

Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts

Many of Interior's programs are carried out through partnerships and agreements with other organizations, such as State, local, and tribal governments; other Federal agencies; and nonprofit organizations. For example, large-scale land management initiatives, such as the Pacific Northwest Forest Plan, the Wildland Fire Management Program, the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration effort, and the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program, involve many governmental and nongovernmental partners. The Department's success in achieving goals in these joint initiatives depends on continued support and commitment from its partners.

Pacific Northwest Forest Plan

Federal management of old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest became increasingly controversial throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. By 1994, there were over a dozen lawsuits and three court injunctions involving the harvesting of old-growth timber and protection of the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet under the Endangered Species Act.

To resolve this legal impasse, the Administration released the "*Forest Plan for a Sustainable Economy and a Sustainable Environment*" in 1993. A final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision was issued in 1994 to implement the recommendations of the forest plan. The management direction includes extensive standards and guidelines to implement a comprehensive ecosystem management approach. The Forest Plan has allowed for sustainable timber production on Federal lands while fully protecting critical wildlife, fish species, and habitat on Federal, State, local, and private lands. To implement this plan, the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, along with other Federal agencies, have developed a common management approach to the lands they administer throughout the entire ecological region. The other Federal agencies involved in implementing the Forest Plan include the Environmental Protection Agency, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Bureau of Indian



The forests of northern California, Oregon, and Washington provide clean water, pure air, and a home for plant and animal species, as well as a wide range of important economic resources including timber, fisheries, recreation, and tourism (photo by Department of Interior).

Affairs, the National Park Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The Forest Plan provides an innovative approach to environmental protection based on protecting key watersheds and valuable old-growth forests. The conservation measures included in this strategy are based upon the best available science and attempt to anticipate future environmental problems, avoiding the severe economic dislocation and legal gridlock that occur when environmental problems are ignored. The plan also provides for a comprehensive system of old-growth preserves that includes the most valuable old-growth forests and designated conservation areas to protect specific species. A workable balance has been achieved between timber production and habitat conservation, with Federal agencies working in partnership with State, local, and private landowners.

The activities in the Northwest Forest Plan directly support two of the Departmental Goals:

- Protect the environment and preserve our Nation's natural and cultural resources.
- Manage natural resources for a healthy environment and a strong economy.

The agencies involved are committed to preserving species and their habitats through Habitat Conservation Plans, coastal salmon habitat restoration projects, watershed analysis, and implementation of riparian

reserves, while still allowing for sustainable timber harvests and promotion of jobs in the local communities.

The Department measures results by tracking progress toward the long-term goal of restoring late successional and old-growth forests, and also supports implementation of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (riparian reserves, key watersheds, watershed analysis, and watershed restoration) to maintain and restore the productivity and resiliency of riparian and aquatic ecosystems in the Forest Plan planning area. Completion of Habitat Conservation Plans related to the Forest Plan will provide additional dispersal for birds and mammals while at the same time protecting riparian zones for anadromous fisheries.

The offering of timber for sale helps provide for a sustainable regional timber economy. Reducing the number of days to process timber sales reduces disruptions in production in the region. The Department measures results by tracking progress in achieving the long-term goal of supporting people and communities during economic transition by providing jobs and training for long-term employment. The BLM will shift the emphasis of the Jobs In The Woods program from forest ecosystem work to coastal salmon habitat restoration to support the Oregon Governor's Coastal Salmon Initiative and other anadromous fisheries efforts.

Performance Goals and Measures

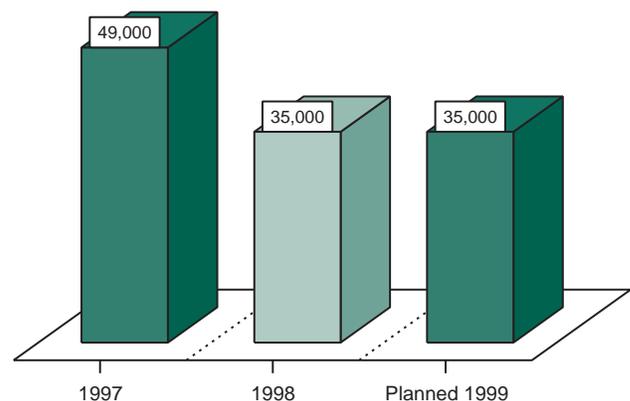
The principal performance measures of the Northwest Forest Plan are as follows:

