



May 2012, Sustainable Water Resources Roundtable

# Forest Service

## Enhancing Water and Watershed Stewardship

# Water from National Forests provides:

- Domestic water supplies
- Irrigation and industrial water supplies
- Hydropower
- Riparian communities that provide and protect habitat
- Refugia for aquatic and riparian species
- The most beautiful places in the country
- Forested watersheds provide water to 180 million Americans.
- 66 million people get their water from National Forests
- Refugia for more than 100 aquatic endangered species
- 75% of our nation's outdoor recreation is within 1/2 mile of water
- 50 million people fish in the United States each year

# Water Stewardship in the Forest Service

- Conservation and Restoration of 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands
- Outreach and technical support to landowners and communities
- Multidisciplinary, landscape scale science and decision support tools

# Water Stewardship Efforts

1987 Organic Act:

*Protect and enhance water supplies, reduce flooding, and secure favorable conditions of flow*

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- Restoration
  - Fish passage
  - Riparian habitats
  - Invasive species
- Management
  - Instream flows
  - Best management practices
  - Addressing threats
- Science
  - Long-term research
  - Effects of forest management
- Often mitigation driven or small scale

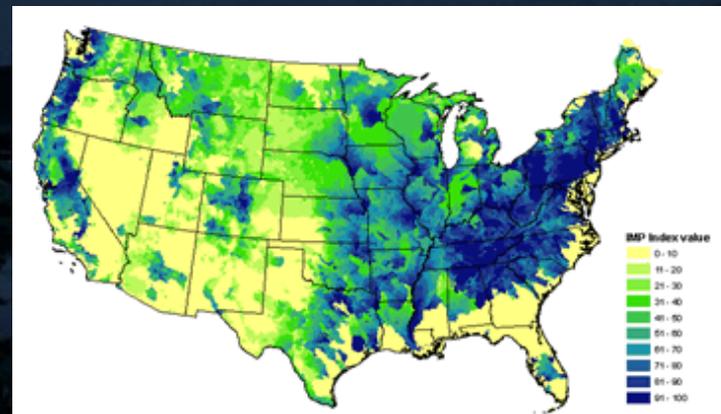
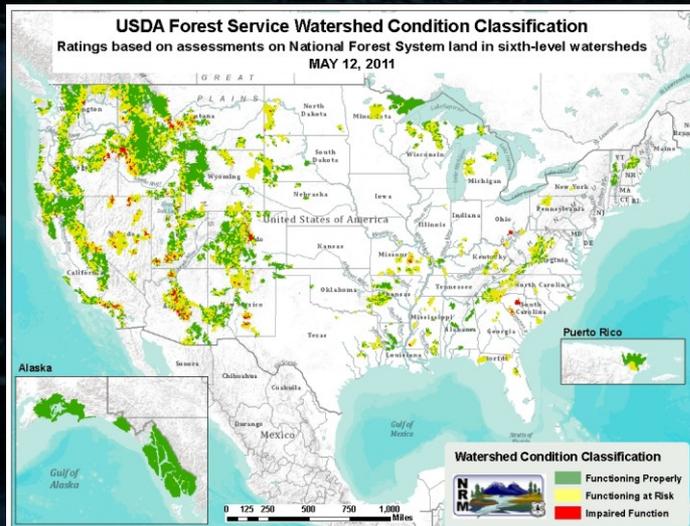
# STEWARDSHIP ACROSS LANDSCAPES

## Prioritization

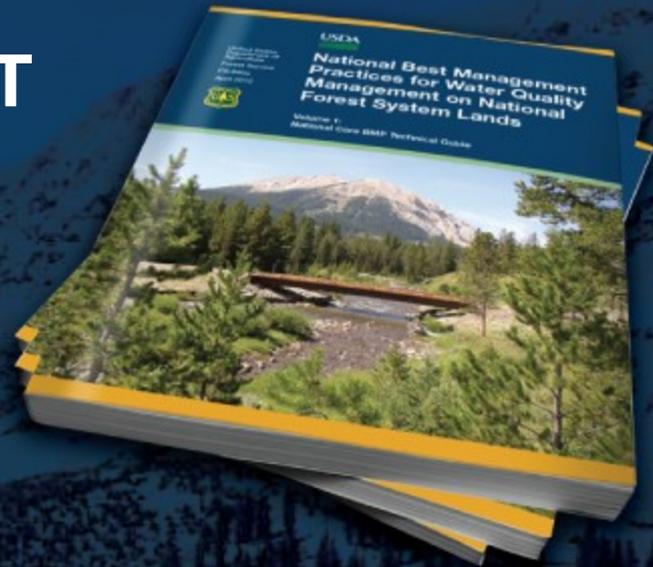
- Watershed Condition Assessment
- Forests to Faucets

## Assessment

- Vulnerability Assessments
- Resource Planning Act



# IMPROVING MANAGEMENT AND ACCELERATING RESTORATION



- New Planning Rule
- Climate Change Score Card
- Best Management Practices
- Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration

# Inventory Monitoring and Assessment Strategic Plan

- Water Resources Emphasis
- Include all lands and all partners
- Provide credible information
- Effectively respond and adapt

# ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE

- Develop new knowledge and tools to address existing and emerging issues
- Continue long-term research studies and maintain experimental watersheds
- Increase science delivery, technology transfer, and adaptive management approaches.

## Informing management:

- How does climate and land use change shift water distribution?
- What are the likely consequences of these changes to plants, animals, and rural and urban communities?
- What are the scenarios for future forest disturbance regimes and how will they affect water and aquatic ecosystems?
- What are the best metrics for measuring watershed condition?
- What are ecological and social thresholds related to watershed condition and resilience?

# Enhancing Partnership and Collaboration

Partners may be unaware of restoration priorities.



## The Situation

Project planning, implementation and monitoring occurs without stakeholder involvement.



No youth involvement

## Future Vision

Stakeholders are involved in restoration priority setting.



Stakeholders are aware of and involved in all stages of the project (planning, implementation, and monitoring).

Youth are involved.



# Forest to Faucets Partnership

Denver, CO

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- Denver Water spent \$40 million on dredging, water treatment, and other costs to restore watersheds after the Buffalo Creek and Hayman Fires
- **Forest to Faucets Partnership** between Denver Water and FS
  - MOU: The two partners will equally **share the cost** of \$32 million of on the ground treatment projects over five years
  - Aimed at reducing the risk and severity of wildfires on public/private lands to protect the South Platte Watershed

## Water Stewardship Goals:

- Conserve, maintain, and restore watersheds, ecosystems and the services they provide to people,
- Secure water of sufficient quantity and quality to sustain aquatic life and support terrestrial habitats and domestic uses,
- Advance knowledge and share science central to managing forests, aquatic and water resources, and watersheds in the future, and
- Facilitate watershed-based partnerships that foster conservation and citizen stewardship.

## Forest Service Water Strategy:

- Unifying existing programs
- Provide guidance and direction to meet future challenges