South Carolina Forestry Commission
Annual Accountability Report
Fiscal Year 2000 – 2001

Section I - Executive Summary

1. *Major Achievements for Fiscal Year 2001:*

- **New State Forester –** A new State Forester was appointed to the Forestry Commission from outside the agency on January 1, 2001 following a 4-month transition period.

- **Strategic Plan Revised** – Revisions to the agency's Strategic Plan were made during a planning conference in September with input from all levels in the agency.

- **Goal-based Performance Planning** – Goals identified in the Strategic Plan were used as the basis for Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) planning stages**.**

- **Statewide Recreation Advisory Committee Formed** – An advisory group was formed to gather input from state forest users.

- **Physical Fitness Program** - Developed process for implementing physical fitness procedure utilizing a team approach in formative stage.

2.1 *Agency Mission:*

To protect, promote, enhance, and nurture the forestlands of South Carolina, and educate the public about forestry issues, in a manner consistent with achieving the greatest good for its citizens.

2.2 *Agency Values:*

We value Customer Service and Satisfaction; to always meet or exceed the customer's expectation. Never show indifference.

We value Professionalism and Pride in Quality Work; to perform up to the highest measure of competence always.

We value Honesty, Integrity and Trustworthiness; to always live the truth, even when it may hurt; to maintain a soundness of character; to trust, and be trustworthy.

We value Treating Employees with Respect and Trust; to respect others (customers, suppliers, and colleagues) and oneself; to believe in our fellow employees abilities to get the job done right.

We value Employee Accountability; to answer for our actions; to accept responsibility.

We value Teamwork; to work cooperatively as a team with no personal agendas.

We value Open Communications; to be open, especially with information, knowledge, and news of forthcoming or actual "problems."

3. *Key strategic goals for 2001-02 and future years:*

    a) Provide the basic data used to assess the forest resource and its condition at annual intervals. Partner with US Forest Service in acquisition and analysis of this data.

    b) Raise the awareness among the public of the economic and environmental benefits of a well-managed forest resource.

    c) Improve the effectiveness of the workforce through better internal communications.

    d) Restructure the workforce at its basic level to meet changing needs and desires of constituents/customers.

4.1 *Opportunities for fulfilling our mission:*

    a) Increasing interest in open space and the health and productivity of that space. Forest Inventory Analysis provides management information.

    b) Increasing interest also creates a need for a better educated populace to make informed decisions regarding the resource.

    c) Increasing demands on the resource to provide clean water, while the resource continues to function as an economic base for the forest products industry.

    d) Recognition of the value of the resource has created the need for protection of the resource from unscrupulous buyers or outright theft.

4.2 *Barriers to fulfilling our mission:*

    a) To move ahead on the above opportunities will require increased funding for both capital improvements and upgrading our workforce. Budget reductions delay implementation.

    b) County forestry boards' role in management of local personnel hampers the agency's ability to change structure of the agency to meet current needs. This role, specified by law, needs to be changed.

    c) A changing populace that no longer has rural needs and lacks the understanding of basic forest management techniques needed to keep the forest healthy and productive.

    d) Expanding population into rural areas creates increased risk of fire to structures built in those areas.

Section II - Business Overview

1. *Number of employees:*

    The Forestry Commission is authorized to employ personnel utilizing 500 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs). Currently we employ 450 people with a 10% vacancy factor.

2. *Operation locations:*

    Personnel are assigned positions throughout the state through a series of county, area, regional and headquarter offices. The largest single group of employees, forest fire wardens, reports directly from their residences in responding to wildland fires. Regional administrative and support offices are located in Newberry, Florence, and Walterboro. Central emergency dispatch centers are co-located at the regional office sites. A forest seedling nursery is located in Edgefield County, and a forest seed orchard is located in Jasper County. Major property holdings include Manchester State Forest near Wedgefield, Sand Hills State Forest near Patrick, Harbison State Forest near Columbia, and a newly acquired forest near Pickens.

3. *Expenditures/appropriations chart:*

Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations

Major Budget Categories	99-00 Actual Expenditures		00-01 Actual Expenditures		01-02 Appropriations Act	
	Total Funds*	General Funds	Total Funds*	General Funds	Total Funds*	General Funds
Personal Service	$13,012,198	$11,554,656	$13,496,453	$11,969,761	$12,258,493	$10,998,299
Other Operating	$6,323,905	$2,966,069	$8,106,143	$4,747,934	$7,596,377	$3,636,377
Special Items	$1,092,278	$544,921	$1,178,603	$430,962	$1,350,000	$300,000
Permanent Improvements	$93,952	$1,113	$600,366	$104,820	$0	$0
Case Services						
Distributions to Subdivisions	$757,272	$0	$725,592	$0	$1,045,000	$0
Fringe Benefits	$4,017,647	$3,630,385	$4,183,831	$3,753,918	$4,032,003	$3,675,445
Non-recurring	$35,512	$35,512	$146,181	$146,181		
Total	**$25,332,764**	**$18,732,656**	**$28,437,169**	**$21,153,576**	**$26,281,873**	**$18,610,121**

* Totals include State Appropriations, Federal and other.

Other Expenditures

Sources of Funds	99-00 Actual Expenditures	00-01 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills	$0	$0
Capital Reserve Funds	$0	$0
Bonds	$0	$0

4. *Key Customers:*

   External:
   - Owners and users of forestland
   - Earth science teachers and students
   - Environmental education coordinators and administrators
   - City and county fire services
   - Rural-Urban interface residents and interest groups
   - State forests visitors and user groups
   - Urban residents and businesses
   - Local governments: county and city councils
   - State Legislative members

   Internal:
   - Employees
   - Commissioners
   - County Forestry Boards

5. *Key suppliers:*

   Vehicle equipment manufacturers, heavy equipment manufacturers and dealers, vehicle repair garages and parts suppliers, communication equipment dealers and repair businesses, forestry equipment suppliers, office supply vendors, printing businesses and media outlets, and aerial detection contractors.

6.   *Major products and services:*

The major products and services of the Forestry Commission are authorized and required by the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90, *General duties of Commission*.

Protect the Resource

The Forestry Commission has a statewide wildfire prevention, detection and control network in place. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, "It shall take and afford such organized means as may be necessary to prevent, control and extinguish fires, including the enforcement of any and all laws pertaining to the protection of the forests and woodlands on the State."

Commission personnel construct firebreaks on privately owned forest lands to suppress fires and reduce the potential for destructive forest fire. To further minimize the effect of wildfire and smoke hazards, Commission foresters prepare prescribed burning plans for property owners and assist with conducting burns to reduce hazardous fuels, improve wildlife habitat, and prepare sites for reforestation.

The Commission periodically surveys the state for forest insect and disease infestations. Because the Commission's central office has an entomologist working out of a fully equipped diagnostic lab, project foresters have access to up-to-date information about local problems and measures for control.

The Law Enforcement Program provides fire prevention through the enforcement of state fire laws and strives to reduce arson and forest product theft and fraud. The agency has 62 commissioned officers, including 4 full-time investigators. In addition to enforcing outdoor burning regulations, this program has handled a dramatic increase in timber theft/fraud cases as a result of increasing timber values. The SCFC's Law Enforcement Program serves as a benchmark for our neighboring states who are not actively investigating timber theft cases.

The Forestry Commission is the designated agency in South Carolina to provide public oversite and guidance for technical forest management practices. The agency has established approved Best Management Practices (BMPs) and monitors compliance with BMP guidelines routinely. Preventative measures, such as BMP education and making pre-harvest site-specific recommendations, are key components of the agency's program.

Manage the Resource

Commission foresters, working throughout the state, examine woodlands at the request of the landowner. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, "It shall give such advice, assistance and cooperation as may be practical to private owners of land …"

Based on the utilization of the land, the forester writes a woodland management plan tailored to the specific needs of that property. The plan includes descriptions of each forest stand, recommended practices to meet the objectives of the landowner, and a property map. The plan also includes suggestions on how to accomplish recommended work.

Prescribed burning services and timber marking services are offered for a fee.

There are several financial assistance options available for landowners in helping to complete forestry practices. Commission foresters determine whether or not a landowner qualifies for assistance and then assist with the application process and implementation of the practice.

To assist the state's woodland owners with reforestation, the Commission sells forest tree seedlings. Several native pine and hardwood species are available.

The Commission manages Sand Hills State Forest, Manchester State Forest, and Harbison State Forest for multiple forestry and public education purposes.

All employees of the Forestry Commission are committed to forest conservation education. Civic and social groups, scouts, science teachers and environmental organizations request programs on forestry and related environmental subjects.

As our urban areas expand, the importance of growing and maintaining healthy trees in city spaces will increase. Foresters work with urban residents, city planners, developers, contractors and local government to improve the quality of our urban environments.

