

Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990's

Report of Accomplishments for Fiscal Year (FY) 1999

Introduction

This is the ninth annual accomplishments report of the Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990's, a blueprint for managing and restoring riparian-wetland areas that cover about 12,917,738 acres of wetlands and 181,071 miles of streams on BLM-managed lands. Overall, riparian-wetland areas account for about 8 percent of the 264 million acres of land under BLM management. This report shows the status of the BLM riparian-wetland areas at the end of FY 1999.

Importance of Riparian-Wetland Areas

Riparian areas are lands adjacent to creeks, streams, lakes, and rivers. They are sometimes called "green ribbons" because the vegetation on the banks of waterways forms a ribbon-like pattern when seen from the air. Wetlands are generally defined as areas inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support vegetation that is typically adapted for life in saturated soil. Wetlands include bogs, marshes, shallows, muskegs, wet meadows, estuaries, and riparian areas. Riparian areas and wetlands are discussed together for purposes of reporting the BLM's progress in meeting its national goals.

Because riparian-wetland areas contain scarce water and vegetation in the otherwise arid Western United States, these areas are important to fish and wildlife species, as well as to livestock. Riparian-wetland areas act like sponges in the hydrologic cycle; they capture and store high flows and slowly release them during the low flow periods of summer. Since they filter the water flowing through them, riparian-wetland areas contribute to providing clean water for fishing, swimming, municipal, and other uses. Overall, they are important to the health of entire watersheds.

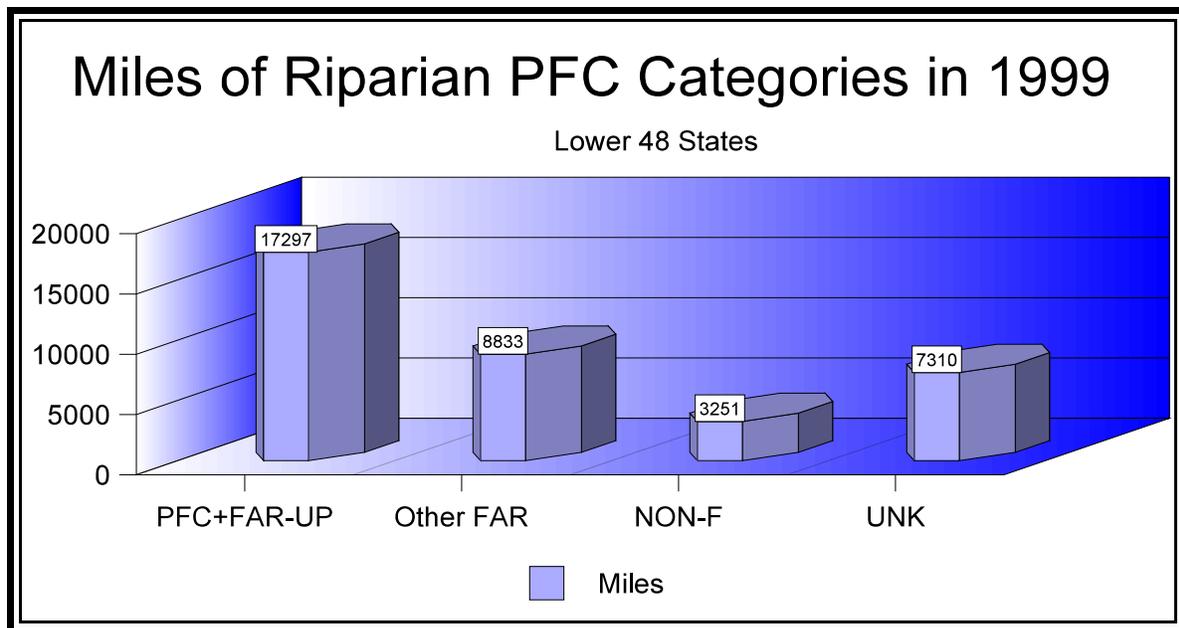
Proper Functioning Condition

Riparian-wetland areas are healthy and functioning properly when adequate vegetation, landform, or large woody debris is present to dissipate energy associated with high water flows or wave action. Healthy riparian-wetland areas perform several critical functions such as:

- Purifying water by removing sediments;
- Reducing the risk of flood damage;
- Increasing available water by holding it in streambanks and aquifers;
- Maintaining instream flows;
- Stabilizing stream banks;
- Increasing ground-water supplies;
- Supporting a diversity of wildlife and plant species;
- Maintaining habitats for healthy fish populations;
- Providing water, forage and shade for livestock; and
- Creating opportunities for recreationists to fish, swim, camp, picnic, and relax.

