



Wasatch-Cache National Forest

Northern Utah • WASATCH-CACHE NATIONAL FOREST REVISED FOREST PLAN • March 2003

Revising the Forest Plan

By Tom Tidwell
Forest Supervisor

I want to thank everyone who participated during the past four years to revise the Forest Plan. I especially appreciate everyone who took the time to submit comments and attend the numerous public meetings. Throughout the process, I have been continually impressed with your passion and depth of commitment to improving the plan. Through the public discussions and reviewing comments, I believe that we have developed a thorough understanding of your concerns and desires on how you want the Forest managed. Rest assured, your comments and involvement have made a difference. We made changes in response to your comments that have definitely resulted in a better plan.

There is a wide range of values reflected in the views of our constituents. No set of values about how the National Forest should be managed is right or wrong. We strived to find the balance, within the context of science, laws and policies, that best reflects the values of the people that use and enjoy this Forest and the broader values of the society. What we tried to do with this revision is to provide for the needs and desires of the current generation within the capability of the lands, while positioning

the Forest to address the needs of future generations. We do this through the mix of management prescriptions and standards and guidelines that will move the Forest toward desired future conditions.

Although this revision is a significant change from the 1985 plan, in many respects it reflects current management with a few changes. Although there is great diversity in the public's interests and values about the Forest, there was also a common theme – many people were in agreement with how the Forest is managed today.

We also heard from many of you about concerns with specific issues, particularly concerns about specific roads and trails. While many of these are valid issues that need to be addressed, the Revised Forest Plan provides the framework to guide site-specific projects that will be analyzed in the future to address your specific issues.

No doubt as interests and values change and population increase projections hold true, there will be a need to adapt this plan. We also expect we will need to make amendments to address exceptions to activities allowed under certain management prescriptions. When we determined what management prescription to apply to an area of the Forest, we carefully considered land capabilities in combination with local needs. And where I know we will have to make exceptions for certain activities that are not allowed under the prescriptions, these exceptions will not be taken lightly and will require a more in-depth analysis required to determine if a Forest plan amendment is justified.



Wildflowers in the Wasatch Mountains

Realistic outputs – with our 1985 plan output projections were based more on potential rather than reality. In the past people were disappointed when actual accomplishments and monitoring fell short of projections. With this revision, we made a conscious effort to make realistic projections based on resource capability, public interests, and realistic budget expectations. I feel it is better to display realistic accomplishments than to create expectations based on future budgets that may never occur.

I know this revision will not satisfy everyone and I expect nobody will be pleased with all of it, but I do believe that everyone can find parts that do meet their expectations. It is important that you consider the full mix of opportunities and uses across the entire Forest and within the context of the adjacent lands before you quickly evaluate the plan and determine if it meets your expectations or not.

Before any of us are quick to judge this decision, we need to remember that success will be measured by how well we meet the objectives and how we adapt this plan based on the implementation and monitoring. Ten years from now when you judge how the Forest has been managed – that will be the real test.

I hope that everyone will continue to stay engaged – by providing your help and knowledge in designing and implementing the site-specific project decisions under the framework of this plan and by working with us to amend it in the future when the need arises.



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Wasatch-Cache releases final forest plan

After more than four years of analysis and planning, and more than 3700 public comments, Regional Forester Jack Troyer has selected a management strategy to care for the 1.2 million-acre Wasatch-Cache National Forest.

The strategy identified as Alternative 7 in planning documents, was developed following significant public input on the Wasatch-Cache's proposed Revised Forest Plan, released in May 2001. The draft contained the Forest Service's proposal for revising the overall management plan.

Included were six alternatives. By federal law, each National Forest must have a management plan and update it periodically.

The Wasatch-Cache National Forest's last Forest plan was adopted in 1985. Few people had mountain bikes in 1985. No one was thinking about the Canada Lynx. And, ski areas were just beginning to consider expanding and proposing master development plans.

All these things make the Wasatch-Cache a more valuable resource to more people. It continues to supply livestock forage and timber, and it also remains a popular destination for downhill skiing. But it is more, a public supply of water for over one million people.

People – including you – had much to say about the draft plan released in 2001. Some thought it was just right, but most wanted changes – more recommended wilderness or less, more snowmobile terrain or less winter motorized area, more motorized recreation trails or less.

Local governments, organized recreation groups and many others submitted detailed comments. Those comments were helpful in understanding the many views and concerns people had for the future management of the Forest.

From the comments, forest planners and specialists began crafting a new alternative. It modified the original preferred alternative with careful consideration of public comments and suggestions about the six draft Alternatives, and considering information on effects. Visits were made to each of the five ranger districts to discuss local concerns and make adjustments. Among other changes, Alternative 7 responds to the concerns for some separation of winter motorized and non-motorized uses to reduce conflicts as well as concerns about unsatisfactory rangeland conditions. It sets objectives for user education and increased

enforcement in response to public concerns. This Alternative makes individual decisions for management of roadless areas based on their inherent values. It recognizes the importance of watersheds especially in the Tri-Canyon area and places more emphasis on reducing hazardous fuels to prevent wildfire in areas where life and property might be at risk.

Finally, Forest Managers met late in 2002 to finalize the alternative we felt would best serve the Wasatch-Cache National Forest for the next 10 years. At that time Forest Supervisor Tom Tidwell, recommended the new Alternative 7 to Regional Forester Jack Troyer. He agreed, and Alternative 7 became the basis for the Revised Forest Plan.

What does this Revised Forest Plan do? It tries to reach a balance between all the competing uses of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. It strives to match those uses with the capability of the land. It emphasizes active management of vegetation to improve wildlife habitat and watershed conditions and to reduce hazardous fuels. It establishes goals and objectives for improving Forest user education and enforcement, OHV and non-motorized travel management, and for managing concentrated recreation use in undeveloped areas of the Forest. The Revised Plan establishes guidance to ensure that the Forest is managed in a sustainable way.

The Revised Forest Plan is unlikely to completely satisfy every group or individual, but it does set a reasonable course that strikes a balance between competing uses.

The management strategy that has been adopted is explained in more detail in the following pages. If your questions are not answered, you will find ways to get those answers. We hope you will understand that balancing is a difficult, though necessary part of managing for multiple uses.

Sundial Peak and Lake Blanche in Big Cottonwood Canyon east of Salt Lake City



Will there be room for everyone?

As population numbers in northern Utah continue to climb, so do the numbers of people who use the Wasatch-Cache National Forest as a place to play, exercise, relax and recreate. Envision Utah has predicted an increase of 1,000,000 people by 2020 (EU, 2002). Our estimates show steady increases in recreation use and rapid increases in particular types of recreation. Between 1984 and 1997, Forest Service reports for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest show increases of nearly 1 million visitor days. This Forest consistently ranks in the top five Forests nationwide for overall recreation use. Results from the National Survey of Recreation and the Environment show that for both urban and rural residents, percentages participating in popular outdoor activities increased dramatically from 62-65% in 1994-95 to 80-83% in 2000-2001. As a primary provider of outdoor recreation settings for Northern Utah, the Wasatch-Cache National Forest is feeling a tug-of-war between various recreation user groups and their desires and demands of the Forest.

Especially prominent during Forest Plan Revision were public concerns about competition for particular areas or routes and conflicting views on the desirability of separating different types of uses. Recreationists using motorized equipment is growing rapidly and some non-motorized recreationists are experiencing conflicts as a result. The number of snowmobiles and ATV's registered in Utah has climbed from about 26,000 in 1980 to about 111,000 in 2000 (Thompson, H. 2001). Increases in the numbers of people using RV's as mobile campgrounds is evident in many popular undeveloped areas. The combination of



Diverse recreation uses occur throughout the Forest.



these increases in numbers with ever improving technology results in more people accessing more places than ever before. In addition to conflicts between users, larger numbers of unmanaged users means potential for negative impacts to resources including vegetation, soil, water and wildlife.

The Revised Forest Plan includes management direction responsive to some of these issues. Maps show where recreation uses will be emphasized and the kinds of recreation for which specific areas will be managed in both summer and winter. The Plan sets goals and describes a "desired future" in which recreationists respect each others' desires and reduce conflicts through their own behavior as well as playing an active role in educating other users to reduce conflicts and prevent negative impacts to the land. The Plan includes specific Objectives to increase emphasis on education, enforcement,

signing, and involvement of organized groups in stewardship of the Forest. It directs Forest Managers to engage Forest users in development of plans for the popular "undeveloped" areas to ensure quality recreation opportunities while protecting natural resources. For certain areas, the Plan sets thresholds for when use levels reach a certain point, the Forest Service will initiate a public process to decide whether and how to limit use.

The next decade will bring many challenges to those who love and use the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. We believe the Revised Forest Plan sets a course that recognizes the importance of recreational pursuits while striving to maintain, protect, and improve the land. Quality of life for people and all life that depends on the Forest, will hinge on how well we can work together to make the desired future a reality.

Changes enhance backcountry winter recreation

One very common request among snowshoers, crosscountry skiers and backcountry skiers is for routes and ski terrain that allow them to be removed from the distractions of snowmobiles.

Under the 1985 Forest Plan, this was a problem for some people. The yurts in the Logan area mountains were set up where winter motorized uses were allowed, but were not used at the time. Some of these yurts were established on State lands, which have become National Forest lands, but were not included under the previous Forest Plan. In recent times, snowmobilers have accessed this area in growing numbers.

During the Forest Plan revision process it became apparent, because of the large increases in the number of conflicts between backcountry skiers and snowmobilers that a change in the management of use for this area was necessary. One of the more difficult tasks was to design some kind of compromise for the highly coveted areas of the upper Logan River.

A 9,000-acre area north of the Tony Grove drainage including the Bunch Grass, Steam Mill, White Pine Creek and Hells Kitchen drainages will now be designated for non-motorized use. Approximately 2,000 of these acres are being closed in cooperation with Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to protect critical big game winter range with the remaining acres being designated for skiers to enjoy the setting without the sights, sounds, and impacts of motorized use.

The Revised Forest Plan increases the safety and quality of the non-motorized experience outside of wilderness responding to non-motorized users concerns without significantly affecting

quality motorized opportunities. In talking with motorized users who frequent this area, the best terrain and play areas for snowmobiles are in the upper elevation basins such as Cornice Ridge, the East side of Naomi Peak and around Mt. Gog and MaGog which remain open to winter motorized use.

Snowmobilers can access play areas in the upper basins above Tony Grove Lake between the Mt. Naomi Wilderness boundary and the Idaho border avoiding the non-motorized areas in the Bunch Grass, Steam Mill and Hell's Kitchen drainages below. However, in the case of an emergency or mechanical breakdown, snowmobilers will be able to travel down designated corridors. In the event of an emergency, this allows a necessary safety outlet where snowmobilers can access Highway 89 and travel to their vehicles and trailers. The designated corridors will be established in coordination with the State and local users.

To improve access to the highly desired areas above Tony Grove Lake and help offset the reduction of motorized terrain, an additional 1,800 acres of winter motorized terrain was opened. This area is to the north of the Twin Creeks drainage below the Tony Grove lake road.

Snowmobile play areas currently identified on the state winter motorized opportunity maps will remain open for riders, friends

and families to test their snowmobiling skills in the greatest snow on earth.

We hope that snowmobilers and backcountry skiers can understand the reasons why these changes were made and why each group chooses to recreate the way they do. We also hope people from both groups, motorized and non-motorized, respect areas that are set aside for each group's use and will help us manage them to minimize further conflicts.

If through implementation we find that line adjustments are needed to make workable separations, we can make these adjustments. We want all of the users of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest to continue to enjoy and have experiences equal to the spectacular lands they find.

Remote yurts are popular with backcountry skiers.



