

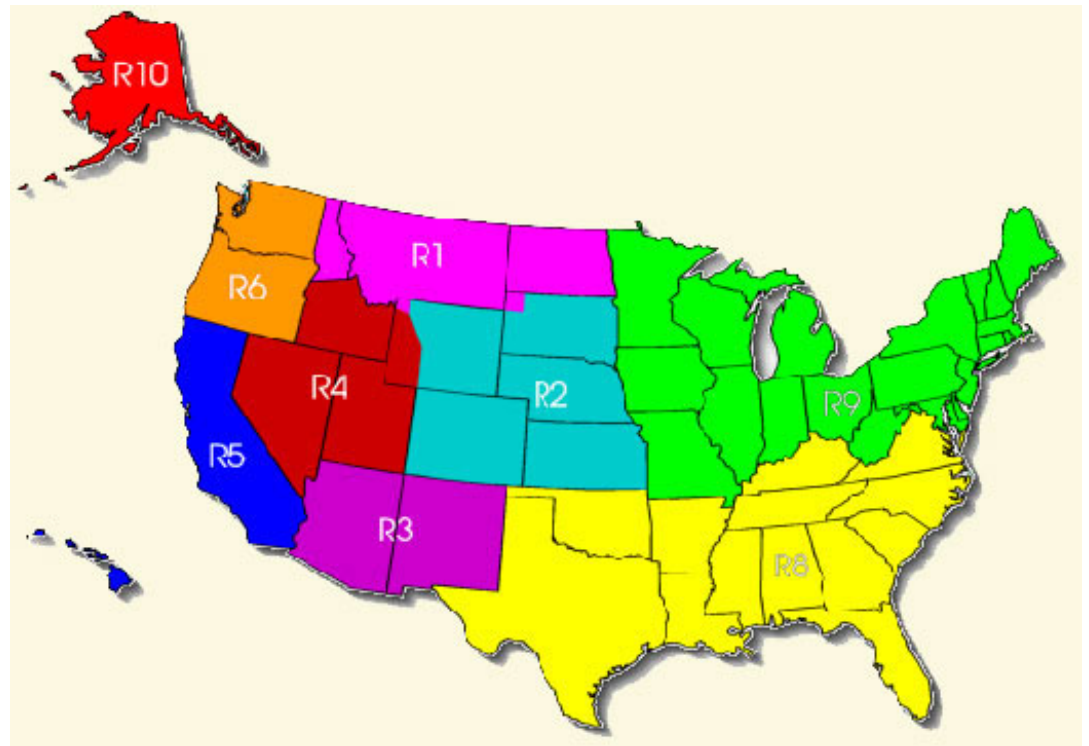
Water Quality Management on National Forest System Lands

Joan Carlson
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National Forest System Organization “Decentralized”

- 9 Regions
 - Regional Forester
- 155 National Forests, 20 Grasslands, 1 Tallgrass Prairie
 - Forest Supervisor
- 520-ish Ranger Districts
 - District Ranger





