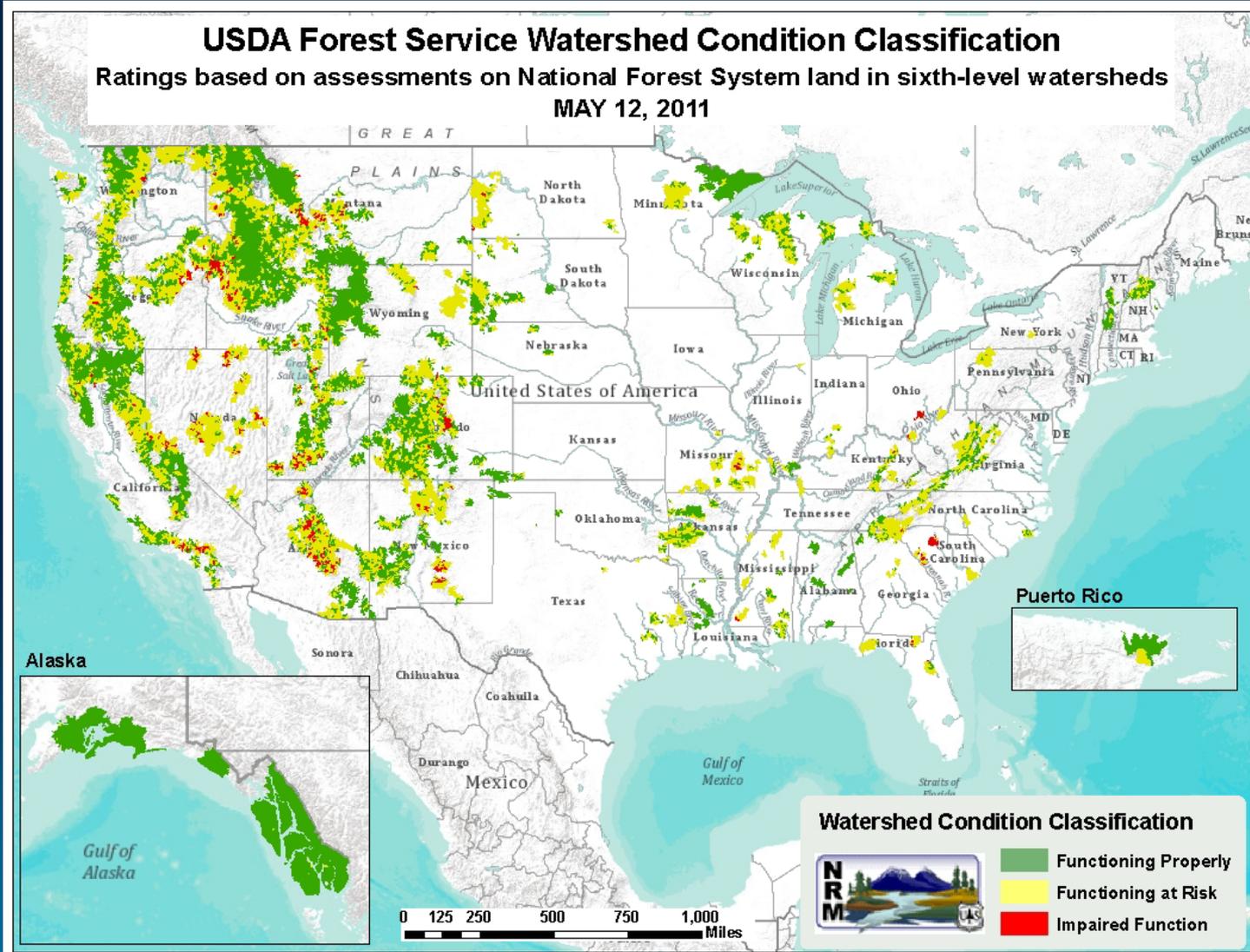
WATERSHED CONDITION INDICATORS (12 Indicator Model)



1. Water Quality
2. Water Quantity
3. Aquatic Habitat
4. Aquatic Biota
5. Riparian/Wetland Vegetation
6. Roads and Trails
7. Soils
8. Fire Regime or Wildfire
9. Forest Cover
10. Rangeland Vegetation
11. Terrestrial Invasive Species
12. Forest Health

