

Desired Future Condition of the Forest

The Forest desired future condition portrays the anticipated character of the Forest after cumulatively implementing the Forest Management Objectives. The anticipated physical and biological changes that result from management direction after 10 years and 50 years are summarized.

The Forest in Ten Years

Ten years is a very short time in the life of a forest and a relatively short time in the continuum of forest management. Therefore the Forest's overall character a decade in the future may be very similar to its existing condition. For example, significant difference in the supply of individual types of recreational opportunities is not expected to occur during the next ten years. Popular scenic travel routes retain much of their current landscape character. Timber harvest is managed most intensively where it conflicts least with other resource values. Current populations of fish and wildlife are maintained or increased by emphasizing habitat protection and enhancement.

Timber

During the next ten years, about half of the timber harvested will be older mature Douglas-fir from high quality, timber-growing sites. Planting, precommercial thinning, and plantation control is common. Areas harvested are adequately restocked within five years of a final harvest (36 CFR 219.27). Areas where timber is managed less intensively exhibit smaller openings, a variety of age-classes, and less intensive silvicultural activity. Timber harvest comes from lands suitable for growing timber. Lands unsuitable for growing timber serve noncommodity values and provide a small amount of salvage volume. Road construction continues somewhat below present levels.

Fish and Water

The Bull Run continues to be managed for high quality water. In general, there will be little apparent change in Forestwide riparian areas associated with perennial streams, lakes, reservoirs, and wetlands. These areas will reflect relatively high vegetative and structural diversity most closely associated with mature and old growth stand conditions. Many individual areas, totaling roughly 10-15 percent of the total areas for these riparian area types, reflect early seral stage vegetation associated primarily with past timber harvest activities. Riparian areas for intermittent streams, seeps, and springs increasingly show a shift toward early seral stage vegetation, particularly on those lands with a timber emphasis allocation.

There is localized improvement in riparian area and aquatic habitat (fish habitat and water quality) conditions. This is most apparent in B6 Special Emphasis Watersheds, A9 Key Site Riparian Areas, and stream systems where rehabilitation and enhancement activities have been completed.

Wildlife

Habitat is managed for the northern spotted owl, pileated woodpecker, pine marten, and other wildlife species represented by the named management indicator species. Areas of old growth are set aside for spotted owl habitat. Identified mature and old growth timber is managed for the woodpecker and marten along with managing for some timber volume, recreation, and other uses.

The mixture of forage and cover needed by deer and elk will be addressed. Seeding for grasses and forbs will enhance these animals' habitat. Timber in the pine/oak habitat on the east side is managed partly to benefit turkeys and silver gray squirrels.

Snags and wildlife trees are left in areas where timber will be harvested. Large, woody debris is left on the ground to continue the nutrient cycle and provide shelter for animal species which utilize such materials.

Recreation

Outdoor recreation opportunities on the Forest are available in a variety of settings. Operation and maintenance of facilities for developed recreation are financed at standard service level. Deteriorated sites are rehabilitated or closed. The Forest shall complete a developed site priority ranking to be used to allocate operations and maintenance funds. This process will include evaluating variables such as amount of use, cost per unit of output, and the uniqueness of the site. The ranking may result in closing of some developed sites and the expansion of others. Savings produced by closing some developed sites will be used to further improve or expand capacity at sites operating near capacity.

Opportunities for dispersed recreation in a roaded setting are plentiful. Activities such as hunting, sightseeing, ORV use, dispersed camping, cross-country skiing, and fishing are typical. Opportunities for dispersed recreation in unroaded areas are less plentiful. However, large Special Interest Areas such as Roaring River/Mitchell Flats, and Olalhe Lakes will offer more primitive types of unroaded recreation

There are five Wildernesses, plus a small part of the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness, on the Forest that will provide primitive recreation opportunities along with scenic, historical, and ecological experiences. Overused areas that have lost some of their wilderness values are gradually being restored to more primitive conditions.

Scenic Quality

Major roads and highways designated as scenic travel routes continue to appear in or near a natural condition. Other less frequented travel routes have noticeable alterations in the landscape character.

The visual character of the landscape results from prescribed visual quality objectives within distance zones from selected viewer positions. Visual management intensities, a combination of visual quality objective and distance zone, provide the following visual character from selected viewer positions:

- **Foreground Retention:** This management intensity applies to lands visible up to a distance of 0.5 mile from selected travelways, water bodies or public use areas.
 - + Vegetation is composed primarily of multi-age, multi-species stands with diverse understory of natural plant associations (where biologically feasible).
 - + Numerous large diameter, old trees are a major component of the stands (where biologically feasible).
 - + Small, natural appearing openings provide diversity and a sense of depth.
 - + The ground is generally free of unnatural forms and patterns of debris and litter.
 - + Seasonal changes in vegetation color and texture are emphasized.
 - + The target tree diameters for mature trees in the following vegetation types are:
 - grand fir (ponderosa pine), 24 inches dbh (diameter at breast height)
 - Pacific silver fir, 26 inches dbh (diameter at breast height)