Snowmobilers will find many opportunities

When the snow flies, an ever increasing number of people turn their thoughts to an ever increasing number of winter-related activities ranging from snowshoeing to snowmobiling. The more remote areas of the Forest provide abundant terrain for winter snow-play for snowmobile touring and hi-marking, groomed snowmobile trails, and backcountry winter yurts.



Snowmobile use is increasing on the Forest.

Snowmobile enthusiasts will find many opportunities to enjoy the snow. There are numerous groomed snowmobile trails on the Forest, with the exception of the Salt Lake District. Most of these routes are on closed roads allowing access in the winter and are groomed in partnership with the State of Utah, Division of Parks and Recreation. Approximately 542,000 acres are open to motorized travel under the new Forest plan. There has been a reduction in the number of acres open to motorized travel from the existing condition of 645,000 acres. However, it must be noted the existing condition acreage includes roughly 30,000 acres of terrain that is not and never has been accessible to motorized use because of the steepness of slope or other natural limiting factors. These reductions in acreage open to winter motorized use are shown on winter recreation maps and are necessary to provide designated terrain for non-motorized recreationists and to avoid disturbance of critical big game winter range.

Heli-skiing continues to be allowed in the currently permitted terrain contributing to the diversity of winter recreation opportunities on the Forest. Specific requirements of operation are decided through site-specific analysis.

Wasatch front ski area boundaries will remain unchanged

Under the Revised Forest Plan, ski area boundaries will be fixed to their current location. However, this does not include small boundary adjustments made for administrative purposes nor does it mean that ski areas will not be allowed to expand facilities within the existing ski resort boundaries. On the contrary, improvements and additions to ski areas that add to the enjoyment and safety of the skiing public will be considered.

The Tri-Canyon area of the Wasatch National Forest is experiencing an increase in growth. Traffic counts in Little Cottonwood Canyon indicate a growth rate of approximately 2.9% per year over the last 20 years while Big Cottonwood Canyon has experienced a 3.1% growth rate over the last 21 years. More and more people, especially during the winter, are exploring the canyons, glades and bowls of the central Wasatch on skis, snowboards and snowshoes.

Most people driving up either Cottonwood Canyon during the holidays or on a picture perfect blue-sky day have experienced heavy traffic, a common occurrence in the wintertime as people swarm to the Canyons for winter recreation.

During the plan revision, the Forest considered the broad variety of different skier groups and their many sincere comments about different aspects and facets available to backcountry and developed ski area skiers. The Forest came to the conclusion there was an appropriate amount of National Forest terrain dedicated to developed ski area skiing.

Interestingly, skier numbers have been fickle to the Wasatch-Cache ski areas during the last several decades. In the ten-year period from 1970 through the 1980, Wasatch-Cache skier visits to the Cottonwood Canyons ski resorts grew briskly, averaging 23.7% per year.

During the 1980's, ski area growth on the Forest grew at a moderate rate of 1.24% per year. Skier growth since has remained static through the 1990's and into the present, actually declining during the last five years.

Five years of low snowfall and erratic weather patterns have helped to shape mixed skier numbers at Alta, Brighton, Snowbasin, Solitude and Snowbird. Even with the large Olympic crowds last winter, skier numbers pre and post games were below average for the five Wasatch front ski areas.

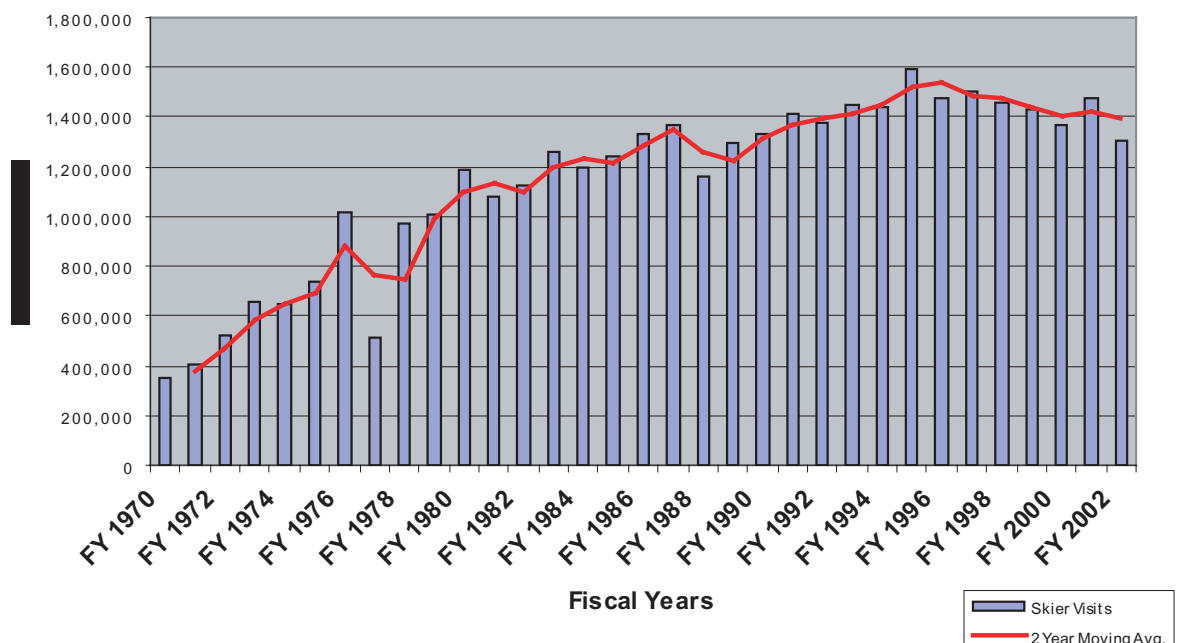
The State Office of Planning and Budget has documented research from past Olympic host cities that revealed during the Olympic year, notable tourism displacement can occur. In Calgary, overall skier days declined in 1988 during the Olympics, despite the attention from the Games. In Atlanta, hotel and convention visitation actually declined during the year of the games. However, both of these cities, because of the attention from hosting the games, have seen increases in tourism as a result of people's interest in visiting a host cities post Olympics.

We will see what will happen in the future for Utah's ski industry. In all likelihood, with several normal snow years, combined with the general internal growth projected along the Wasatch-Front, the ski industry in Utah will continue to grow and provide a playground for skiers to enjoy the greatest snow on earth.



Downhill skiers at Snowbasin ski area on the Ogden Ranger District

30-Year Wasatch-Cache Skier Visits



Healthy water flows are foundation for healthy forest

It's a given. You walk to your kitchen sink, turn on the faucet and cool, clean water flows into your glass. We often take the water in our homes for granted. Chances are if you live along the Wasatch Front, your water comes from the nearby mountains.

Water is critical for all life. Streams and riparian areas (streamside zones) are rich zones of biological diversity; supporting

aquatic life such as insects, amphibians and fish; and are important habitat for birds, mammals and aquatic life.

People also need water, and this demand will continue to increase as local communities and regional metropolitan areas grow in population. National Forests such as the Wasatch-Cache provide a clean abundant source of fresh water to meet many downstream needs and uses. We must all work together to balance the water needs of municipalities, agriculture and recreation with the needs of forest ecosystems. Watersheds are a key component of multiple use forests.

Healthy watersheds play a key role in providing clean water and sustaining aquatic ecosystem health. The role of the watershed protection on National Forest System lands is a key element of the 1897 Organic Administrative Act which was the first law directing how lands set aside as Forest reserves were to be managed. Now known as National Forests, Congress directed that these lands be set aside "to improve and protect the Forest within the

boundaries, or for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of citizens of the United States.

A major goal of the Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan is to maintain and/or restore overall watershed health (proper functioning of physical, biological and chemical conditions). Objectives to meet this broad goal are to teach people appropriate behavior while using the Forest, especially when they are recreating near water.

Watersheds are areas that catch rain and snow that drain into rivers, streams, and lakes. Most of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest drains into the Great Basin and includes the mountains along the Wasatch Front, the Bear River Range, the Stansbury Mountains, and the west side of the Uinta Mountains. Drainages in this area include the Bear River, Weber River, Jordan River, and Provo River, and Tooele and Skull valleys east and west of the Stansbury Mountains. On the east side of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest are the Uinta Mountains

that drain into Colorado River Basin and include the Duchesne River, Blacks Fork, and Henrys Fork drainages.

For the Revised Forest Plan, watersheds located wholly or partially on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest were evaluated in terms of natural and human caused risks to their health. This is part of the Forest Service's watershed management program, which seeks to manage activities to protect the watersheds against degradation.

When the health of a watershed is found to be at risk, steps must be taken to remedy the problem – either by modifying

management activities, rehabilitating degraded resources or both. Because watersheds do not recognize political boundaries, it is often necessary to work collaboratively with all landowners in a watershed to address problems.

What degrades watersheds? Both natural and human caused impacts can affect watershed health. Increased runoff and erosion from hill slopes after a fire, or changes in water chemistry from abandoned mine drainage, are two examples. Proper construction and maintenance of roads and trails are issues of critical concern for watershed health. On roads, which are improperly built or maintained, runoff from rain or snowmelt can carry soil directly to a stream. Well-designed roads use effective techniques that minimize erosion and direct runoff away from streams. User created roads and trails often cause damage because they are not planned or engineered to minimize soil erosion and negative impacts to water quality and aquatic life. The Revised Forest Plan's goals, objectives, and standards and guidelines address these types of concerns.

All Forest management activities, including timber harvesting, recreation, mining, and grazing must follow standards and guidelines to protect watershed health. The Revised Forest Plan includes standards and guidelines necessary to protect soil and water resources.

Public comment on the proposed Revised Forest Plan identified the management of water and aquatic resources as a key concern to many people. Water direction in the Revised Forest Plan was reviewed and revised as a result. New direction recognizes the importance of healthy streams and the aquatic systems that depend on them. It also emphasizes the need to work together with all interested parties to achieve the best management of streams and aquatic resources.

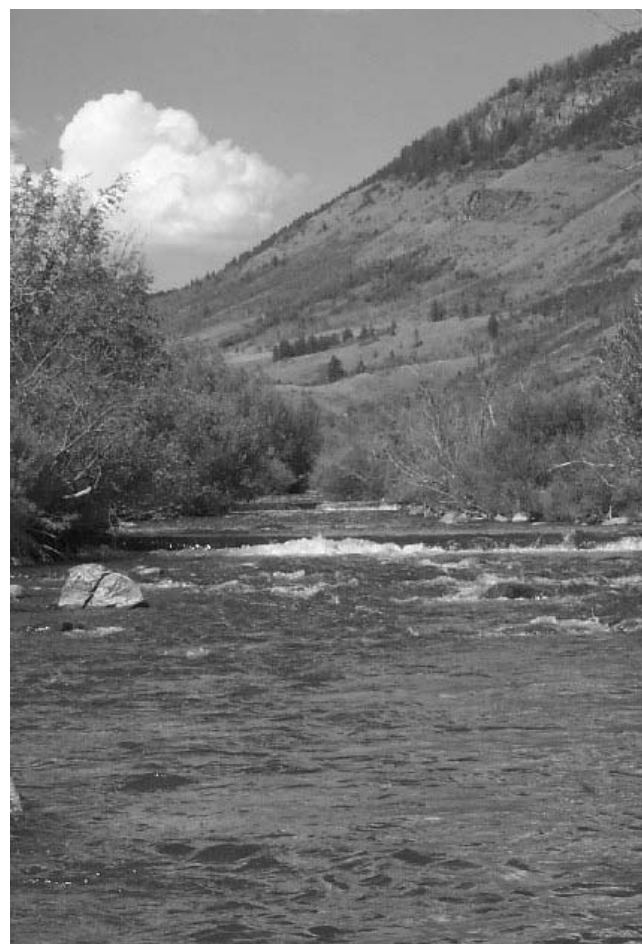


Healthy watershed in the Uinta Mountains

“Wild” rivers top list of eligibles

Ninety-six stream segments in eleven drainages of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest are “free-flowing”. Free-flowing is the first test of an inventory to see what streams might be eligible to be designated as either wild, scenic, or recreational under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. To be eligible, a stream or stream segment must be free-flowing and have at least one outstandingly remarkable feature. Of the 96 segments, 33 totaling about 284 miles were found by the Forest Service inventory team to have one or more outstandingly remarkable features. Interested citizens helped refine the inventory and several changes were made as a result. The Logan River in particular generated considerable public interest. Fifteen segments were found to be eligible as “Wild”, six as “Scenic”, eight as “Recreational” and four had dual eligibility with both “Wild” and “Scenic” portions.

