



# Ecosystem Workforce Program

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## MEASURING SOCIOECONOMIC OUTCOMES OF FOREST AND WATERSHED RESTORATION: STATE OF THE FIELD

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The USDA Forest Service has emphasized how forest and watershed restoration can support jobs and economic development. However, the Forest Service currently has few performance measures to track the socioeconomic outcomes of restoration. There are a number of monitoring guidebooks that suggest measures for these impacts. Taken together these guidebooks offer hundreds of related indicators that can be organized into four major categories: adaptive capacity, economic impacts, social equity, and provision of ecosystem services. Building on these measures, the Forest Service can find ways to document its diverse roles in fostering socioeconomic resilience (see Table 1, reverse).

### Adaptive capacity

The Forest Service depends on collaborative groups, community-based organizations, other agency partners, and businesses to accomplish restoration activities. In the context of climate change, ecological and economic uncertainty, and declining federal resources, partnerships and collaborative processes will help foster adaptability. The Forest Service helps build adaptive capacity when it invests in activities that improve local human and natural capital. Existing monitoring guidebooks suggest a range of measures of community and business capacity to reflect these investments. In addition, performance measures that track a National Forest System unit's engagement with partners and collaborative processes can demonstrate how well the agency and local community are working together.

### Economic impacts

Laws and policies obligate the Forest Service to create positive economic outcomes from land man-

agement. This remains true as restoration has become a focus of national forest management. Virtually all of the monitoring guides we reviewed focus attention on job creation and retention. Monitoring guides also emphasize the importance of job quality. High-quality jobs in restoration are typically defined to include fair wages and benefits, a safe work environment, durable employment, opportunities for training and advancement, and work that is close to home.

### Social equity

The equitable distribution of benefits from forest and watershed restoration is another focus common to the monitoring guides we reviewed. Communities and businesses located near national forests and grasslands can derive benefits from creation and retention of local restoration jobs. The most common measures track opportunities for local contractors and workers to participate in restoration activities and build their capacity. Another theme in several monitoring guides is the ability



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of socially vulnerable communities, such as those with low socioeconomic status, or with traditionally underserved minority or tribal populations, to benefit from federal land management.

### **Provision of ecosystem services**

Although measures of ecosystem services were not included in the monitoring guides we reviewed, scholars and a growing number of practitioners are conceptualizing land management activities for the services and financial values they provide to society. Ecosystem services measures could help

provide financial metrics for the social impacts of the Forest Service's restoration efforts. There are emerging Forest Service efforts to develop ecosystem service metrics.

For additional information, see Moseley, C., and E.J. Davis. 2012. *Developing socioeconomic performance measures for the Watershed Condition Framework*. Ecosystem Workforce Program Working Paper 36. University of Oregon. [ewp.uoregon.edu/publications/working](http://ewp.uoregon.edu/publications/working)

**Table 1 Potential socioeconomic performance measures**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Measure</b>
<b><i>Adaptive capacity</i></b>	
Collaboration	Number of administrative units who rank "high" on a collaboration scorecard <sup>1</sup> Percent of units whose collaboration rank increased over last year
Community capacity	Number of local organizations awarded restoration-related grants and agreements over last three years Number of units who rank "high" on a community capacity scorecard <sup>1</sup>
Local business capacity	Number of local contractors awarded restoration-related contracts, timber, or stewardship contracts over last three years Number of units who rank "high" on a business capacity scorecard <sup>1</sup>
<b><i>Economic impacts</i></b>	
Jobs	Number of direct jobs created or retained through restoration-related federal seasonal employment, Job Corps, service contracts, timber sales, grants, and stewardship contracts and agreements
Job quality	Percent of restoration contracts involving migrant/seasonal workers of H2B workers where contracting officers or their representatives inspected contract sites for safety and labor law compliance and spoke to workers about working conditions
<b><i>Social equity</i></b>	
Local business opportunities	Percent of restoration-related service, stewardship, and timber sale contract value awarded locally Percent change over last year in local benefit awards
Tribal engagement	Percent of units with "high" score on a tribal engagement scorecard <sup>1</sup>
Investments in socially vulnerable watersheds	Percent of money from restoration-related BLIs invested in watersheds with medium/high social vulnerability

<sup>1</sup> For a sample scorecard, see Moseley, C., and E.J. Davis. 2012. *Developing socioeconomic performance measures for the Watershed Condition Framework*. Ecosystem Workforce Program Working Paper 36. University of Oregon. [ewp.uoregon.edu/publications/working](http://ewp.uoregon.edu/publications/working)