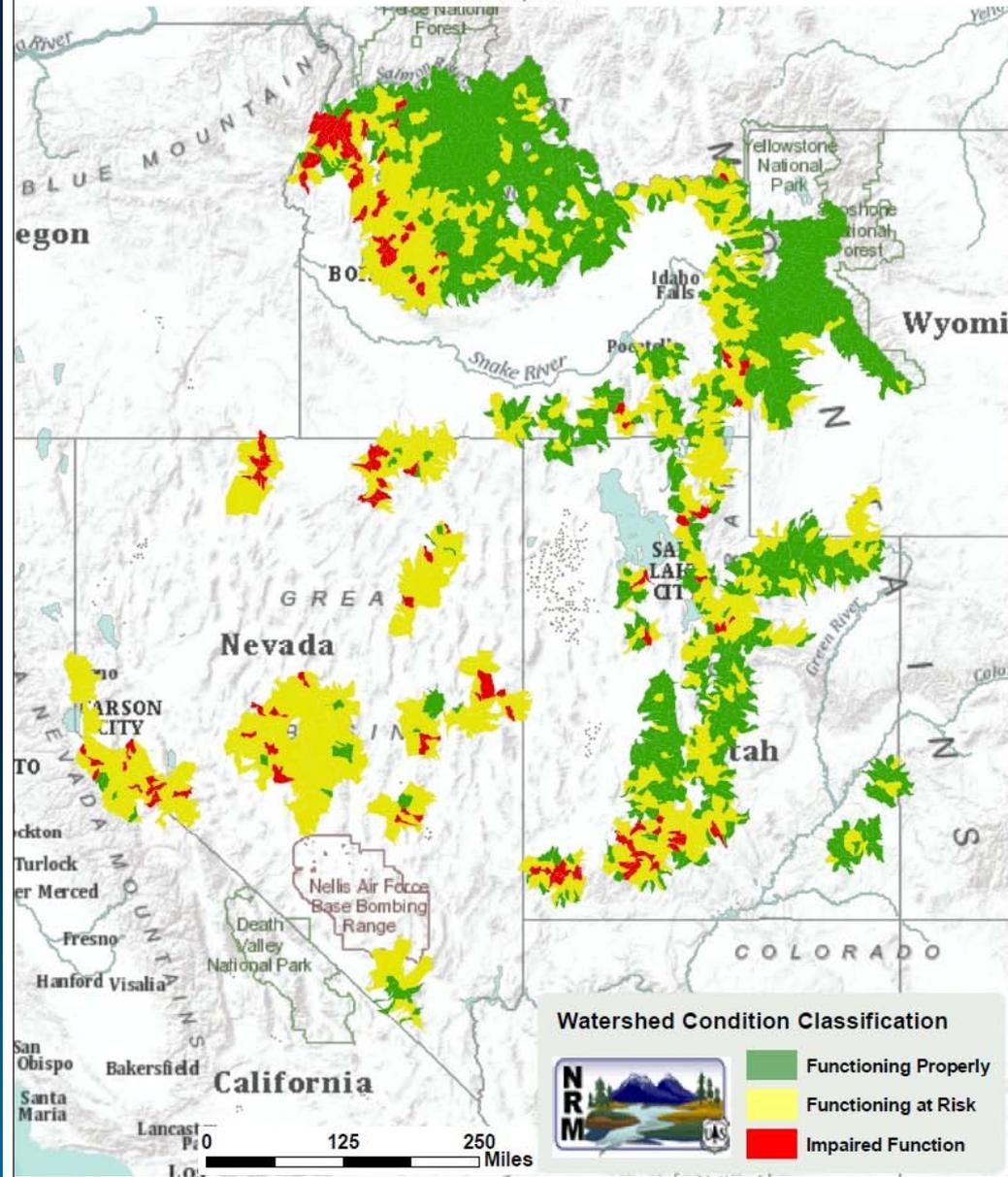


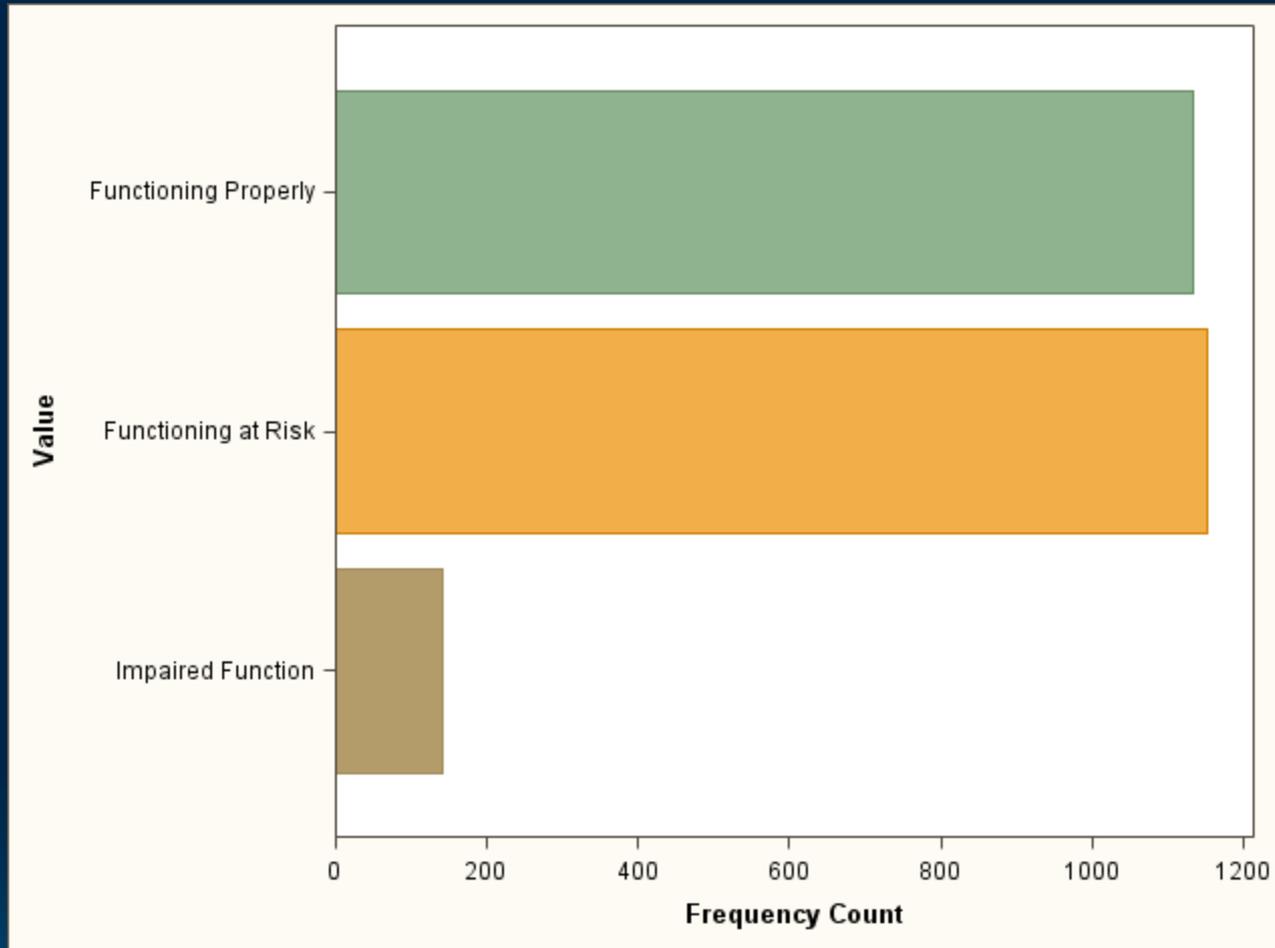
Map of Condition Class - NFS Watersheds





USDA Forest Service Watershed Condition Classification - Region 4
 Ratings based on assessments of National Forest System land in sixth-level watersheds
 MAY 12, 2011