Eligibility is only the first step of a Wild and Scenic Rivers Study. It is intended to identify all potential streams without regard to potential trade-offs of designation. Suitability determination is the next step and includes careful consideration of land ownership in the area, land uses that might be affected, interest in designation, costs, and any other issues raised during the public process. It will be triggered by strong local or Congressional interest in designating a segment for permanent protection or by a proposed project that would alter the free-flowing character of the stream or the resources that made the stream eligible. In the State of Utah to date, Congress has designated no rivers under the Act. Someday, one or more of these streams may join the ranks of other nationally recognized streams. In the meantime, the Revised Forest Plan includes protection standards for the eligible segments. Most on-going uses will not be affected by these standards.



Portion of Logan River eligible for “recreational” classification under Wild and Scenic River Act.

Revised Forest Plan makes key decisions

This Revised Forest Plan is something like a city's planning and zoning ordinances. It tells Forest Managers and users where certain kinds of activities will be allowed and under what conditions. It is clearly a "multiple use" plan in that it attempts to balance all sorts of uses and demands while maintaining the health of the land and water for the long-term.

The Plan contains some direction for the entire Forest and some that applies to specific areas of the Forest. Direction for the entire Forest includes descriptions of "desired future conditions" for various resources to paint a clear picture of how we want the Forest to look overall. In order to move toward these conditions, the Plan sets broad goals with subgoals for management of the 1.2 million acres of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Objectives plot a strategy for accomplishing the goals. Taken altogether, these lay out a vision of

how the National Forest is to be used while its resources are protected. These are found in the first section of Chapter 4 of the Revised Forest Plan.

In addition, the Revised Forest Plan sets standards and guidelines. A standard is like a School Zone sign that says, "20 MPH when light is flashing". It defines a limitation intended to keep children safe. There is no discretion. If a standard cannot be met, then the project must be changed or after rigorous analysis, the standard may be amended.

A guideline, as the name suggests, normally allows more discretion. It articulates a preferred or advisable course of action. If a guideline is not going to be followed, the reason must be documented as part of a project environmental analysis. For all the standards and guidelines, see chapter 4a3 of the Revised Forest Plan.

Area specific direction is composed of several layers of maps each with a set of descriptions that explain the intended uses and restrictions. One map layer assigns specific areas to one of 20 "prescription categories" that are used to provide the overall emphasis and define what activities are allowed in the area. At one end of the prescription spectrum is wilderness, relatively pristine with human uses very restricted. At the other end are developed oil and gas fields where human uses are given a high priority while mitigating impacts to basic resources. Between these are numerous prescriptions aimed at watershed protection, wildlife and fish habitat, recreation, undeveloped character, and forest or rangeland vegetation.

Also displayed on maps are the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, Winter Recreation and Scenery Management System. These define the types of summer recreation settings you can expect to find in different parts of the forest as well as the areas and routes open in winter to motorized uses and designated for non-motorized uses. Maps showing how scenery is to be managed will guide activities such as timber harvest or road construction to protect or enhance the scenic qualities of the area. These descriptions are found in Chapter 4a5-4a7 of the Revised Forest Plan. The maps are in Chapter 4b organized in seven distinct

geographic areas called Management Areas. You can also see these maps at the open houses planned in April, on the Internet site, or in CD ROM. See page 18 for full details of dates and addresses.

Management Areas are where all of the direction discussed above must be integrated to fit the land considering its inherent capability. Each Management Area has its own desired future condition description reflecting this integration. It's helpful to read these descriptions for your area of interest to get a sense of the intent for resources and management there.

Finally, the Revised Forest Plan outlines requirements for monitoring and evaluation to ensure we do what we said we would and we learn from how things turn out. This monitoring strategy is outlined in Chapter 4a8 of the Revised Forest Plan.

As required by the National Forest Management Act, the Revised Forest Plan specifies those lands suitable for timber harvesting and livestock grazing. Included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement that accompanies the Revised Forest Plan is analysis about what areas should be managed for commercial timber harvest. It also identifies lands suited for livestock grazing. The Record of Decision summarizes these decisions.

The Revised Plan includes recommendations to Congress for lands that could be designated as wilderness. It provides protection standards for rivers found eligible in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Inventory. A summary of those recommendations is found elsewhere in this newsletter. (see pages 5 and 9)

The above elements meet requirements set out in a 1976 law in which Congress specified that the Wasatch-Cache National Forest and all other national forests assemble and update such plans periodically. That law and accompanying regulations guide how forest plans are developed. These forest plans only make "programmatic" or broad overview decisions, not detailed site-specific decisions. These are made when specific projects are proposed and evaluated within the context of this overall management plan.

Only time (and monitoring) will tell

Even New Plans Need To Be Adaptable

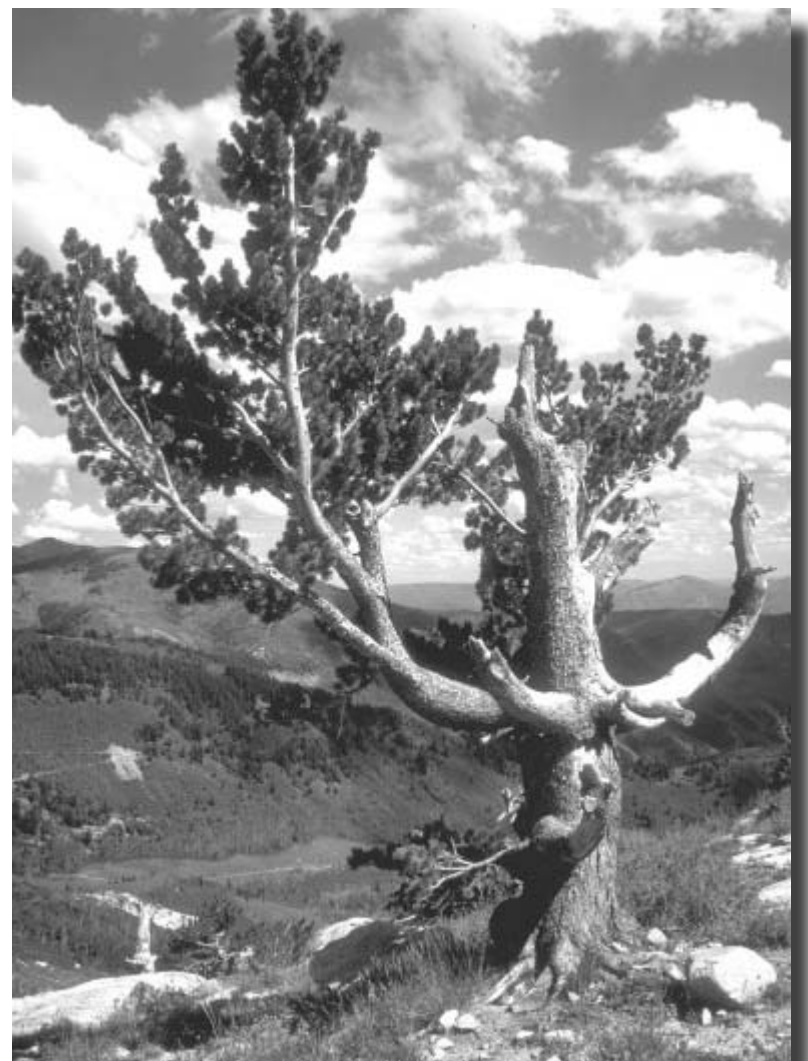
Now that we have made decisions to guide Forest management over the next ten years, how will we all know whether they are moving us toward the stated goals and what will we do if they are not? Monitoring and evaluation focus on these questions and are a required part of planning for the future of a National Forest. Monitoring is simply checking periodically and answering the following: Did we do what we said we were going to do? How well is it working and why? Evaluation answers the question: What, if anything do we need to change to move toward our goals? These activities provide the information needed to keep Forest Plans up-to-date and to make sure that we learn from our successes and mistakes.

The large area and complexity of planning for the variety of uses

and values of the Wasatch-Cache made it impossible to anticipate every possible situation. We fully expect to need to make adjustments. Through monitoring we can evaluate the assumptions made during plan development, see if priority objectives are being accomplished, and determine how well those actions are working. We can assess whether management direction in the Plan is sufficient to provide for long-term sustainability and desirable public opportunities. Finally, we can determine if we should change some aspect of the Forest Plan through amendment based on what we learn.

Every year, we will publish a Monitoring Report outlining how we are doing with Plan implementation, what we are finding, and what management actions, if any, we are considering as a result of the findings.

Through monitoring we can evaluate the assumptions made during plan development, see if priority objectives are being accomplished, and determine how well those actions are working.



Old gnarled pine tree in the Bear River Range east of Logan

Summer recreation

Summertime brings many visitors to the Wasatch-Cache National Forest seeking cooler temperatures and recreation opportunities. Many enjoy the Forest while hiking, riding horses, mountain biking, camping and Off-Highway Vehicle riding, just to name a few. The Revised Forest Plan lays the groundwork to provide quality recreation to an increasing number of diverse users. Keeping up with the growing numbers of people enjoying the outdoors and the impacts of increased recreation will continue to be a challenge. The Revised Forest Plan makes some key decisions to balance the use of the Forest while minimizing the environmental impacts.

First, we defined what we view for recreation for the future to help users and managers know what to expect and manage for on any part of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Next came the fine-tuning to assess whether an area should have more developed recreation or more dispersed recreation. Should these be motorized or non-motorized? Finally, the Revised Forest Plan utilizes a national scenery management system to help assess the right mix of alteration and protection for the magnificent scenery of the Forest.

The Revised Forest Plan will help guide the revision of Travel Plans for ranger districts. Each districts travel plans will eventually be revised and will specify which roads and trails are open to motorized and mechanized vehicles. The Evanston-Mountain View District, the first district to revise their Travel Plan, will have their new travel plan maps available this summer.

Because of the environmental impacts, mechanized and motorized use is only allowed on routes designated open. Cross-country motorized travel is not permitted in summer. Dispersed camping will be managed to protect streams, rivers and meadows from soil and vegetation loss.

Many people commented they would like the Forest Service to emphasize education by working with user groups to promote proper etiquette while recreating on the Forest. One technique could be to expand ongoing efforts to work collaboratively with the different user groups who use particular areas and create opportunities to work together to promote land stewardship by assisting the Forest Service with maintenance of recreation facilities, trails, backcountry camping areas and motorized trails. Or, volunteers could assist with ranger patrols providing Tread Lightly education to road and trail users. The opportunities for working together towards improved land ethics are endless.

The Revised Forest Plan lays the groundwork for these opportunities and pleasurable and responsible summer recreation in northern Utah.

The Revised Forest Plan lays the groundwork to provide quality recreation to an increasing number of diverse users.



OHV user follows the Tread Lightly message.



Horseback riding is a popular activity in the Uinta Mountains.

