
Southwest Idaho Ecogroup Forest Plan Revision – Hot Topics

(6.6 million acres of National Forest System lands – Boise 2.3; Payette 2.2; Sawtooth 2.1)

HOT TOPICS

Inventoried Roadless Areas and Recommended Wilderness

- A re-inventory of roadless areas was completed as part of the revision process.
 - 50% of the Boise NF, or 1,108,000 acres identified as roadless;
 - 40% of the Payette NF, or 908,500 acres identified as roadless;
 - 58% of the Sawtooth NF, or 1,225,000 acres identified as roadless.
 - **Ecogroup total of 3,242,500 acres or 49% of the ecogroup area**

- Areas recommended for wilderness designation are the same as those carried in the current plan:
 - **BNF** - Four areas totaling 183,900 acres: Needles – 4,300 acres; Red Mountain – 86,100 acres; Ten Mile/Black Warrior – 79,900 acres; and Hanson Lakes – 13,600 acres (the boundaries have been adjusted slightly to encompass more manageable watershed boundaries (a reduction of 1100 acres))
 - **PNF** – Two areas totaling 207,300 acres were recommended as wilderness: Secesh – 115,400 acres and Needles – 91,900 acres.
 - **SNF** - Three areas totaling 264,000 acres: Hanson Lakes – 18,500 acres; Boulder/White Clouds – 184,400 acres; and Pioneer Mountains – 61,000 (the boundary for the Boulder/White Clouds was adjusted slightly to eliminate the potential conflict over a popular mountain bike trail)
 - **Ecogroup total of 655,200 acres or 10% recommended for wilderness**

- Of the Ecogroup IRA acres, 24% are assigned prescriptions that are completely consistent with the roadless rule. The majority of IRA acres are managed to maintain unroaded character but would allow for salvage harvest or restoration treatments:
 - **BNF** – 692,800 acres managed to allow restoration and salvage
 - **PNF** – 532,000 acres managed to allow restoration and salvage
 - **SNF** – 592,100 acres managed to allow restoration and salvage

- Suited Timberland within IRAs
 - **BNF** – 23,928 acres were identified as within the suited timber base
 - **PNF** – 2,700 acres were identified as within the suited timber base
 - **SNF** – 120,800 acres were identified as within the suited timber base, however, the majority of these lands are in non-forested vegetation types
 - **Ecogroup total** – 147,428 acres or approx. 4%

- Existing motorized uses will be allowed to continue in all recommended wilderness areas.

- Much of the area in high to extreme hazard for fire and/or insect and disease infestations are located within IRAs

Forest	Acres of High/Extreme Fire Hazard within IRAs	% of Total Forest acres in High/Extreme Hazard in IRAs	Acres of High/Extreme Insect Hazard Within IRAs	Percent of Total Forest acres in High/Extreme Hazard in IRAs
Boise	97,200	33%	139,900	52%
Payette	117,000	39%	136,300	43%
Sawtooth	17,500	83%	155,500	76%

National Fire Plan/Healthy Forest Initiative

- The Revised Plans accomplish the Healthy Forest Initiative (HFI) and National Fire Plan (NFP) goals and objectives by emphasizing a combination of mechanical and fire treatments around NFP communities and within wildland urban interface watersheds.
 - **BNF** – Approximately 100,000 acres of Condition Class 3 would be treated in the first decade.
 - **PNF** - Approximately 100,000 acres of Condition Class 3 would be treated in the first decade
 - **SNF** - Approximately 40,000 acres of Condition Class 2 and 3 would be treated in the first decade.
- Direction in the revised plan strives to avoid conflicts, and emphasizes coordination needs, with counties as they plan and implement their NFP mitigation plans.
- The Revised Plan provides direction for a strongly integrated noxious weed management program across the Forest in cooperation with other federal, state, and local agencies.

Timber Production/Livestock Grazing

- The Revised Plans emphasizes timber production in developed, high productivity areas outside of Inventoried Roadless Areas and riparian conservation areas to support economic and community stability.
 - **BNF** – The Revised Plan **ASQ** is 45 mmbf with **TSPQ** estimated to contribute an additional 21.27 mmbf.
 - **PNF** – The Revised Plan **ASQ** is 32.5 mmbf, with **TSPQ** estimated to contribute an additional 7.7 mmbf
 - **SNF** - The Revised Plan sets an objective of 6 MMBF (annual average harvest over 10 years) for the first decade to contribute to the **ASQ** and an 12.9 MMBF (annual average harvest) objective for the first decade to contribute to **TSPQ**
- Increased national forest supplies could lead to wood industry investment to expand capacity.
- Old growth direction has been replaced by the more encompassing large tree size class direction which research indicates is more appropriate for addressing species viability.
- A re-evaluation of livestock grazing capability and suitability was completed. We do not anticipate significant changes to livestock use numbers as a result of new plan direction.

Recreation

- The Revised Plans include a commitment to update the Forest Travel Plans after revision. Current Travel Plans remain in effect until updates are completed.
- The Revised Plans include improved direction for dealing with user conflicts including direction to encourage user groups to work together to resolve conflicts.

Soil, Water, Riparian, and Aquatic resources.

- The Revised Plan includes a long-term Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) that focuses restoration dollars in priority subwatersheds identified as important to achieving ESA, Tribal, and CWA goals.
- This ACS replaces the interim PacFish/Infish strategies that were designed to “hold the line” until a long-term ACS could be developed. The revised plan ACS adds elements acknowledged as missing in the interim strategies. This includes providing an ecosystem management foundation, a prioritization for restoration integrated across multiple scales, and adaptable active, passive and conservation management strategies that address both protection and restoration of habitat and 303(d) stream segments.
- The ACS acknowledges that long-term restoration may require incurrence of short-term effects that were not acceptable under interim strategies. The biological assessments supporting the revised plans account for the relationship of these short-term effects to the risks to species viability.
- The Revised Forest Plan provides measures that protect and restore soil, water, riparian and aquatic resources during project implementation while providing flexibility to address both short- and long-term social and economic goals.