BTNF FOREST PLAN REVISION
THE SCENARIO BUILDING PROCESS

What's a scenario?
A scenario is a map that shows where to consider adjusting current access/development levels or other Plan direction in order to address the Need for Change. These locations are drawn as polygons on a base map, and are accompanied by a description of:
1. The various potential adjustments to consider in the polygon;
2. The rationale for each potential adjustment; and
3. The trade-offs v.v. other Need for Change items (or other Desired Conditions) that could be expected to result from each potential adjustment.

What's a scenario for?
The purpose of scenarios is to identify where and how the Need for Change can realistically be addressed given current management approaches, conditions on the ground, and the likely trade-offs that come into play for actual values in specific places. Its goal is not to generate decisions but rather to establish a range of choices for further consideration. The intent is to promote a shared understanding about the real choices on the table for Forest Plan Revision and provide a rational framework for analyzing, refining and ultimately making those choices.

How does it fit into the overall Revision process?
Scenarios provide a starting point for developing and analyzing formal alternatives (or equivalent, pending a new Planning Rule) for the Proposed Revised Plan. By indicating in broad terms the kinds of choices that may be considered, scenarios provide a context for identifying the trade-offs and arrangements to analyze in more detail later on.

How to build scenarios?
The FPR Team works with District specialists to begin building scenarios, documenting its deliberations on Scenario Development Worksheets (attached), using the following process:
1. For each of the 47 Geographic Areas ('GAs'—unique land units that have the same boundaries as 'Management Areas' in the 1990 Plan), a brief 'Theme' is crafted that qualitatively describes unique, special, and/or important features of the GA.
2. With the GA's Theme in mind, participants review Need-for-Change ('NFC') base maps that depict current conditions in the GA relative to the NFC Emphasis Items established by the Forest Leadership Team in April 2007. Those items that are considered most likely to drive a change in management direction for the GA are identified as NFC drivers.
3. For each NFC driver, one or more polygons are drawn on a base map showing where the management direction (either the current access/development levels shown on the map or other direction) could be adjusted in one or more ways to benefit that item.
4. Potential changes to consider in each polygon are discussed relative to the NFC driver and other NFC items or Desired Conditions as appropriate; apparent trade-offs are documented.
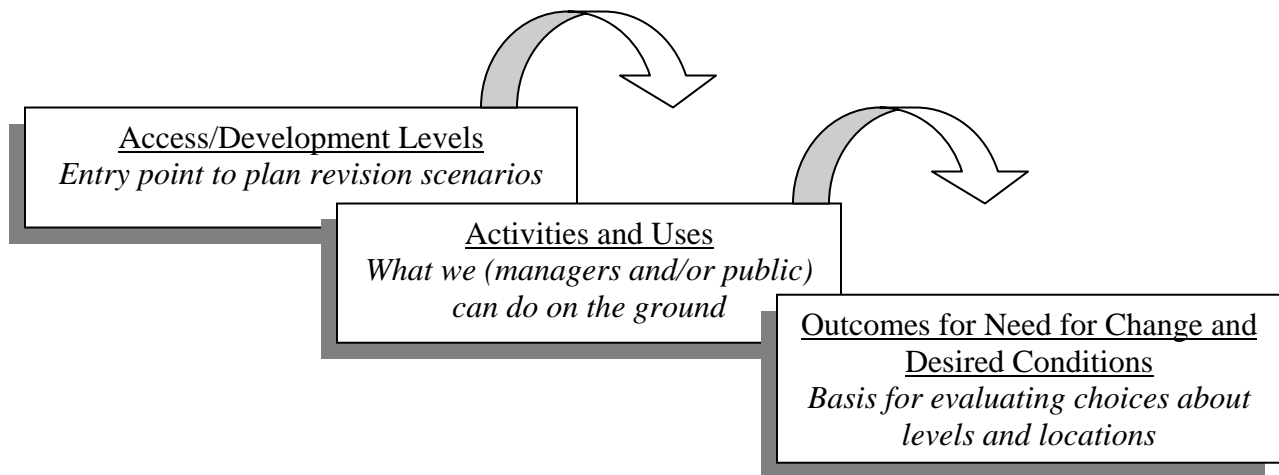
The resulting draft scenarios will then be reviewed and further refined with the public via workshops and a specially designed website, which will result in a set of second drafts. These second drafts will then be reviewed with the FLT, public and Cooperators, and finalized as starting points for alternatives to be developed in the next phase of the Revision process.

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ACCESS/DEVELOPMENT LEVELS AND THE SCENARIO BUILDING PROCESS

The mapped land units being used for scenarios are descriptions of existing conditions, based on access and development level, that have resulted from implementing the 1990 Forest Plan.

The current scenario map is an inventory of access/development levels where they presently exist on the ground, as depicted by the color coding described below. New scenarios can be developed by adjusting where these colors are placed on the map.