Forest Service call for volunteers

This is the chance you've been waiting for! If you like people and care about our country's natural resources – your time and talents are needed! Students, retirees, professionals, young people, service clubs and organizations have all contributed greatly to the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Why not join these volunteers; whose legacy is seen everyday throughout the forest on trails, in camping areas, in wilderness and in the office. Contact your local Ranger District Office for more details.

Volunteers play an important role in managing the forests.



Wasatch-Cache provides public ample opportunity to experience regionally and nationally significant trails

The Bonneville Shoreline Trail (BST) is a pedestrian and bicycle trail promoted by state and local governments which extends from Santaquin to Brigham City. The BST has quickly become a popular feature of the recreation infrastructure available along the Wasatch Front. This prominence has resulted in the Bonneville Shoreline Trail receiving the designation as one of sixteen National Millennium Legacy Trails in October 1999. Additional trail proposals extend the BST north from Brigham City along the Wellsville Mountains to Tremonton, and east into Cache Valley.

The trail generally follows the eastern shoreline of ancient Lake Bonneville along the foothills of the Wasatch Mountains. Major portions of the trail were constructed while other segments are in various stages of planning processes. Volunteers have been invaluable, performing the majority of the planning and trail construction. In fact, without the tremendous support of local citizens and communities donating time, materials and labor, the BST would not be what it is today.

The Bonneville Shoreline Trail also allows the Forest Service to meet some of its priorities in serving the public which are: providing public access to the National Forest, creating a natural buffer

between developed urban areas and the foothills, and establishing a consistent fire break along the wild land/urban interface.

The Great Western Trail (GWT) traverses five states, including Utah, as it spans the western United States from its southern border with Mexico to the Northern Canadian border. The GWT system consists of over 4,455 miles of existing roads and trails. Approximately 1,600 miles of this system are located within the State of Utah. It is a motorized trail system that also provides abundant opportunities for non-motorized travel including hiking, equestrian and mountain biking.

A multi-year feasibility study is complete resulting in proposing the GWT as a candidate to receive designation of a new category of National Trails defined as a "National Discovery Trail." National Discovery Trails will be continuous interstate trails with the purpose of allowing users to experience and learn aspects of American life and history as our forefathers expanded and settled in new regions. Only Congress has the authority make this designation. Congress has not acted on the recommendation.

The Great Western Trail (GWT) traverses five states, including Utah, as it spans the western United States from its southern border with Mexico to the Northern Canadian border. The GWT system consists of over 4,455 miles of existing roads and trails.



Mountain biker on the Great Western Trail

LEAVE NO TRACE

- **PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE.** Proper planning and preparation helps hikers and campers have a safe and enjoyable trip, while minimizing damage to natural and cultural resources.
- **TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES.** Damage to land occurs when visitors trample vegetation or communities of organisms beyond recovery. The resulting barren areas develop into undesirable trails, campsites and soil erosion.
- **DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY.** Bury human waste in cat holes 6-8" deep and at least 200' from water, trails, and campsites. Carry out toilet paper, food scraps and all trash.
- **LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND.** Allow others a sense of discovery by leaving rocks, plants, archaeological artifacts and other objects as you find them.
- **MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS.** Lightweight camp stoves make low impact camping possible by eliminating the need for firewood, and the scars that remain after a campfire.
- **RESPECT WILDLIFE.** Observe wildlife from afar to avoid disturbing them. Store food securely and keep garbage and food scraps away from animals so they will not acquire bad habits. Keep pets leashed to avoid harassment or injury to wildlife.
- **RESPECT OTHERS.** Travel and camp in small groups, and help maintain the peace by camping out of sight and sound of others. Keep pets leashed and always pick up after your pet.

Two new recommended Wildernesses

We're really excited to recommend two new wildernesses. Congress will have to consider their qualities and make a final determination if they'll be added to our National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS), but in the meantime we'll protect their pristine character – because we think they're very special wild places.



View from the Notch in recommended wilderness, Lakes roadless area

Lakes recommended wilderness

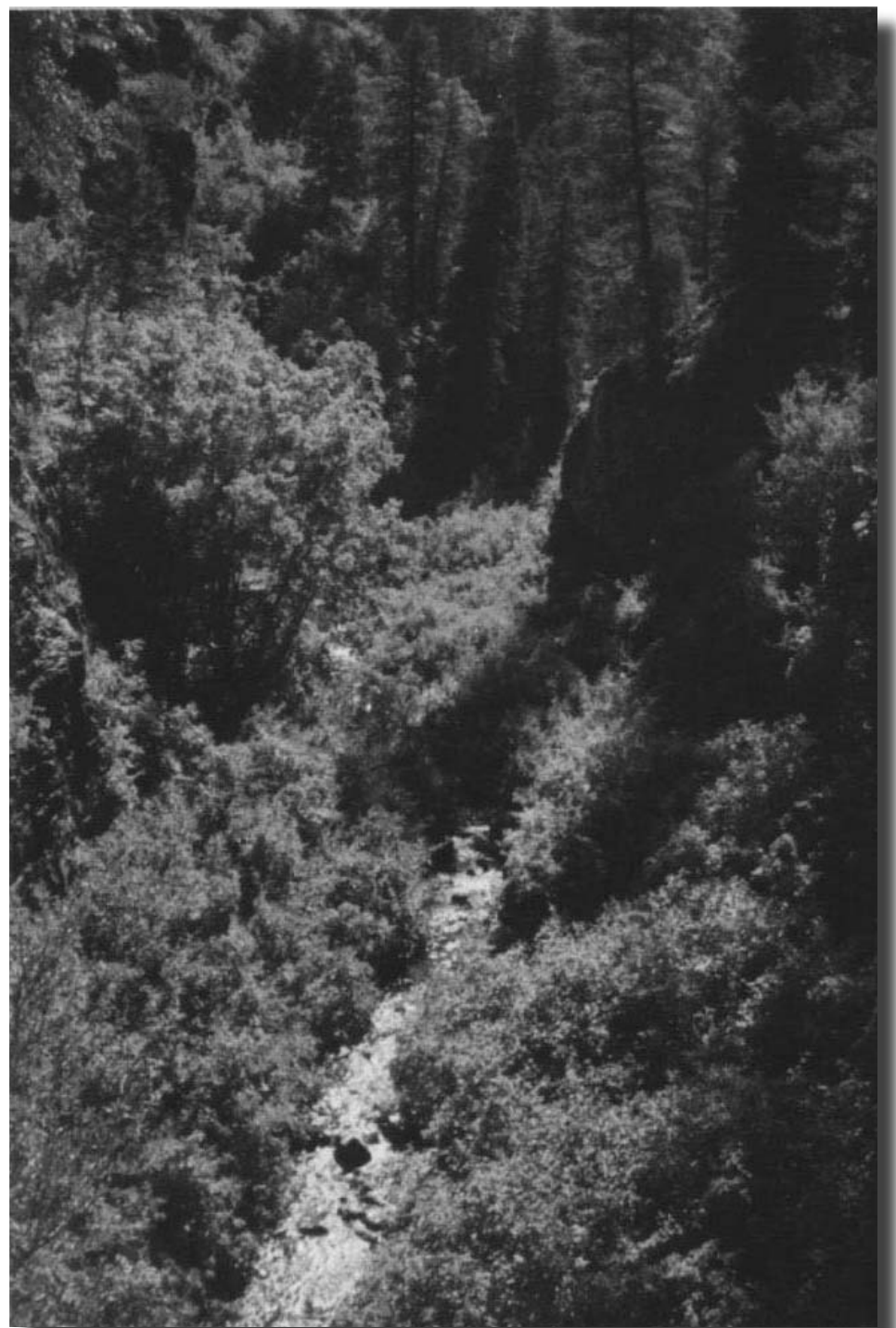
This was a complicated decision for us. Many people told us that a large part of Lakes roadless area should be recommended as wilderness. There was no doubt in our minds that the area is special, it's huge – over 100,000 acres, making it the largest contiguous roadless area left on the Wasatch-Cache, and it's gorgeous – broad expansive views across a landscape of bald summits, forested basins, lakes and creeks. We took the core of the area, 38,800 acres, and devoted it to the recommended wilderness. Both physical features and current use patterns were considered in setting the recommended boundary which is primarily beyond an easy day hike and heavy use areas. Our wilderness recommendation is intended to protect this one-of-a-kind place so that future generations may enjoy and continue to learn about one of our best wild places.

Those who were concerned about a loss of current backcountry opportunities in the Lakes area should have no fear – there's plenty left for you too, as the remainder of the Lakes roadless area still has either backcountry or dispersed recreation as an emphasis. We also decided to allow snowmobiling to continue in the Lakes recommended wilderness. We do not believe that snowmobiling, in the short term, will affect fundamental physical wilderness characteristics. It is our hope that winter users – both motorized and non-motorized will practice their activities with great care in this new recommended wilderness.

Upper South Fork recommended wilderness

Although relatively small at 14,200 acres, Upper South Fork recommended wilderness will fill an ecological niche that is not well represented in the NWPS. Unlike the rock and ice high elevation wildernesses of the central Rockies, redrock canyonlands in southern Utah, or Great Basin deserts and ranges, Upper South Fork (USF) is an undisturbed mid-elevation setting, ranging from 5,000 to 8,000 feet. There's not a lot of this ecosystem left untouched, as most of it has been modified by urban, rural, or agricultural development. Somehow, USF escaped roadbuilding and development, in part due to its rugged topography, but also because it's landlocked by large private ownership tracts, and generally has a lack of merchantable resources. The vegetation includes grasslands, oakbrush, maple, and mountain mahogany and some aspen and conifer at the highest elevations. Rugged, narrow canyons with rock outcrops and wild streams dissect the area, including an eligible Wild and Scenic River. The Left Fork South Fork Ogden River is a refuge for isolated populations of Bonneville cutthroat trout, and its cascades can provide striking visual experiences.