Pacific Northwest Forest Plan Goal 1: Maintain and begin restoring remaining late-successional and old-growth forest, water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat in the Forest Plan planning area. Through the FWS, implement voluntary Habitat Conservation Plans with major non-federal land owners to allow economic development and habitat protection on 7.5 million acres.

Pacific Northwest Forest Plan Performance Measure 1: Number of acres of Oregon and California lands restored (Figure 20).

Figure 20

Number of Acres of Oregon and California Lands Restored

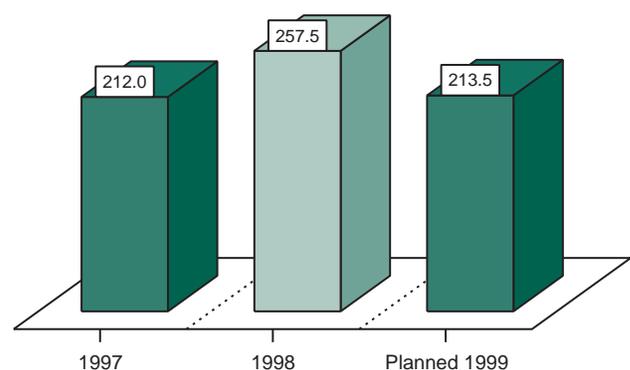


Pacific Northwest Forest Plan Goal 2: Offer 213.5 million board feet (mmbf) of timber sale annually from BLM-managed lands in western Oregon (211mmbf) and northern California (2.5 mmbf).

Pacific Northwest Forest Plan Performance Measure 2: Number of million board feet of timber offered for sale by BLM (Figure 21).

Figure 21

Number of Million Board Feet of Timber Offered for Sale by BLM



Wildland Fire Management Program

The Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs conduct fire management activities as part of their land management missions. Historically, these efforts focused on suppression of wildfires. Over the past several decades, a better understanding of the critical role that fire plays in shaping and maintaining healthy ecosystems has been incorporated into agency fire management practices. The 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Policy and Program Review emphasized the need to incorporate fire into managing ecosystems. In 1996 the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture jointly endorsed the principles, policies, and recommendations of the resulting report and directed the agencies to implement the report's recommendations. The new fire management policy moves the two Departments beyond their traditional role of fire suppression toward an approach that integrates fire into managing lands and resources in an ongoing and systematic manner.

The role of the bureaus within the Department's Wildland Fire Management program is to integrate fire into land and resource management planning and activities; protect Federal and trust lands and resources and the public welfare from destructive fire; and use fire to maintain and restore healthy and sustainable ecosystems. The Department's oversight role facilitates common policy interpretations among the bureaus and complementary planning and management strategies across administrative boundaries.

The Wildland Fire Management initiative contributes primarily to two Departmental goals:

- Protect the environment and preserve our Nation's natural and cultural resources.
- Manage natural resources for a healthy environment and a strong economy.

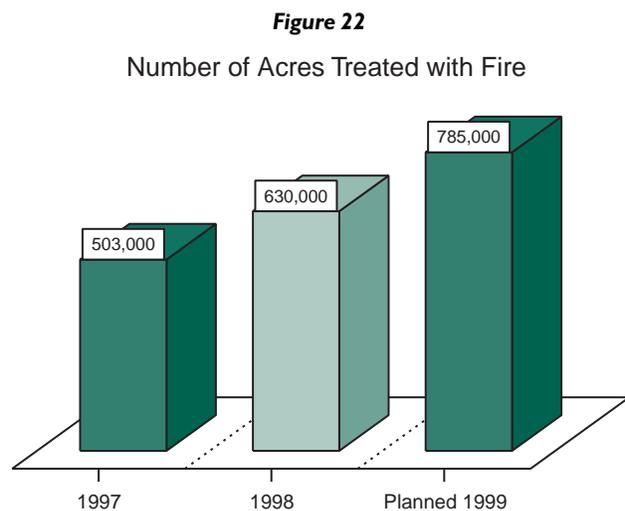
The Wildland Fire Management Program's first priority is to protect life, property, and natural/cultural resources from adverse fire effects. The program is also charged with using fire as a tool to reintroduce fire into its natural role in ecosystems that are fire dependent but have had fire excluded in recent years.