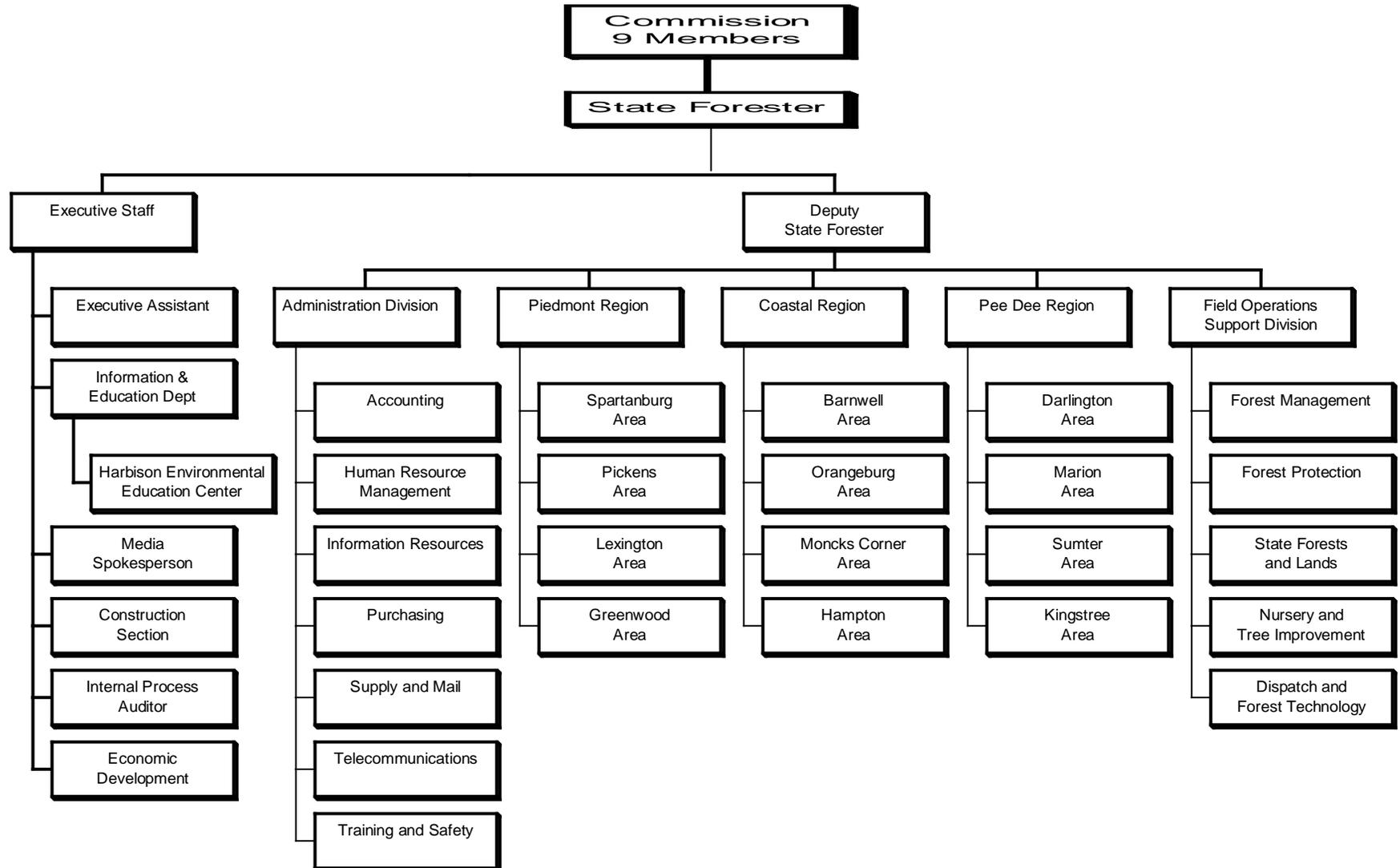### Raise Awareness about the Resource

The Forestry Commission is responsible for educating the public on the economic and environmental benefits of a well-managed forest resource. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws "It shall … promote… a proper appreciation by the public of the advantages of forestry and the benefits to be derived from forest culture and preservation."

The Environmental Education Program has grown rapidly in the past few years. Currently composed of Harbison Environmental Education Forest and the Information & Education Section, the goal of this program is: (1) to provide environmental education opportunities among school age children and adult populations, (2) to produce technical and general informational materials on forestry and forest-related subjects for educational and informational purposes, and (3) to operate two public environmental education centers.

7.   *Organizational Structure*

(See Organizational Chart on page 7.)

South Carolina Forestry Commission
Organizational Chart

Commission 9 Members

State Forester

Executive Staff

Deputy State Forester

Executive Staff
- Executive Assistant
- Information & Education Dept
  - Harbison Environmental Education Center
- Media Spokesperson
- Construction Section
- Internal Process Auditor
- Economic Development

Administration Division
- Accounting
- Human Resource Management
- Information Resources
- Purchasing
- Supply and Mail
- Telecommunications
- Training and Safety

Piedmont Region
- Spartanburg Area
- Pickens Area
- Lexington Area
- Greenwood Area

Coastal Region
- Barnwell Area
- Orangeburg Area
- Moncks Corner Area
- Hampton Area

Pee Dee Region
- Darlington Area
- Marion Area
- Sumter Area
- Kingstree Area

Field Operations Support Division
- Forest Management
- Forest Protection
- State Forests and Lands
- Nursery and Tree Improvement
- Dispatch and Forest Technology

SECTION III – Elements of Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria

Category I: Leadership

1.1   How do senior leaders set, deploy and communicate:

a) Short and long term direction?

Short and long term directions are based on priorities presented by and discussed with stakeholders, customers, agency leadership and employees, Commissioners, Executive/Legislative branches of government, and by monitoring and projecting issues/trends that impact forestry/forest resources.

Direction is communicated through the strategic plan, performance evaluation process, weekly news bulletins, newsletters, meetings with employees, customers, and stakeholders, and one-on-one discussions.

b) Performance expectations?

Performance expectations are determined through one or more of the following: review of past organizational performance, review of other organization performances, discussions with those primarily responsible for carrying out/monitoring the program.

Expectations are communicated through the strategic and action plans, the performance review planning process, meetings, and one-on-one discussions. Commitment and performance are achieved and supported through periodic and on-going reviews of expectations and progress towards them. Individual high performance is supported through the performance appraisal process, as well as informal, on-going reviews; the agency also has in place a performance pay increase and bonus pay programs.

c) Organizational values?

Employees at an agency-wide planning conference identified organizational values in 1997. Values were printed, framed and displayed in offices. Management strives to model the values. Senior management recognizes the importance of reviewing and discussing organizational values with employees, and with job applicants during the interview process.

d) Empowerment and innovation?

The agency has an open work environment, with a majority of the employees being self-directed. During the self-assessment, strategic plan development, and strategic plan review processes, employees have been encouraged to identify opportunities for improvement. Feedback may be conveyed directly to agency leadership by employees or through the line organization, as well as through various program areas.

Employees may receive rewards or recognition through the EIS program, bonus pay, or performance pay programs, as appropriate.

e) *Organizational and employee learning?*

During the self-assessment process and agency-wide planning conference, employees identified training as an area needing new direction and leadership support. Agency leadership supported and implemented this change. Employees provide input to the training program through a training council, which identifies, evaluates, prioritizes, and implements internal training courses. Training guides are being developed for various employee groups and a training calendar is maintained on the agency's website; senior leaders participate in various training courses.

Additionally, learning and ideas for new training come from employee and leadership participation in meetings and training offered by other agencies and organizations (US Forest Service, Office of Human Resource Management, Agency Director Organization, Deputy Director Organization, professional associations).

During tight budget years, training emphasis shifts to courses that require little or no registration fees, little or no overnight travel, and/or seeking/conducting training on a more localized basis. Oftentimes, a few select employees attend the more extensive training courses and then serve as trainers for other employees. This "train the trainer" approach has been successful.

f) *Ethical behavior?*

Ethical expectations are expressed and communicated in the agency values - identified by employees, as well as in various policies and procedures and professional organizations.

Employees violating ethical principles are dealt with through appropriate means, which may include counseling, disciplinary or legal action.

1.2 How do senior leaders establish and promote a focus on customers?

Senior leaders establish and promote a customer focus through the agency's mission statement, strategic and action plans, and budgeting process. A strong emphasis is placed on listening and responding to internal and external customers (meetings, focus groups, surveys, one-on-one) and incorporating input into the strategic and action plans. Opportunities are identified/sought to meet with key customers, partners, and suppliers.

1.3 What key performance measures do your senior leaders regularly review?

Key performance measures are tracked by appropriate programs and/or line personnel and reported to senior leadership periodically. Depending upon the measure, information may be reported through e-mail, at monthly leadership meetings, by a formal report, or one-on-one.

Our key measures include:

- Customer satisfaction levels for forest tree seedlings, technical forestry assistance, and forestry services.
- Forest based economic development impact.
- Forest Inventory Analysis Productivity
- Fire response times.
- Timber theft recovery rates
- Best management practices compliance trends
- Environmental education trends
- Employee turnover rates
- Warden turnover and experience loss rates
- Financial trends

There are other efficiency and quality measures we want to design and review. Some areas we are looking at include: response time for forestry services and woodland management plans, new and repeat customers, quality of fireline construction and the rate of failure, hazard and risk assessments for communities, and quality of prescribed burns.

1.4 How do senior leaders use organizational performance review findings and employee feedback to improve their own leadership effectiveness and the effectiveness of management throughout the organization?

Senior leaders discuss and use employee feedback and organizational reviews to determine if leadership/management is:

- adequately communicating direction and priorities to employees
- identifying and removing barriers that may hinder employees performance
- setting realistic performance expectations
- needing to modify or change priorities

1.5 How does the organization address the current and potential impact on the public of its products, programs, services, facilities and operations, including associated risks?

Agency leadership assesses impacts on the public of products, services, and facilities by seeking input from employees, customers, stakeholders, public, and legal/regulatory-authorities (as needed), evaluating the product/service, anticipating the intended and unintended consequences, and adapting as appropriate, then monitor and re-evaluate/readapt as needed.

1.6 How does senior leadership set and communicate key organizational priorities for improvement?

Senior leadership sets key priorities for improvement by reviewing input and feedback from internal and external customers and reviewing available performance data and benchmarks.

Priorities may be communicated by leadership meeting with internal and external customers, weekly news bulletins, newsletters, performance evaluation planning stage, and one-on-one discussions.