Caring for the land and serving people

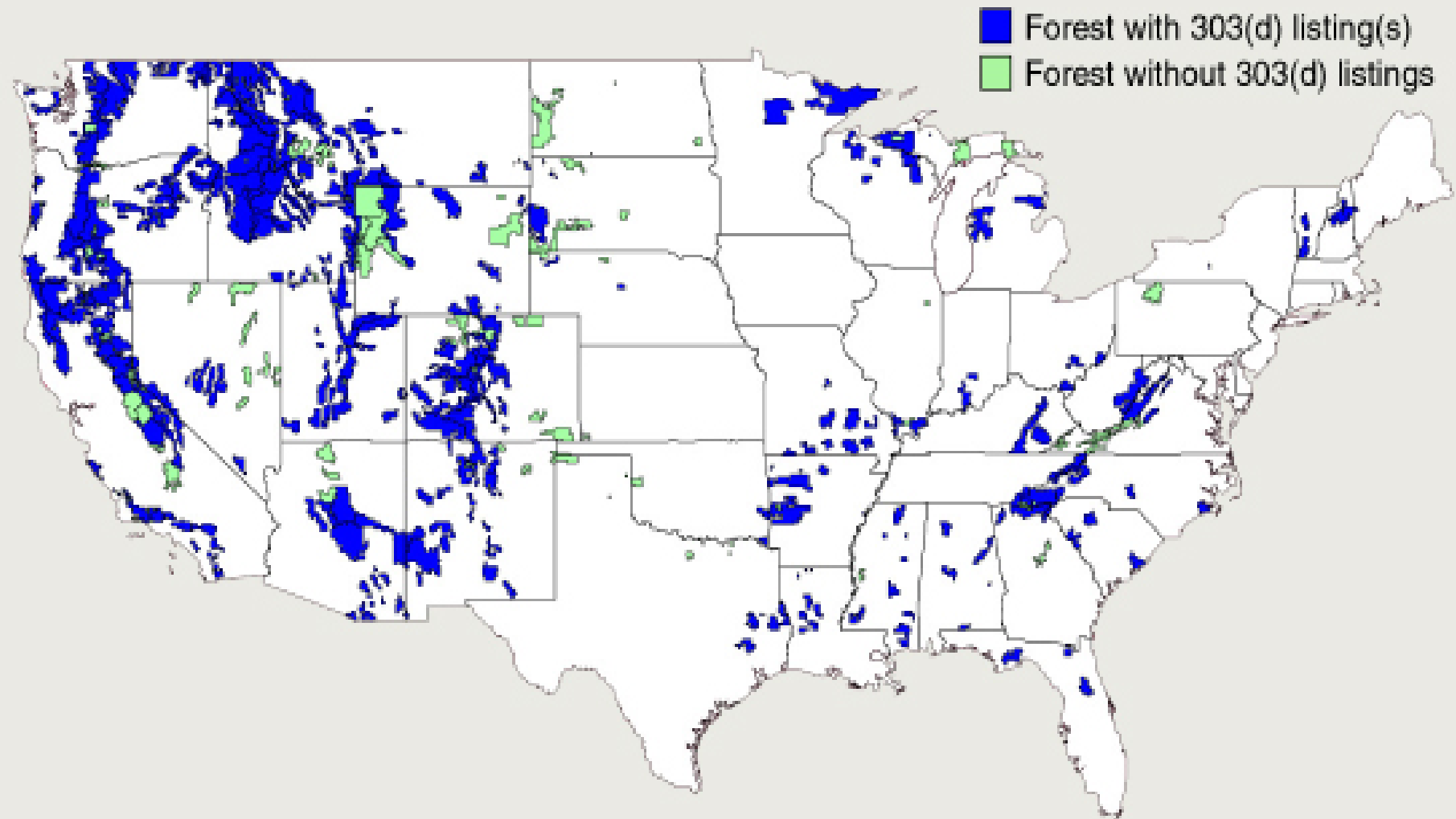
193 million acres
8.5 % of US land base
In 44 states,
Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands

87 % of NFS lands
are west of
Mississippi River

3 million lake acres
400,000 stream miles

produce nearly 20% of the nation's water

Impaired Waters on NFS Lands



A close-up photograph of green grass blades, likely from a lawn or field, covered in numerous small, clear water droplets. The droplets are in various stages of condensation, some appearing as thin films and others as distinct beads. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. The overall tone is fresh and natural.

Key federal laws guide management of NFS lands

Organic Act of 1897

“favorable conditions of water flow”

MUSY Act of 1960

purpose of NFS lands includes watersheds



Key federal laws guide management of NFS lands

NFMA of 1976

overall goal for NFS lands is multiple use of renewable resources in perpetuity while maintaining long-term productivity

CWA of 1977

Forest Service is subject to and will comply with all federal, state, interstate and local requirements related to the abatement of surface water pollution in the same manner and to the same extent as any non-governmental entity (Section 313)



Forest Service Mission:

Sustain the health,
diversity and productivity
of the Nation's forests and
grasslands to meet
the needs of present
and future generations



Water - one of the USFS Chief's 3 Emphasis Areas



"We can make a difference by managing national forests and grasslands to restore ecological processes and functions that support clean and healthy streams, lakes and aquifers."