Performance Goal and Measure

The principal performance measure of this program is as follows:

Wildland Fire Management Goal: *The number of acres of fuels management treatments will increase an annual average of 10 to 20 percent over four years (1998-2001), given adequate funding and suitable weather conditions.*

Wildland Fire Management Performance Measure: *Number of acres treated with fire (Figure 22).*



South Florida Ecosystem Restoration

One of the Nation's most significant environmental initiatives is the restoration of the Everglades and the South Florida ecosystem. This vast region, which is home to more than six million Americans, seven of the ten fastest growing cities in the country, a huge tourism industry, and a large agricultural economy, also encompasses one of the world's unique environmental resources. Over the past 100 years, man-made changes to the region's water flow have provided important economic benefits to the region, but have also had adverse effects on the environment. Biological indicators of native flora and fauna have shown severe damage throughout South Florida.

To address this problem, the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Army, and Justice and the Environmental Protection Agency signed an in-

teragency agreement in September 1993 creating the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force. The group is working to integrate Federal plans, policies, and programs in the Everglades ecosystem. In May 1995, the task force was expanded to include the Florida Lieutenant Governor and the Chairmen of the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes. In October 1996, the President signed the Water Resources Development Act (Public Law 104-303), which included provisions to expand the membership and scope of duties of the task force and designated the Secretary of the Interior as the group's chairperson. The mission of the task force is to restore, preserve, and protect the South Florida ecosystem while maintaining a sustainable South Florida economy.

The South Florida Ecosystem Restoration initiative contributes primarily to two Departmental goals:

- Protect the environment and preserve our Nation's natural and cultural resources.
- Manage natural resources for a healthy environment and a strong economy.

This initiative and the efforts of the South Florida Ecosystem Task Force not only support Interior's strategic goals but also advance the strategic goals of the Army Corps of Engineers, the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The South Florida initiative responds to policy guidance from both the Administration and the Congress to improve partnerships among the Federal, State, tribal, and local governments. The South Florida Ecosystem Task Force has established a vision for South Florida as a sustainable, holistic, and integrated ecosystem. The advances made in South Florida demonstrate that ecosystem restoration works. The lessons, strategies, and methods emerging from this effort have much broader applications as well. The increasing knowledge of restoration methods holds relevancy for similar undertakings throughout the United States.

The following goals describe the responsibilities of the Federal agencies involved in the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration initiative. These goals are based on the work of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, the Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida, and the results of a strategic plan-

ning workshop conducted for the stakeholders in the restoration process.

- Mission Goal 1: The spatial extent of wetlands will be sufficient to support the historic functions of the greater Everglades ecosystem.
- Mission Goal 2: The diversity, abundance, and behavior of native plants and animals in South Florida will be characteristic of predrainage conditions.
- Mission Goal 3: Estuarine and coastal areas will function as a natural, healthy part of the ecosystem.
- Mission Goal 4: Natural hydrologic functions in wetlands are restored while providing for the water resource needs of the urban and agricultural landscapes and the estuarine and marine systems.

The participation of many non-Federal entities is vital to the success of the South Florida initiative. Through its non-Federal members, the task force works toward ensuring that the region's working landscape supports a healthy ecosystem and a sound economy while complementing the management of vital natural resources. It strives to transform the urban nature of South Florida so that growth is managed to support the region's sustainability goals, while the region's agricultural industry is profitable and compatible with the long-term goals for both urban and natural resource areas.