1.7 How does senior leadership and the agency actively support and strengthen the community?

Leadership and the agency support and strengthen the community by encouraging employees to actively participate in local civic, school, and community projects and activities. The agency routinely provides advice and assistance, as well as training and grant opportunities to communities, organizations and local governments (especially through its urban forestry program, cooperation with rural and volunteer fire departments, and reforestation efforts).

Category 2: Strategic Planning

2.1 What is your Strategic Planning process, including participants, and how does it account for:

The Forestry Commission's strategic plan is mission based. Our planning process involves collecting input, analyzing and verifying its content, consolidating like issues, identifying strategies related to each issue, developing and disseminating the plan, and reviewing and updating the plan as it is carried out. Participants include agency Commissioners, employees, customers, cooperators, and the public.

During plan development and revision, data and information were collected and shared at area level meetings throughout the agency. Representatives from all areas of the organization participated in refining information for the plan. Goals and action items are assigned to appropriate personnel and may be included in the EPMS planning process.

a) Customer needs and expectations?

A number of action items in the strategic plan call for monitoring customers' needs and expectations through surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews. Input from customers is a primary basis for developing other action items in the plan.

b) Financial, societal and other risks?

Specific financial, societal, or other risks are addressed in individual action items.

c) Human resource capabilities and needs?

Human resource needs and capabilities are covered primarily under one of the five major objectives in the plan. Many of the goals and action items were a direct result of employee input.

d) Operational capabilities and needs?

Operational capabilities and needs are included in specific action items in the plan and include internal audits and reviews of programs and processes.

e) Supplies/contractor partner capabilities and needs?

Major contractor and partner needs and capabilities are also covered in specific action items. A primary focus of these action items is to strengthen working relationships by conducting joint planning and training with partners.

2.2 How do you develop and track action plans that address your key strategic objectives?

Action items were identified for each goal during the development of our strategic plan and were included in the plan; they form the basis for our action plans. Agency leaders and program managers further identified steps needed to achieve the action items and the personnel involved. Action items have been included in employees' EPMS planning stages, with managers and leaders responsible for tracking progress.

2.3 How do you communicate and deploy your strategic objectives, action plans and performance measures?

Strategic objectives, action plans, and performance measures are communicated by a cross-functional leadership team, and program managers, as well as through meetings, the agency's weekly bulletin, newsletter, and the EPMS planning process.

Category 3: Customer Focus

3.1   Identify key customers and stakeholders:

- Forest landowners
- State forest visitors
- Urban residents and businesses
- County and City Fire Services
- Earth science teachers and students
- Environmental education coordinators and administrators
- Local governments: City and County Councils
- State Legislative members
- State agencies: Clemson University, University of South Carolina, South Carolina State University, Department of Commerce, Department of Education, Department of Health and Environmental Control, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism.
- Federal agencies: USDA Forest Service, Farm Services Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of the Interior, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Defense.
- Forestry Businesses: pulp and paper companies, sawmills, loggers, and secondary wood processors, private consulting firms.
- Other organizations: S. C. Forestry Association, forest landowner associations, SC Urban and Community Forestry Council, South Carolina Foresters Council.

3.2   How do you determine who your customers are and what are their key requirements?

Our key customers were generally identified in the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90 *General duties of Commission*. As our services and products have evolved over the years our customer base has expanded to include other non-traditional forestry customers. For example, urban populations have expanded into the more rural and forested areas of our state and we are responding to this population's need for assistance on their personal property, as well as providing information on their surrounding natural environment.

Our agency uses a variety of methods to determine requirements, expectations, and preferences and satisfaction of customers and stakeholders:

- Customer Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Public Forums and Workshops
- Collaboration with Partners and User Groups
- Outreach Publications for Targeted Audiences
- Interviews
- County Forestry Board Meetings
- Monitoring of Legislative Activities

For the past two years, the Forestry Commission has conducted surveys of potential (landowner) customers and current customers to determine their expectations and preferences. Survey forms soliciting feedback are sent to landowners that receive forest management assistance or services. Customers are asked about the length of time it took to complete the service, the results of the service, follow-up on the service, and courtesy and professionalism of the employees.

Each year, agency leadership also participates in meetings of county forestry boards to discuss current forestry issues and agency programs.

Federal grants dictate who we provide assistance to regarding Urban Forestry, Best Management Practices, and the Wildland/Urban Interface.

Periodic mailings to new forest landowners, surveying their interests and needs help acquire new customers.

3.3   *How do you keep your listening and learning methods current with changing customer/business needs?*

The Forestry Commission seeks input and information through participation in a number of partnerships and councils. These include: Urban and Community Forestry Council, Wildland Fire Protection Partnership, South Carolina Foresters Council, Southern Group of State Foresters, National Association of State Foresters, Emergency Preparedness Division, South Carolina Forestry Association, many local landowner associations, and the South Carolina Firemen's Association.

3.4   *How do you use information from customer/stakeholders to improve services or programs?*

Information about customer satisfaction and suggestions for improving services is reviewed by the senior leadership of the Forestry Commission and is disseminated to the appropriate program manager to improve the service or product. Regionally, this information is passed on to the Area and then to the County where the work is performed for improvement.

3.5   *How do you measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction?*

Customer satisfaction surveys for forest management plans, forest services, and forest tree seedlings are provided to customers for them to fill out and return in a self-addressed postage paid envelope. This has been done for the past two years for management plans and services. Survey information for the past three years is available for forest seedling customers.

3.6 How do you build positive relationships with customers and stakeholders? Indicate any key distinctions between different customer groups.

Complaints are recorded and promptly investigated to determine all problems and to attempt to alleviate them quickly.

The Forestry Commission meets with state forest user groups on a timely basis to discuss and plan for future opportunities on Forestry Commission owned land that is used for various recreational purposes.

The Forestry Commission makes timely responses to state legislators when our elected officials seek input.

Category 4: Information and Analysis

4.1 *How do you decide which operations and systems to measure?*

Measures have been used for several years to monitor program accomplishments. Output measures are commonly used as a gauge of our activity levels. More recently however, efficiency measures have been developed for specific operations as a result of our improved ability to gather performance data. For example, we recently installed a computer aided fire dispatch system that allows us to measure response times to wildfires.

Other measures have been designed as a result of discussions with the South Carolina Office of Human Resources and our need to gauge customer satisfaction with our services and products. For example, we now ask our customers to evaluate our work through the use of questionnaires. We are still learning what constitutes good performance measures; whether they be output, outcome, efficiency, or quality measures.

Our next step is to design measures which are linked directly to our mission and the objectives in our strategic plan. Senior management has begun discussions about which measures should be developed for internal use, and which measures may be reported on an annual basis. The State Forester has determined that key measures should be designed and in place as quickly as possible to allow us to begin the data gathering phase during this fiscal year.

4.2 *How do you ensure data quality, reliability, completeness, and availability for decision making?*

We are continuing to learn to use performance measures in our decision making processes. Measures and data have been used on a limited basis during program reviews at the area and state levels. Senior management has instructed regional foresters and division directors to begin sharing performance data with personnel at all levels as a means of improving processes and generating feedback.

We undergo annual audits of financial records and processes. An internal auditor reviews data collection processes frequently.

4.3 *How do you use data and information analysis to provide effective support for decision making?*

Until recently, good performance data was not readily available. Decision makers at all levels will soon have access to performance measures and are expected to factor that information into their thinking and decisions.

4.4   How do you select and use comparative data and information?

Comparative data from similar state forestry organizations is available on a limited basis. Each state records data differently. Contacts made with southeastern states reveal that most state forestry organizations are just beginning to track meaningful performance measures. South Carolina is the only southeastern state which tracks dispatch response times through a statewide real time computer aided dispatch system.

Category 5: Human Resources Focus

5.1   How do you and your managers/supervisors encourage and motivate employees to develop and utilize their full potential?

The Forestry Commission encourages, arranges, and enables employees to obtain the State's Associate Public Manager Award (APM) to help them be more effective supervisors and better prepare them for promotional opportunities.

We reward outstanding employee performance through a pay incentive program. We consider this financial recognition incentive to be a high priority and we will continue to recognize high performers even in the presence of budget changes.

We also recognize those employees who take on additional duties and responsibilities as a result of budget changes and then perform well. We believe that as we downsize and adjust to doing more with less it is very important to reward those employees who do more than their share of work.

We award pay bonuses to employees who make unusually productive contributions towards the work of our agency. We encourage supervisors to nominate their employees for this type of reward and we believe that the program has a positive effect on employees throughout the organization.

Tuition assistance is available in our agency and is viewed as a win-win situation for employees to expand their educational opportunities as well as help provide increased levels of expertise for the agency.

We involve employees in our strategic planning processes. During plan development and revision, data and information were collected and shared at area level meetings throughout the agency. Representatives from all areas of the organization participated in refining information for the plan.

Recruiting for new foresters is conducted at various forestry schools in the southeast with on-site interviews and screenings, looking for bright energetic candidates with knowledge and skills to develop into future leaders of the organization. We value promoting from within to fill the majority of our supervisory and upper management positions and have been very successful doing so over the years through these recruiting efforts.

Structured career paths providing for advancement opportunities, additional skills and knowledge gained through training, and salary increases are available for Forestry Wardens, Forestry Technicians, Rangers, Mechanics, and Foresters, which together comprise over 60% of our workforce.

5.2 How do you identify and address key developmental training needs, including job skills training, performance excellence training, diversity training, management/leadership development, new employee orientation and safety training?

Identification of training needs is done by asking program managers to stay current on all required training and new techniques and technologies affecting their programs and requesting appropriate training. A training council meets quarterly to review training needs and is currently working on training guides to set minimum training requirements by job position. The training director constantly looks at training opportunities and insures that all personnel meet required training.

5.3 How does your employee performance management system, including feedback to and from employees, support high performance?