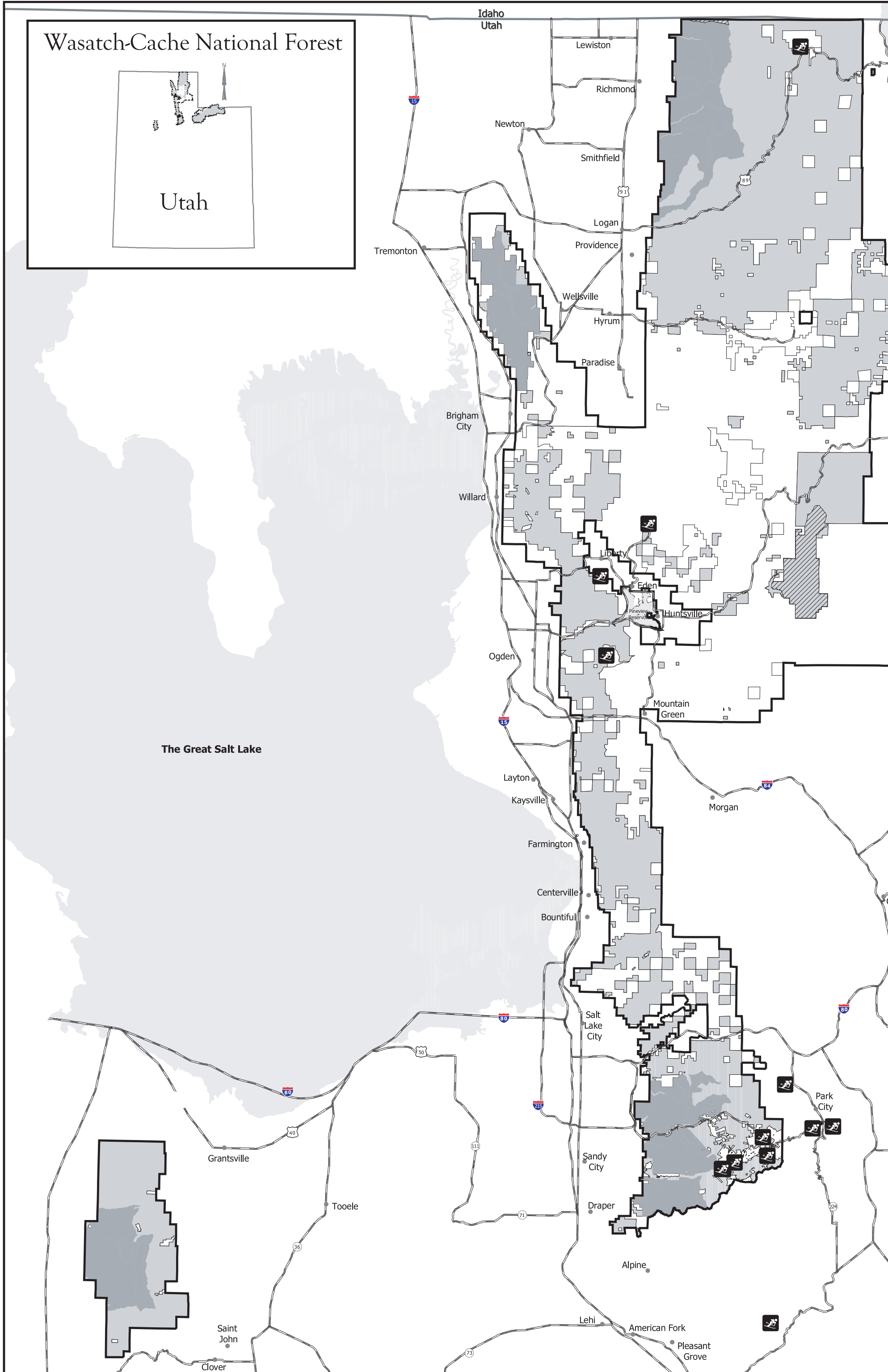
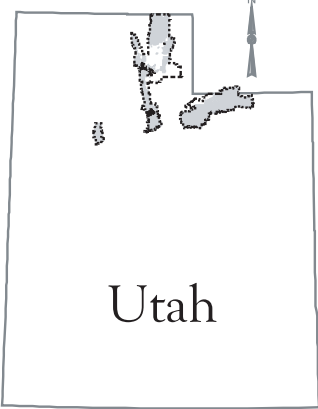
What little recreation goes on in the area is truly primitive. Solitude is found along small streams flowing below cliffs in narrow riparian settings, or in rough backcountry uplands. There are few developed trails or developed trailhead facilities. We'll keep it protected from heavy recreation use impacts. Those few hardy adventurers who discover its wonders will feel like we do – it deserves to be wilderness!

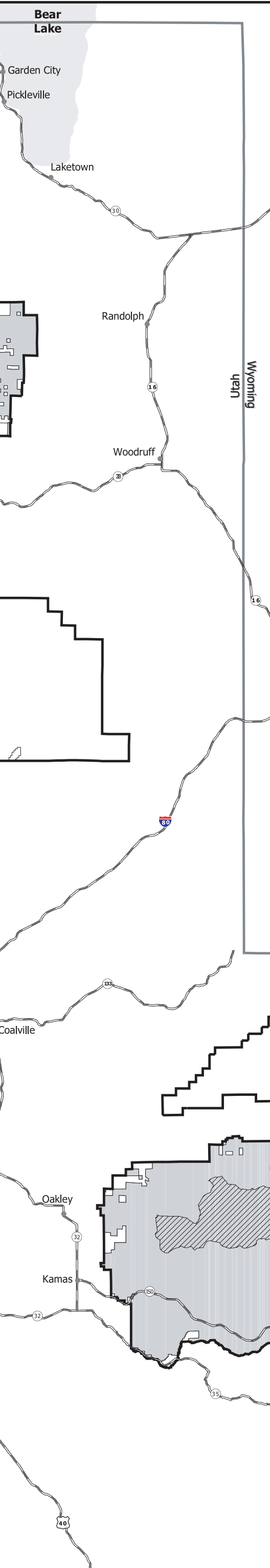


Undisturbed drainage in Upper South Fork roadless area, recommended wilderness



Wasatch-Cache National Forest





FOREST FACTS



HOW BIG IS THE WASATCH CACHE NATIONAL FOREST ?

The Wasatch-Cache National Forest covers nearly 1.2 million acres comprised of high desert and alpine landscapes, pristine lakes and streams, and rugged mountain peaks. More than 318,000 acres are designated wilderness areas, which limits human uses to foot traffic and prohibits any man made structures.



RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

There are 73 campgrounds, 28 picnic areas and three visitor and information centers. The Wasatch-Cache National Forest also has five downhill ski areas and two cross country ski areas under special use permit. Eighty percent of the forest is available for backcountry and dispersed recreation.



ROADS AND TRAILS

The Wasatch-Cache National Forest has over 1600 miles of forest roads and four scenic Byways offering the motorist over 75 miles of spectacular sightseeing. It also boasts 84 trailheads and 1500 miles of trails for hiking, biking, snow shoeing, horseback riding and motorized recreation.



TIMBER HARVESTS

An average of 8.4 million board feet of timber was cut and removed annually from the Wasatch-Cache National Forest between 1975 and 2000. This volume was comprised primarily of lodgepole pine, and included stands killed by a mountain pine beetle epidemic which occurred on the North Slope of the Uinta Mountains in the early 1980s.



LIVESTOCK GRAZING

There are approximately 55,000 head of livestock that graze on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Of these, approximately 11,000 are cattle and 44,000 are sheep.

Legend

- Ski Area
- City
- Forest Administrative Boundary
- State Boundary
- Major Roads
- Waterbodies
- Proposed Wilderness
- Existing Wilderness
- Ownership**
- State / Private / DOD
- Wasatch-Cache N.F.

Special areas on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest

The Revised Forest Plan identified some old and some new special areas on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. These areas fall into two different categories: Research Natural Areas and Special Interest Areas. Research Natural Areas (RNAs) are lands within the National Forest System that are permanently protected as places to conduct monitoring and research, to maintain biological diversity and to foster education. The RNA program is a national effort. The goal is to have representative examples of as many ecosystems as possible set aside for permanent protection. Special Interest Areas (SIAs) are lands within the National Forest System that are established to protect and manage for public use and enjoyment, special areas with scenic, geological, botanical, zoological, paleontological, archaeological or other special characteristics or unique values.

Major difference between RNAs and SIA include:

- RNAs are focused around areas in a natural condition;
- SIAs are focused on environmental education of the attributes included within them;
- RNAs are protected from uses such as recreation, timber harvest, and livestock grazing. Fire is allowed only if it is a research component of those ecosystems included in the RNA;
- SIAs can include any or all of these activities, as long as they do not interfere with the values being protected or emphasized within them;
- RNAs are primarily used by agency personnel or the scientific community;
- SIAs are used as much by the general public;
- RNAs are selected based on a need to maintain representative ecosystems in as unmodified condition as possible; and
- SIAs are chosen because of their unique attributes.



Additions to the Morris Creek Research Natural Area add diversity as well as acres.

Research Natural Areas Special Interest Areas

There are three RNAs on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. These include the Red Butte Canyon, Morris Creek, and Mollens Hollow RNAs. Before its inclusion in the Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Red Butte Canyon was under the management of the Fort Douglas, a military base established in 1862. Because of its value as a water source, the canyon was protected from most common uses, including livestock grazing. And because of this protection, it provides conditions most like those that historically occurred along the Wasatch Mountains before early settlement. These conditions are uncommon in this area because most similar areas have been either developed, or have otherwise been impacted by humans to a much greater degree over the years. Because the lower portion of this canyon has a high amount of non-native plants, including many noxious weeds, the Forest Service has decided this area (about 850 acres of the total 5,500 acres) no longer meets the definition of a “natural area” and can more appropriately be managed as a Special Interest Area (see below). Research would remain the primary focus in this area, but would focus on restoration ecology rather than natural processes that no longer occur here.

The Morris Creek RNA east of Farmington (Farmington Canyon) is currently only about 200 acres. It was originally established as a small area to study watershed concerns. The Revised Forest Plan enlarges this area to over 1,200 acres to include a much broader range in elevation and associated plant communities, from Gambel oak to subalpine fir and aspen. While fire is excluded to the degree possible in Red Butte Canyon because of the types of research being conducted there, it is expected that research that focuses on natural processes including, but not limited to, the role of fire in the ecology of these plant communities will be emphasized in this RNA.

The Mollens Hollow RNA southeast of Logan, in the Bear River Range, offers a variety of plant communities for research, but includes some unique plant communities to that part of northern Utah. Single needle pinyon is typically found further south in Utah, but is an important component of this RNA. In addition, because of its distance from water and the steep nature of its lower slopes, it has not experienced the heavy livestock grazing that commonly occurred throughout this mountain range. The focus of this RNA will continue to be on the preservation of unique communities (to this part of Utah) in undisturbed conditions.

This Revised Forest Plan has introduced the concept of Special Interest Areas to the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. As mentioned above, these areas have a somewhat different purpose, but they can also play an important research role. Two SIAs are included in the Revised Forest Plan. As noted above, the Red Butte Canyon SIA has been carved out of the lower portion of the Red Butte Canyon RNA because of the high amount of introduced and weedy species that now occupy the area. Because these conditions occur throughout the foothills of the Wasatch Front, we feel the value of this area for restoration ecology research is great. In addition, an increased focus on environmental education will be included in this area, while protecting the adjacent RNA from unwanted encroachment.

The Logan Canyon SIA, which runs from the mouth of Logan Canyon up to Temple Fork Canyon, will have a different focus. This area will be primarily used to protect the rare endemic plants that occur there in addition to an increased emphasis on environmental education on the value of protecting these rare species, such as: Maguire's primrose and Frank Smith's violet. The upper portion of this SIA will focus on protecting one of the plant communities that has been identified by The Nature Conservancy as an example of an excellent condition Douglas-fir community with the shrub, ninebark, dominating the understory. This portion of the SIA may be better included as an RNA, but the ability to control uses in this area is limited because of its proximity to the Logan Canyon Highway. Its value for research, however, is recognized and will be encouraged.



Management indicators

The Wasatch-Cache National Forest provides habitat for many vertebrate species of wildlife. This includes: fish, reptiles (snakes and lizards), amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders), mammals, and birds. All of these species are not on the Forest all of the time. Many birds migrate south for the winter, some as far as South America. Some of the species are rare on the Forest. The Yellow-billed cuckoo for instance, only occasionally comes to Utah and when here, may not even cross the Forest.

Laws and regulations determine wildlife management on a National Forest. These laws state that we must maintain habitat and viability for all native and desired non-native species on the Forest. How does the Forest track over 300 species? It's difficult to track all species individually. To make tracking easier, species are categorized according to the habitat they use. We then select one species that is very dependent on a particular habitat and track only that species. We call the species we are tracking a Management Indicator Species. By assessing one species, we can make a determination that other species using the same habitat are experiencing similar conditions and effects.