Condition of BLM Riparian-Wetland Areas

States are moving closer to completing their initial assessments of the condition of riparian-wetland areas on BLM-managed lands. Most high priority management riparian areas have been assessed. Just over 91 percent of the BLM riparian areas in the lower 48 States have been assessed using the Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) process. About 54 percent of BLM's riparian areas in the lower 48 are in Proper Functioning Condition or Functioning-At-Risk with an Upward Trend (PFC+FAR-UP).



*PFC+FAR-UP - Proper Functioning Condition plus Functional-At-Risk with Upward Trend
Other FAR - Functional-At-Risk with No Apparent or Downward Trend
NON-F - Non-Functional
UNK - Unknown

An upward trend implies that current management is helping to improve the condition of an area that is in less than proper functioning condition. The number of miles rated as PFC + FAR-UP has increased 6 percent since 1998. The change represents, mainly, new assessments; the "Unknown" category was reduced by 4,017 miles. In Alaska, 91 percent of the BLM riparian areas are in Proper Functioning Condition.

Approximately 36 percent of the wetlands on BLM-managed lands in the lower 48 States remain in the "Unknown" category; they have not been assessed for functioning condition. However, almost 55 percent of all BLM wetlands in the lower 48, that have been assessed, are in Proper Functioning Condition, or Functioning-At-Risk with an Upward Trend. That total is 98 percent for Alaska where the vast majority of wetlands are in pristine condition.

Appendix I details by state the condition of riparian-wetland areas on BLM-managed lands at the end of fiscal year 1999. The condition classes are shown by State in miles for streams and acres for wetlands. There are four classes: Proper Functioning Condition, Functioning-At-Risk, Non-Functional, and Unknown. These terms are defined in the footnotes to the table.

Workload Summary

In FY 1999, the BLM spent \$20,441,000 in the Riparian (1040) subactivity. With the help of numerous partners, including cost-sharing with other programs within the BLM, the following workload accomplishments were achieved:

- 6,109 Riparian Miles Assessed;
- 2,564,366 Wetland Acres Assessed (this includes an extensive effort in Alaska);
- Improvements Made on 1,514 Miles of Riparian Habitat;
- 390 Riparian-Wetland Projects Built;
- 858 Riparian-Wetland Projects Maintained;
- Monitoring on 1,297 Miles of Riparian Habitat;
- Monitoring on 5,837 Acres of Wetland Habitat;
- New Management Initiated on 1,138 Miles of combined Riparian and Fisheries Habitat.

Clean Water Action Plan

Approximately \$2,990,000 was spent in operations funds under CWWR. These involved not only riparian projects, but also work in watershed and fisheries.

CWWR PROJECTS

OFFICE	AMOUNT SPENT ON CWWR
AK	64985.91
AZ	67487.44
CA	258413.37
CO	10033.85
ES	45741.52
ID	291081.15
MT	20539.39
NM	1136243.11
NV	236234.62
OR	794622.44
UT	18308.41
WO	26510.83
WY	19590.94

National Riparian Service Team (NRST) and State Cadres

The NRST is a service-oriented interagency team that emphasizes collaboration to accomplish riparian-wetland restoration objectives. The NRST provides consulting and advisory services, training, and program review and evaluation. This is accomplished through an extended network of associates both within and outside government. Within government, this work is assisted by a network of riparian program coordinators throughout each agency and by State training cadres.

The NRST focus for FY 1999 included increased assistance to State Cadres, integration with agency programs, addition of new team members, training courses in Grazing Management and Riparian Areas, providing others opportunity to work with the NRST, and assessing the effectiveness of this interagency effort.

Completed one or more assistance trips with 9 of the 11 western State Cadres.

The State Cadres, with assistance from NRST, completed 59 training sessions for approximately 1,800 people.

The NRST completed 26 assignments for consulting and advisory services on projects that included endangered species, livestock grazing, roads, timber harvest, prescribed burns, wildfires, monitoring, bioengineering, recreation, and abandoned mines. The Team requested assistance from the BLM, USFS, and NRCS people to participate in Team assignments.

Developed a soils training module for State Cadres.

Completed five training sessions on Livestock Grazing and Riparian Areas.

Provided training for Langston University, a HBU, in management and restoration of watersheds and riparian areas.

Developed an interagency User Guide for Proper Functioning Condition.

Participated in the development of TR-1737-16, User Guide for Assessing Functionality of Wetlands as part of an interagency effort led by NARSC.

Conclusion

The BLM is making significant headway in improving the condition of riparian-wetlands throughout the West. The initiation of Standards and Guidelines on BLM lands and the implementation of the Clean Water Act Plan is greatly enhancing the protection given to riparian-wetland areas.