Our Employee Performance Management System uses a universal review date of January 1, which allows supervisors to emphasize strategic plan action items for employees during the calendar year. Position descriptions have been revised to reflect strategic plan objectives for selected positions.

5.4 What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine employee well being, satisfaction, and motivation?

Employees are surveyed periodically for input on issues and areas needing improvement, such as in planning conferences and development/updating of strategic plan action items. We are considering developing a survey for future use to measure employee satisfaction and well being.

5.5 How do you maintain a safe and healthy work environment?

Maintaining a safe and healthy work environment is accomplished by stressing safety in all aspects of the agency. Safety training such as defensive driving training and first aid training is required of certain positions. The safety coordinator looks at all accident reports to recommend ways to avoid similar accidents in the future. Safety inspections of facilities and operations are ongoing and other agency personnel with special expertise are involved where needed. Employees are encouraged to participate in health screenings and health fairs.

We recently began a physical fitness standards program for fireline employees. The program is designed to ensure the readiness of fireline employees to perform their jobs, to increase fireline employees' productivity, and to increase physical fitness levels of fireline employees through a program of fitness and health education, evaluation, monitoring, and follow-up.

5.6 What is the extent of your involvement in the community?

We conduct annual fund drives for United Way, Good Health Appeal, United Black Fund, and the Salvation Army. Our agency actively participates in numerous community programs such as volunteer fire departments, career days at schools, Camp Kemo, fishing rodeos, state & county fairs, state forests and state parks events, as well as festivals in towns, cities, and communities. We bring Smokey Bear to children groups in all counties of the state. In addition, 25% of receipts from timber sales on state forests go to the associated counties for educational uses.

Category 6: Process Management

6.1   What are your key design and delivery processes for products/services, and how do you incorporate new technology, changing customer and mission-related requirements, into these design and delivery processes and systems?

The agency offers products and services to forest landowners and the general public in five key areas: forest protection, forest management, state forests, seedling production, and environmental education.

Forest Protection

The SCFC provides landowners with wildland firefighting assistance through a network of firefighters and equipment stationed throughout the state. Dispatching the closest firefighting unit is a key process in protecting the forest resource. The agency has three dispatch centers located in Newberry, Florence, and Walterboro. Each dispatch center was reviewed in Spring of 2001 to ensure consistency among centers and efficiency in operations. The dispatch centers are heavily reliant on advanced technology. A Dispatch & Forest Technology Coordinator, located in Columbia, has technical oversight of the dispatch centers. Independent analyses of key success criteria, such as response time, is monitored at the Columbia Headquarters level.

The SCFC also administers the process of accepting notification of outdoor burning. Forestry, agriculture, and wildlife burning notifications are received by the regional dispatch centers. All other notifications for outdoor burning, including trade waste and yard debris, are received by an automated voice mail system. This system is an efficient way to process large numbers of calls (300,000+ per year) in a timely fashion and to deliver a consistent fire safety message to the burner.

Forest Management

The SCFC provides forest landowners with assistance in managing their forestland. This involves a wide range of services including the development of management plans, the monitoring of environmental guidelines, and the re-inventory of South Carolina's forests. One fourth of the agency's 12 operational areas are reviewed annually. These reviews are led by the Forest Management Chief in the Columbia Headquarters. Also, customer surveys are mailed to recipients of management plans or forest services. Compliance with agency-approved environmental guidelines are monitored bi-annually on federal, state, industrial, and private forest ownerships. Results are published and widely distributed in hard copy and over the internet. A key activity of the SCFC is the re-inventory of the state's forestland. Six two-person crews are measuring plots to exacting national standards. The US Forest Service is required to check a minimum of 5% of our plot work to ensure quality control.

State Forests

The SCFC's State Forests demonstrate sustainable multiple-use management to forest landowners and the general public. In FY 2000-2001, the State Forests began developing a long-range plan that will address the primary uses of the State Forests. The plan should be complete by January, 2002, at which time short-range plans will be developed for each State Forest.

Seedling Production

The Nursery & Tree Improvement Section of the SCFC supplies forest landowners in South Carolina with high-quality forest tree seedlings. Approximately 25 million seedlings were grown during FY 2000-2001. A 10% customer survey is implemented annually as a feedback mechanism to direct future product design. The last survey showed 97% of our customers were satisfied with seedling quality and customer service. Also, an annual financial analysis is completed to adjust seedling production and price.

Environmental Education

One of the SCFC's primary missions is to promote a proper appreciation by the public of the biological functions and benefits of the state's forests. Educational programs are tailored to audiences of all ages. Science teachers are one focal point for training so they can take information back to their classrooms. The Wood Magic Program is rapidly expanding in response to its popularity among elementary school children. Educational programs are evaluated and adjusted to meet perceived needs.

6.2   *How does your day-to-day operation of key production/delivery processes ensure meeting key performance requirements?*

Forest Protection

Response time to fires is recorded by dispatchers using time stamp technology and computers. Monthly reports are generated and provided to the regional dispatch manager and the regional staff. Networking capabilities also allow Columbia headquarters staff to stay in touch with real-time dispatching in order to quickly respond to problems.

Forest Management

Customer surveys are sent out immediately at the completion of services work or delivery of management plans. Responses are returned directly to the regional forester and analyzed with particular attention given to any negative responses. Contacts are made with landowners where possible to review responses and correct any problems with service delivery. In general, statewide programs, such as the Environmental Management and Forest Inventory and Analysis programs, are directly supervised by a Columbia staff forester with specific training in their program area.

State Forests

Annual work plans are reviewed by agency management. Forest product sales are reviewed and approved by the agency's nine-member Commission. Federal and state regulatory agencies work closely with the state forests to ensure protection of rare plants and animals.

Seedling Production

Key success criteria are included in Nursery and Tree Improvement facility manager's EPMS rating criteria. Success criteria include measures of seed & seedling quality as well as protection of the productive capability of the nursery soil. There is technical oversight by staff at the Auburn & NC State University Cooperatives, of which the SCFC is a member. Internally, agency staff updates seedling production periodically.

Environmental Education

Pre- and post-tests are given to participants of the Wood Magic to evaluate program effectiveness. Exit interviews are completed with teachers who participate in the Teacher's Tour. In general, there is an overwhelming demand for SCFC environmental education programs. Many teachers return for additional training after going through one of the agency's environmental education programs.

6.3   *What are your key support processes, and how do you improve and update these processes to achieve better performance?*

Information Technology

Most aspects of our business involve technology and information management. We have established a presence on the internet as a means to disseminate information. Internet sales of State Forest recreational permits and Nursery & Tree Improvement seedlings are being developed. Personnel have been hired with expertise to develop unique agency-specific application software.

Outreach Efforts

We have begun an earnest effort to reach under-served landowners by holding outreach meetings for minority and non-traditional landowners. Law enforcement issues, especially timber theft, are used as the focal point of outreach meetings. Once interest is developed, other management assistance can be offered. These community meetings provide a forum for question and answer sessions with local people and leaders. The meetings also provide feedback to the SCFC as to concerns and issues important to that locality.

Training Programs

Fire training is a key internal activity specific to the South Carolina Forestry Commission due to our emergency response mission. We also require employees to attend training in human resource management areas such as Equal Employment Opportunity training, recruiting and hiring practices, and supervisory skills. The Training Council reviews training policy and procedures. Mandatory training guidelines are being developed for each position in the agency.

Accounting Department

Our accounting department has received four successive audits by the State Auditors Office with no findings.

6.4   *How do you manage and support your key supplier/contractor/partner interactions and processes to improve performance?*

Air Operations

We depend on two sources for early detection of wildfire: fires called in to dispatch centers by the public and aircraft detection. Aircraft detection services are provided by both contract aircraft and aircraft on loan from the federal government. Contract pilots are trained by us to detect and report location, size, and woodlands involved to dispatch centers who in turn dispatch fire suppression resources to the fire. In addition to detection, our pilots and aircraft are used in the fire suppression effort to assist ground crews and equipment with information needed to suppress the fire in a safe and efficient manner. Close coordination among agency pilots and contractors is required to operate efficiently. Contract specifications were updated and rebid during Summer, 2001.

Equipment Manufacturers

Our Equipment Program Manager works closely with fire suppression equipment dealers and factory representatives to stay abreast of new designs and technology. The equipment program produces specifications to receive bids on equipment as well as provides design and fabrication capability to the field organization. Equipment specifications are updated as state-of-the-art technology changes, such as the development of hydraulic transmissions. Equipment maintenance, warranty issues, inventory, cost effectiveness and replacement scheduling is also a responsibility of the program which in turn provides information as needed to equipment manufacturers and other related partners. Software has been purchased and utilized to track equipment costs.

University Cooperative Membership

The SCFC stays current with state-of-the-art forestry research through membership in university-based research cooperatives. This is especially important in the Nursery and Tree Improvement section where we are members in the NC State Tree Improvement Cooperative and the Auburn Nursery Cooperative. The collaborative effort and related cost of conducting research is spread over all cooperative members, eliminating the redundant efforts and expenses which would otherwise occur.