Chief Gail Kimbell

NFS Planning for water quality



National

Strategic Plan Goal 1: Restore, Sustain and Enhance the Nation's Forests and Grasslands

Regional

Northwest Forest Plan (R6), Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (R5), Southern Appalachian Assessment (R8)

NFS Planning for water quality



Forest and Grassland Plans

Goals and objectives, desired conditions, standards and guidelines

Watershed Analysis

Understanding of watershed context to guide project planning and decision-making

Project Plans

Site specific restoration and BMPs



Forest Service
approach to
water quality
management

1. Passive
recovery thru
protection -
BMP Program

2. Fixing degraded
watershed conditions from
legacy land uses -
Restoration Program

2002 10 1



Forest Service BMP Program

It is Forest Service policy to implement Best Management Practices, monitor the implementation and effectiveness of BMPs, and adjust management practices based on monitoring results



**Each Region has a BMP document.
Most Forests do some BMP monitoring.**

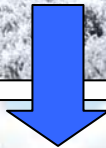
**Current effort underway to institute a
National BMP monitoring program.**

Restoration Program

FY09 target

55,000 acres of watershed
improvements

Elimination of grazing allotments
(Gallatin NF)



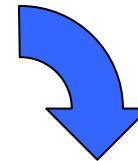


Top Causes of Impairments on NFS Lands

Rank	Cause of Impairment	# of NF Impairments	% of NF Impairments
1	Temperature	779	17.8
2	Sediment	678	15.5
3	Habitat Modification	538	12.3
4	Mercury	518	11.9
5	Metals	461	10.5

Listed waters are considered in determining watershed condition and prioritizing projects.
Policy is to work with states to restore impaired waters.

Road decommissioning (Gallatin NF)



**Current effort underway
to institute a consistent
watershed condition
protocol**





Coordination with Partners

Federal Partners

Unified Federal Policy for a
Watershed Approach to Land
and Resource Management (2000)

MOU with EPA to address
impaired waters on
NFS lands (2007)

Coordination with Partners

States

- Water quality agreements
- Provide data for standards development and assessments