Non-Federal entities play a critical role in making sure that surface and ground waters are clean. They focus on containing non-point source levels of water pollution to 1996 levels and reducing that pollution by 25 percent over the next 10 years. Surface and ground water quality standards have been established for priority areas and remediation actions will be initiated as appropriate.

Performance Goal and Measure

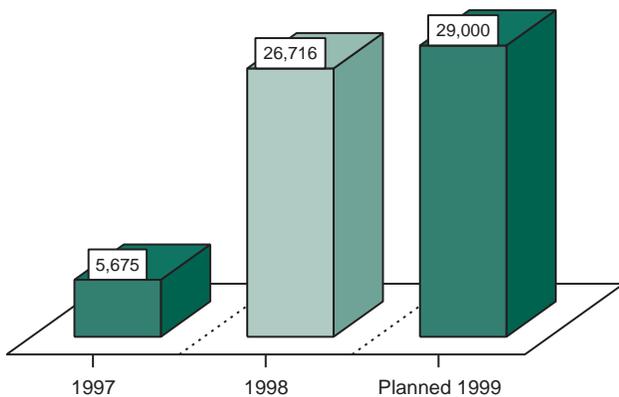
The principal performance measure of this effort is as follows:

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Goal: Federal land acquisitions in Everglades and Biscayne National Parks and Big Cypress National Preserve will be completed on a schedule consistent with the hydrologic restoration of those areas.

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Performance Measure: Number of acres acquired and/or offers extended by Federal agencies (Figure 23).

Figure 23

Number of Acres Acquired and/or Offers Extended by Federal Agencies



Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program

The Departmentwide Restoration Program provides for the restoration of injured natural resources nationwide. The first steps in the process are to select priority natural resource damage assessment projects (damage assessments), determine the extent of injury, and assess damages.

The assessments lead to negotiated settlements, including the financing of restoration projects, with the parties responsible for the hazardous substances or oil spills. Restoration projects are implemented through restoration plans after completion of a public comment period.

The Restoration Program mission is “to ascertain injuries to damaged natural resources and implement appropriate actions to restore and protect those resources for present and future generations.” These ac-

tions are taken on behalf of the American public in cooperation with other natural resource trustees.

The Restoration Program is authorized by several laws, including the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, as amended, and the Clean Water Act, as amended by the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) of 1990. These laws authorize natural resource trustees, the Federal and State governments, Indian Tribes, and foreign governments to determine the level and extent of injuries to, or lost uses of, natural resources; to seek monetary or in-kind compensation from responsible parties; and to use recoveries for restoration to pre-release/spill conditions. CERCLA, as amended, is undergoing reauthorization. Potentially, there may be changes that impact damage assessments and affect the operation of the Restoration Program.

The Restoration Program is directly related to three Departmental goals:

- Protect the environment and preserve our Nation’s natural and cultural resources.
- Manage natural resources for a healthy environment and a strong economy.
- Meet our responsibilities to American Indians.

The Restoration Program assesses the damage to natural resources resulting from releases of hazardous substances or oil spills on the Department’s lands as well as other lands within its authority and trust responsibilities for American Indians and natural resources. Settlements resulting from damage assessment cases provide recovered funding that the Department uses to protect and restore the health of injured natural and cultural resources, returning them to a healthy environmental condition for management in perpetuity.

At the heart of the mission of the Restoration Program is restoration of injured natural resources. Planning for and conducting restoration is the critical element in measuring its success. Therefore, the primary measure is to assess the number of projects where restoration implementation is occurring. Using damage assessments to reach settlements, the funding for res-

toration projects is recovered from polluters and deposited in the Restoration Fund or court registry accounts.

Another measure addresses the increase in the number of cumulative damage assessments leading to settlements with responsible parties. To determine appropriate compensation for the restoration of injured resources and lost use of resources, it is necessary to assess damages to soils, waters, vegetation, and wildlife under the trust responsibility of the Department.