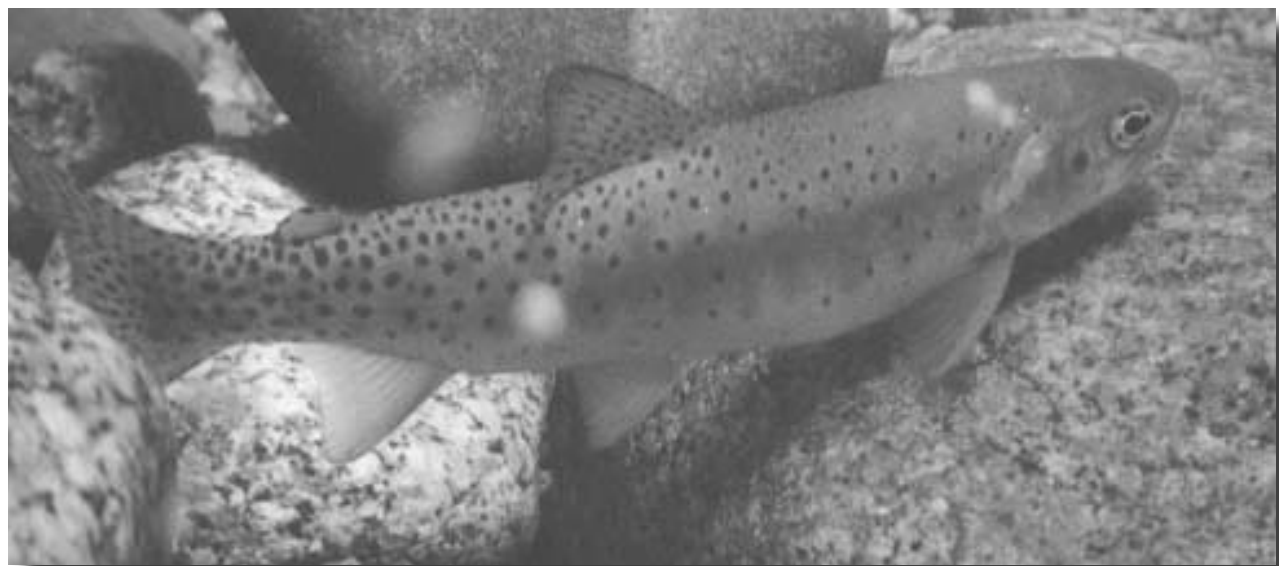
We identified the habitats our management is expected to impact and then we selected management indicator species for tracking in those habitats. We monitor impacts

to aspen and conifer trees using the Goshawk, a raptor known for using mature and old growth trees. We selected the snowshoe hare to help us assess what is happening with young aspen and conifer since it favors these. The beaver was selected to assess what is happening in riparian or streamside areas and Bonneville cutthroat trout was selected to monitor what is happening within the streams.

Management Indicator Species provide a way to monitor effects Forest management may be having on species dependent on the Forest for survival. As information on these species is gathered over the next ten years, it will help Forest Managers determine if changes in management direction are needed to ensure the 300 species are able to survive.



Beaver and Bonneville cutthroat trout are among the new Management Indicator Species.



Aspen are on the decline

Imagine fall in the Wasatch and Uinta Mountains without the brilliant yellow-gold of aspen trees. We've come to expect that beautiful quaking yellow, patch-worked among fiery red and orange maple or dark green pine and fir. But the future of aspen was identified early in Plan revision as "at-risk" without some kind of change from current management. This is because most aspen *require* disturbance such as fire to keep its' place on the landscape. As aspen trees age, they provide a nice shady environment favored by conifer trees such as pine and fir. As these evergreens become established and grow taller, they begin to shade out any young new aspen. Aspen require lots of sunlight and actually send out large numbers of sprouts after a fire when the land is wide open to the sun. Historically, regular fires served to maintain the aspen in our landscapes and to check the encroachment of conifers. It is estimated that we now have only 65% of the aspen once found on the Wasatch-Cache. Without fire, many

areas will eventually be covered by pine, fir, and spruce forest.

Beautiful scenery is only one benefit of healthy aspen in our forests. Aspen stands also provide important habitat for many songbirds, small mammals, and grazing animals such as deer, elk, moose and even domestic livestock. Along with the aspen trees, the abundant diversity of plants that commonly grow under aspen offer food, cover, and desirable places for nesting, calving and fawning. In contrast, the understory of conifer forests is often devoid of this variety of sizes and types of plants. These are some of the reasons why the Revised Forest Plan calls for large acreages of aspen and aspen-conifer to be burned or in some cases cut. We want to return these areas to the variety of young, and middle-aged aspen stands, historically present, in addition to the older aspen now so common across the Forest. We expect to average treating about 3,200 acres annually over the next ten years. In areas where burning is not practical or where conifer can

be used commercially, we will use cutting to return the sites to aspen. Where fire is the selected treatment, we do not expect the job to be easy. Weather conditions must be nearly perfect, permitted livestock grazing will need to be coordinated and the effect of large volumes of smoke on air quality must be considered.

Aspen is only one example of a vegetation type in the Wasatch-Cache National Forest that has become "un-balanced" because of well-intended fire suppression. Mountain brush, sagebrush, juniper, and even pine, spruce and fir all historically

had periodic fires returning them to a mix of different ages, sizes, and plant species. This variety creates ideal habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species and is part of what is termed biodiversity. Much has been learned about this since the 1985 Plan was developed and we intend to put this new knowledge to work as we implement the Revised Forest Plan. Projects will be proposed to treat these different types of vegetation so that the dominance of older stands gives way gradually to the rich and desirable variety that made up these landscapes historically.



Aspen trees in the Wasatch mountains

The future of aspen was identified early in Plan revision as "at-risk" without some kind of change from current management.



Gas and oil drilling sites occur on the North Slope of the Uinta Mountains on the Mountain View Ranger District.

Gas and oil underlie the Wasatch-Cache NF

While many visitors to the north slope of the Uinta Mountain range have long known of its splendid riches they could see; few could have known what was buried below the surface.

Hidden in the folds deep within the earth were reservoirs of oil and pockets of gas. Since this discovery of oil and gas in the 1960s, southwestern Wyoming and north central Utah has been an area of petroleum exploration and development. Production remains in place today as 19 wells on the National Forest and many wells on nearby private lands contribute to domestic supplies.

Forest Managers felt strongly as stewards of the land it was their responsibility to protect the natural resources and that any development must harmonize with its environs. It was in the early 1990s that the Forest Service and several petroleum companies collaborated on a joint venture to create the first oil and gas showcase in the nation. It is meant to be an educational and demonstration tool for showing development of the nation's energy while maintaining its environmental integrity. To this day, careful measures are taken to protect clean mountain streams and wildlife populations and other resources that are present.

Because of new laws and regulations enacted in 1994, the Forest Service re-evaluated the oil and gas deposits that underlie the Uinta mountain portion of the Wasatch-Cache NF. At that time, Forest Managers decided to allow

some development on 140,400 acres. Careful consideration was given to resource values when deciding where and when to allow future drilling. Future development was allowed on the land where there were already some roads in place.

An area at the center of public debate during 1994 analysis was the future of the lands where no roads had been built. At the conclusion of several public appeals, Forest Managers decided to analyze this area in further detail. This is the area that is analyzed in the Forest Plan revision.

In assembling the Revised Forest Plan, the Forest Service reexamined its 1994 assumptions about geology, free market trends, and other factors that led to the previous estimate that 14 wells would be drilled. The agency believes that the assumptions made then for "reasonable, foreseeable development scenario" developed then remains on target; however, it was scaled back because of the much smaller area being analyzed in the Revised Forest Plan.

This Revised Forest Plan recommends additions to the High Uintas Wilderness. In the future, no oil and gas would be allowed here. It also recommends areas to be managed for backcountry recreation values. In these areas and highly sensitive areas, leasing would be allowed, but an operator would not be allowed to place wells on the surface. They would be required to drill on a slant from outside these areas. In other cases operators would not operate during certain times of the year to avoid impacts to sensitive wildlife.

The decision made in the Revised Forest Plan applies only to new leases that will be issued. Existing leases can be developed under their original terms.

Who knows what the future will bring? Will we be driving hydrogen-powered cars to work? Heating our homes with power generated from windmills? At least for now, oil and gas development will remain one of the many multiple uses on the Forest.

WE GOT MAIL— 3700 letters emails and postcards

Imagine receiving over 3,700 comments from people in letter, email and postcard form and having to read through each one? Well, we did not imagine it. We did.

That's about how many letters the Forest Service received after the Proposed Forest Plan was issued in May of 2001. Some were mass formatted emails or postcards, but an unusually high number were carefully written letters from individuals.

What happened to your letter after the deadline in November of 2001? Did anybody read it?

You bet somebody read it and in many cases several people did. First, a team analyzed each letter, dissecting the messages. Those statements were then categorized under subject headings, such as wildlife or alternative. Each of these was a "comment." These comments were condensed and given to a team for study. Team specialists, such as biologists and ecologists, as well as Forest planners and also Tom Tidwell, Supervisor of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest sometimes read the letters again. After the comments were compiled, a great deal more work and analysis was done to ensure the Forest Service was responding to public concerns

It's important to understand how the comments were used. Some comments suggested new alternatives or improved analysis. Many comments expressed a desire for one type of management or their appreciation of certain values. These types of comments, while not generating any changes in the analysis, help give decision makers a sense of how strongly some of the public feels about a specific issue.

Comments from individuals, groups and other government agencies were influential in changes between the draft and the Revised Forest Plan. Public comments were carefully considered as Forest Service Planners crafted Alternative 7. From the outset, it had been clear that no one person or group would prevail in their vision of how the Wasatch-Cache National Forest would be managed but rather the Revised Forest Plan would reflect a mix of opportunities and uses.

Sometimes comments received did not directly relate the decisions being made by the Revised Forest Plan. Such was the case with the multitude of comments received about specific roads and trails and travel management planning. While we didn't make any specific summer travel management decisions, we did recognize its importance in the views of many of you. We responded by focusing one of our seven objectives on this issue.



Moving toward vegetation variety

Throughout the life of a forest, it is confronted by a wide array of natural disturbances such as fire, insects, disease, and winds. The ability of a forest to withstand such assaults and continue to thrive is dependent upon the diversity of the forest; diversity of species, diversity of ages, and diversity of sizes of trees in forests across the landscape, ranging from seedlings and saplings, to mature and old trees. This variety of conditions helps to provide stability in the face of disturbances such as fire and insect and disease outbreaks. A pattern of older trees interspersed with younger aged trees will help limit the extent of potentially severe disturbances, particularly fire and insect epidemics. In contrast, extensive areas of forests dominated by the same species and approximately the same age will allow insects and fire to spread rapidly and increase impacts to the forest.

The lands of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest have changed dramatically in the time since European settlement occurred. The grazing of hundreds of thousands of sheep and cattle in the late 1800's to mid 1900's, coupled by our effective suppression of fires during the past 100 years, helped to form the landscapes we see today. Not only have we lost more than 65 percent of the aspen that once occurred here, most of our forested lands lack the diversity in ages and sizes of trees that once covered the Uinta and Wasatch Mountains. In addition, the sagebrush communities, pinyon-juniper communities, and oak-maple communities also lack the diversity in species and diversity of ages that once occurred. The oak-maple, especially, which before fire suppression burned every 40 to 60 years, is ready for a large catastrophic fire because of the high amount of dead and old branches and trees that are present.

Because of this, we have lost the diversity of wildlife and bird habitats that once existed. Many species have evolved to use different ages of vegetation and will thrive as long as their habitats exist. There are wildlife and birds that prefer younger aged forests, and there are those, such as woodpeckers that prefer older aged stands. There are birds that prefer sagebrush communities that

have dense sagebrush cover, while others prefer more scattered cover. There are those that prefer aspen rather than pine, spruce, and fir forests.

Diversity of the forest varies by species and locality, but in general, most forests of the Wasatch-Cache are mature or old. Most lodgepole pine and aspen stands originated following wildfire in the mid to late 1800s, and are increasingly susceptible to insect and disease attacks. Lodgepole pine stands on the North Slope of the Uintas are more than 100 years old and have been subjected to mountain pine beetle epidemics in the past. Mountain pine beetles are increasingly active along Hwy 150 on the Kamas Ranger District, with pockets of mortality occurring in the vicinity of the North Fork of the Provo River, and the Yellow Pine area. Dwarf mistletoe, a parasitic plant, threatens most of the lodgepole pine stands on the eastern Uinta Mountains of the Mountain View Ranger District.