US Forest Service Cooperative Funding

We are the primary partner for the US Forest Service in South Carolina in implementing forestry-related programs. Federal funds are allocated to key SCFC state partners based primarily on funding levels and project prioritization by SCFC-led coordinating committees.
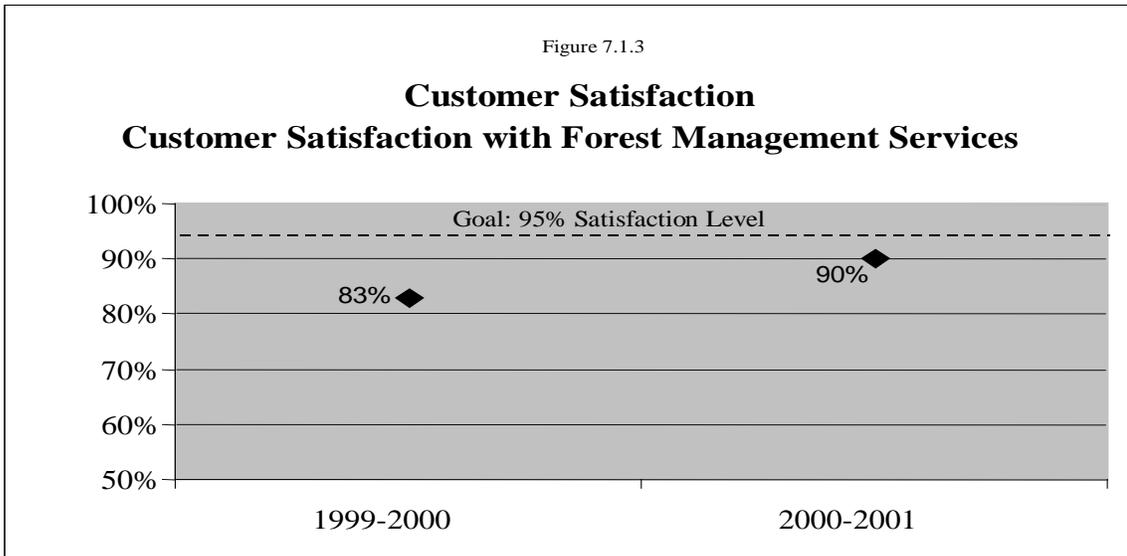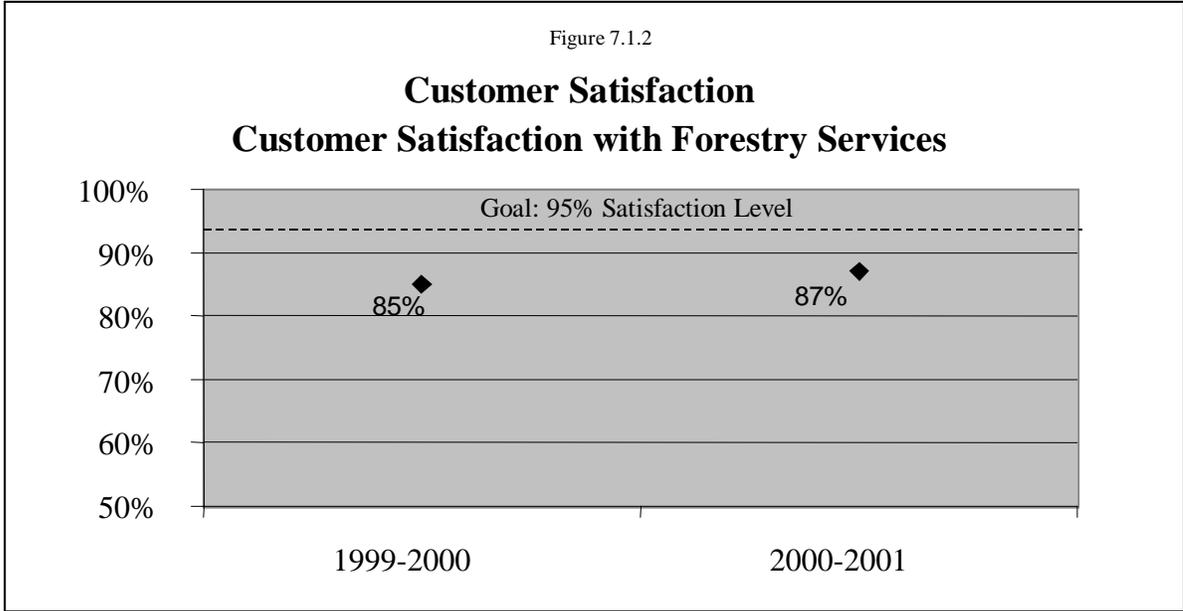
Category 7: Business Results

7.1   What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of customer satisfaction?

Beginning in 1998 we began to measure customer satisfaction with our forest tree seedling products. The combined satisfaction levels have consistently remained in the 90%+ range as illustrated in Figure 7.1.1. We routinely review comments on returned surveys looking for ways to improve our product and delivery systems.

Figure 7.1.1

Customer Satisfaction
Customer Satisfaction Level for Seedling Products
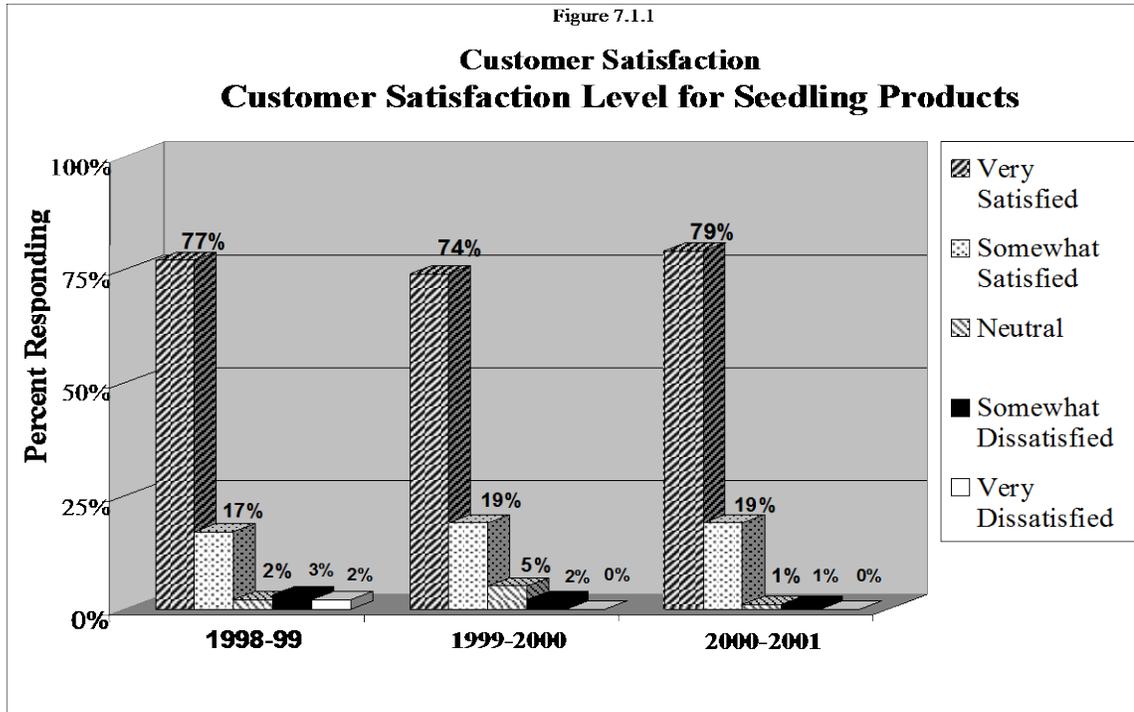
Beginning in 1999 we began measuring customer satisfaction levels with our forestry services and our technical forest management assistance. Figures 7.1.2 and 7.1.3 illustrate our overall satisfaction levels. Our immediate goal is to improve our forestry services to the 95% satisfaction level. We feel this is a very reasonable and attainable goal.
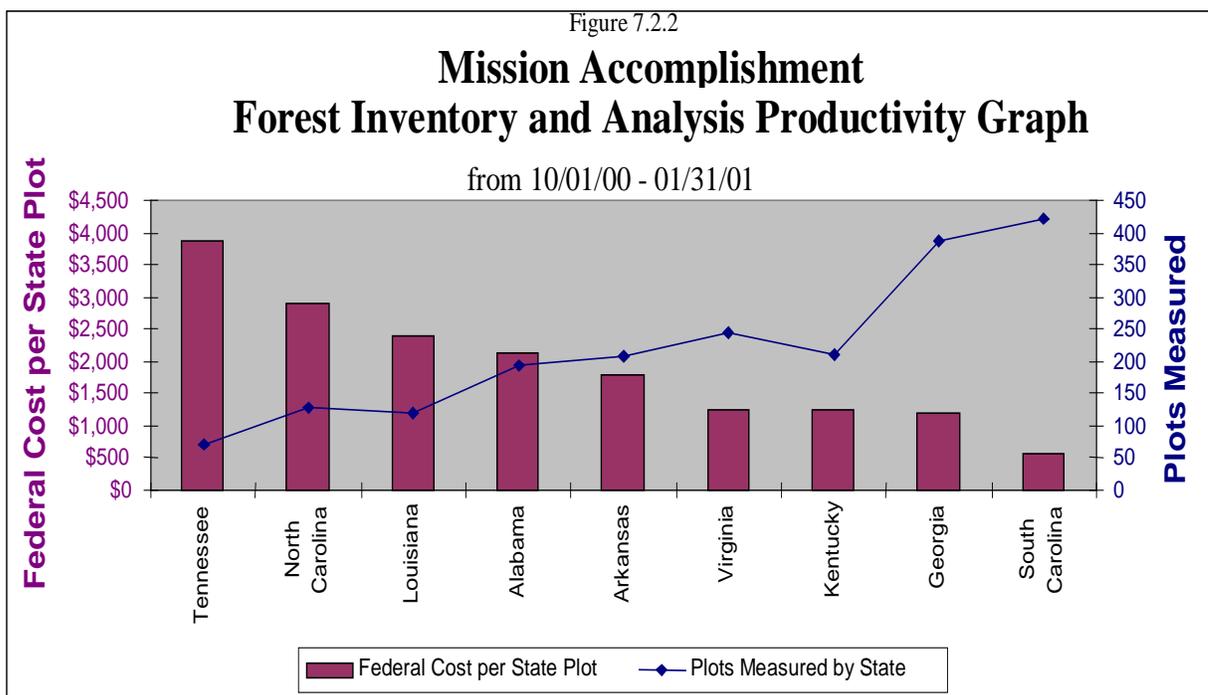
Figure 7.1.2