- western hemlock, 32 inches dbh (diameter at breast height)
- mountain hemlock, 24 inches dbh (diameter at breast height)
- Middleground Retention:** This management intensity applies to lands visible from 0.5 mile to 5.0 miles from specified travelways, water bodies, or public use areas.
 - + Natural appearing forest landscape.
 - + Management activities are not visually evident.
 - + Diversity of species, colors, and textures is desirable.
- Foreground Partial Retention:** This management intensity applies to lands visible up to a distance of 0.5 mile from selected travelways, water bodies, or public use areas.
 - + A pleasing diversity of tree and shrub species of various sizes and ages, distributed in natural appearing patterns.
 - + Seasonal changes in vegetation color and texture are evident.
 - + Natural appearing openings provide diversity and enhance views to landscape features.
 - + The ground is generally free of unnatural patterns of debris and litter.
 - + The target tree diameters for mature trees in the following vegetation types are:
 - grand fir (Ponderosa pine), 21 inches dbh (diameter at breast height)
 - Pacific silver fir, 23 inches dbh (diameter at breast height)
 - western hemlock, 28 inches dbh (diameter at breast height)
 - mountain hemlock, 21 inches dbh (diameter at breast height)
- Middleground and Background Partial Retention:** This management intensity applies to lands visible for distances from 0.5 mile to 5.0 miles from the selected travelways, water bodies, or public use areas.
 - + Natural appearing forest landscape, with little evidence of human alteration.
 - + Dominant visual impression is mostly continuous tree canopies, with diversity in occasional natural appearing openings.
 - + Mosaic of species and age classes add texture and color contrast in natural patterns.
 - + Management activities repeat form, line, color, and texture common to the characteristic landscape.
- Foreground Modification:** This management intensity applies to lands visible up to a distance of 0.5 mile from roads, water bodies, or public use areas within management areas:
 - B4 - Pine/Oak Habitat
 - B5, DB5 - Woodpecker/Pine Marten Habitat
 - B6 - Special Emphasis Watershed
 - B8, DB8 - Earthflow Area
 - B10, B11 - Deer/Elk Summer/Winter Range
 - C1, DC1 - Timber Emphasis

unless a portion of the area is within a designated viewshed or Wild and Scenic River corridor, in which case the appropriate viewshed standard will apply.

- + Diversity of species and ages, representative of the naturally occurring vegetative type, in patterns similar to, and compatible with the characteristic landscape.
 - + Seasonal changes in color are noticeable.
 - + Management activities are blended with adjacent vegetative and landform elements so that any unnatural edges, and the size of the affected area are generally not obvious, and do not dominate the scene.
 - + Unnatural patterns of the management activities, such as slash root wads, structures, etc. remain subordinate to the proposed composition.
- **Middleground and Background Modification:** This management intensity applies to lands visible for distances farther than 0.5 mile from selected travelways, water bodies, or public use areas.
- + Diversity of species and ages distributed in patterns similar to, and compatible with the characteristic landscape.
 - + Management activities are blended with natural landforms and existing vegetation with natural shapes, edges, patterns, and sizes.
 - + Views of interesting landscape features.
 - + Offers a wide variety of land uses and recreation opportunities.

Air Quality

The existing character of the air quality continues to improve from the past. Reduced burning during the summer months provides for increased visibility. The amount of suspended particulates emitted is reduced significantly due to improved burning technology and improved evaluation techniques to predict when burning is needed.

Local Communities

Opportunities for the Forest to help enhance the vitality of surrounding communities will occur through a Regional initiative called the Pacific Northwest Strategy. It is envisioned that the Pacific Northwest Strategy will be a new focus of operation for many people, one that empowers Forest Service people and local citizens to look and work beyond the traditional boundaries. At the same time, it reaffirms and emphasizes working with other government agencies, local businesses, and the communities themselves in a spirit of interdependency and cooperation that has always existed at the local Ranger District level. As the Strategy becomes an integral part of doing business, its central focus will be to foster and enhance communication, cooperation, and partnerships.

The Forest in Fifty Years

After the Forest has been managed for 50 years as provided by this Plan, its present appearance will change to a more managed appearance. For example, it will be obvious that timber in certain areas will have been intensively harvested while wildlife habitats will have been preserved in other areas. Recreation use will intensify.

Timber

After 50 years, many stands suitable and programmed for timber production will have been harvested. In areas intensively managed for timber, many of the existing mature and overmature stands have been harvested and replaced with more vigorous and faster growing, managed stands. Emphasis on stocking level control measures will increase. More of the total wood fiber in trees will be utilized if markets exist for it, resulting in less residue available for firewood.

Fish, Water and Wildlife

Aquatic habitat capability over the long term is stable and improving. Standards to manage fish and water resources efficiently are in full effect. The implementation of rehabilitation and improvement programs will increase fish populations. Wildlife habitat diversity is moderate with identifiable tracts of mature and old growth stands managed for species depending on them. The majority of population levels will stabilize or decrease. Deer and/or elk populations may decrease.

Recreation

Recreation in the Forest 50 years from now will depend to a significant extent on sites privately developed and operated. As demands for winter sports, organizational activities, and overall developed recreation opportunities increase, they will be met by concessionaires or permittees. Primitive and semi-primitive recreation opportunities are limited primarily to Wilderness, Special Interest Areas, and some Unroaded Areas where natural conditions will be maintained. In Wilderness, heavily used trails, trailheads, and campsites have been returned to a more primitive state. As the demand for dispersed recreation in an unroaded setting begins to exceed capacity, systems to limit usage such as reservations, fees, or other methods may be initiated.

Visual corridors along popular travel routes should appear near-natural. Small openings and a variety of vegetation are visible along with improvements in viewpoints and vistas. Visitors who travel on roads outside main transportation corridors pass a mosaic of timber-cutting patterns. These vary in size, shape, and arrangement. These areas appear as part of an intensively managed forest.

Air Quality

Vegetation and fuel management require less use of prescribed fire as timber harvesting changes from regeneration harvest to commercial thinning. The number of acres requiring prescribed fire is approximately half the number in the first decade of the plan. The amount of suspended particulates emitted will subsequently be reduced proportionately. Hence, visibility continues to be improved.

Local Communities

Each community will have capitalized on its uniqueness and involved its citizens in the development of a desired future. The activities associated with the Pacific Northwest Strategy will continue to support the goals and plans of resource-dependent communities.