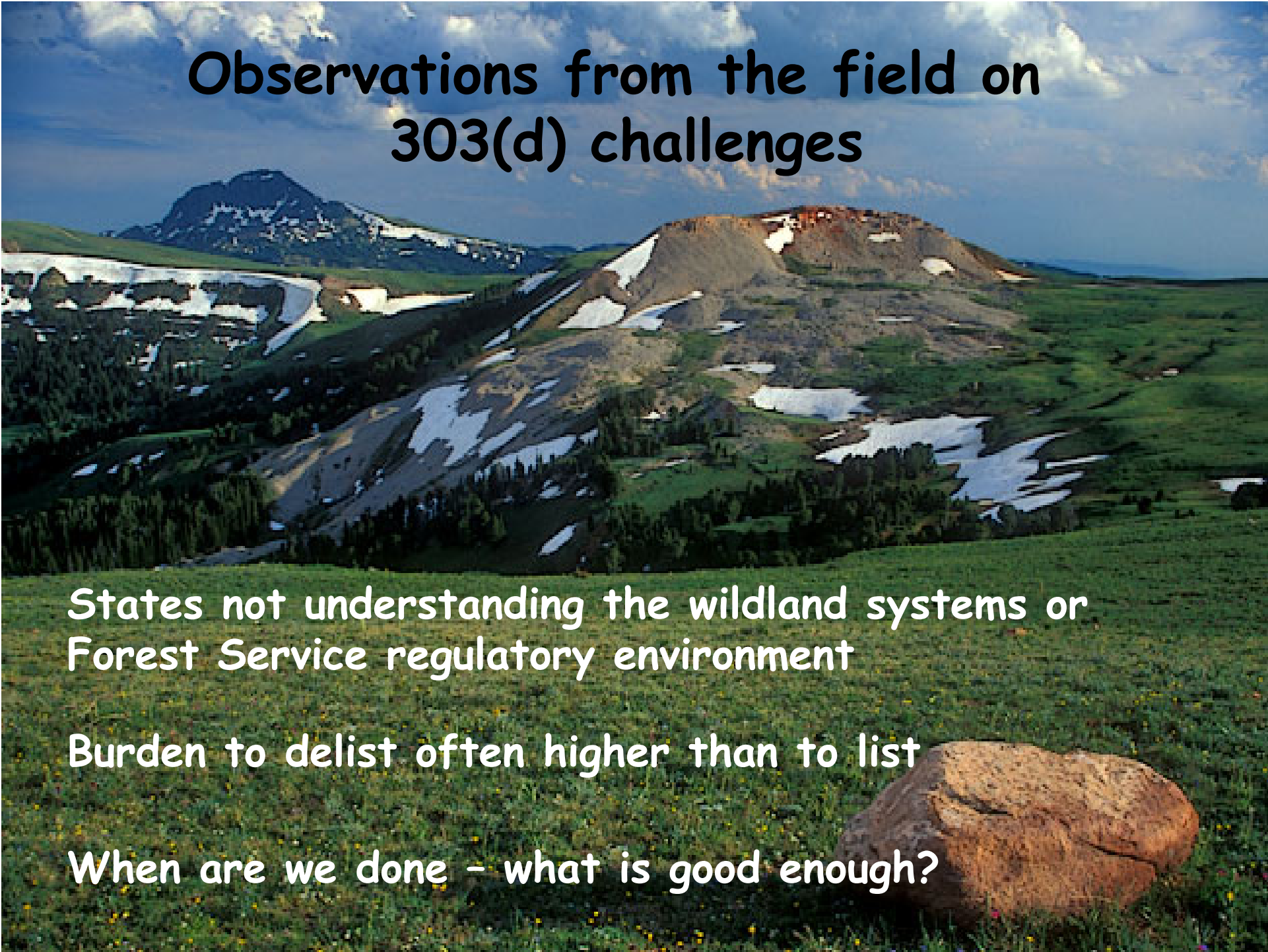
- Assist with TMDL development
- Support Category 4b rationales
- Implement TMDLs through planning activities





US Forest Service Water Quality Agreements with 25 States

MAA	MOA	MOU		LOC
AL (1990)	WA (2000)	SD (2009)	LA (1993)	OK (1991)
MS (1990)	AK (1992)	AZ (2008)	UT (1993)	AR (1990)
CA (1981)		ID (2008)	NC (1992)	FL (1990)
		MT (2008)	GA (1991)	MS (1990)
		WY (2005)	TX (1991)	VA (1990)
		NM (2002)	KY (1990)	
		OR (2002)	SC (1990)	
		TN (1997)	NV (1981)	