Customer Satisfaction
Customer Satisfaction with Forestry Services

Goal: 95% Satisfaction Level

85%

87%

1999-2000   2000-2001

Figure 7.1.3

Customer Satisfaction
Customer Satisfaction with Forest Management Services

Goal: 95% Satisfaction Level

83%

90%

1999-2000   2000-2001

7.2   What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of mission accomplishment?
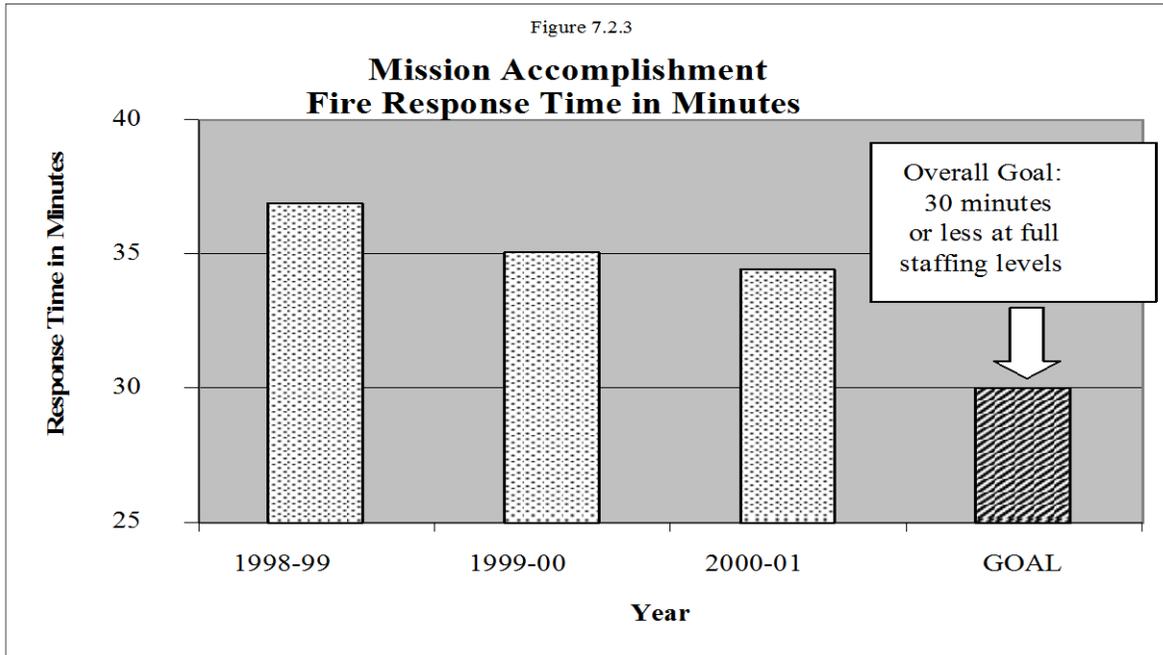
Enhance the Resource

During the past four years the Forestry Commission has made a positive impact on rural economic development by assisting seventeen forest based businesses in locating in South Carolina as illustrated in Figure 7.2.1.

Figure 7.2.1

Mission Accomplishment

Forest Based Economic Development Impact
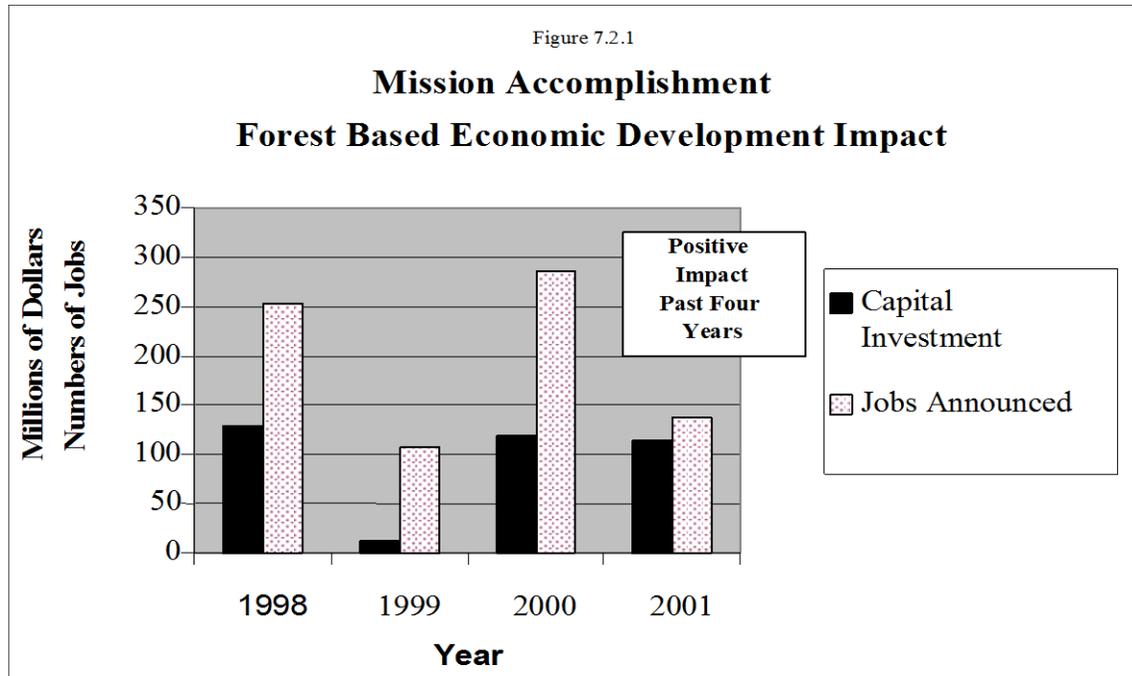
The Forestry Commission was recently recognized by the US Forest Service as being a leader among the southern states in productivity and cost containment in collecting Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) data as illustrated in Figure 7.2.2. The Forestry Commission set an aggressive goal of measuring all plots in a three-year time period before initiating the 20% annual inventory.
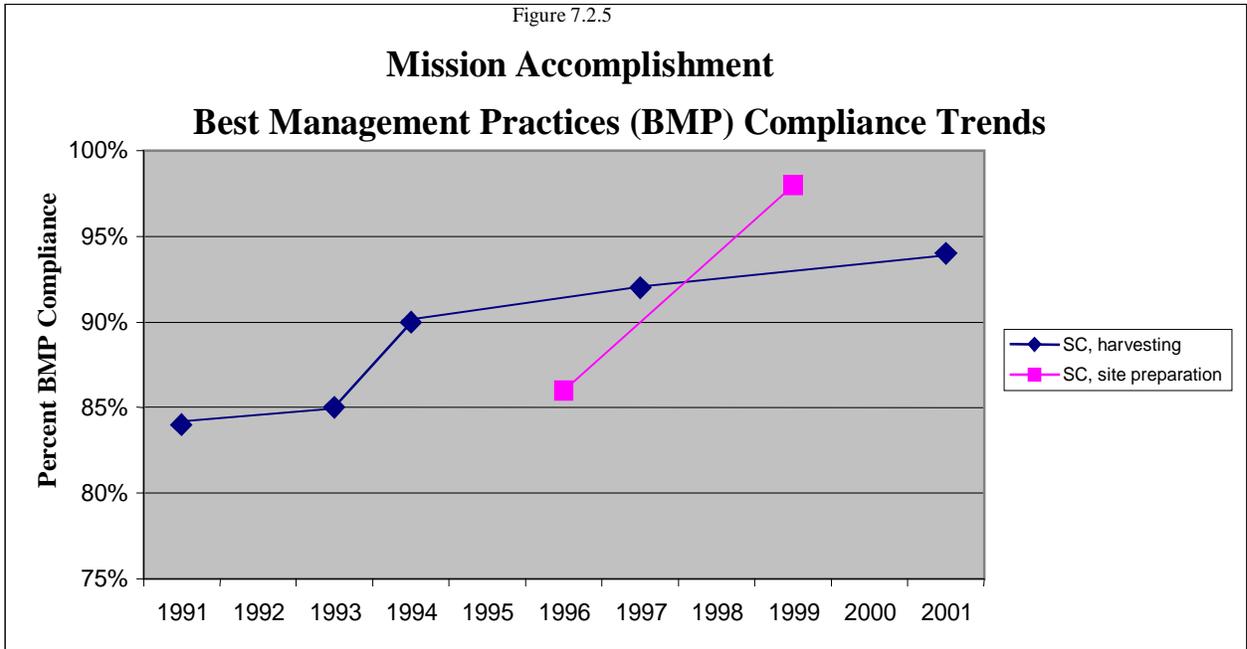