Aspen is a relatively short-lived species, and most of the stands on the Wasatch-Cache are over 80 years old. Aspen stands are decreasing over time as a result of absence of fire and encroaching conifers, which are longer-lived and outlast the aspen. Without disturbance, conifers will replace many of the existing aspen stands in the next 50 years.

Spruce-fir stands tend to be older than lodgepole, and are generally 150-200 years old. Major fires occur infrequently in spruce-fir stands, on intervals of 200 or more years. Spruce beetle epidemics are the primary disturbance affecting this forest type. Spruce beetle epidemics usually result from trees blown down during high winds that provide a site for beetles to lay eggs and begin to increase their populations. In the last five years, spruce beetle outbreaks have impacted spruce-fir stands in the vicinity of the Daniels Experimental Forest on the Logan Ranger District, the Ogden District from Red Spur Mountain south to approximately Hwy 39, and the Whitney area on Evanston Ranger District.

The Plan emphasizes the use of a variety of tools to manage the forest vegetation. Depending on the management direction for an area, we will use timber harvest, thinning, mechanical treatment, prescribed fire and wildland fire use to increase diversity and move landscapes closer to their historic conditions.

Harvesting trees is a tool that can help achieve and maintain forest diversity by creating patterns of vegetation on the landscape. This results in a variety of trees of different sizes and age and, therefore, habitat for a majority of species that occur on the Forest. Some areas, specifically the lower elevations of the north slope of the Uinta Mountains and in the northern portion of the Bear River Range will be managed to emphasize commercial timber harvest. However, other areas



Bigtooth maple and river birch leaves float down the Logan River.

may also yield commercial timber as the result of accomplishing other objectives.

As one of the multiple uses of forest, the Revised Forest Plan projects an average annual harvests of trees on up to 850 acres, yielding approximately 4.5 million board feet of timber. This is roughly equivalent to the wood needed for 300 houses. If this level is reached, only about one percent of the forested land or seven-tenths of the total National Forest land will be cut during the next decade. We expect to supply about 90 percent of the annual harvest that has occurred over the past seven years.

Prescribed fires will also be used to a greater extent than in the past to create the desired mosaic across the landscape. Prescribed fires are fires ignited by the Forest Service under approved conditions to meet certain objectives. To a lesser extent, wildland fire use will be also be used to manage vegetation. Wildland fire use refers to the management of fires caused by lightning to accomplish management objectives. Since wildland fire use depends on natural ignitions, it is not as reliable a tool as prescribed fire.

Our Revised Forest Plan proposes active management, primarily through vegetation treatments, of some areas of the Forest to create healthier ecosystems and reduce hazardous fuels. This would allow for the continued production of timber for human use in many areas, and in other areas, would allow other techniques to proceed with less human intrusion.



A diversity of plant communities of all ages will be managed for Logan Canyon.

Livestock grazing on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest

Livestock grazing has occurred on lands managed by the Wasatch-Cache National Forest for over 100 years. In the late 1800's to early 1900's, around 300,000 animal unit months (AUMs) were produced on the Forest. An AUM is the amount of forage (vegetation) needed to feed a cow, or its equivalent, for one month. The equivalent of a cow for forage purposes is one horse or five sheep. The heavy grazing of 100 years ago left its mark on the land, but steady progress has been made to better match this use with the capability of the land. Over the past 10 years, actual livestock use averaged 58,900 AUMs and ranged from approximately 30,200 to 70,000 AUMs. Cattle made up about 55 percent of these totals, and sheep 45 percent. Grazing use can be highly variable from one year to the next because of annual differences in precipitation and resulting



Sheep grazing is common throughout the forest.

current livestock use. In most cases, these latter allotments have been vacant for over 10 years. The Revised Forest Plan will close eight of the vacant allotments; five located in the watersheds of Salt Lake and Davis Counties.

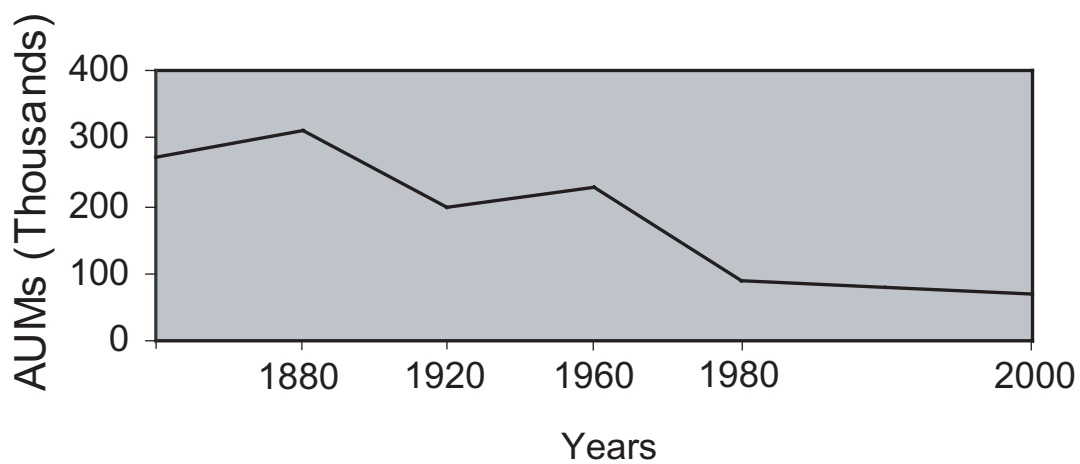
Several open allotments at upper elevations in the Uinta Mountains where additional bighorn sheep habitat occurs, would be closed in the future

In 1996 we amended the old plan to establish broad desired conditions such as how much ground cover is needed to protect watersheds as well as standards for how much forage could be used on satisfactory condition rangelands (50 percent use). At that time, there was limited information available on how much forage could and should be used on rangelands in unsatisfactory condition, so no standards for those rangelands were established. "Unsatisfactory" means that the lands are not producing the needed types and amounts of vegetation and soil protective ground cover to provide for healthy watersheds and wildlife habitats. Since then, additional research has resulted in recommendations for a lower forage utilization rate (30-40 percent) on rangelands in unsatisfactory condition. A new Forest-wide guideline has been included in the Revised Forest Plan to address these lower condition rangelands. Some alternatives we considered removed these unsatisfactory areas from grazing in order to improve conditions over time. But the reality is that many of these areas are small and scattered and it would be difficult to remove grazing without expensive fencing. There are certain areas within allotments that livestock seem to congregate in. These are typically areas close to water and where palatable forage is, or at one time was, abundant. It was felt that the lower 30 to 40 percent use on these areas, rather than 50 percent or trying to entirely remove use, would allow them to return more quickly to satisfactory conditions.

Another effort that will help improve conditions of rangelands is the prescribed fire we expect to propose in many of the aspen, mountain brush and sagebrush vegetation communities. Periodic fire helps improve the vigor of plants in these communities. Livestock grazing will need to be carefully coordinated both before and after these fire use projects. Areas will need to be rested from grazing to prepare for the burns and to recover from them. Over the long-term though, grazing use for both domestic livestock and wildlife will benefit from the improved forage.

These changes may result in a small overall reduction in AUMs over time, but that will depend on how well the grazing livestock are managed. If they are properly herded away from the unsatisfactory areas, if fences are kept up, if salting is effectively used and of course, depending on how much moisture is available for vegetation growth, there may be no reduction in outputs. Any actual changes in permitted livestock numbers will only occur following site-specific analysis to make adjustments that fit the particular allotment.

Domestic Livestock Use (AUM Outputs) on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest from 1880 to Present



variations in forage production, but it continues as one of several important multiple uses of this Forest.

Currently, there are 98 open allotments on the Forest. Of these allotments, 86 are active, which means livestock graze them most years. The remaining 12 allotments are vacant with no

only if the existing permit holders decided to waive their permits without preference. This means if existing permittees decide to give up their grazing permits, and if they do not identify anyone to take the permit, these allotments would be closed.

On the remaining allotments, the new plan makes some changes to how they will be grazed.



Cattle on the forest

Invaders of the Forest

Weeds have been described, as “plants with a strong will to survive”. And they are. Unfortunately, this is at the expense of native plants that provide food and shelter for native wildlife and bird species. In addition, weeds increase the costs associated with the agricultural industry and their ability to supply us with the food and other products. The diversity of ecosystems is severely threatened when weeds outcompete native plants. These invasive and exotic plants are degrading wildland ecosystems at a rapid and ever-increasing rate. The Wasatch-Cache National Forest has seen a tremendous expansion of weeds in the past 15 to 20 years, especially dyers woad and leafy spurge. Other plants that are expanding rapidly include Dalmatian toadflax, star thistle, goatgrass, and various thistles.

Some of these plants were originally planted with good intention. Dyer’s woad was brought into North America from Europe, probably late in the 17th century. It was first introduced to the eastern United States by colonists as a source for blue dye (from the roots of the plant), and now has invaded extensive areas of agriculture, roadsides, and rangelands in Utah, Wyoming, Montana, California and Oregon. Dyer’s woad spreads primarily by seed.

Weeds spread in a variety of ways. On the Wasatch-Cache National Forest we find many weeds along travel ways, both roads and trails. Vehicles, humans, and horses can spread many of these plants. In addition, wildlife, livestock, wind and water can play roles in the spread of these plants. For example, many can be spread by birds or by the wind reaching remote areas far away from human contact. So why have we seen such an increase in weeds during the past 10 to 20 years?

Increased population growth has resulted in more soil disturbing activities including the construction of new highways and utility lines. Increased Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) travel through infested areas may spread weed seeds that are caught in the undercarriage or in tire treads. Use of weed-infested hay, straw or mulch will spread noxious weeds. Weeds may spread without anyone being aware that they might be hitching a ride on a vehicle, pet, or clothing.

Educating Forest users about noxious weeds is one of the focus areas of the public outreach efforts outlined in the Revised Forest Plan. Noxious weeds are a problem that concerns all, from the land manager to the farmer and rancher to the recreationist and hunter.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Burning old, dead and dying branches in the forest reduces the risk for catastrophic fires.

Threat of catastrophic fire can be reduced

Skies engulfed in smoke. Flames creeping toward homes, people struggling to make sense of blackened, scorched landscapes. Television has presented these scenes from the West with increasing frequency. Could they happen here? Yes, they could. Overall, our aging forests are becoming more susceptible to fire. Roughly half of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest is moving into this realm of potentially high intensity fires. Controlling high-intensity fires is difficult, sometimes impossible.

As has been demonstrated since the 1988 fires at Yellowstone National Park, forests regenerate from high-intensity fires with surprising quickness. Most larger animals and many smaller animals can flee fires. However, people are part of the forests, and populations adjacent to the National Forest growing at among the fastest rates in the nation. Obviously, fires cannot be allowed to burn at this interface. One of the seven priority objectives in the Revised Forest Plan is to reduce hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface. The question is how.

The Forest Service sees several answers, none simple or complete. Vegetation management can abate the threat. Thinning of trees reduces the rate of fires spreading, and may be particularly useful in some areas. However, only a small portion of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest is slotted for timber sales annually. Moreover, steep terrain precludes harvesting in many areas, and furthermore, a quarter is designated wilderness where timber harvest is not allowed.