The diagram below illustrates how these access/development levels serve as the starting point for the scenario development process. The chosen level establishes the management activities and land uses that may occur in a given area; we can then evaluate that choice in terms of the outcomes of the activities and uses for specified Need for Change items, and for the ecological, social and economic Desired Conditions in general, in that area.

Access/Development Levels
Entry point to plan revision scenarios

Activities and Uses
What we (managers and/or public) can do on the ground

Outcomes for Need for Change and Desired Conditions
Basis for evaluating choices about levels and locations

Descriptions of access/development levels. For each level, applicable activities, uses and constraints (standards & guidelines) will be described; currently a few examples are given.

1. **Wilderness**. Wilderness is a congressionally designated special area, managed with special regulations and for purposes that include preserving wildlife, ecological, scientific, educational, and other values.

2. **Non-motorized Backcountry.** Large, usually remote areas that may have non-motorized trails but no motorized trails or roads.

   Example constraint discussed among team members: mechanical treatment of fuels may be compatible with backcountry only if no ground disturbance is needed. Use of motorized equipment (other than chain saws) that results in skid roads etc. is not compatible with a backcountry environment.

3. **Motorized backcountry and areas accessed by primitive roads**. Large areas that have both motorized and non-motorized trails, as well as unimproved 4WD and high-clearance roads. Roads included in these areas are unimproved (maintenance level 2).

   Other forest activities can take place here, with some constraints. The roads may be used for administrative purposes and may include some temporary timber roads, but if these areas are to be developed in a more permanent way with improved roads we would be changing this condition to more of a roadside environment such as unit 4 or 5 below.

4. **Roadside environments—restricted vehicle access**. Land within the area of influence of forest roads that are closed except for administrative use. The land includes roads and timber harvest areas, some of which may be active.

   Timber harvest and other commodity uses are compatible with this land unit. Some of the closed roads in these areas may be used by OHVs as trails; some are managed for non-motorized public use. It would be important to maintain scenic quality in doing resource management, for the public experiences these areas in a way similar to backcountry.

5. **Roadside environments**. Land accessible to the public by road vehicle; defined by the area of influence near open roads (up to one mile distant). Included in this category are the areas surrounding primary forest roads as well as some roads of other jurisdictions (a county road, for example that passes through the forest).

   All management activities, including oil/gas exploration, range and wildlife habitat improvement, development of recreation sites, and timber harvest, are potentially compatible with this area as long as they operate within the constraints of sustainable soil, watershed function, protection of scenery etc.

6. **Areas of concentrated public use, accessible by vehicle.** Applies to high-use roadside recreation areas such as the Snake River Canyon and major resorts; also those forest roadside environments that include many developments and high use (lower Greys River, Granite Creek).

   All management activities are potentially compatible with this area as long as they operate within the constraints of resource protection; because of high public visibility, maintaining scenic quality will be of great importance.

7. **Areas of concentrated public use, beyond roaded areas.** Unroaded areas with high trail densities and facilities to accommodate heavy recreation use. Examples include Cache and Game Creeks, the Teton Pass trail complex.

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NEED FOR CHANGE EMPHASIS ITEMS

Ecological
A. Aspen is declining. (DC 1.1.1)
B. Whitebark pine is declining. (DC 1.1.1)
C. Conifer structural diversity is lacking. (DC 1.1.1)
D. Canopy of mountain big sagebrush is excessive in some areas of the Forest. (DC 1.1.2)
E. Tall forb communities are not meeting desired conditions for ground cover and species composition. (DC 1.1.3)
F. Invasive weed species are increasing in number of species and area infested by each species. (DC 1.1.5)
G. Pressure is increasing on habitat connectivity (DC 1.2.1) and security. (DC 1.2.3)
H. Pressure is increasing on transitional ranges for ungulates. (DC 1.2.6)
I. There is a risk of high intensity fires in the wildland urban interface. (DC 1.3.2)
J. Watershed function is at risk on some watersheds. (DC 1.4.1)
K. Channel function is at risk in some areas due to stream bank damage. (DC 1.4.2)
L. Forest Plan direction related to water production would have negative impacts on watersheds and should be revised. (DC 1.4.5)
M. Air quality is declining and air quality related values, such as deposition and visibility, are being negatively impacted. (DC 1.4.7)

Social
N. More use, new kinds of use and illegal uses are negatively impacting unroaded backcountry. (DC 2.1.1)
O. OHVs are having a negative effect on wildlife, non-motorized recreation, soil, and vegetation. (DC 2.1.2)
P. Increased winter recreation is causing visitor conflicts and displacement.(DC 2.1.3)
Q. Number, size, and deteriorating condition of dispersed roadside camps are negatively impacting vegetation and soil, damaging stream banks and introducing weeds. (DC 2.1.4)
R. Increased recreational use and development of private lands is creating more pressure on big game winter ranges. (DC 2.1.9)
S. Access to the Forest is reduced due to lack of easements on private land. (DC 2.2.1)
T. Scenic integrity is declining because of recent insect epidemics, large fires, and lack of forested diversity. (DC 2.7.1)

