

2005 Monitoring and Evaluation Report

**Payette National Forest
Land and Resource Management Plan**

September 2006

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2005 MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST

LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2006

I. Introduction

1.1 The Forest and The Forest Plan

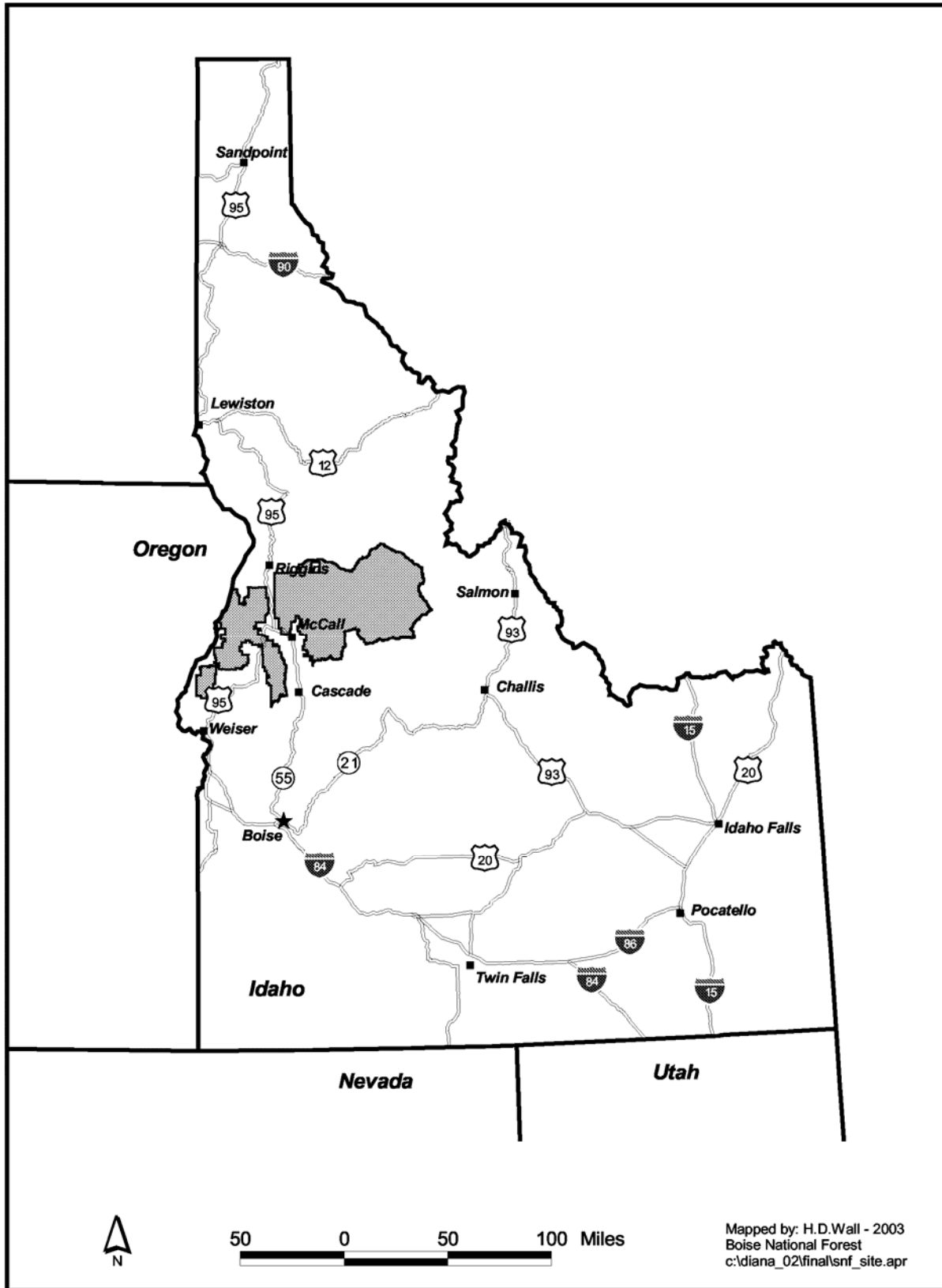
The Payette National Forest is located in west central Idaho in Adams, Idaho, Valley, and Washington Counties (see Figure 1). The Forest is bordered on the south by the Boise National Forest, on the east by the Salmon-Challis National Forest, on the north by the Nez Perce National Forest, and on the west by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in Oregon. The Forest Supervisor's Office is located in McCall, Idaho, approximately 100 miles north of Boise. The Forest is comprised of five ranger districts—Council, Weiser, New Meadows, McCall, and Krassel—with district headquarters in Council, Weiser, and New Meadows, and two in McCall.

The Forest is an administrative unit of the Intermountain Region (Region 4) of the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Regional Forester's office is in Ogden, Utah.

In 2003, the Payette National Forest (the Payette) completed revision of its 1988 Land and Resource Management Plan (hereafter, called the 1988 Forest Plan). The Regional Forester signed the Record of Decision for the revised Forest Plan on July 25, 2003. The revised Plan (hereafter also called the Plan) went into effect September 7, 2003. The Plan defines a strategy for the next 10-15 years. It describes desired conditions for Forest ecosystems. It sets goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines that emphasize maintaining and restoring watershed conditions, species viability, terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and healthy, functioning ecosystems. It also lists monitoring requirements.

This Monitoring and Evaluation Report reflects activities and accomplishments during the second full year of implementing the revised Plan—fiscal year (FY) 2005, which was from October 2004 through September 2005.

Figure 1. Location of Payette National Forest



1.2 Forest Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

The goal of Plan monitoring is to determine what in the Plan is working well and what is not, and to help identify what changes are needed in management direction or monitoring methods.

The “monitoring and evaluation” process is a key part of adaptive management. They track how projects are meeting the Plan’s desired condition. They provide the information to keep the Forest Plan viable. Monitoring and evaluation tell how Forest Plan decisions have been implemented, how effective the implementation has proven to be in accomplishing desired outcomes, and how valid the underlying the management strategy expressed in the Forest Plan.

Chapter IV of the Plan, “Implementation,” describes the Payette’s monitoring and evaluation strategy. It lists the activities, practices, and effects to monitor and the indicators, or measures, to track in Tables IV-1 and IV-2. While most of the elements require annual data gathering, most are to evaluate the effects of management over several years. Therefore, results of monitoring for most elements will be reported after evaluation of data gathered over multiple years.

As this is the first year of monitoring under the revised Plan, this monitoring report focuses on the elements from Tables IV-1 and IV-2 that are to be reported annually.

1.3 Applying Forest Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the Forest Plan have focused on implementation success (that is, achievement of plan objectives), and on decisions made in the 2003 Record of Decision for the Forest Plan. Monitoring elements also include requirements from the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and NFMA Regulations as well as other pertinent laws and regulations. (Although the Forest Service issued new 36 CFR 219 NFMA planning regulations in January 2005, the Forest Plan was prepared under the 1982 planning regulations, which remain in effect to that extent.)

Monitoring also tracks compliance with the requirements in the biological opinions on the revised Forest Plan by two regulatory agencies, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries).

Monitoring and evaluation of key results over time will help determine if projects are making satisfactory progress toward the desired conditions in the Plan, or if a “need for change” in the existing strategy has arisen in light of the conditions at that time. As long as the information gained from year to year indicates that Plan implementation strategy is making acceptable progress toward Plan desired conditions, then there is no need for change in that strategy. However, if evaluation concludes that the Forest Plan strategy is not effective, then the Forest Supervisor would make the determination as to what “needs for change” exist, and whether Plan errata, amendment, or revision would be needed to make the change.

If evaluation of monitoring results indicates any monitoring requirements or their methodology is ineffective or outdated, then that conclusion would provide an empirical basis for initiating change.

1.4 Report Organization

Section 2.1 below shows the five monitoring elements required to be reported annually listed in Forest Plan **Table IV-1**, “Forest Plan Evaluation Expectations.” This Table lists elements related to NFMA and other laws and regulations that are reported annually, and others that are reported every five years. Elements not reported each year require the collection of information over multiple years before meaningful evaluation is possible. Thus, in this second full year of monitoring and reporting under the

2003 Plan, only the five elements identified with a “**Yes**” in the “Annual Posting of Results?” column of Table IV-1 are addressed in this report.

Section 2.2 shows the five monitoring elements required to be reported annually in **Table IV-2** of the Forest Plan, “Monitoring Elements.” This Table lists questions and indicators to monitor to determine the success of the Forest Plan management strategy in progressing toward desired conditions. As with Table IV-1, monitoring questions addressed in this report are the four with “**Annually**” and the two with “**2 Years**” in the “Report Period” column of Table IV-2.

Section 2.3 describes the project level monitoring completed in 2005. This monitoring collects some of the information needed to address annual monitoring elements in Tables IV-1 and IV-2, as well as the elements that have annual information needs to evaluate and report every 3 or 5 years.

2. 2005 Monitoring and Evaluation

2.1 Five Annual Monitoring Elements from Table IV-1

2.1.1 Evaluation of Performance

This section provides a “quantitative estimate of performance comparing outputs and services with those projected by the forest plan” (Forest Plan Table IV-1, p. IV-5).

As defined in the Forest Plan, objectives are “concise time-specific statements of actions or results designed to help achieve goals.” As such, objectives provide the best projection of outputs and services provided through implementation of the Forest Plan. This narrative lists objectives (and the Forest’s accomplishments for those objectives) that provide for specific services or outputs on an annual or bi-annual basis.

Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, Candidate Species

Objective TEOB01. *Continue to map and update locations of species occurrence and habitat for TEPC species during fine- or site/project scale analyses. Incorporate information into a coordinated GIS database and coordinate with the Idaho Conservation Data Center).*

Accomplishments: Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel Surveys. From May 1 to June 1, approximately 40 person hours were spent surveying for northern Idaho ground squirrels (NIDGS) across approximately 1,000 acres in the Mud Creek and Upper East Branch in the Price Valley area. The surveys were completed in conjunction with the proposed Muddy Squirrel Habitat Restoration project. Surveyed sites had the same soil and vegetative characteristics, aspect, elevations, and slope consistent with extant and extinct NIDGS populations. Potential habitat was searched by walking and looking for NIDGS burrows and fresh droppings, and glassing suitable NIDGS habitat. No individuals were observed. Note this activity also met the following Conservation Recommendation provided by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the Biological Opinion for the Forest Plans: *Continue existing efforts to locate additional natural population of northern Idaho ground squirrels within the Probable Historical Distribution of the species. Document the systematic search methods so all surveys are using similar techniques.*

Accomplishments: Bald Eagle Nest Surveys. The Forest cooperated with Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) to monitor the bald eagle nest site in the Lost Valley area. This site was monitored for productivity and information was shared with agencies responsible for bald eagle recovery monitoring (USFWS and IDFG). No eggs were laid, hence no young were produced in 2005. Results were reported in the *Idaho Bald Eagle Nest Monitoring 2005 Annual Report* published by IDFG in January 2006. Note this activity also met Conservation Recommendations for bald eagles provided by USFWS in the Biological Opinion for the Forest Plans.

Objective TEOB06. *Develop an agreed-upon process with NOAA Fisheries and USFWS for project-level consultation that addresses multiscale analyses and tracking of environmental baselines.*

Accomplishments: The Payette began implementing a process called “Framework” in FY05. During this year, the Forest was dis-aggregated into seven different assessment areas that closely represent 4th field watersheds. Forest specialists working with the vegetation, fisheries, wildlife, and hydrology resources

began their assessments. Fisheries and wildlife began looking at the entire Forest, or all subbasins while vegetation, hazardous fuels, and hydrology specialists began with the Little Salmon Subbasin.

Objective TEOB011. Update appropriate NRIS database modules for TEPC species and their habitats on a biennially basis to incorporate latest field data.

Accomplishments. The FAUNA database was updated with occurrences of a variety of species for the current year sightings. Legacy (old) data was migrated to the NRIS database.

Objective TEOB015. *Maintain or restore vegetative conditions that contribute to the recovery of northern Idaho ground squirrel habitat.*

Accomplishments. The following projects were completed to remove trees encroaching into NIDGS habitat thereby enhancing and expanding habitat for the squirrels.

- Lost Valley Restoration Area – 70 acres were logged in winter. The purpose of the project was to expand existing occupied sites, enhance NIDGS habitat, and open dispersal corridors between current occupied NIDGS populations. NIDGS dispersal into newly created habitat was documented in the summer of 2005.
- Lost Valley Area -- 95 acres were broadcast burned. The objective was to expand the existing NIDGS sites, rejuvenate grass and forb communities, and reduce slash from the Lost Squirrel Timber Sale. The project was very successful; the burn was a low intensity mosaic with low mortality of leave trees.
- Price Valley – 35 acres of thinning and slash piling and burning. The objectives were to expand and enhance NIDGS habitat and reduce ladder fuels, thereby reducing large tree mortality during future broadcast burning.
- Lost Valley and Price Valley. Surveys were conducted using GPS to produce maps of treatment areas and active burrows, and to document NIDGS dispersal into new treatment areas.

Objective TEOB23. *Develop operational resources (maps, keys, desk guides, etc.) within one year of signing the ROD, to coordinate TEPC species concerns and practical mitigations, and include those resource tools in the Fire Management Plan. Consult with NMFS and USFWS on operational resources on an annual basis.*

Accomplishment. In fiscal year 2004, the Payette developed a fire management guidebook and applied it during the 2004 fire season. The *Resource Advisor's Guide* for the Payette National Forest (June 2004) contains guidance consistent with the Payette's completed consultation on listed fish species. On March 14-15, 2005, the Payette provided a Resource Advisor Training session for Payette employees on the use of the guidelines.

Objective TEOB027. *During fine scale analysis in acres where dispersed and developed recreation practices or facilities are identified as a potential concern or problem contributing to adverse effects to TEPC species or degradation of their habitats, evaluate and document where the problems are and prioritize opportunities to mitigate, through avoidance or minimization, adverse effects to TEPC species.*

Accomplishment. The Lost Valley Access Management Project installed two locked gates within the Lost Valley Restoration Area. The objective was to reduce off-road vehicle access and protect critical NIDGS habitat. Habitat degradation and off-road ATV use was greatly reduced.

Objective TEOB28. *During travel planning, identify areas of concentrated snow compaction activities (designated trails, snow pplay areas) in lynx habitat within LAUs, and minimize snow compaction in those areas to reduce potential conflicts.*

Accomplishment. The process of identifying areas of concentrated snow compaction activities began during this reporting period as part of the analysis for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Payette Travel Plan.

Soil, Water, Aquatic Resources

Objective SWOB11. *Coordinate with state and local agencies and tribal governments annually to limit or reduce degrading effects from stocking programs on native and desired non-native fish and aquatic species.*

Accomplishment. The Payette held a coordination meeting on March 10, 2004 with the Nez Perce Tribe. It also held a coordination meeting with Idaho Fish and Game in the field on April 27, 2004, and in the office June 18, 2004.

Wildlife Resources

Objective WIOB03: *Prioritize wildlife habitats to be restored at a mid- or Forest-scale, using information from sources such as species habitat models, and fine-scale analyses. Initiate restoration activities on priority wildlife habitats to move current conditions toward desired conditions.*

Accomplishment. During Forest Plan Revision, wildlife habitat families that have declined from historic conditions were identified for the Southwest Idaho Ecogroup (SWIE) and Payette National Forest. Based on an updated multi-scale analysis, the Forest has now prioritized restoration activities this planning period (i.e., 10-15 years) for those habitat families and associated species identified as being of greatest concern. The process also prioritizes longer-term (i.e., 15+ years) needs of other habitats that have experienced varying levels of decline.

This multi-scale analysis was developed using the principles and science generated in support of the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP MOU and Strategy, 2003; Raphael et al. 2000; and, Wisdom et al. 2000), as was the analysis supporting decisions in the 2003 Forest Plan. In addition, this updated analysis incorporates new information generated after the revised Forest Plans were implemented in September 2003. New information incorporated includes mid-scale assessments such as the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies for the State of Idaho and Utah, respectively (Idaho CWCS 2005 and Utah CWCS 2005), and the Conservation Plan for the Greater Sage Grouse in Idaho (2006 Public Review Draft).

To describe how this analysis and habitat prioritization process, along with other components of the 2003 Forest Plan (LRMP), result in a Forest Plan-level comprehensive strategy for wildlife conservation, a “Wildlife Conservation Strategy” (WCS) will be proposed. This WCS, in conjunction with the existing Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) and current Forest Plan direction, provide a comprehensive strategy for managing the bio-physical elements of the Forest. The seven components of the WCS will include:

1. Forest Plan Goals to Maintain and Restore Wildlife Habitat Resources

2. Conservation Principles and Indicators for Wildlife Resources
3. Forest Plan Objectives, Standards and Guidelines for Management of Wildlife Resources
4. Planning Period Priorities for Habitat Families and Species of Greatest Conservation Concern
5. Multi-Scale Analysis of Watersheds within the Interior Columbia Basin, EcoGroup and Forest.
6. Identification of the Appropriate Type of Restoration and Long-term (15+ years) Habitat Family Priorities
7. Forest Plan Monitoring and Adaptive Management Provisions to Track Baseline Changes and Address Data Limitations and Uncertainties

Components 1, 3, and 7 consist of direction from the Forest Plan. Components 2, 4, 5, and 6 were generated as part of accomplishing Forest Plan objective WIOB03, using data that supported the 2003 Forest Plan assessments updated with new information, as applicable. No change to Forest Plan direction is anticipated at this time.

Documentation concerning this comprehensive WCS will be completed through a supplement to the analysis of the SWIE LRMP Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A Notice of Intent to supplement the analysis of the Final EIS is expected to be published in the Federal Register in the fall of 2006.

Objective WIOB7. *Maintain or restore each PVG in each watershed (5th field hydrologic unit) to provide at least 20 percent of the forest vegetation in the large tree size class (medium tree size class in PVG 10).*

Accomplishment. Six timber sales harvested acres in fiscal year 2005. One sale, the Cougar Timber Sale, was planned and approved under the 1988 Forest Plan. The other five sales were approved under the 2003 Forest Plan. They occurred within the following watersheds, or fifth-field hydrologic units (5th HUs):

Cougar Timber Sale. Little Weiser River HU5. A total of 49 acres in PVGs 5 and 6 were harvested with a modified regeneration/reserve tree treatment. All cutting occurred in strata 23 and 24, large tree component. The prescription left adequate numbers of large trees on site to maintain the large tree structure, with the exception of two acres. These acres within strata 24 of PVG 5 no longer meet the large tree classification.

Tamarack Thin Timber Sale. Pine Creek HU5. A total of 246 acres in PVGs 2 and 6 were commercially thinned, with all cutting occurring in strata 22, medium tree component. No change occurred in the large tree component as a result of this harvest.

Landore Salvage Timber Sale. Indian-McGraw HU5. A total of 202 acres in PVGs 5 and 6 were harvested with a salvage treatment. All cutting occurred in strata 23 and 24, large tree component. The prescription targeted only heavily diseased and dying trees for removal, leaving the majority of the stand structure intact. No change occurred to the large tree component.

Brundage Spruce Timber Sale. Goose Creek HU5. This was a one-acre harvest in strata 24 of PVG 6. Treatment involved the expansion of a ski lift line. The one acre no longer meets the large tree component classification.

Highway 95 and PV Squirrel Timber Sales. Upper Weiser River HU5. The Highway 95 harvest was designed to improve safety along a narrow corridor. It covered approximately 119 acres. Most of the acreage was within PVG 6 in a variety of strata. Given the type of treatment, there was no reduction in large tree component. The PV Squirrel Timber Sale was a wildlife habitat improvement prescription on

69 acres in strata 22 of PVG 2. This acreage is classified as medium tree structure; therefore, no change occurred within the large tree component.

Lost Squirrel Timber Sale. WF Weiser River HU5. The objective of this treatment was to improve wildlife habitat on 69 acres. The treatment was done within strata 21 and 22 of PVGs 1, 2, 6, and 10. Classification of tree structure on treated sites is medium. No change occurred to the large tree component.

In summary, as a result of timber harvesting that occurred on the Payette during FY 2005, there was a total reduction of three acres of large tree component. The amount was so small that no measurable change occurred in the percentage of large tree component calculated for fifth field watersheds.