Other ways to manage vegetation is through what we call mechanical means. A machine called a roller chopper essentially mows down thick shrubs. New green growth quickly resprouts with this technique and is less likely to burn. This may be used to manage brush species such as sagebrush and Gambel Oak. While it is effective in reducing fire potential in some areas, it is limited to certain terrain and may be expensive.

Prescribed and natural fires are a third technique for abating fire potential. A prescribed fire is a well-planned and carefully watched fire. A natural fire is ignited by lightning and allowed to burn under very specific conditions. Both types of fire benefit the forest.

Again, prescribed fire may be the right tool to use within certain vegetation and under certain conditions. Air quality is always an important consideration.

We know that unless hazardous fuels are reduced, the number of severe wild land fires and costs associated with suppressing them will continue to increase. We also know we can't do the job alone. The Forest Service will continue to work cooperatively with state and local governments, communities and homeowners to address the threat of fire in the wild lands urban interface. Everyone has to pitch in to reduce this threat because whether caused by lightning, careless recreational use or, unfortunately, arson, fire does not respect property lines.

One of the seven priority objectives in the Revised Forest Plan is to reduce hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface. The question is how.



Where can I get my questions answered?

Questions about the Revised Forest Plan not answered in these pages can be answered in several ways.

First, look through the documents themselves. The Revised Forest Plan itself is about 400 pages, but the Final Environmental Impact Statement that analyzes the plan together with related appendices totals more than 1500 pages. Plus, there are color-coded maps.

You can find these full documents at the Wasatch-Cache National Forest Supervisor's office and at Districts offices. They are also being sent to libraries in Utah (see this page for locations). You

can also find the complete document at the Forest Service website: www.fs.fed.us/wcnf/

Second, attend an open house held specifically to explain this Revised Forest Plan. See this page for schedule.

Third, call the Wasatch-Cache National Forest Supervisors office at (801) 524-3900 and Information Specialists will connect you to someone who can answer your questions. This is a good way to get information.

Now, suppose you want your own copies of these documents. Again, you have options.

First, you can request a paper packet that includes the Revised Forest Plan, the record of decision, a summary of the final Environmental Impact Statement and a map of Alternative 7. Make your request to the Supervisors Office. Please limit your request to one per household.

Second, you can get compact discs compatible with the Windows computer operating system. These reports are Adobe Acrobat PDF format files. The computer disc contains everything-the Record of Decision, Revised Forest Plan, Final EIS with appendices and a full map set.

Locations of Revised Forest Plan copies

LIBRARIES:

Salt Lake City Main Library

209 East 500 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
(801) 524-8200

J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah

295 South 1500 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84112-0860
(801) 581-8558

West Valley Library

2880 West 3650 South
West Valley City, UT 84119-3753
(801) 944-7631

Whitmore Library

2197 Fort Union Blvd
Salt Lake City, UT 84121-3188
(801) 944-7533

Sandy Library

10100 South Petunia Way
Sandy, UT 84092-3624
(801) 944-7574

Uinta County Library, Evanston

701 Main Street
Evanston, Wyoming 82930
(307) 789-2770

Mountain View Branch

322 2nd Street
Mountain View, WY
(307) 782-7736/(307) 782-3161

Merrill Library

Utah State University
Logan, UT 84322
(435) 797-2633

Logan Library

255 North Main
Logan, Utah 84321
(435) 716-9123

Brigham City Library

26 East Forest
Brigham City, UT 84302-2198
(435) 723-589/(435) 723-5850

Weber County Library Main Branch

2464 Jefferson Avenue
Ogden, UT 84401-2404
(801) 337-2617

Stewart Library

Weber State University
290 University Circle
Ogden, UT 84408-2901
(801) 626-6415 (reference)

Main Library

6505 North Landmark Dr #100
Park City, UT
(435) 615-3900

Kamas Branch Library

110 North Main
PO Box 1053
Kamas, UT 84036-1053
(435) 783-4350

Wasatch-Cache National Forest offices

Supervisor's Office

125 South State Street, 8th Floor
Salt Lake City, UT 84138
(801) 524-3900

Salt Lake Ranger District

6944 South 300 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84121
(801) 733-2660

Ogden Ranger District

507 25th Street, Suite 103
Ogden, UT 84401
(801) 625-5112

Logan Ranger District

1500 East Highway 89
Logan, UT 84321-4373
(435) 755-3620

Mountain View Ranger District

321 Highway 414
P.O. Box 129
Mountain View, WY 82939
(307) 782-6555

Evanston Ranger District

1565 Highway 150 South, Suite A
P.O. Box 1880
Evanston, WY 82931-1880
(307) 789-3194

Kamas Ranger District

50 East Center Street
P.O. Box 68
Kamas, UT 84036
(435) 783-4338

Open houses planned in communities

Meetings to explain the Revised Forest Plan will be conducted by Forest Managers in the communities below. Formal presentations of the "Key Decisions" will be conducted at **3:30 and 5:30** during each open house session.

Open discussion will follow each formal presentation. However, this is not a forum for taking comments. Those input sessions began in 1999 and concluded in 2002.

Salt Lake City

April 14, 3-7 p.m.
City/County Building, Room 315
451 South State Street
Salt Lake City, UT
Contact: Loren Kroenke
(801) 733-2660

Logan

April 21, 3-7 p.m.
Logan City Building
290 North 100 West
Logan, UT 84055
Contact: Rob Cruz
(435) 755-3620

Kamas

April 22, 3-7 p.m.
Oakley Town Hall
960 West Center
Oakley, UT 84055
Contact: Tim Garcia
(435) 783-4338

Ogden

April 23, 3-7 p.m.
Weber County Library
2464 Jefferson Avenue
Ogden, UT 84401
Contact: Chip Sibbersen
(801) 625-5112

Evanston

April 24, 3-7 p.m.
Bear Building
Next to Ice Ponds off
Bear River Drive
Evanston, WY
Contact: Steve Ryberg
(307) 783-3194



Find all
planning documents at

www.fs.fed.us/wcnf/



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Intermountain
Region

Dear Reader,

I am pleased to announce the release of the Revised Forest Plan for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. This plan provides a framework for more specific decisions that the Forest Supervisor and District Rangers will be making on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest in the years to come.

I want to thank everyone for your commitment and interest in working with the Forest Service to revise the 1985 plan. Your involvement has definitely resulted in a better plan.

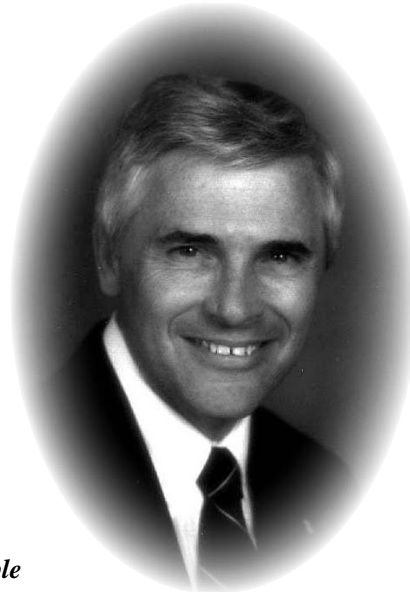
We received over 3,700 written comments along with numerous individual discussions on how the plan should be revised. Revising this plan was a complex and lengthy process that focused on areas of the 1985 plan that needed to be changed to reflect the desires of the communities and the people that enjoy and depend on this National Forest. This revision strives to find the balance between today's competing needs while ensuring healthy watersheds for future generations.

We hope that the many groups and individuals who took the time to comment, will continue to help guide our decisionmaking. As we learn from implementation and monitoring we will need your help to adapt this plan in the future.

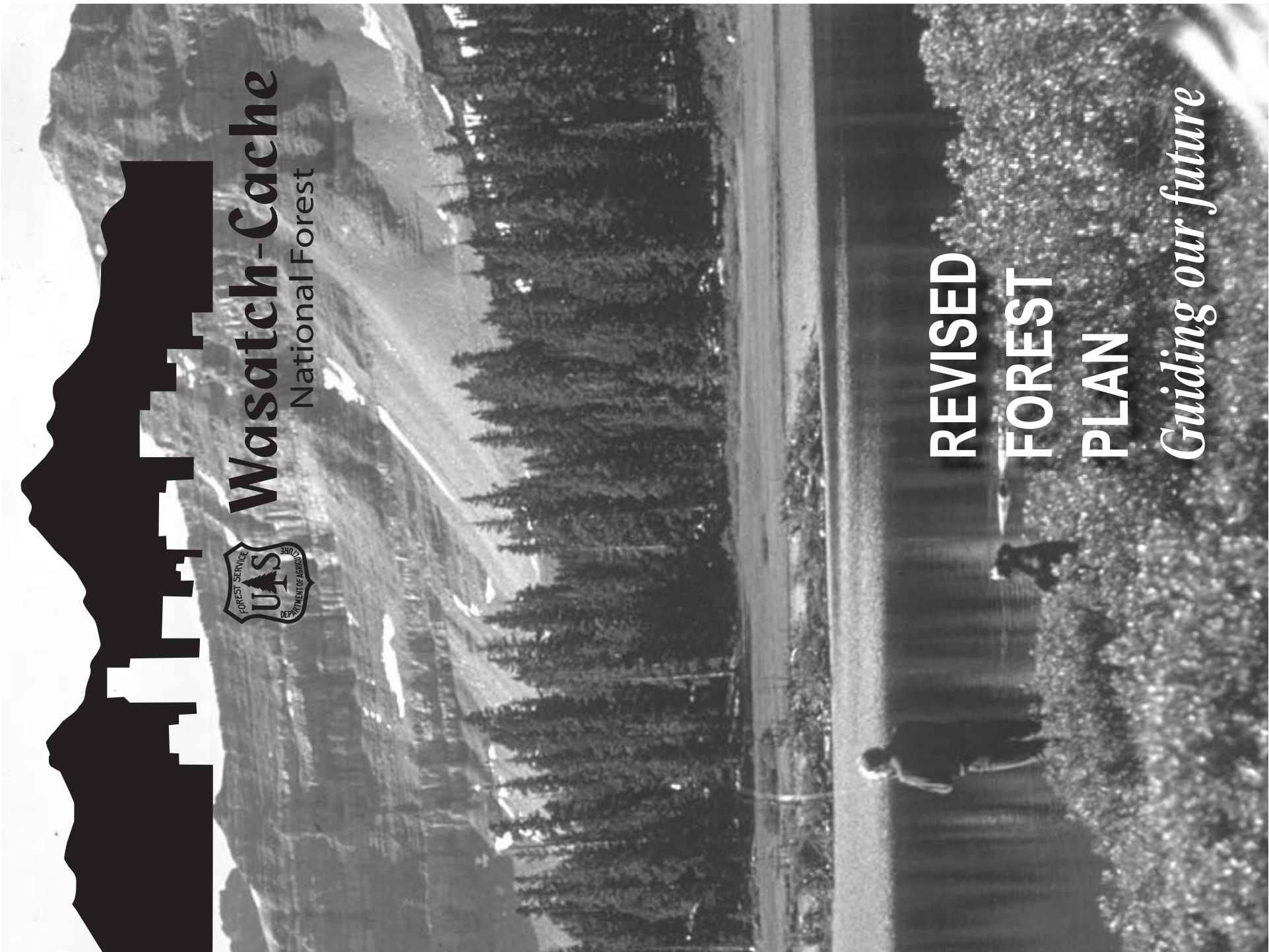
Once again, I want to thank everyone who participated in this effort and I encourage you to read this newsletter and stay engaged with the management of your National Forest.

Sincerely,

*Jack G. Troyer
Regional Forester*



Caring for the Land and Serving People



Wasatch-Cache

National Forest



REVISED FOREST PLAN

Guiding our future

Wasatch-Cache National Forest
125 South State Street, 8th Floor
Salt Lake City, UT 84138

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