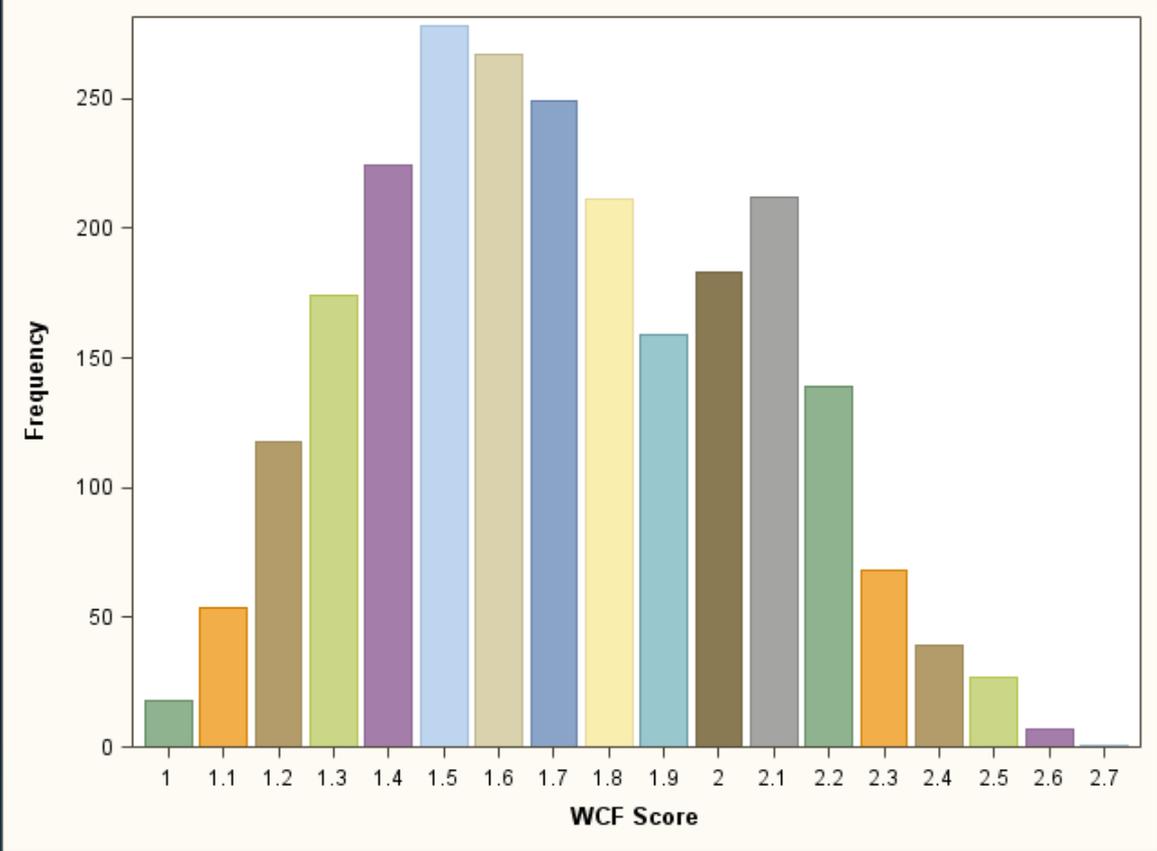
Watershed Condition Class in the Intermountain Region



Functioning

At-Risk

Impaired



Watershed Condition Score in the Intermountain Region



Step B: Prioritize Watersheds for Restoration

- Small number of 6th-level HUCs equivalent to a 5-year program of work for each Forest
- Implementation Guidance
 - Collaborate with Stakeholders and Partners
 - Ecological, social, and economic considerations
 - Align with national/ regional strategies and Forest Plan direction
 - Align with outside agency efforts and partnership opportunities
- Initial Priority Watersheds Identified Sept 2011



Step C: Watershed Restoration Action Plans

- Work with stakeholders and potential partners to:
 - Identify 'essential projects' that address specific problems
 - Identify potential partners and funding sources
 - Develop implementation schedule & monitoring plan
- Completed two priority watershed action plans per unit with data entered into corporate data base November 2011



Step D: Implement Integrated Essential Projects

- **Begin October 2012**
 - (may take 1 -5 years)
- **Implementation includes:**
 - planning (NEPA)
 - project design
 - project completion
 - completion information entered into corporate database





Step F: Monitor and Verification

- Verify accomplishment of project activities and monitor improvements to watershed and stream condition
 - Did we do what we said we were going to do? (Tier 1)
 - Did our work produce the results we predicted (Tier 2)



Watershed Condition Framework Within Intermountain Region



- Contributes toward water and landscape restoration emphasis
- Provides opportunities for collaboration across ownerships within watersheds
- Provides economic and environmental benefits to residents of rural communities





In summary

The Watershed Condition Framework:

- is an agency emphasis
- condition and watershed action plan steps are complete
- restoration implementation is occurring
- provides opportunities for collaboration across ownerships within watersheds in the Intermountain Region

QUESTIONS?

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Watershed Condition Framework Information and Interactive Map

<http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/>

<http://apps.fs.usda.gov/WCFmapviewer/>