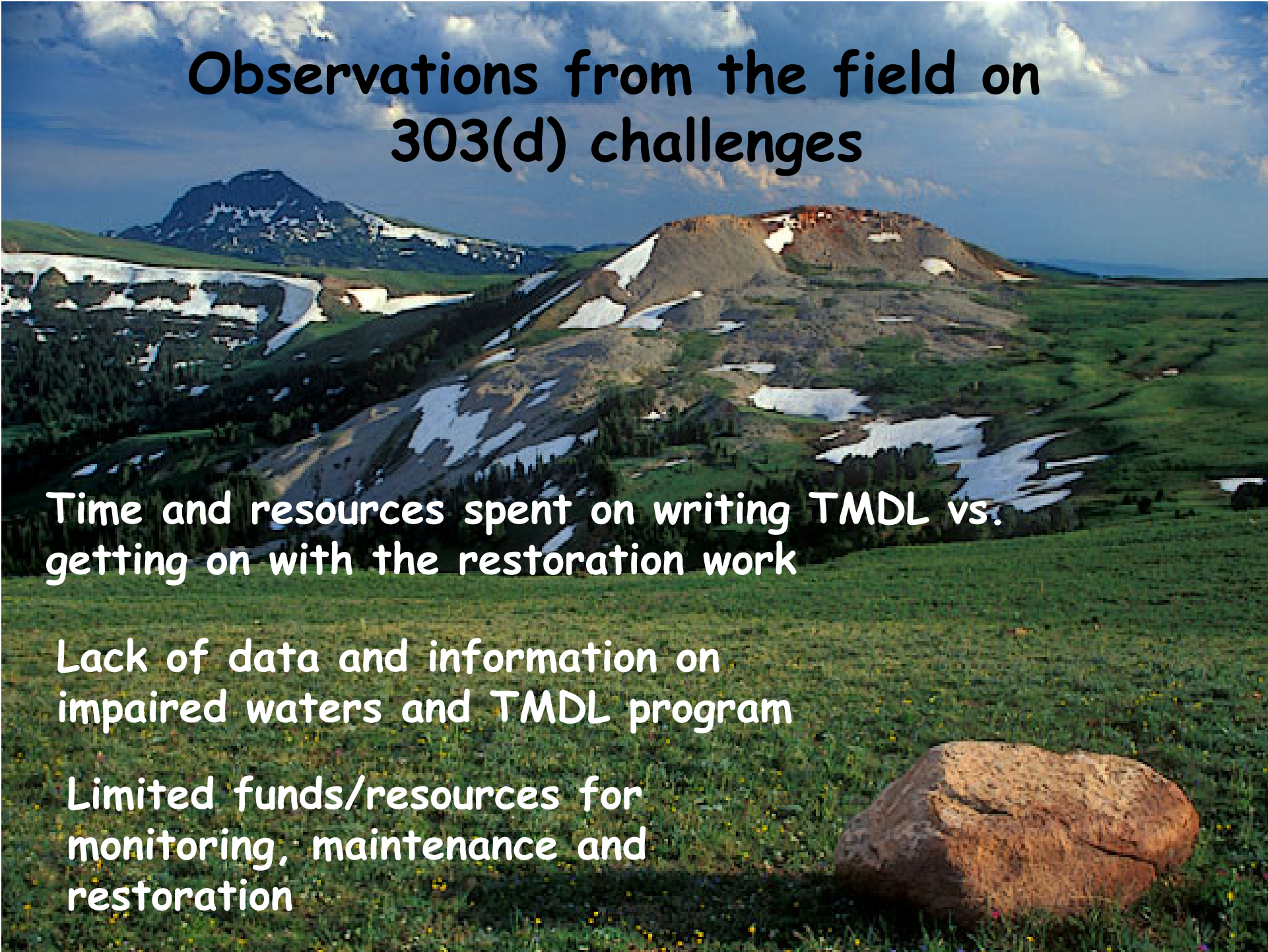


Observations from the field on 303(d) challenges

States not understanding the wildland systems or
Forest Service regulatory environment

Burden to delist often higher than to list

When are we done - what is good enough?



Observations from the field on 303(d) challenges

Time and resources spent on writing TMDL vs.
getting on with the restoration work

Lack of data and information on
impaired waters and TMDL program

Limited funds/resources for
monitoring, maintenance and
restoration



Coordination Opportunities

Establish or revisit State-FS MOUs

Monitoring, data sharing, communication etc...

Tier TMDLs on NFS lands to existing Forest Service programs - BMPs and restoration plans



Coordination Opportunities

Funds for TMDL development and implementation
Secure Rural Schools, 319 Funds ...

Developing efficient methods for reporting and
sharing information on restoration activities -
measurable results



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Thank you!