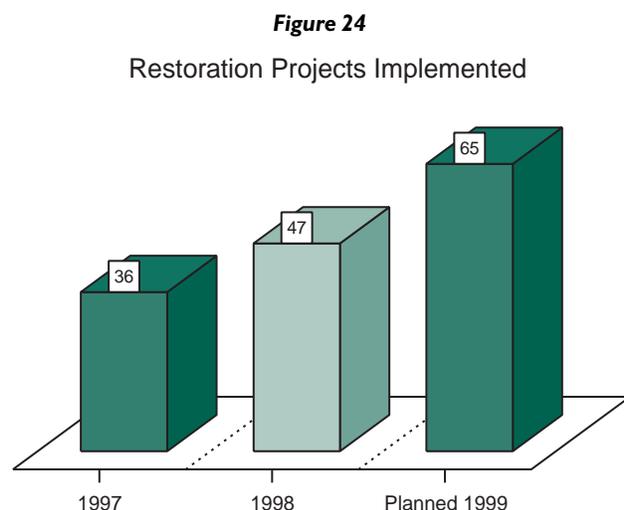
The third measure is cost recovery. Receiving sufficient recovery of the past costs of conducting damage assessments allows the Department to fund new priority damage assessments, resulting in even more settlements for the restoration of lands and resources. Without the consistent recovery of costs, restorations will either not be accomplished, or will be accomplished at the taxpayers' expense.

Performance Goal and Measure

The principal performance measure of this effort is as follows:

Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program Goal: *By 2003, increase the cumulative number of restoration projects to 110.*

Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program Performance Measure: *Restoration projects implemented (Figure 24).*



Insular Affairs

The Secretary of the Interior has certain authority and responsibilities with regard to four U.S. territories (Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) and three freely associated states (Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau). The Secretary has delegated this authority and these responsibilities to the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA), under the general supervision of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget.

The mission of the Office of Insular Affairs is to assist the islands in developing more efficient and effective government by providing financial and technical assistance, and to serve as a focal point for the management of Federal-island relations by developing and promoting appropriate Federal policies.

The insular governments are OIA's primary customers. They receive grants and direct financial assistance administered by OIA staff and they participate in technical assistance programs funded through OIA appropriations. Insular relationships with the Federal government are the primary subject of Interior's policy efforts.

OIA also performs an important service for Congress and other Federal agencies. The Federal relationship with each self-governing insular area is unique and differs dramatically from typical relationships with the States. OIA is the principal Federal repository of expertise on the insular governments and is often called upon by Congress or other agencies to explain or clarify the Federal position in the context of these unique relationships or to coordinate interagency efforts dealing with the islands.

During 1998, the Office of Insular Affairs made a concerted effort to involve all staff in developing a strategic plan and its first annual performance plan. OIA's mission and strategic goals were a collaborative effort—input and comments were sought from all island governments as well as from key Federal partners. Performance goals and measures for the Office of Insular Affairs are listed at the end of this section.

OIA is also changing some of its processes, although this evolution began several years ago. The technical assistance program was created by law more than 15 years ago. Its purpose at the time was to give OIA the capability to react outside the annual budget process to relatively small technical needs identified by the island governments. The result was an application-based grant program that tended to address a broad range of short-term projects. With GPRA now in place, OIA is changing the emphasis to a more proactive approach. Island governments are being asked to identify major technical needs and longer-term priorities in advance and to develop plans to address those objectives. While OIA will retain a capability to react to unforeseen problems, most resources will be dedicated to developing and implementing plans to meet fewer, longer-term objectives.

Significant issues that Insular Affairs is addressing include the following:

American Samoa Financial Condition: The financial position of the American Samoa Government remains a serious concern. Despite strong support and admonitions from the Secretary and members of Congress, OIA's efforts to convince the local government to implement a financial recovery plan continue to be thwarted by local policies. Preliminary reports show that the cumulative deficit in American Samoa increased by another \$6 million in 1997, further exacerbating the financial situation.

One of the major causes of American Samoa's financial problems is inadequate control over health care costs with no fees or dedicated revenues for cost recovery. Interior is currently working with American Samoa and the Health Care Financing Administration (Department of Health and Human Services) to develop a series of health care reforms that will address American Samoa's deteriorating financial condition.