Objective WIOB08. *Continue to map locations of species occurrence and habitat for MIS and Region 4 Sensitive species during fine- and site/project scale analyses. Incorporate information into a coordinated GIS database, including FAUNA, and coordinate with the Idaho Conservation Data Center; and*

Objective WIOB10. *Update appropriate NRIS database modules for sensitive species' occurrence and habitat on a biennial basis to incorporate the latest field data.*

Accomplishment: A variety of wildlife population and habitat surveys were conducted on the Forest in fiscal year 2005. Surveys focused on several species: pileated woodpeckers, northern goshawks, flammulated owls, great gray owls, bald eagle nest sites, northern Idaho ground squirrels, and forest carnivores. Bald eagle monitoring and northern Idaho ground squirrel surveys are described above under Objective TEOB01. MIS monitoring is described on page 21. As a result of these efforts, new locations for MIS and Region 4 Sensitive Species were documented and mapped. This data was provided to the Idaho Conservation Data Center (CDC) and entered into the PNF wildlife occurrence FAUNA database. Hundreds of occurrence data records representing common and rare species observations were entered.

In 2005, long-term studies were initiated to obtain population trend and habitat use information on three sensitive bird species: flammulated owls, great gray owls, and northern goshawks. These studies coordinate with similar studies the Payette initiated in 2003 on white-headed woodpeckers and in 2004 on pileated woodpeckers (see MIS monitoring accomplishments on page 21-22). Progress reports of the study results are in preparation and will be released at periodic intervals, depending on the study design, status, and current results. The 2005 study of flammulated owls was conducted in cooperation with Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) under a Challenge-Cost-Share Agreement. A report of the 2005 survey results titled *Occurrence of the Flammulated Owl (Otus flammeolus) on the Payette National Forest* was prepared by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in December 2005.

Snow track surveys were conducted in cooperation with IDFG biologists to monitor forest carnivores (fisher, wolverine, wolf, lynx, marten, etc.). The results of these surveys are published in the IDFG and Game Snow-Track Survey Report.

Botanical Resources

Objective BTOB01. *Continue to map locations of suitable occupied habitat for Region 4 Sensitive plant species, Forest Watch plants, and globally rare plant communities. Incorporate information into a GIS database and coordinate with the Idaho Conservation Center.*

Accomplishment: Locations of occupied and suitable plant habitats and their populations were mapped either as new locations or as expanded populations during fiscal year 2005. Site and species information was gathered and sent to Idaho CDC.

Objective BTOB04. *Maintain annually a list of Forest Watch plants that identify species of concern (see Table 1 for a list of species).*

Accomplishment: Following the 2005 Rare Plant Conference with Idaho Fish and Game, the Payette added six new species to the Forest Watch list and removed one species. All added species have known populations on the Payette except for *Trifolium douglasii*. One species, *Carex buxbaumii*, was removed from the Watch List because the numerous populations and lack of threats reduced conservation concerns.

Table 1. 2006 Watch List of Rare Plants on the Payette National Forest

Scientific Name	Common Name	Districts *	Status	Habitat
<i>Botrychium lineare</i>	Skinny moonwort	New Meadows, McCall, Krassel, Council	USFWS-candidate, PNF-watch	Lodgepole pine & spruce forests and meadows.
<i>Howellia aquatilis</i>	Water Howellia	Weiser, Council, New Meadows, Krassel, McCall	USFWS-threatened, PNF-watch	Aquatic plants found in ponds and river oxbows
<i>Mirabilis macfarlanei</i>	MacFarlane's four-o'clock	Council, McCall, New Meadows	USFWS-threatened, PNF-watch	Hells Canyon, Salmon River grasslands
<i>Silene spaldingii</i>	Spalding's catchfly	Council, New Meadows, McCall, Krassel	USFWS-threatened, PNF-watch	Hells Canyon, Salmon River Fescue grasslands
<i>Spiranthes diluvialis</i>	Ute ladies tresses	New Meadows, McCall, Krassel, Council, Weiser	USFS-threatened, PNF-watch	Moist soils near riparian areas, springs, lakes, meadows, and river meanders
<i>Allium validum</i>	Tall swamp Onion	Council	PNF-watch	Swampy meadows mid to high elevations
<i>Allotropa virgata</i>	Candystick	McCall	PNF-watch	Lodgepole pine forest
<i>Botrychium lanceolatum</i> var. <i>lanceolatum</i>	Lance-leaved moonwort	McCall	PNF-watch	High elevation grasslands & meadows
<i>Botrychium simplex</i>	Least moonwort	McCall Krassel	PNF-watch	High elevation grasslands & meadows

Scientific Name	Common Name	Districts *	Status	Habitat
<i>Carex aboriginum</i>	Indian Valley sedge	Council	PNF-watch	Wetlands
<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i> spp. <i>Nanus</i>	Dwarf Grey Rabbitbrush	Council	PNF-watch	Shrub and grasslands
<i>Douglasia idahoensis</i>	Idaho Douglasia	New Meadows, Krassel, McCall	PNF-watch	Forest gaps, high elevations
<i>Eatonella nivea</i>	White eatonella	Council	PNF-watch	Grasslands
<i>Mimulus clivicola</i>	Bankmonkey flower	New Meadows, Council, Weiser	PNF-watch	Forest gap
<i>Schistostega pennata</i>	Luminous moss	McCall Krassel	PNF-watch	Wetlands & riparian
<i>Trifolium douglasii</i>	Douglas Clover	Council	PNF-watch	Grasslands

* known populations and/or habitat

Fire Management

Objective FMOB04. *Schedule and complete at least 100,000 acres of fuels management through prescribed fire and mechanical treatments in the next decade to achieve desired vegetation attributes and fuel reduction goals. Focus on wildland/urban interface and areas in Fire Regimes 1, 2, and 3 (non-lethal, mixed1, mixed2) in Condition Classes 2 and 3 (moderate to extreme hazard rating).*

Accomplishment. During fiscal year 2005, the Payette treated 1,652 acres of hazardous fuels using prescribed burning and mechanical treatments. It also treated 45,024 acres using naturally occurring fire (Wildland Fire Use, or WFU). Of the 46,676 total acres treated, the treatment mix was 4 percent WUI (Wildland Urban Interface) and 96 percent Non-WUI. Table 3 shows the types of treatment acres. Although current direction is to provide a 50/50 mix of WUI/Non-WUI, it is nationally and regionally recognized that not all Forests have this land distribution. Therefore, Forests such as the Payette are expected to produce more of the Non-WUI acres to help balance WUI acres elsewhere. When going beyond the WUI, direction is to place a priority on those areas of the Forest within fire regimes 1, 2, and 3 (frequent fire regimes) that are also classified as condition classes 2 and 3 (those most departed from historic conditions). Much of the work that the Payette completed in the Non-WUI portion of the Forest in 2005 did occur in these areas and has helped to move them toward lower condition class ratings.

Table 2. Hazardous Fuels Treated, Fiscal Year 2005

FY 2005	WUI Treatments	WUI Acres	Non-WUI Treatments	Non-WUI Acres	Total Treatments	Total Acres
Mechanical	1	652	0	0	1	652
Prescribed Fire	1	1000	0	0	1	1,000
Subtotal	1	1,652	0	0	1	1,652
Wildland Fire Use - WFU*	0	0	16	45,024	16	45,024
Total	1	1652	16	45,024	18	46,676

* WFU acres are not considered part of the Forest target, but do reflect an ecological change on the landscape including condition class change resulting from managed fire activities.

Timberland Resources

Objective TROB01 (Timber): *Provide timber harvest, and related reforestation and timber stand improvement activities, to contribute toward the attainment of desired vegetation conditions. Annually, during the next 10 to 15 years:*

- (a) *Harvest timber, other than by salvage, on an average of approximately 5,500 acres,*
- (b) *Reforest an average of approximately 1,500 acres, and*
- (c) *Complete timber stand improvement activities on an average of approximately 3,000 acres.*

Accomplishment: Table 3 shows the acres harvested, reforested, and thinned. Acres treated are the result of a timber planning pipeline of months or years. The shortfall in timber harvested, reforested, and thinned reflects past sales approved under the previous Forest Plan, not the 2003 Plan. Most of these were enjoined by litigation or delayed by litigation response. In 2005, few new projects prepared and approved under the new Plan were yet through the pipeline.

Table 3. Timber Area Treated 2005

	Total Timber Harvested (Acres)	Total Salvage (Acres)	Total Other than Salvage (Acres)	Total Reforested (Acres)	Total Timber Stand Improvement (Acres)
Completed	4755	203	552	265	2,309

Objective TROB02: *Make available an estimated 325 million board feet of timber for the decade, which will contribute to Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ).*

Accomplishment: In fiscal year 2005, the Payette made available (offered) approximately 5.6 million board feet (MMBF) of timber which contributed to the ASQ. This consisted of 4.9 MMBF of green and 0.7 MMBF of salvage timber. This shortfall from the average of 32.5 MMBF per year is primarily the result of the factors listed in Objective TROB01 above. The volume actually harvested was about the same as the volume offered.

Objective TROB03: *Utilize wood products (e.g., fuelwood, posts, poles, houselogs, etc.) generated from vegetation treatment activities, on both suited and not suited timberlands, to produce an estimated 80 million board feet of volume for the decade. This volume, when combined with ASQ, is the Total Sale Program Quantity (TSPQ). The TSPQ for the first decade is estimated to be 405 million board feet.*

Accomplishment: The Payette made available (offered) approximately 1.4 million board feet (MMBF) of wood products (fuelwood, posts and poles, houselogs, etc.). When combined with the 5.6 MMBF contributing to ASQ (TROB02, above), the Payette made available 7.0 MMBF that contributed to the Total Sale Program Quantity (TSPQ). This is approximately 25 percent of that expected as an annual average.

Minerals and Geology

Objective MIOB02: *Develop and implement within one year standardized inspection, monitoring, and reporting requirements for minerals activities to provide for environmentally sound exploration, development, and production of mineral and energy resources.*

Accomplishment: The Mineral Materials component of the mineral operations database (web-based component of INFRA, the Forest Service integrated national resource database) was introduced late in fiscal year 2005 by the Forest Service Minerals and Geology Program. This new database should be fully implemented by the summer of 2006. The database includes inspection and monitoring forms, as well as reminders for bond reviews. The Locatable Minerals component should be released in late fiscal year 2006 or early 2007. The Forest implemented an interim inspection protocol for both locatable and saleable minerals in FY 2004.

Facilities and Roads

Objective FROB01: *Analyze road system needs and associated resource effects in accordance with the established agency policy direction for roads analysis.*

Accomplishment: Agency policy requires Roads Analysis Process (Forest Service Manual FSM 7712.1). No Roads Analyses were completed on the Payette Forest in 2005. Fine-scale analysis identifying opportunities to reduce road-related degrading effects was addressed in one project level NEPA document, the Burgdorf Roads EA (below).

Objective FROB02: *Cooperate with federal, state, and county agencies, tribal governments, and cost share partners to achieve consistency in road design, operation, and maintenance needed to attain resource goals; and:*

Objective FROB03: Identify safety hazards on Forest classified roads, establish improvement priorities, correct or mitigate the hazard.

Accomplishments: Between 2001 and 2005, 100 percent of the system passenger car roads (maintenance levels 3, 4, and 5) were surveyed to determine maintenance needs. Identified maintenance needs were placed into the deferred maintenance backlog in INFRA until such time as they are addressed through future programs of work. For maintenance level 1 and 2 roads, no road condition surveys were completed in 2005 because the WO assigned none for the fiscal year. (Site-specific NEPA projects in areas with roads routinely identify safety hazards and remedy them where possible.) The Payette classified road system includes 70 bridges, most on a 2-year inspection cycle. Fourteen bridges were inspected in 2005 to determine if they support design uses (that is, Road Management Objectives) and legal highway limits. Road miles and bridges surveyed are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Roads and Bridges Surveyed

Type of Site	Total Assets	Surveyed FY05	Surveyed FY01 thru FY05	% Surveyed FY01 thru FY05
Objective ML 3,4,5 Roads (miles)	653	93	653	100
Road Bridges	70	14	70	100

Source: INFRA Report: 2005 Status of Meeting Maintenance Protocols as of 10/01/2005

In fiscal year 2005, the Payette Road Crews and Watershed Crews maintained 282 miles of system road, decommissioned 3 miles of system road, and obliterated 35 miles of non-system road. Table 5 lists those road miles maintained by Payette crews, as reported in the 2005 Payette NF Annual Roads Accomplishment Report (ARAR). Identified resource and safety hazards were corrected during this maintenance.

Table 5. Roads Receiving Force Account Maintenance

Objective Maintenance Level	Total System Miles (End of FY)	Roads Receiving Maintenance (Miles)	Remarks
1	1101	33	Miles reported are for road closures
2	1264	65	
3	611	141	
4	39	39	
5	4	4	
Decommissioned or Obliterated		3	Miles not counted in totals

(former Level 1)			
Obliterated (non-system)		35	Miles not counted in totals. 25 of the 35 miles were surveyed to confirm no further work was needed
Total Miles	3,019	282	

Source: FY 2005 Payette NF Annual Roads Accomplishment Report (ARAR)

In addition to the road miles maintained by the Payette Road Crew, 3 miles of new road were constructed and 56 miles of road were reconstructed during fiscal year 2005 by Payette NF timber sale purchasers. These miles are from timber sales awarded in prior fiscal years. Also, 13 miles of Forest system road were maintained by Idaho Department of Lands (IDOL), a cost share cooperator, during their 2005 timber sale program. Table 6 lists those system road miles constructed and maintained during timber sales as reported in the FY 2005 Payette NF Annual Roads Accomplishment Report (ARAR). Identified resource and safety hazards were corrected during the maintenance.

Table 6. Road Miles Maintained by Purchasers and Cooperators

Maintained By:	Objective		
	Maintenance Level	Construction	Reconstruction
PNF Timber Sale Purchaser	1	3	10
PNF Timber Sale Purchaser	2	0	28
IDOL Timber Sale Purchaser	2	--	11
PNF Timber Sale Purchaser	3	0	18
IDL Timber Sale Purchaser	3	--	2
Total Miles		3	69

Source: FY 2005 Payette NF Annual Roads Accomplishment Report (ARAR)

One stewardship sale and one timber sale were awarded in 2005. The 25 miles of road maintenance from these two sales and additional road maintenance from prior year sales are expected to occur in future fiscal years. Identified resource and safety hazards will be corrected during this maintenance.

Table 7. Road Miles to be Maintained by Purchasers for 2005 Awarded Sales

Objective Maintenance Level	Construction	Reconstruction
1	0	13
2	0	9
3	0	3
Total Miles	0	25

Source: FY 2005 Payette NF Annual Roads Accomplishment Report (ARAR)

Objective FROB04: *During fine scale analyses, identify opportunities to reduce road related degrading effects to help achieve other resource objectives.*

Accomplishment: McCall Ranger District completed the Burgdorf Road Management and Inactive/Abandoned Mine Site Reclamation EA (Burgdorf Roads EA, April 2005). It identified 21.4 miles of unclassified road and 4.8 miles of classified road for decommissioning. The specific policy of “actively engaging the public in transportation analysis” during the roads analysis process was minimally met. Improvements in public involvement at the RAP level would give the public more input in managing roads and access on the Payette National Forest. On the other hand, the ongoing Forest Travel Plan process had extensive public involvement (described below).

Objective FROB05: *Coordinate transportation systems, management, and decommissioning with other federal, state and county agencies, tribal governments, permittees, contractors, cost-share cooperators, and the public to develop a shared transportation system serving the needs of all parties to the extent possible.*

Accomplishments (for Objectives FROB02 and FRB05): In fiscal year 2005, the Forest:

- a. acquired one road right-of-way across private land (.01 mile on Loomis Ranch Rd. No. 50389);
- b. did not issue any FLPMA private road permits or easements;
- c. issued a power line permit to Idaho Power--the primary use under the permit is the transmission line, but 12 access roads are included in the permit to allow for construction, operation and maintenance of the line;
- d. issued two ditch easements--the primary use of the easement is operation and maintenance of the ditch, but two access roads are included in the authorization to allow for access;
- e. issued three Road Use Permits for commercial use of NFS roads.

In cooperation with local county governments and to clarify jurisdictional issues, the Payette National Forest granted FRTA (Forest Roads and Trails Act) public road easements on several roads in 2005. In accordance with Forest Service Manual direction (7703.3) these FRTA easements:

Transfer the jurisdiction of a National Forest System road and associated transportation system facilities (FSM 7705) to the appropriate public transportation agency when the road meets any of the following criteria:

- a. More than half of the use is likely to be non-Forest Service-generated traffic.
- b. The road is necessary and used for mail, school, or other local government purposes.
- c. The road serves year-long residents within or adjacent to the National Forests.

The roads listed in Table 8 are now under County (non-Federal) jurisdiction. Transferring the jurisdiction of these roads to the Counties opens up new funding sources to help with the estimated deferred maintenance needs of close to \$1,000,000 for these 76 road miles and 14 bridges.

Table 8. FRTA Easements Granted and INFRA Deferred Maintenance Costs Eliminated

Road	County:	Miles	Bridges	INFRA Deferred Maintenance
Landore Road No. 50105	Adams	8.2	2	\$43,400
Sheep Rock Road No. 50106	Adams	9.1	0	\$57,000
McCall-Stibnite Road No. 50412	Valley	59.0	12	\$854,000
Totals		76.3	14	\$954,400

Source: INFRA Query: Road Miles and Deferred Maintenance Costs as of Jan 1, 2005.

During the Payette’s 2005 Travel Management Planning process, the Forest hosted planning meetings with the four local counties, each of whom was offered “Cooperating Agency” status in the NEPA process. This was in addition to multiple general “open house” meetings for the public. The objective was to include county input in the Forest’s effort to designate travel routes in accordance with National proposed OHV rules.

The Payette executed one Cost Share Supplement with the State of Idaho in 2005. A Cost Share Supplement is a project-specific agreement under a Master Road Right-of-Way Construction and Use Agreement by which the Government and Cooperators develop and maintain a road system serving their ownerships and sharing costs thereof. In addition, under the terms of Supplement No. 4, the State of Idaho completed a culvert replacement project on Buck Park Road No. 50055.

The Payette conducted annual meetings on cost share road maintenance with its cooperators, the State of Idaho, and with Western Pacific Timber LLC, the holder of cost share easements owned by former cooperator Boise Cascade Corporation. The purpose of the meetings was to make efficient use of resources and funds to manage our shared road network, and to account for each party’s traffic and non-traffic generated use and maintenance obligations.

Objective FROB06: *Identify roads and facilities that are not needed for land and resource management, and evaluate for disposal or decommissioning; and*

Objective FROB09: *Develop a Forest Facilities Master Plan depicting facility location, unit standards, existing and proposed buildings, and related improvements.*

Accomplishment: McCall Ranger District completed the Burgdorf Roads EA, which identified 21.4 miles of unclassified road and 4.8 miles of classified road for decommissioning.

The Payette National Forest completed a Facility Master Plan (FMP) in 2004. The FMP evaluated existing administrative facilities and identified unneeded facilities. Unneeded facilities identified will be evaluated for disposal or decommissioning. During fiscal year 2005, six additional buildings located in New Meadows, Idaho were identified to be decommissioned. The FMP was amended (FMP Amendment #1) to reflect the status of these additional buildings. The amendment added one existing building not previously inventoried, identified six additional buildings to be decommissioned, and added two new buildings to be acquired.

In addition to FMP Amendment #1, in July 2005 the Forest sent to the Regional Office a Preliminary Project Analysis (PPA) for a New Payette National Forest Administrative Site Combining the Supervisor's Office and the McCall and Krassel District Administrative Sites. The PPA proposes constructing a new, federally owned, combined District Office and Supervisor's facility to reduce high leased building costs and high Forest owned facility annual maintenance costs. This PPA has not yet been approved by the RO.

Objective FROB10: *Inventory and assess existing classified road crossings in subwatersheds that are occupied or contain critical habitat for TEPC species. Assess crossings to determine if they provide for fish passage, 100-year flood flow, and bedload and debris transport. Incorporate the results into the biennial updates of the Watershed and Aquatic Recovery Strategy (WARS) database.*

Accomplishments: Road crossing surveys were conducted in 2003. No inventory or assessment of classified road stream crossing was done in 2005 in subwatersheds that are occupied or contain critical habitat for TEPC species or in other streams. Funding was not available, and the benefits of the 2003 surveys did not warrant additional expenditures.

Objective FROB11: *In the Forest's annual program of work, prioritize and schedule improvements to existing culverts, bridges, and other stream crossings to accommodate fish passage, 100-year flood flow, and bedload and debris transport. Include accomplishments in the biennial update of the Watershed and Aquatic Recovery Strategy (WARS) database.*

Accomplishments: The Payette conducted no activities in this category in 2005.

Objective FROB12: *During fine scale analyses in areas where roads and facilities are identified as a potential concern or problem contributing to degradation of water quality, aquatic species or occupied sensitive or watch plant habitat, evaluate and document where the contributing facilities are and prioritize opportunities to mitigate effects.*

Accomplishments: The objective was met in one project level NEPA document, the Burgdorf Roads EA. As stated in FROB04 above, the McCall Ranger District completed the Burgdorf Roads Analysis Process (RAP) and EA in 2005. These two projects used fine-scale analysis to identify and approve opportunities to reduce road-related degrading effects. The project to improve watershed and other conditions by decommissioning roads was substantially implemented in 2006.

Recreation Resources

Objective REOB18: *Initiate a process of phased, site-specific travel management planning as soon as practicable. Prioritize planning based on areas where the most significant user conflicts and resource concerns are occurring. Identify and address inconsistent access management of roads, trails, and areas across Forest, Ranger District, and interagency boundaries.*

Accomplishment: In fiscal year 2005, the Payette continued with the revision of the Travel Management Plan. The project will designate a system of roads and trails for use in summer, and areas open to oversnow vehicles in winter. The Forest ID team identified four alternatives (including "No Action") and analyzed the effects of the alternatives. Significant issues analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) included effects to recreation opportunities, water quality, fisheries, and wildlife. The DEIS was released for public review in February 2006. Public meetings were held in late February and early March. A final EIS and decision is expected in early 2007.

Tribal Consultation

Objective TROB01: *Meet annually with designated tribal representatives to coordinate tribal uses of National Forest System lands as provided for through existing tribal rights with the U.S. Government.*

Accomplishment: Three federally recognized American Indian Tribes have expressed interest in land and resource management activities on the Payette National Forest:

- Nez Perce Tribe
- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall
- Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley

Nez Perce Tribe. Formal and informal annual meetings have been taking place with the Nez Perce Tribe since 1986. In 2005, District and Forest officials visited the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee and staff regularly to present upcoming project proposals and seek comments on them.

Shoshone-Paiute Tribes. Formal and informal annual meetings have been taking place with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley since 1998. In 2005, the Payette participated in monthly or bi-monthly in "Wings and Roots" facilitated gatherings with representatives of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes to present upcoming project proposals and seek comments on them.

Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. Government-to-government consultation has taken place occasionally with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall since 1998. In 2005, the Payette presented information on the Payette Travel Plan to representatives of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and sought their comments.

2.1.2 Evaluation of Costs

This section evaluates the documentation of costs of carrying out the planned management prescriptions as compared with the costs estimated in the Forest Plan, as required by Forest Plan Table IV-1, p. IV-5.

As described in Chapter IV of the Forest Plan, carrying out the intent of the Forest Plan depends on the funding allocated by Congress. During the implementation period of the former Forest Plan (1988-2003), funding was consistently lower than projections for most program areas. Therefore, the 1988 Forest Plan was implemented more slowly than projected. Table 9 compares the actual allocation for fiscal year 2005 with a level predicted based on the 2003 Forest Plan, by program area (fund type).

To predict a more realistic rate of implementation, the budget level used to develop the 2003 Forest Plan for all programs, except forest products and hazardous fuels, was based on average actual budget allocations from 2001 to 2003. Forest products and hazardous fuels reduction were based on a 10 percent increase over average service level constraints from the Forest Service Budget Formulation and Execution System (BFES). Actual allotment by fund code and program emphasis will vary on an annual basis based on Forest and Regional priorities for a given year, as well as on the will of Congress. Table 9 compares the predicted Forest Plan budget level by program area based on average allotment and BFES, with the actual allotment for fiscal year 2005.

Table 9. Predicted Versus Actual Forest Budget Levels FY 2005

Fund Code	Fund Description	Predicted Forest Plan Budget Level	FY 2005 Actual Allotment	Percent Difference
BDBD	Brush Disposal	\$79,510	\$66,404	-16%
CMFC/CMII	Facility Construction and Deferred Maintenance	\$632,873	\$366,845	-42%
CMRD	Road Construction and Maintenance	\$1,370,254	\$1,286,049	-6%
CMTL	Trail Construction and Maintenance	\$301,219	\$250,895	-17%
CWKV	Coop Work, KV	\$1,091,546	\$712,647	-35%
NFIM	Inventory and Monitoring	\$442,160	\$586,839	33%
NFLM	Land and Ownership Management	\$308,546	\$216,859	-30%
NFMG	Minerals and Geology	\$307,785	\$512,284	66%
NFPN	Land Management Planning	\$502,769	\$67,773	-87%
NFRG	Grazing Management	\$304,207	\$525,926	73%
NFRW	Recreation/HR/Wilderness	\$733,522	\$851,800	16%
NFTM	Forest Products	\$2,522,000	\$2,033,266	-19%
NFVW	Vegetation and Water	\$873,338	\$1,063,720	22%
NFWF	Wildlife and Fisheries Management	\$555,627	\$447,120	-20%
RBRB	Range Betterment	\$33,812	\$45,690	35%
RTRT	Reforestation Trust Fund	\$293,666	\$394,144	34%
SSSS	Salvage Sale	\$2,743,302	\$921,896	-66%
WFHF	Hazardous Fuels	\$1,427,000	\$883,167	-38%
WFPR	Fire Preparedness	\$7,322,256	\$6,166,000	-16%
	Total	\$21,845,392	\$17,399,324	-20%

Note: Carryover dollars are not included in the current year allotment. These are un-obligated funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year that may be carried in the next fiscal year. The availability and use of these funds tend to be highly variable.

2.1.3 Evaluation of Population Trends

This section evaluates the population trends of the management indicator species required to be monitored and relationships to habitat changes required to be determined, as required by Forest Plan Table IV-1, on p. IV-6).

Table 10 shows the management indicator species (MIS) selected for the 2003 Forest Plan. The primary reason a given MIS is selected is because its population is believed to indicate the effects of management activities. Other factors also contribute to the choice (36 CFR 219.19(a)(1)).

Table 10. Management Indicator Species for the Payette National Forest

Type	Common Name	Habitat	Management Concerns
Bird Species	Pileated Woodpecker	PVGs 2 through 9	Sufficient large trees, snags, and down logs
	White-headed Woodpecker*	PVGs 1, 2, 3, 5	Sufficient snags, and large trees with low crown density
Fish Species	Bull Trout	Perennial streams	Sediment in spawning and rearing areas, water temperature, habitat connectivity

* MIS for Management Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10 only.

2.1.3.1 Population Trend Monitoring for Bull Trout

Background. For Columbia River bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), the population trends and relative viability of bull trout on the Forest were evaluated and a white paper completed. Among the conclusions in the white paper is a correlation between road density and low bull trout viability. In the Payette River drainage, bull trout are no longer present. In the Weiser River basin, viability is low with an inferred long-term declining trend. In the Salmon River basin, the extent to which bull trout viability is affected by hybridization with brook trout is unknown. In 2006, the Payette is beginning a study of the extent of detrimental effect of brook trout on bull trout viability in the Salmon River Basin in cooperation with the Rocky Mountain Research Station.



Accomplishments: In fiscal year 2005, the Payette completed MIS protocol surveys in five patches (6th order hydrologic units). Idaho Department of Fish and Game provided data for four subbasins, and the Nez Perce Tribe provided data for one subbasin. Bull trout were found in all eight subbasins on the Forest. The Payette will continue this data collection in future years. A preliminary assessment (white paper) of trend indicators was completed after peer review (Burns, D., M. Faurot, D. Hogen, M. McGee, R. Nelson, D. Olson, L.

Wagoner, and C. Zurstadt. 2005. *Bull Trout Populations on the Payette National Forest*).

2.1.3.2 Population Trend Monitoring for Pileated and White headed Woodpeckers

Background. The Payette National Forest MIS monitoring strategy is designed to provide a measure of the population trend for two management indicator species: pileated woodpecker and white-headed woodpecker. In addition, the strategy can be used to investigate relationships between MIS presence, habitat conditions, and management actions across the landscape.

The monitoring strategy adopted by the Payette is modeled on standardized bird monitoring methods (i.e., Hamel et. al. 1996 and Ralph et. al. 1993), that are being applied on the National Forests in Idaho in Region 1, as well as the Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth National Forests in Region 4. As such, the data collected from any one unit becomes not only relevant to its particular Forest, but contributes to larger data sets which allows monitoring trends to be evaluated at multi-forest scales, state-wide scales, or regional scales.



Monitoring was begun in 2003 for white-headed woodpecker and in 2004 for pileated woodpecker. The sampling design uses 25 transects of ten points each resulting in 250 monitoring stations for each species. Points were located in suitable habitat within the historic range of each species across the Forest. The historical range for the white-headed woodpecker includes the west side of the Forest, while the pileated historic range is Forest-wide. Habitat measurements are also recorded at each point and changes evaluated over time.

Accomplishment: Table 11 summarizes the results of the white-headed woodpecker surveys. Table 12 summarizes the results of the pileated woodpecker surveys.

Table 11. Payette National Forest White-Headed Woodpecker Survey Results

Year	Number of Points Monitored	Number of Sightings
2003	250	3
2004	250	0
2005	260	1

Table 12. Payette National Forest Pileated Woodpecker Survey Results

Year	Number of Points Monitored	Number of Sightings
2003	250	3
2004	210	14
2005	250	6

Note: In 2004, two pileated woodpecker transects were not accessible due to snow and flooding, these transects were relocated for 2005.

2.1.4 Evaluation of Watershed Restoration

This section evaluates the accomplishment of restoration objectives in the ACS (Aquatic Conservation Strategy) Priority Subwatersheds. One acre of Tri Corp Logging Road Decommissioning was accomplished in the Upper East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River near Stibnite. Table 13 summarizes these accomplishments and identifies the specific Plan objectives met by each.

Table 13. Accomplishments in ACS Priority Watersheds

ACS Priority Subwatershed	Forest Plan Objective Addressed	Work Completed
Upper East Fork of the South Fork Salmon River	SWG002, SWG010, SWG013	Tri Corp Logging Road Decommissioning 1 acre

The ACS is a long-term strategy to restore and maintain the ecological health of watersheds and aquatic ecosystems contained within National Forest System lands. It is a refinement and furtherance of approaches outlined in the ICBEMP Implementation Strategy and the USFWS and NMFS 1998 Biological Opinions. It provides direction to maintain and restore characteristics of healthy, functioning watersheds, riparian areas, and associated fish habitats.

There are eight ACS components. Any of these components has the potential to influence any of the factors of decline or the recovery/restoration strategy.

1. Goals to Maintain and Restore SWRA (Soil, Water, Riparian, Aquatic) Resources
2. Watershed Condition Indicators for SWRA Resources
3. Delineation of Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs)
4. Objectives, Standards, and Guidelines for Management of SWRA Resources, Including RCAs
5. Determination of Priority Subwatersheds within Subbasins
6. Multi-Scale Analyses of Subbasins and Subwatersheds

- 7. Determination of the Appropriate Type of Subwatershed Restoration and Prioritization
- 8. Monitoring and Adaptive Management Provisions

The ACS incorporates the monitoring goals identified in the ICBEMP Implementation Strategy and associated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

2.1.5 Evaluation of Compliance with Consultation Requirements

This section evaluates compliance of projects with terms and conditions or reasonable and prudent measures that resulted from consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries as provided in Section 7(a) of the Endangered Species Act.

The Biological Opinion (BO) on the Forest Plan from NOAA dated June 9, 2003 contains a number of terms and conditions (T&C) starting on page 89. Project implementation needs to be in compliance with those terms and conditions.

Fisheries Consultation Requirements

In Table 14, below, the left hand column briefly summarizes the specific term and condition from the BO, and the right-hand column summarizes how the Forest met or made progress toward that term and condition in 2005.

Table 14. Compliance with Terms and Conditions for Reasonable & Prudent Measures Required by NOAA Fisheries

Terms and Conditions	Compliance in 2005
# 1 – To implement Reasonable and Prudent Measure #1, clarification of local sideboards. the Forest Service shall:	
<i>A. RCAs – Assess effectiveness of flood prone widths</i>	RCA delineation is occurring as part of project development and riparian monitoring. Project development identifies local landslide hazards.
<i>B. Landslide Prone – Stratify by hazard class</i>	Completed as for RCAs
<i>C. Definitions – Identify change to WCIs and potential effects to WCIs over 3 temporal scales</i>	Changes to WCIs and effects over temporary, short-term, and long-term timescales are evaluated as part of project development. Completion of adjustments to sediment WCIs were completed in 2005 with cooperation of the Boise National Forest, NMFS & FWS after peer review.
<i>D. Fire Management – Develop operational resource guidelines prior to 2004 season</i>	For fire, also see TEOB23 above. In fiscal year 2005, no variances from guidelines were identified. No consultations occurred in which limitations on the Forest Service authority needed clarification.
# 2 – To Implement Reasonable and Prudent Measure #2, maintain link between LRMP and Broadscale restoration/recovery strategies, the Forest Service shall:	

Terms and Conditions	Compliance in 2005
A. IIT – Provide oversight and accountability body linking to IIT	In fiscal year 2005, coordination with the Interagency Implementation Team (IIT) field crews occurred multiple times.
B. In Upper Salmon, SFSR, and Little Salmon - Framework must be in place to implement “likely to adversely affect” actions	Framework has not been completed. However, the baseline was updated for the section 7 watershed BAs in order to be consistent with the development of the Framework document.
# 3 – To Implement Reasonable and Prudent Measure #3, Upper Salmon and South Fork Salmon direction, the Forest Service shall:	
A. Do not increase ECA above 15% in watersheds with ESA-listed anadromous fishes.	In fiscal year 2005, no ECA increases were planned over 15%.
<p>B. In the South Fork Salmon River (SFSR):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revise the default WCIs to values appropriate for the Subbasin 2. Continue sampling, analysis, and annual reporting of sediment levels. 3. Projects must meet criteria if even a negligible likelihood to adversely effect 	<p>A white paper to revise sediment WCIs in the South Fork Salmon River was completed in 2005 by the Payette fisheries staff. (See summary of paper, below.)</p> <p>Sampling occurred in 2005. Data were compiled and a statistical summary was completed. No reporting was completed.</p> <p>Actions at Meadow Creek are being monitored to assure that mitigation measures are effective.</p>

Summary of White Paper on WCIs in the South Fork Salmon River

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) biological opinion (Term and Condition 3.B.1.) for the 2003 Forest Plans required the Payette and Boise National Forests to revise the default sediment Watershed Condition Indicator (WCI) values to something more appropriate for the South Fork Salmon River (SFSR).

On July 13, 2005, the Payette and Boise National Forest Supervisors transmitted the final version of this white paper to NMFS and documented interagency agreement on the white paper and use of its revised values for analysis of effects for future projects within the SFSR basin. The sediment WCI paper is entitled, *Developing Appropriate Sediment-Related Watershed Condition Indicators for National Environmental Policy Act Analyses and Biological Assessments in the South Fork Salmon River Basin* (Burns and Nelson 2005).

The analysis supporting the paper estimated what watershed condition indicators researchers could expect in streams functioning at the three categories defined in the Forest Plan (Functioning at Acceptable Risk, Functioning at Risk, and Functioning at Unacceptable Risk). The paper proposed four major categorical changes: (1) modifications to the indicator names; (2) combining indicators for salmonids where appropriate and rearranging species associations; (3) using free matrix counts in preference to cobble embeddedness measurements for interstitial conditions; and (4) eliminating or relegating surface fines to a support role.

These proposed WCIs incorporate inherent variability so that risks to the aquatic system can be minimized when Forest projects are planned and implemented in the granitic portions of the South Fork Salmon River. The Payette and Boise National Forests will now proceed with the use of the revised sediment WCI values for analysis in future biological assessments.

Wildlife Consultation Requirements

Although this section appeared in the 2004 Monitoring Report, it does not appear in the 2005 Monitoring Report because the components are conservation measures, not terms and conditions, and thus do not have a mandatory reporting requirement.

2.2 Four Annual Monitoring Elements from Table IV-2

This section evaluates the four Monitoring Elements in Table IV-2 of the Forest Plan that need to be reported annually.

As described in Chapter IV of the Forest Plan, monitoring elements were designed around monitoring questions that need to be answered about Forest Plan implementation. These questions are key to determining if implementation is moving toward the desired conditions in the Forest Plan. This summarizes the findings.

Safety of Administrative Facilities

Monitoring Question: *Are administrative sites safe and accessible for visitors and employees including drinking water sources?*

Work Completed and Findings: In fiscal year 2005, building inspections were performed on 53 administrative buildings and 23 recreation buildings by the Forest Facilities Engineering Technician. Records are maintained in the Facilities Engineering files. Inspections look for maintenance items, overall condition of the building, building information for INFRA, building code compliance, plumbing and mechanical code compliance, fire code compliance, some human safety code compliance, some OSHA code compliance, some environmental compliance, and internal Health and Safety code compliance.

In fiscal year 2005, 235 administrative sites were listed as not accessible in the INFRA database. Thirty-five were listed as accessible, and three were partially accessible.

Eight administrative and two administrative/recreation water systems open in 2005 were tested monthly. During the months open, the samples collected determined that each of these systems met the Safe Drinking Water Act standards.

Sanitary surveys were performed on approximately 20 percent of the recreation and administrative sites, primarily those open in 2005. Sanitary surveys are required every five years at a minimum to assess the operational quality, function, and maintenance of supporting systems.

Safety of Developed Recreation Sites

Monitoring Question: *Are developed recreation sites free of high-risk conditions? Do water systems meet Federal, State, and local requirements?*

Work Completed and Findings: All gated Forest developed campgrounds, and picnic areas were inspected in 2005 by District recreation specialists prior to opening them for public use. Sites that remain open year-round (because they are not gated) were inspected prior to beginning to charge for use in the spring/summer months. Dispersed sites were inspected throughout the season to comply with safety standards for dispersed recreation sites. Unsanitary, hazardous, or unsafe conditions were mitigated at this time. Additionally, in 2005, 20 percent of the developed recreation sites listed in the INFRA database were inspected for deferred maintenance.

Additionally, in 2005 20 percent of the developed recreation sites listed in INFRA were inspected for deferred maintenance needs by the Forest Facilities Engineering Technician. Identified work items were entered in INFRA.

The drinking water systems for 22 recreational facilities plus two systems that are both recreation and administrative were open for use in 2005. Monthly samples collected from these water systems determined that all sites met Safe Drinking Water Act standards. In 2005, all developed recreation water systems met all standards established under this act and agency regulations. Table 15 summarizes the FA&O (Forest Administrative and Other) surveys.

Table 15. Administrative and Recreation Sites Surveyed 2005

Type of Site	Total Assets	Surveyed FY05	Surveyed FY01 thru FY05	% Surveyed FY01 thru FY05
Water Systems	40	6	40	100
Wastewater Systems	23	3	23	100
Buildings	384	72	384	100
Dams	9	6	9	100
Trail Bridges	51	9	35	68.6
Recreation Sites	70	57	65	92.9

Source: INFRA Report: 2005 Status of Meeting Maintenance Protocols as of 10/01/2005

Protection of Historic Properties

Monitoring Question: *Are historic properties being affected by project activities? (Forest Plan Objective HPOB09)*

Work Completed and Findings: In fiscal year 2005, one internal (Payette National Forest) incident occurred in non-compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) section 106. It was reconstruction of a trail bridge in the Frank Church – River of No Return Wilderness in a place where an American Indian site had been previously reported. A section 106 archaeological site evaluation was planned prior to bridge replacement. However, in summer 2005 the bridge was constructed on the American Indian site without section 106 review. Archaeologists monitored this site in summer 2006 a year after bridge construction, leading to a “no adverse effect” determination because no damage to the site had occurred.

To address continuing non-compliance situations, the Krassel Ranger District and Supervisor’s Office personnel in August 2005 committed to annual coordination meetings in the winter to plan upcoming field season reviews.

Indicator: *Assess the effects of project implementation on selected projects for at least five percent of the projects for which cultural resource management approval had been recommended during the previous year.*

Work Completed and Findings: Five federal actions were monitored:

- Meadows Slope Wildland Fire Protection (PY2003-1696), reference Quarter Round PY2004-1796
- Quartz Creek Mine Reclamation Project (PY2005-1884)
- Red Ledge Adit #2 Bat Gate (PY2005-1883)
- Cold Meadows Guard Station Maintenance, a Property listed on the National Register of Historic Places (PY2003-1736)
- Parks-Eiguren #1 Prescribed Burn (PY2003-1738)

All five project reviews determined the projects to be consistent with design requirements and with NHPA Section 106 requirements.

Watershed Restoration and Conservation Activities

Monitoring Question: *Have restoration and conservation activities been focused in priority watersheds identified by the WARS process?*

Work Completed and Findings: In fiscal year 2005, watershed restoration totaled 48.2 acres of road obliteration using watershed funds, and using roads funds. A total of 6 percent of these activities were conducted in low priority WARS watersheds, 88 percent in moderate priority watersheds, and 6 percent in high priority watersheds. Most of these NEPA projects were developed under the old Forest Plan. The Little Pine Creek project was covered in the Brownlee-Seid EA under the new Forest Plan. Because of the lead-time required for new projects, the switch to priority watersheds called for in the new Forest Plan is not evident yet. Therefore, the activities were mostly in moderate WARS priority watersheds.

Table 16. Watershed and Road Restoration Completed in ACS Priority and Other Subwatersheds

Subwatershed	HUC Code (Old)	Management Area Objectives Met?	Acres of Work Accomplished	WARS Restoration Strategy, Priority	ACS Priority Sub-Watershed?
Middle Fork Brownlee Cr.	170502010404	230	3.0	Active, Low	No
Upper Pine Creek	170501240603	0318,0319,0322	2.0	Active, High	No
Upper Mud Creek	170602100505	0518, 0519	29.2	Active, Moderate	No
Little Goose Ck	1706021005401	0626	13.0	Active, Moderate	No
Upper EFSFSR	170501240101-3	0318, 0319, 0322, 0323	1.0	Active, High	Yes
TOTAL			48.2		

2.3 Project Monitoring

This section evaluates selected project monitoring conducted in fiscal year 2005 that contributes to meeting Forest Plan monitoring requirements.

Project-level monitoring is designed to evaluate the implementation and the effectiveness of Forest Plan direction at the ground level. It focuses on achievement of resource objectives, proper use and effectiveness of management practices, impacts on site-specific resources of concern, and effects on resource baseline conditions. This monitoring therefore will allow updating of baselines when they change.



Monitoring Secesh WUI Thin Project, Sept. 2005

As part of the monitoring efforts, project level monitoring is scheduled each year on most Ranger Districts on the Payette National Forest. Project monitoring scheduled for completion in the 2005 field season was designed to respond to the five **Required Monitoring Questions for All Projects** listed below (numbered 1 through 5), as well as some of the **Optional Monitoring Questions to Be Addressed if Applicable** listed (numbered 6 through 18).

Required Questions for All Projects

1. How well did the project meet its objectives?
2. Were the effects to other resources within the expected range?
3. Were the project design and mitigation effective?
4. Are actions proposed and associated effects being adequately disclosed in NEPA documents?
5. Have prescriptions, projects, and activities been implemented as designed and in compliance with the Forest Plan? Are they moving towards desired conditions as described in the Forest Plan?

Optional Questions To Be Addressed If Applicable

6. Are management activities changing the ROS settings?
7. Are Forest management activities adequately designed (including delineation of RCA's) to maintain or improve riparian functions and ecological processes important to furthering Forest Plan goals and objectives?
8. Are management actions providing for or moving toward the extent of vegetation components necessary to meet the needs of MIS and TEPC species?

9. Are management actions and Forest Plan direction effectively maintaining or restoring long-term soil productivity?
10. Are snags and coarse woody debris at, or moving toward, desired conditions as described in Appendix A of the Forest Plan?
11. Have restoration and conservation activities been focused in priority watersheds identified by the WARS process?
12. Are management actions and Forest Plan direction effectively maintaining WCIs when currently in the range of desired conditions, and restoring WCIs when outside the range of desired conditions over multiple spatial scales?
13. Are consulting agencies part of the process, and are concerns being raised about implementation of the Forest Plan?
14. Are Forest management actions being designed and implemented to meet Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs)?
15. Are historic properties being affected by project activities?
16. Are Forest management actions affecting known sensitive species or watch species habitats at the project level?
17. Are Forest management strategies effective in preventing, controlling, or eradicating targeted populations of noxious weeds?
18. Are established utilization levels (livestock) providing for desired ground cover, soil stability, plant vigor, and composition?

The Payette Interdisciplinary Team visited five projects during the 2005 field season specifically for Forest Plan monitoring purposes.

Table 17. Projects Receiving Forest Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

Project Name	Project Type	Ranger District	Date
Landore Timber Sale	Timber	Council	August 18, 2005
Green Hornet Fuels Reduction	Fuels	Council	August 18, 2005
Quartz Creek Mine Reclamation	Minerals	Krassel	September 14, 2005
Secesh WUI Fuelbreak	Fuels	McCall	September 21, 2005
Price Valley Ground Squirrel Thin	Wildlife	New Meadows	October 5, 2005

In summary, the evaluation of the results of the monitoring visits provided these conclusions.

Landore Salvage Timber Sale

1. *How well did the project meet its objectives?* The project met its objectives well. Objectives were to "...recover the sawtimber and firewood value associated with these [dead and dying] trees, contribute to the Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) for the Forest, generate jobs, and provide firewood for the local community." The salvage sale sold for about \$200,000 and was implemented promptly in 2005. Timber value was not lost by delay or decay. The sawtimber was harvested by a Council, Idaho logging company with local employees. Leftover logging slash was available for firewood post-sale.
2. *Were the effects to other resources within the expected range?* Yes, the impacts to fish and wildlife habitat were minimal. Long-term soil productivity and detrimental disturbance were maintained at current levels. Road reconstruction and skid trail rehabilitation were completed adequately to meet the Forest Plan, although additional waterbars were needed on some skid trails to meet Decision Memo requirements. Noxious weeds were appearing on some rehabilitated skid trails, but mitigation requiring weed treatment was being implemented.
3. *Was the project design and mitigation effective?* Yes, although some skid trails were not rehabilitated in some units, other skid trails were rehabilitated to a high quality standard elsewhere. Coarse woody debris (large logs and slash on the ground, CWD) is an issue in salvage sales such as this. The pre-harvest levels of that material are not known. The retention of snags and CWD appears good, but in similar projects more material may be decked and removed than Forest Plan standards anticipate. To better address noxious weeds in future projects, Knudsen-Vandenberg (KV) funds are recommended to be collected for post-sale weed treatment.
4. *Are actions proposed and associated effects being adequately disclosed in NEPA documents?* Yes, the action fits in a Categorical Exclusion (section 31.12, category 13: Salvage of Dead and/or Dying Trees Not to Exceed 250 acres, Requiring No More Than ½ Mile Temporary Road), and is documented in the Council District's seven page Decision Memo (DM). The proposed action was adequately described in the DM, although the document did not state the project's purpose and need. The project was analyzed through a Categorical Exclusion, which does not require documentation of the environmental effects. However, the DM does explain why there are no extraordinary circumstances affected by the project that may lead to significant effects. It explains that the project complies with Forest Plan MPC 5.2, but does not address other Plan direction such as goals, objectives, standards, or guidelines.
5. *Have prescriptions, projects, and activities been implemented as designed and in compliance with the Forest Plan?* Yes, although the project goals could have been broader. The sole purposes of the project in the DM were to recover timber and firewood, contribute to allowable sale quantity (ASQ), and generate jobs and firewood. The project was not designed to meet Forest Plan Appendix A (Vegetation Desired Conditions) by moving toward larger-scale vegetation goals. The project therefore missed an opportunity to remove grand fir trees that are encroaching on the larger seral overstory trees. It also missed the opportunity to retain old forest structure by retaining the seral trees--ponderosa, Douglas-fir, and western larch—by marking them as wildlife trees and snags and protecting them from firewood cutting. Although it is not a firewood species, a large number of live grand fir trees were marked "W" as wildlife retention trees.

Green Hornet Hazardous Fuels Reduction

1. *How well did the project meet its objectives?* Because the timber sale project was marked but not yet harvested, it is too soon to say that the project met its objectives. The project objective was to "...modify fire behavior sufficiently to allow suppression of wildfires in a safe and efficient manner." Specifically, objectives were to reduce the basal area to 60 square feet with a crown separation of 10 to 20 feet, and to

remove grand fir and dwarf mistletoe patches. The marking of trees for harvest appears to support meeting these objectives. Slash from the harvesting will need to be removed to meet the fuel reduction objective. Future treatments will be needed to create large snags and to further move toward desired conditions in Appendix A.

2. *Were the effects to other resources within the expected range?* Yes, the effects are expected to be within the Forest Plan standards. Provided that cull woody material would be left on site, the treatment should move vegetation toward the range of historic variation and Appendix A. Watershed objectives will be met as Best Management Practices (BMPs) are implemented. Provided road closures are implemented post-sale, the wildlife, watershed, and fish effects, as well as noxious weed treatments, are expected to be beneficial.

3. *Was the project design and mitigation effective?* Yes, the project layout and timber marking reflect the mitigation listed in the Decision Memo. Roads identified for closure post-sale need to be closed to ensure road-related objectives are met. Based on past experience, mitigation is expected to be effective.

4. *Are actions proposed and associated effects being adequately disclosed in NEPA documents?* Yes, the action fits in a Categorical Exclusion (section 31.2, category 10: Hazardous Fuels Reduction Activities That Do Not Exceed 1,000 Acres of Mechanical Treatment), and is documented in the Council District's seven page Decision Memo (DM). A DM does not require analysis and documentation of environmental effects. However, the DM does explain why there are no extraordinary circumstances. It explains that the project complies with Forest Plan MPC 5.1, but does not address other Plan direction such as goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines.