Responding to the challenges of riparian-wetland restoration and management will require the continued support of Congress and ongoing cooperation between the BLM and its numerous public and private partners. Given this support and cooperation, the BLM will continue to increase the miles and acres of healthy riparian-wetland habitats on public lands.

APPENDIX I

CONDITION OF RIPARIAN-WETLAND AREAS, FY 99

State	Habitat Types	Proper Functioning Condition	Functioning-At-Risk				Non Functional	Un-known	Total
			Trend Up	Trend Not Apparent	Trend Down	Total			
AK	Riparian Miles	132,023 (91%)	35	0	0	35 (T)	812 (1%)	11,434 (8%)	144,304
	Wetland Acres	12,376,200 (98%)	-	-	-	-	-	188,800 (2%)	12,565,000
AZ	Riparian miles	308 (34%)	139	186	85	410 (46%)	22 (2%)	153 (17%)	893
	Wetland Acres	85 (T)	17,838	15	96	17,949 (82%)	3,027 (14%)	838 (4%)	21,899
CA	Riparian Miles	1,865 (52%)	395	700	104	1,199 (33%)	101 (3%)	425 (12%)	3,590
	Wetland Acres	11,273 (85%)	3,100	6,516	955	10,571 (12%)	413 T	237 (3%)	22,494
CO	Riparian Miles	2,119 (47%)	316	1,138	81	1,535 (34%)	762 (17%)	53 (1%)	4,469
	Wetland Acres	4,986 (67%)	10	591	106	707 (9%)	3 (T)	1,780 (24%)	7,476
ES	Riparian Miles	0	0	0	0	0	0	10 (100%)	10
	Wetland Acres	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,300 (100%)	4,300
ID	Riparian Miles	1377 (37%)	254	1,117	91	1,462 (39%)	379 (10%)	536 (14%)	3,754
	Wetland Acres	1,361 (10%)	117	1,107	100	1,324 (10%)	248 (2%)	10,200 (78%)	13,133
MT	Riparian Miles	2,048 (42%)	207	1,902	116	2,225 (46%)	523 (11%)	57 (1%)	4,853
	Wetland Acres	4,444 (7%)	70	593	30	693 (1%)	859 (1%)	56,518 (91%)	62,514

CONDITION OF RIPARIAN-WETLAND AREAS, FY 99, CONCLUDED

State	Habitat Types	Proper Functioning Condition	Functioning-At-Risk				Non Functional	Unknown	Total
			Trend Up	Trend Not Apparent	Trend Down	Total			
NV	Riparian Miles	660 (27%)	440	387	300	1,127 (46%)	392 (16%)	268 (11%)	2,447
	Wetland Acres	8,821 (26%)	235	1,069	408	1,712 (5%)	4,098 (12%)	19,566 (57%)	34,197
NM	Riparian Miles	160 (35%)	81	104	33	218 (48%)	72 (16%)	4 (1%)	454
	Wetland Acres	1,663 (30%)	6	2	2	10 (T)	776 (14%)	3,114 (56%)	5,563
OR	Riparian Miles	2,678 (40%)	1,775	1,040	425	3,240 (48%)	270 (4%)	557 (8%)	6,745
	Wetland Acres	126,808 (86%)	1,666	1,478	377	3,521 (2%)	478 (1%)	15,896 (11%)	146,703
UT	Riparian Miles	1,798 (38%)	499	740	244	1,483 (31%)	388 (8%)	1,053 (22%)	4,722
	Wetland Acres	5,047 (36%)	3,088	297	71	3,456 (24%)	470 (3%)	5,207 (36%)	14,180
WY	Riparian Miles	1,528 (32%)	872	987	617	2,476 (51%)	649 (13%)	177 (4%)	4,830
	Wetland Acres	4,236 (21%)	190	3,462	1,811	5,463 (27%)	345 (2%)	10,235 (50%)	20,279
Total Lower 48	Riparian Miles	14,541 (39%)	4,978	8,301	2,096	15,375 (42%)	3,558 (10%)	3,298 (9%)	36,767
	Wetland Acres	168,724 (48%)	26,320	15,130	3,956	45,406 (13%)	10,717 (3%)	127,891 (36%)	352,738
Total BLM	Riparian Miles	142,620 (81%)	5,013	8,301	2,096	15,410 (9%)	4,370 (2%)	14,727 (8%)	181,071
	Wetland Acres	12,544,924 (97%)	26,320	15,130	3,956	45,406 (T)	10,717 (T)	316,691 (3%)	12,917,738

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APPENDIX II
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