Economic
U. There is a conflict between the need to produce energy for the nation and other social and ecological resources which are more highly valued by the public. (DC 3.2.6)

BTNF FOREST PLAN REVISION
GA _45_ SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

1. What changes, in any, are needed to the description of the Theme for this GA?
MA 45 -- Moccasin Basin

    Moccasin Basin, Lava Mountain, Tripod Peak, Continental Divide. High elevation and remote, with low development levels but moderate use in fall and winter, big game habitat, few summer trails, groomed winter trails. Whitebark pine, grizzly bear. *Add: Protect scenic quality of Continental Divide Nat'l Scenic Trail, recent wildland fire (Hardscrabble) consider future whitebark pine restoration in N. Fork of Fish Creek – more effective closures needed (standards & guidelines).*

2. Given the Theme and the NFC base maps for this GA, which NFC items are most likely to drive a change in management direction here (NFC Drivers)?
    B: Whitebark pine is declining;
    P: Increased winter recreation is causing visitor conflicts and displacement.

3. For each NFC Driver listed in #2, draw polygons as needed and complete a polygon scenario form for each one (see attached)

4. Overall comments/questions/rationale for this GA:

GA: 45   *Polygon*:   B1   *NFC Driver*:   B: Whitebark pine is declining

Potential adjustments (label multiple options as a, b, c, etc.):
(a) Change level from green to light blue throughout the polygon
(b) Change level from green to light blue in smaller, high-priority areas within the polygon
(c) Make no changes to level but prioritize wildland fire use and prescribed fire on a project basis

Rationale for potential adjustments
(a) Increased availability of treatment options including mechanical methods, prescribed fire or wildland fire use.
(b) Same as for (a), although in more limited areas.
(c) Fire opportunities can still provide some mitigation of whitebark pine's decline.

Potential trade-offs and rationale (indicate adjustment option and NFC item or DC):
(a) Some negative impact on NFC item N (protect backcountry), although it is minimal because the area in question is of relatively low priority for backcountry use, and administrative access will generally be of limited scope and duration. Standards & guidelines will be needed to protect scenic byway (DC 2.6.6.) and scenic integrity in the trail system (DC 2.7.1). This adjustment could create additional opportunities for groomed snowmobile trails (DC 2.1.3).

(b) Same as for (a) but less impact on the indicated NFC items and DCs

(c) Least impact.

Comments:
Grizzly bear amendment standards and lynx amendment standards may limit application of mechanical treatments.

GA: 45   *Polygon*:   B2   *NFC Driver*:   B: Whitebark pine is declining

Potential adjustments (label multiple options as a, b, c, etc.):
(a) Change level from green to light blue throughout the polygon
(b) Change level from green to light blue in smaller, high-priority areas within the polygon
(c) Make no changes to level but prioritize wildland fire use and prescribed fire on a project basis

Rationale for potential adjustments
(a) Increased availability of treatment options including mechanical methods, prescribed fire or wildland fire use.
(b) Same as for (a), although in more limited areas.
(c) Fire opportunities can still provide some mitigation of whitebark pine's decline.

Potential trade-offs and rationale (indicate adjustment option and NFC item or DC):
(a) Some negative impact on NFC item N (protect backcountry), although it is minimal because the area in question is of relatively low priority for backcountry use, and administrative access will generally be of limited scope and duration. Standards & guidelines needed to protect scenic byway (DC 2.6.6.), Continental Divide Nat'l Scenic Trail (DC 2.6.7) and scenic integrity in the trail system (DC 2.7.1).   Proposed change could create additional opportunities for groomed snowmobile trails (DC 2.1.3).

(b) Same as for (a) but less impact on the indicated NFC items and DCs

(c) Least impact.

Comments:
Grizzly bear amendment standards and lynx amendment standards may limit application of mechanical treatments.

GA: 45   *Polygon*: P1   *NFC Driver*: P: Increased winter recreation is
                                     causing visitor conflicts and displacement

Potential adjustments (label multiple options as a, b, c, etc.):
(a) Close the polygon to public motorized access in winter
(b) Close portions of the polygon to public motorized access in winter

Rationale for potential adjustments
(a) Reduces scarcity of non-motorized winter recreation opportunities,
(b) Same as for (a), but less so.

Potential trade-offs and rationale (indicate adjustment option and NFC item or DC):
(a) Slightly reduces availability of winter settings for shared use including snowmobiles (DC 2.1.3),
    perhaps negligible relative to remaining area available. Reduction of motorized access could
    benefit lynx (NFC items G and O)

(b) Same as for (a) but less so.

Comments: