

Chapter 1

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CHAPTER 1. FOREST PLAN INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE FOREST PLAN

The Forest Plan guides all natural resource management activities and establishes management standards and guidelines for the Umatilla National Forest for the next 10 to 15 years. It describes resource management practices, levels of resource production and management, and the availability and suitability of lands for resource management.

The Forest Plan is a broad, programmatic plan which is a key part the management system for the Forest. The planning process leads to certain decisions in the Forest Plan about management of the Forest including:

- Establishment of Forest-wide multiple-use goals and objectives and desired future condition;
- Establishment of Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines (management and other requirements) applying to activities;
- Establishment of management areas (goals, location, and desired future condition) and management area direction (prescriptions) applying to activities;
- Establishment of Forest-wide allowable timber sale quantity, and identification (location) of lands suitable or selected for timber harvest;
- Identification of nonwilderness allocations for roadless areas (where 36 CFR 219.17 applies);
- Establishment of Forest-wide outputs and proposed and probable activities for each management and roadless area, which are then confirmed through the implementation process (including a NEPA analysis);
- Establishment of monitoring and evaluation requirements;
- Incorporation of specific extant plans or projects; and
- Identification of recommended additions to the Research Natural Areas system.

The Forest Plan embodies the provisions of the National Forest Management Act of 1976, its implementing regulations, and other guiding documents. Goals, objectives, land use determinations, prescriptions, and standards and guidelines are statements of the Plan's management direction. However, the projected outputs, services, and rates of implementation are estimates and are dependent on the annual budgeting process.

Management direction established in the Forest Plan will normally be reviewed (and updated if necessary) at least every 5 years and will ordinarily be revised on a 10-year cycle or at most every 15 years. The Forest Plan may be revised whenever the Forest Supervisor determines that conditions or demands in the area covered by the Plan have significantly changed. In addition, when changes in the RPA program significantly affect Forest programs, the Forest Plan may be revised.

RELATIONSHIP OF FOREST PLAN TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

The Forest Plan sets forth the selected alternative for managing the resources of the Umatilla National Forest. The Plan results from extensive analysis and considerations addressed in the accompanying Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD). The planning process and the analysis procedures used to develop this Plan are described or

referenced in the EIS. The EIS also describes other alternatives considered in the planning process.

Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision Regional Guide and RPA Relationship to Other Plans

Activities and projects will be planned and implemented to carry out the direction in this Plan. The Forest will perform environmental analyses on these projects and activities. Project level environmental analyses will use the data and evaluations in the Plan and EIS as its basis, but frequently will need additional or more specific information. Documentation of project level analysis will be tiered to the EIS accompanying this Forest Plan. Tiering, in this case, means that Environmental Assessments prepared for projects arising from the Forest Plan will refer to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and associated documents rather than repeat information given there. The environmental documents for specific projects can thereby concentrate on issues unique to the projects.

Regional Guide and RPA

The Forest Plan is part of the overall three-level planning process as required in applicable laws and implementing regulations. At the national level, the RPA Program establishes long-range resource objectives based on the present and anticipated supply and demand for various resources. A portion of each national resource objective included in the RPA Program is distributed to each of the nine Forest Service regions in the Nation. A Regional Guide was developed for the Pacific Northwest Region (and amended December 8, 1988). The Regional Guide provides direction for national forest plans and develops standards and guidelines addressing major issues and management concerns considered at the regional level in order to facilitate forest planning. The Regional Guide also displays the Pacific Northwest Region's portion of the RPA program. At the national forest level, the Forest Plan is prepared based on economic and environmental analysis and documented in the EIS. Site or project specific plans are generally developed at the district level and are tiered to the Forest Plan. The planning process is a continuously repeating process in that the information from the Forest level (in the Forest Plan) flows up to the national level, is incorporated in the RPA program, and then flows back to the Forest level.

Relationship to Other Plans

The Forest Plan serves as the overall coordinating land and resource management plan for directing the Umatilla National Forest All previous land management unit plans are superseded by this Forest Plan as displayed in Table 1-1.

TABLE 1-1. LAND OR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS STATUS FOREST PLAN

UMATILLA NATIONAL FOREST

DECADE 1

Plans	Date	Superseded and Replaced
Oregon Butte Planning Unit Land Management Plan	04/22/77	*
Elgin Planning Unit Land Management Plan	07/20/79	*
Desolation Planning Unit Land Management Plan	12/26/79	*
Heppler Planning Unit Land Management Plan	12/26/79	*
Grande Ronde (Wallowa-Whitman NF) Planning Unit Land Management Plan (Umatilla National Forest portion)	04/07/78	*

Plans	Date	Superseded and Replaced
John Day (Malheur NF) Planning Unit Land Management Plan (Umatilla National Forest portion)	04/29/78	*
Timber Management Plan, as amended, Umatilla National Forest (as per timber inventory of 1981)	01/11/63	*

Pertinent, valid, existing resource management implementation or action plans are hereby incorporated into the Forest Plan as discussed in Chapter 4, Resource Summaries.

Implementation and action plans designed to give further guidance for management and development activities are or will be developed 'under the umbrella' of this Forest Plan. These, in effect, become part of the management direction and implementation for the Forest.

Examples of such plans are:

- Motorized Access and Travel Management Plans
- Range Allotment Management Plans
- Fire Management Action Plans
- Wilderness Activity Plans
- Wild and Scenic River Management Plans
- Corridor Viewshed Plans

Project Planning

Resource management objectives are discussed in Chapter 4. Schedules of projected resource management activities are displayed in Appendix A.

The management direction provided by the Forest Plan makes up the framework within which project planning and activities take place. The Plan defines management area goals and management standards that guide project activities toward achieving a desired future condition for the given management area and, collectively, for the Forest. It specifies a schedule for project activities and management practices. It provides guidance concerning potential projects and project limitations, including assumptions about the appropriate vegetation management practices for timber sale projects and best management practices to protect water quality for all Forest management activities. On-the-ground project analysis then verifies the appropriateness of the assumptions.

Within this guidance, projects are developed which most efficiently and effectively accomplish management goals and objectives. All National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements will be complied with in all projects.

Project environmental analyses provide an essential source of information for Forest Plan implementation and monitoring. First, as project analyses are completed, new or emerging public issues or management concerns may be identified. Second, the management direction designed to achieve management area goals is tested for its efficacy by the project analyses. Third, the site-specific data collected for project environmental analyses serve to check the correctness of the Forest Plan direction. Furthermore, information included in the project environmental analyses is used in the monitoring process to help determine where changes should be made in the Forest Plan.

FOREST PLAN STRUCTURE

The Forest Plan document is composed of five chapters, a glossary, an index, and appendix material.

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the purpose of the Plan, its contents, its relationship to other documents, and it describes the Forest geographic location.

Chapter 2 is a summary of the Analysis of the Management Situation. Included are summaries of the current management situations for each resource, potential supply and demand for various resource goods and services, and a brief socioeconomic overview of the Forest and related communities and counties.

Chapter 3 summarizes the issues and concerns and briefly explains how each was dealt with in the Forest Plan.

Chapter 4 is the heart of the Plan and contains the multiple-use resource objectives, Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines, and management area direction which the Forest has established for plan implementation. The Forest objectives include the projected resource outputs, activities, and budget necessary to achieve the goals. Standards and guidelines provide Forest-wide implementation direction which applies to everyday, on-the-ground projects. Management area directions and descriptions define the types and intensities of activities that can occur within a given area. Locations of the various management areas within the Forest are shown on the maps of Alternative F/M and in the separate maps book included with the Forest Plan.

Chapter 5 contains the Forest Plan implementation direction and a plan for its monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring program, based on the identified issues, is used to determine if the objectives are being met, if the standards and guidelines are adequate and being applied, and if environmental effects are as predicted in the EIS. The process for Plan amendment and revision is described.

A reference section, glossary of terms used in the document, and index follow Chapter 5. Finally, three appendices are provided. Appendix A includes activity schedules for each resource, and proposed budgets, Appendix B contains wilderness and landownership plans; and Appendix C displays the procedures for calculating and monitoring an elk habitat effectiveness index.

FOREST DESCRIPTION

Location

The Umatilla National Forest is located in the northern portion of the Blue Mountains in northeastern Oregon and southeastern Washington. Within the Forest Boundary there are over 1.5 million acres, of which 1.4 million are national forest lands. Of the national forest acres within the boundary, 1.2 million are within the Oregon counties of Baker, Grant, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, and Wheeler; and 0.3 million are within Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Walla Walla counties in Washington (see Table 1-2).

The Forest is divided roughly into halves by Interstate Highway 84. The north half extends into Washington and is bordered partially on the west by the Umatilla Indian Reservation and on the southeast flank by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. The south half is bordered on the east by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and on the south by the Malheur National Forest.

The largest cities in the area are Pendleton (pop. 14,521) and Hermiston (pop. 9,408) in Oregon; Kennewick, Pasco, Richland (Tri-Cities [pop. 85,919]), and Walla Walla (pop. 25,618) in Washington; and Lewiston, Idaho (pop. 28,000). Heppner, La Grande, Milton-Freewater, and

Ukiah, Oregon: and Clarkston, Dayton, and Pomeroy, Washington, are other important, but smaller population centers. The Forest headquarters is located in Pendleton. Ranger district offices are located in Heppner and Ukiah, Oregon, and in Pomeroy and Walla Walla, Washington.

General

The Umatilla National Forest is an area of diverse landforms and ecotypes. The Forest lies within the headwaters of four large drainage basins: Umatilla, John Day, Walla Walla, and Grande Ronde river basins. The north and south forks of the Umatilla, north and south forks of the Walla Walla, Touchet, Grande Ronde, Wenaha, Tucannon, and North Fork John Day are the local rivers. Waters of the latter are recognized for their high quality anadromous fisheries. There are also a few small lakes and reservoirs greater than 5 acres. The Forest provides significant timber and other wood products, water, and recreation. The Forest supports one of the largest Rocky Mountain elk herds in the Nation, making elk hunting a particularly popular activity here. It also provides substantial domestic livestock grazing. There are 9 wildernesses covering 304,400 acres, and 22 roadless areas totaling 281,000 acres.

Resource descriptions are provided in Chapter 2.

TABLE 1-2 ACREAGE STATISTICS

UMATILLA NATIONAL FOREST

December 31, 1989

OREGON COUNTIES	GROSS AC.	NATIONAL FOREST AC.	PRIVATE AC.	O.F.* AC.
Baker	88	3	85	0
Grant	339,176	309,884	29,292	0
Morrow	158,029	143,303	14,726	2.25
Umatilla	415,645	374,386	41,259	20.01
Union	107,515	99,829	7,686	0
Wallowa	125,502	123,510	1,992	0
Wheeler	45,782	40,349	5,433	0
Total Oregon	1,191,737	1,091,264	100,473	22.26

WASHINGTON COUNTIES	GROSS AC.	NATIONAL FOREST AC.	PRIVATE AC.	O.F.* AC.
Asotin	55,780	53,791	1,989	5.0
Columbia	163,841	159,513	4,328	0
Garfield	96,410	95,466	944	0.95
Walla Walla	3,324	2,433	891	0
Total Washington	319,355	311,203	8,152	5.95
GRAND TOTAL	1,511,092	1,402,467	108,625	28.21

ACREAGE STATISTICS BY DISTRICTS

DISTRICT	ACRES WITHIN PROCLAIMED BOUNDARY	ACRES OF NF WITHIN BOUNDARY	ACRES OF PRIVATE LAND WITHIN BOUNDARY	O.F.* AC.
Heppner	232,885	212,213	20,672	2.25
Pomeroy	373,471	365,901	7,570	5.95
North Fork John Day	518,529	465,822	52,707	16.21
Walla Walla	386,207	358,531	27,676	3.80
TOTAL	1,511,092	1,402,467	108,625	28.21

* O.F. = Other Federal lands administered by the Forest Service outside the National Forest (NF) Boundary (i.e., administrative sites)