Figure 7.2.2

Mission Accomplishment

Forest Inventory and Analysis Productivity Graph

from 10/01/00 - 01/31/01

Protect the Resource

Figure 7.2.3

Mission Accomplishment
Fire Response Time in Minutes

Overall Goal:
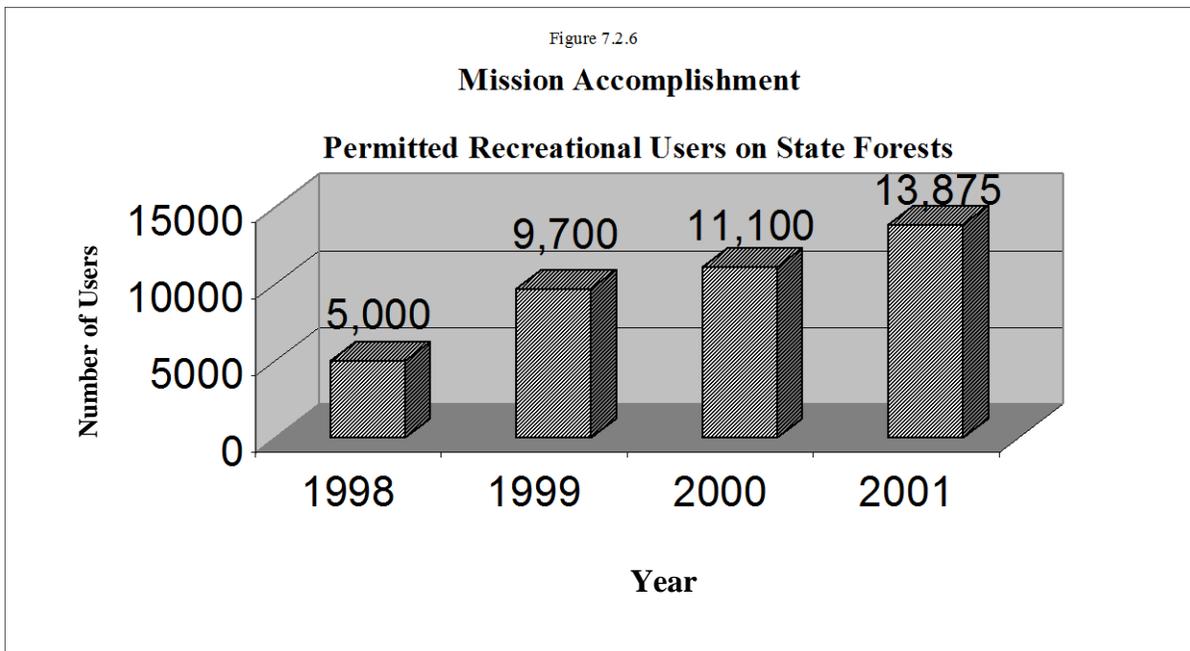30 minutes
or less at full
staffing levels

Response time to wildland fires is dependent upon many factors, some of which are beyond our control, such as traffic congestion. We refer to fire response time as the time from when we receive the first report of a wildfire until the time our fire warden arrives on the scene.

Internally we measure the different segments of response time and strive to improve each segment with an goal of reducing overall response time to 30 minutes or less at full staffing levels. Figure 7.2.3 illustrates our improvement in attaining this goal.
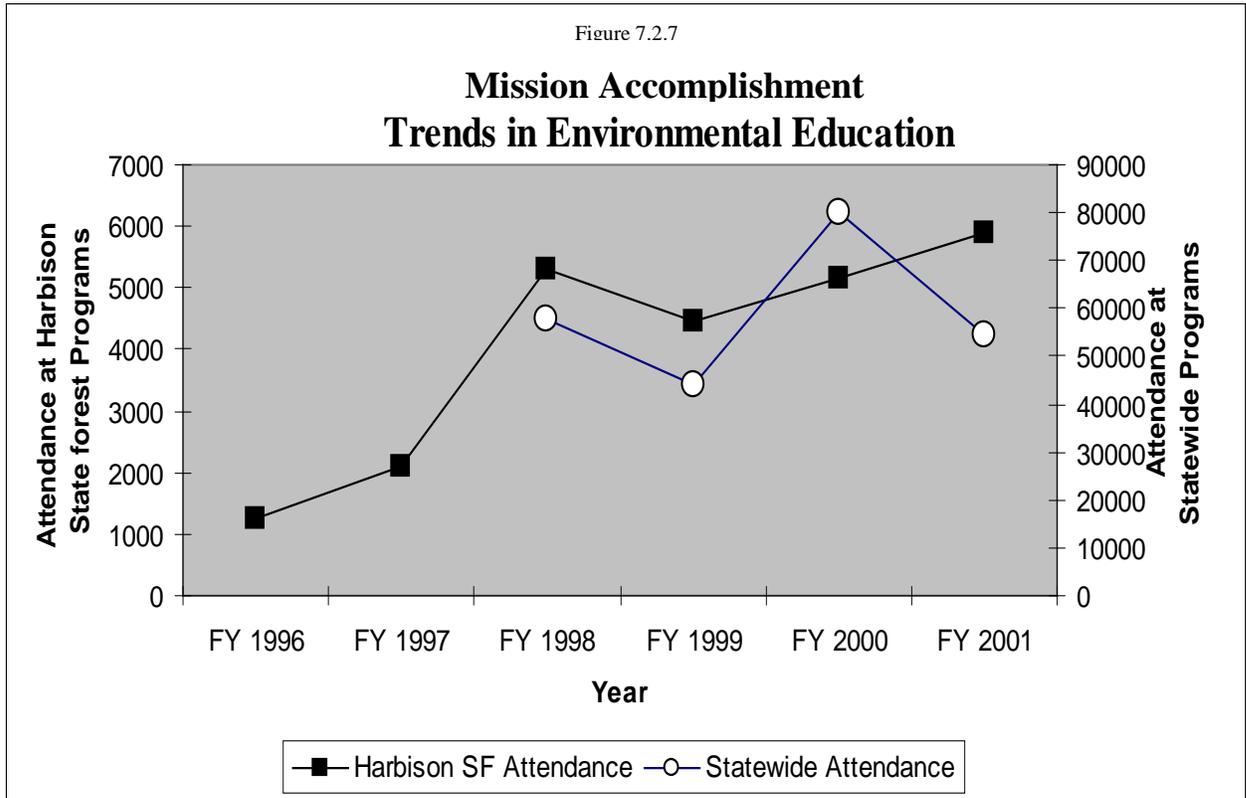
Figure 7.2.4

**Mission Accomplishment**
Timber Theft and Fraud Cases

Figure 7.2.5

Mission Accomplishment

Best Management Practices (BMP) Compliance Trends

Manage the Resource

Figure 7.2.6

Mission Accomplishment

Permitted Recreational Users on State Forests

Raise Awareness About the Resource

Figure 7.2.7

Mission Accomplishment
## Trends in Environmental Education

7.3   *What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of employee satisfaction, involvement, and development?*

Since 1996 a total of 65 Employees have received performance pay increases or pay bonuses in recognition of outstanding contributions to the agency.

The average state service for all state employees is 11.1 years, compared to the average state service for Forestry Commission employees of 13.9 years. We believe this comparison is indicative of our employees enjoying their work and their working environment.

Figure 7.3.1

Employee Satisfaction
Employee Turnover Rate
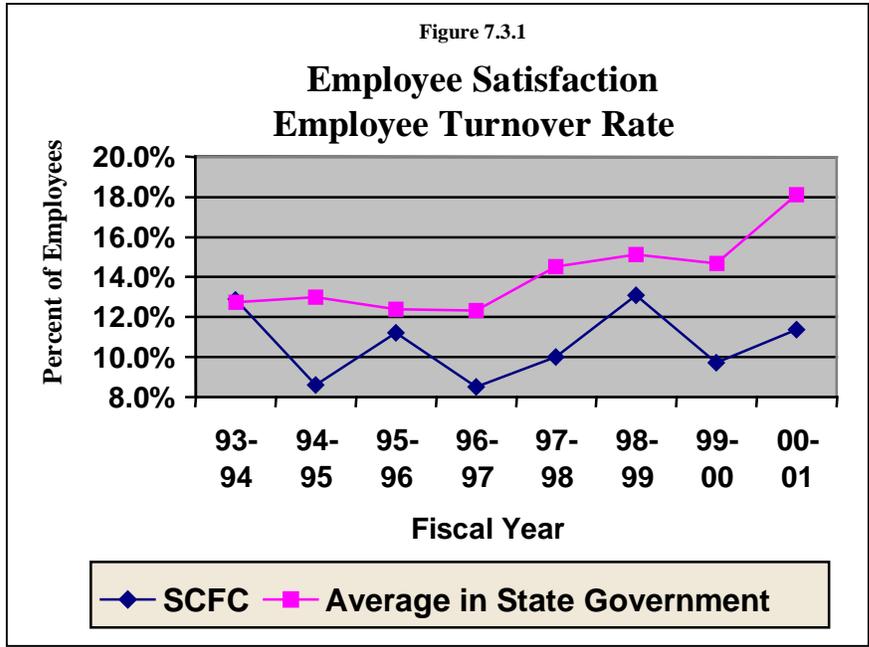
Forestry Wardens comprise 34% of the total number of agency employees, which is the largest job category of employees in the agency. During the period 7/1/98 – 6/30/01, 40 Wardens left employment, of which 20 were retirements. Figure 7.3.2 shows the experience level of the 40 who left employment. Not only does Figure 7.3.2 demonstrate the longevity and successful careers of many of our wardens it also points out the need for an effective new employee training program.