U.S. Virgin Islands Financial Condition: Hurricane Marilyn in 1995 had a devastating impact on what was already a struggling Virgin Islands economy burdened by government deficit spending. Government revenues have fallen by nearly 20 percent from pre-1995 levels and, under current projections, it may take ten years just to return to those former levels. At the request of the U.S. Virgin Islands, OIA is assisting

the local government in its efforts to improve financial management and the financial recovery effort.

Brown Tree Snake Control: Finding a means to control the brown tree snake remains a major priority within the Department. The brown tree snake is a non-indigenous predator accidentally introduced into Guam that has caused extraordinary ecological and economic impacts. Additional funds have been allocated to address this critical issue.

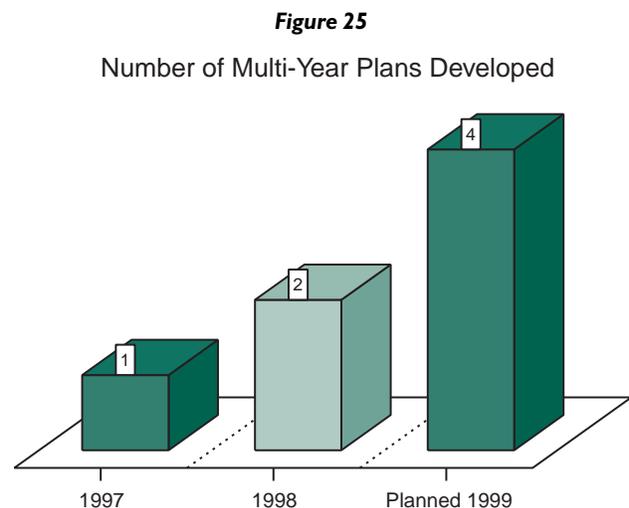
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Prison and Crime Laboratory: The Northern Mariana Islands need a new prison facility and a crime lab. These are integral to the success of the labor, immigration, and law enforcement initiative in the Commonwealth.

Performance Goals and Measures

The principal performance goals and measures for Insular Affairs are as follows:

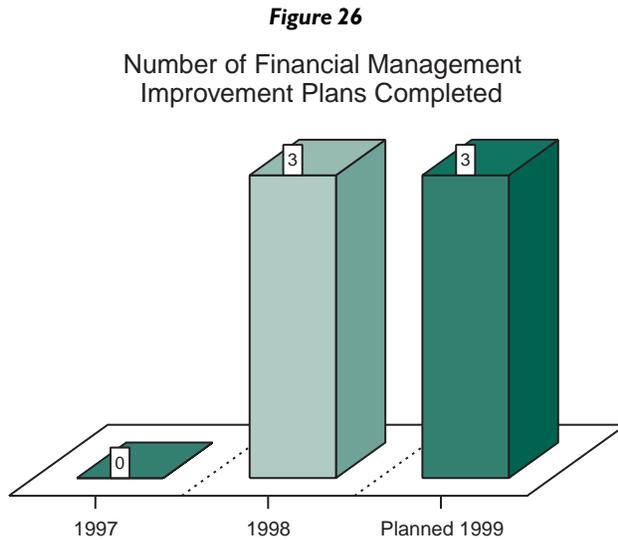
Performance Goal 1: *By 2002, all insular governments are implementing multi-year capital plans for infrastructure that are based on objective criteria, ensure adequate operations and maintenance, and specifically address user fees or other self-financing mechanisms, when appropriate.*

Performance Measure 1: *Number of multi-year capital plans developed (Figure 25).*



Performance Goal 2: By 1999, financial management improvement plans will be completed for three of the seven insular governments.

Performance Measure 2: Number of financial management improvement plans completed (Figure 26).



Performance Goal 3: Work with each insular government to identify problems and develop and implement long-term plans to improve expertise, operating efficiency, and institutional capacity in health care, education, public safety, economic development, statistics, transportation, and telecommunications. By 1999, at least 70 percent of planned objectives will be met on schedule.

Performance Measure 3: Percent of planned objectives on schedule. Baseline data for this performance measure was gathered in 1998 and will be available in 1999.