5. *Were prescriptions, projects, and activities implemented as designed and in compliance with the Forest Plan?* Yes, the project was laid out and marked as designed, but future implementation needs to have monitoring to answer the question.

Quartz Creek Mine Reclamation

1. *How well did the project meet its objectives?* Projects objectives were substantially met. (A small portion of the project remains to be completed—adit (mine shaft) mesh, tree planting, seeding, level parking area.) The objective was to "... improve public safety and watershed condition at the Red Mountain and Skipper Lode Mine sites." The main objective for public safety and watershed improvement was met, although a part of the proposed action was not completed—road conversion to trail was not converted due to opposition from county government. Public safety was improved by removing dangerous materials—diesel, hydraulic fluid, lubricants, trash, and an old shack posing Hantavirus risk. Safety was also improved by closing adits with mesh and culvert grate. Watershed conditions improved with mine reclamation, and road stabilization improved with rolling dips.

2. *Were the effects to other resources within the expected range?* Yes, effects were as expected for resources represented. The one exception was that road conversion to trail did not occur; thus the anticipated two-wheel motorized trail opportunity did not result. Otherwise, a new recreation facility was provided—a flat turnaround with a dispersed campsite. The old road bridge was not removed due to new information that a stream ford would not be compatible with a possible bull trout redd.

3. *Was the project design and mitigation effective?* Yes, wildlife (bat) mitigation appears successful, and fish habitat was protected by advance authorization for fording Quartz Creek by heavy equipment after fish biologist inspection. Soil and water mitigation was implemented, though more coarse woody debris (CWD) could have been placed on the surface of rehabilitated mine tailings.

4. *Are actions proposed and associated effects adequately disclosed in NEPA documents?* Yes, the Decision Memo approved the action under a categorical exclusion (section 31.2, category 8: Short-term Mineral, Energy, or Geophysical Investigation and Their Incidental Support Activities). However, the

project was more mine reclamation than exploration, so it was not a close fit in category 8. Nevertheless, the on-ground land disturbance is similar to the category. The Krassel District's four page DM listed the several elements of the proposed action clearly. Although the DM for the Categorical Exclusion did not need to disclose the environmental effects, it did accurately describe the purpose and need, accurately depicted the proposed action, identified the extraordinary circumstances that did not apply, and summarized the Categorical Exclusion analysis. It did not make reference to the Forest Plan or have a section finding consistency with the Forest Plan goals, objectives, standards, or guidelines.

5. *Have prescriptions, projects, and activities been implemented as designed and in compliance with the Forest Plan?* Yes, all pertinent Forest Plan direction was complied with. The project was completed almost as intended in the design. This federal action was in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106. Small amounts of Canadian thistle and spotted knapweed were found at the Skipper Lode Mine site. Weed monitoring should continue given the high disturbance level at both sites. Amounts of Total Soil Resource Commitment (TSRC) were reduced, along with a small reduction in soil Detrimental Disturbance (DD). The project met the emphasis on actions in priority watersheds. Additional work could enhance the road turnaround site into a trailhead by installing parking barriers, trees, a turnaround, and a trailhead information board. On balance, the project was implemented successfully with only minor problems.

Secesh Wildland-Urban Interface Fuelbreak

1. *How well did the project meet its objectives?* The project met its objectives partly. Objectives were (1) to reduce the spread of wildfires and impacts to private in-holdings, and (2) to reduce the amount of live fuel so that if a wildfire were to occur or encroach, it would burn as a surface fire rather than a crown fire. The project moved toward these objectives, but would have made further progress if trees were thinned to a wider spacing and over a larger area. But this was not feasible due to effects more intensive treatment would have caused to other resources such as soils and residual stand. Even the current size and spacing of the hand piles will make burning difficult without damaging residual trees. A number of other Forest Plan objectives could have been met, but were not part of the scope of the action. The project could have used a prescription more suited for the lodgepole pine type (patch cuts), and for riparian conservation areas (RCAs). However, the thinning met direction in Appendix A vegetation conditions as it removed the small trees and retained the large trees.

2. *Were the effects to other resources within the expected range?* Yes, the effects are expected to be within the Forest Plan standards, with the exception of soils. The standard for Detrimental Disturbance (DD) is less than 15 percent by unit, and may not be met. Follow-up monitoring is recommended to ensure that the standards and guidelines for snags, DD, and coarse woody debris (CWD) are met within the project area. Effects on Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive (TES) wildlife are expected to be neutral or positive as documented in the Biological Assessments (BAs) and Biological Evaluations (BEs). Effects on cultural resources were determined to be "No Effect."

3. *Was the project design and mitigation effective?* The project layout and design reflect the mitigation listed in the Decision Memo. The Decision Memo did not specifically list design features or mitigation, but stated that the project would comply with law, regulation, and policy, as well as Forest Plan standards and guidelines.

4. *Are actions proposed and associated effects being adequately disclosed in NEPA documents?* Yes, the action fits in a Categorical Exclusion (section 31.2, category 10: Hazardous Fuels Reduction Activities That Do Not Exceed 1,000 Acres of Mechanical Treatment), and is documented in the District's five-page Decision Memo (DM). A DM does not require analysis and documentation of environmental effects. However, the DM does explain why there are no extraordinary circumstances. It explains that the project

complies with Forest Plan MPC 5.1, but does not address other Plan direction such as goals, objectives, standards, or guidelines.

5. *Were prescriptions, projects, and activities implemented as designed and in compliance with the Forest Plan?* The DM stated: “The project will adhere to the Goals, Objectives, Standards, and Guides of the Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP).” The DM stated the project adhered to the Forest and Appendix B direction on RCAs. Appendix B direction applies at the watershed scale. Snags and coarse woody debris levels are already low, but the project will not reduce them appreciably. Burning may increase snags toward desirable levels. Standard practice should be to conduct monitoring for noxious weeds following prescribed fires. The Plan’s coarse woody debris (CWD) standard could be better met by requiring the DM and contract that larger logs (3-7 inches in diameter) are left on the ground. The Plan’s vegetation objectives could be better met by heavier thinning and patch cuts, which would emulate natural disturbances while reducing dwarf mistletoe. Future projects could also seek the option of removing merchantable products.

Price Valley Ground Squirrel Thin

1. *How well did the project meet its objectives?* Yes, the project met its objectives. The project objective was: “to improve northern Idaho ground squirrel habitat by: reducing the density of conifers, creating connectivity corridors, rejuvenating the grass and forb communities by implementing low intensity broadcast burns, and seeding with native grasses and forbs where necessary.” The project met this objective very well as far as implementation has proceeded. The first two sub-objectives were met—conifer density reduction, and corridor creation. The prescribed burning has not yet occurred, but recent burning of the same area shows good results in re-growth and vigor of native grasses and forbs. Seeding has not become necessary yet, but after prescribed burning, seeding may be necessary to supplement vegetation re-growth in the connectivity corridors.

2. *Were the effects to other resources within the expected range?* Yes, the effects are expected to be within the Forest Plan standards with the exception of coarse woody debris. It would have been better to leave logs greater than 6 inches in diameter scattered to meet coarse wood levels in the Forest Plan; and to leave down material greater than 15 inches in diameter for woody debris. The riparian area buffer was well marked and implemented.

3. *Was the project design and mitigation effective?* Yes, the project layout and design reflect the mitigation listed in the Decision Memo as far as it went. However, implementation was better than the Decision Memo documentation as some of the protective measures done on the ground were required by contract but not by the DM. Protective measures implemented were over-snow logging, some coarse woody material was left, the riparian buffer was protected, skid trails were limited, etc. To allow better disclosure and accountability, DMs need to list the same mitigation measures to be implemented on the ground. Following the prescribed burn, spot seeding may be done with native seed mix.

4. *Are actions proposed and associated effects being adequately disclosed in NEPA documents?* Yes, the action fits in a Categorical Exclusion (section 31.2, category 12: Harvest of Live Trees Not to Exceed 70 acres, Requiring No More Than 1/2 Mile of Temporary Road Construction), and is documented in the District’s three-page Decision Memo (DM). A DM does not require analysis and documentation of environmental effects. However, the DM does explain why there are no extraordinary circumstances. It explains that the project complies with the Forest Plan direction and lists several wildlife objectives specifically, but does not address Plan goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, or resources other than for wildlife.

5. *Were prescriptions, projects, and activities implemented as designed and in compliance with the Forest Plan?* Detrimental Disturbance levels appear to be well below 15 percent and therefore meet the Forest Plan. No additional Total Soil Resource Commitment (TSRC) was produced as existing skid

trails, landings, and roads were utilized. Live vegetation is moving towards desired conditions as described in Appendix A. Large trees are being retained, and treatments will provide further growth towards large trees. Present and future coarse woody debris is also being provided. The Plan's coarse woody debris standard could be better met by requiring a greater amount of larger logs to be left on the ground instead of piled for burning. The present low level of snags could be improved by prescribed fire scorching nearby trees. As more habitat enhancement projects for the Northern Idaho ground squirrel (NIDGS) are implemented, it is possible that livestock management will become more difficult if trailing, grazing routes, or other areas are closed to use. The project development and analysis process should look for opportunities to integrate more opportunities into the purpose and need and into the proposal, in addition to squirrel habitat improvement. Such opportunities include watershed improvement and silvicultural improvement.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation Reports Relationships

The 2005 Monitoring and Evaluation report documents and discloses the activities from fiscal year 2004, September 2004 – September 2005. The Payette will continue to issue the Forest Plan Monitoring and Evaluation reports by summer of the following year. Each year's report describes findings from monitoring data collected through the prior year's field season compiled and evaluated during the winter of the reporting year.

Each Forest Plan Monitoring and Evaluation report is intended to be a "living" document. It means information displayed in the 2006 report will be added to the 2005 report. Much of what is learned from monitoring and evaluation is based on how things evolve from year to year, rather than what is learned at a single point in time. For example, trends and answers to several of the questions in Forest Plan Table IV-1 and Table IV-2 become clearer with the accumulation of annual data. The Five-Year Monitoring Report that is scheduled to be issued in 2008 will evaluate those longer-term trends.

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