Figure 7.3.2

Employee Satisfaction

Recent Three Year Turnover Among Fire Wardens
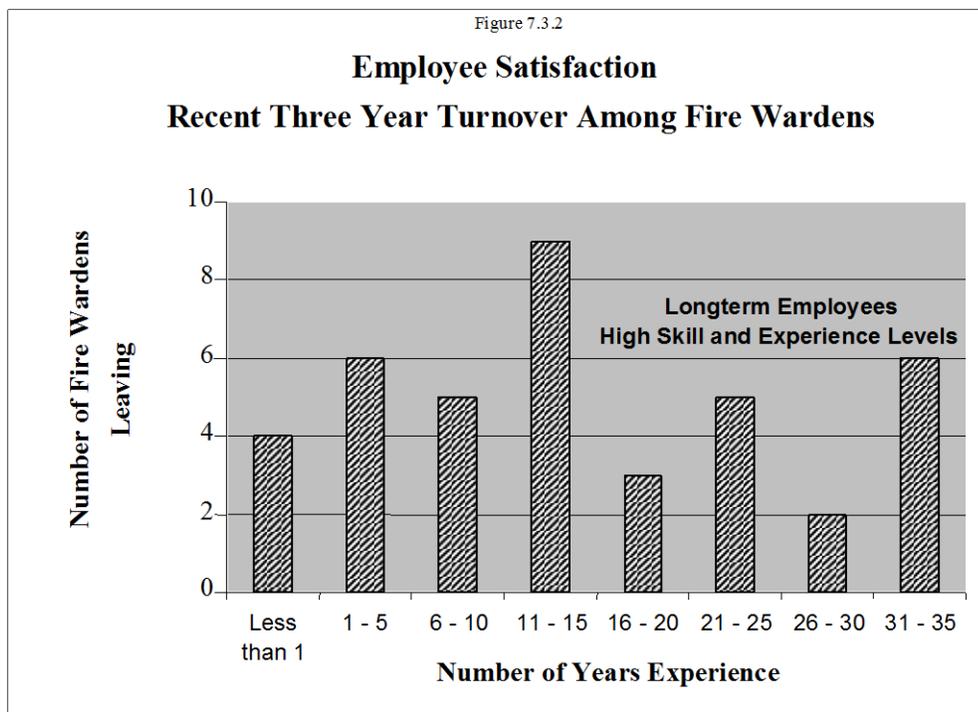
During the period 1/1/97 – 6/30/00 statistics from the Office of Human Resources show 1,112 grievances were filed by state employees. Of that number, only 2 were filed by Forestry Commission employees.
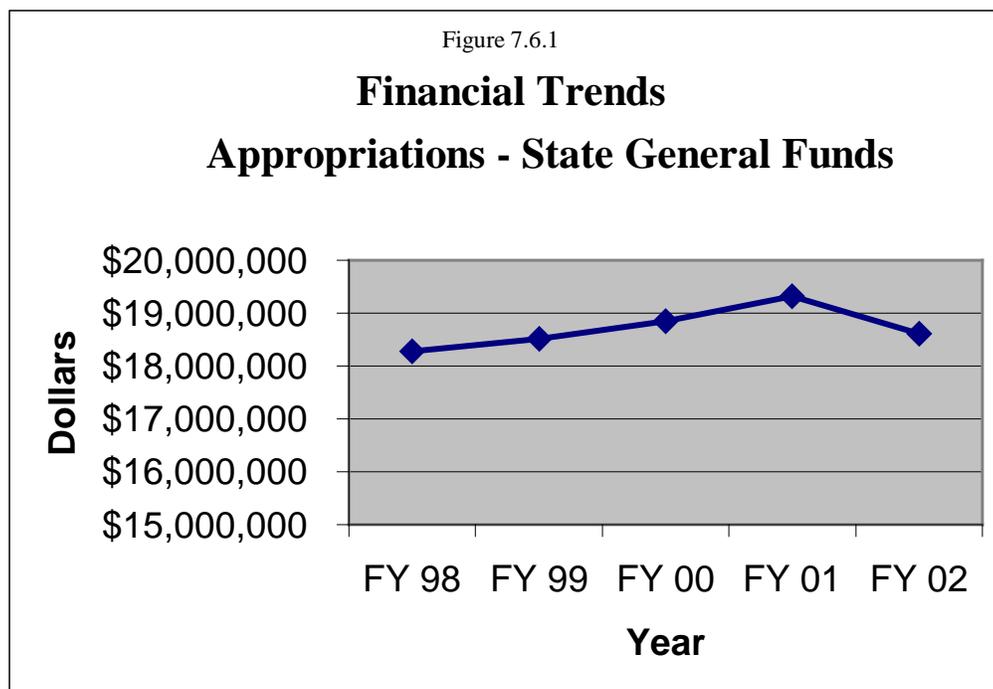
7.4   What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of supplier/contractor/ partner performance?
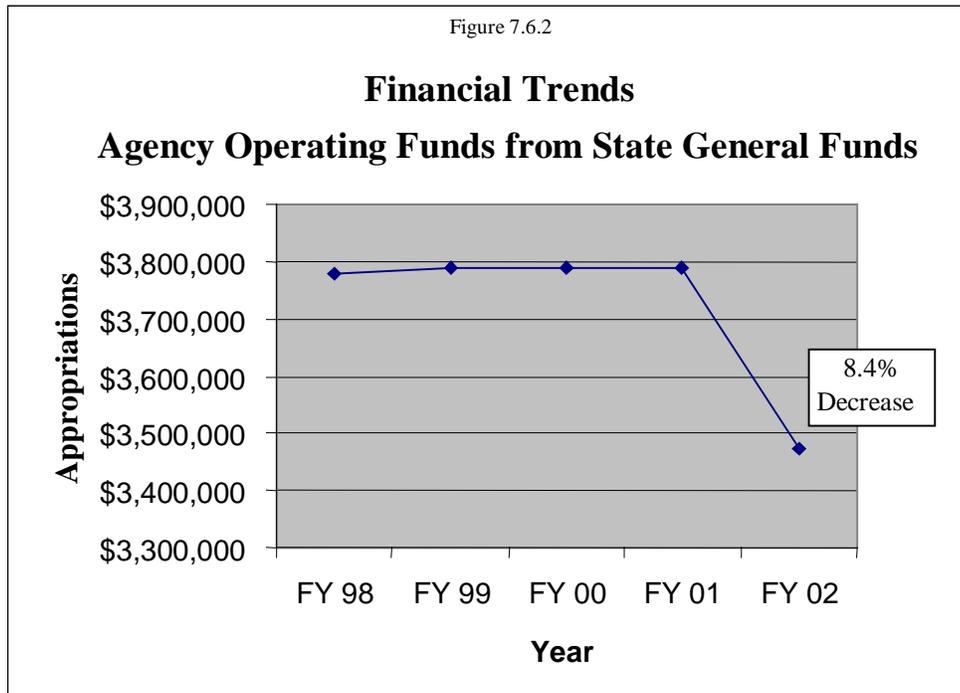
We do not currently have in place firm measures of supplier/contractor/partner performance. We are looking for opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of our air detection contractors, the response times for our emergency dispatch center repair vendors, and the dependability of our heavy equipment vendors in on time delivery of new equipment.

7.5   What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of regulatory/legal compliance and citizenship?
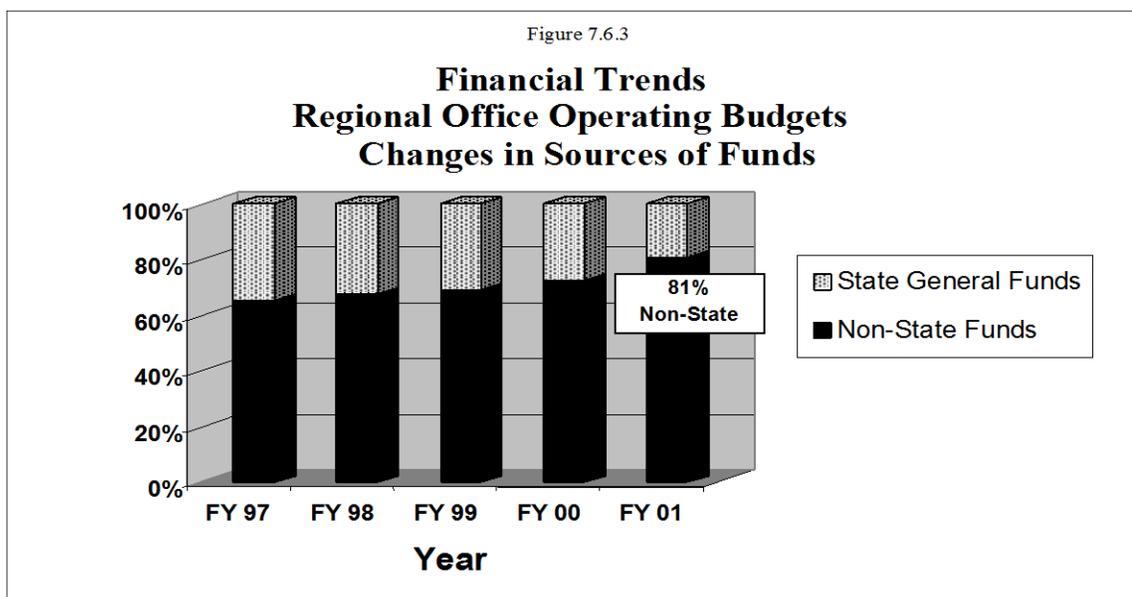
We are subject to financial audits, Federal Aviation Administration inspections and regulations, and OSHA regulations. We have audits in the areas of accounting, purchasing, insurance, and classification, and compensation and they have all been performed without findings of audit exceptions in each of the past four years.

7.6   What are your current levels and trends of financial performance?

Figure 7.6.1

Financial Trends

Appropriations - State General Funds

Figure 7.6.2

Financial Trends
Agency Operating Funds from State General Funds

8.4% Decrease

Our three regions have experienced a change in their source of operating funds. Over the course of the past seven years an increasing percentage of their operating funds has been derived from increasing revenues from providing forestry services to landowners. Figure 7.6.3 illustrates that 81% of the operating funds are now from non-state funds. Many of the revenue generating services are weather dependent. Wet weather postpones or cancels forestry practices such as prescribed burning or firebreak plowing. Consequently revenues may be off that year and resulting in reduced operating funds. This makes operational planning difficult.

Figure 7.6.3

Financial Trends
Regional Office Operating Budgets
Changes in Sources of Funds

81% Non-State

State General Funds
Non-State Funds

(END END END END END END END END END END)