



United States Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

Pacific Southwest Region

R5-MB-085

September 2005



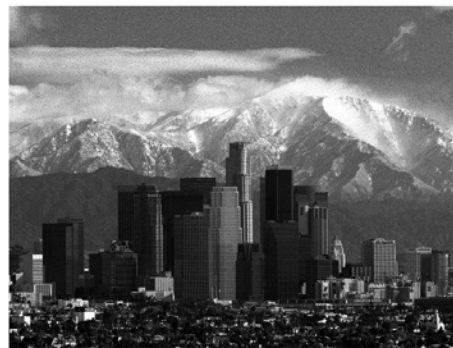
Executive Summary of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Revised Land Management Plans

Angeles National Forest

Cleveland National Forest

Los Padres National Forest

San Bernardino National Forest



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Tables

Note: Tables were managed in a database environment, and were assigned unique numbers as their need was identified. During the lifetime of the analysis, over 500 tables were created for potential use. Some tables were later determined to be redundant or unnecessary. The planning team decided not to renumber the tables for publication due to the amount of work required to locate and update every reference to every table. Thus, the table numbers are not consecutive, and all table numbers were not used in the final documents.

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Document Format Protocols

The following format protocols (font type, size, and strength, as well as indentation) are used throughout the Land Management Plan.

All headings are Arial bold, in varying font sizes and indentation.

Text is generally Times New Roman, 12 point regular.

Table Titles are Arial, bold, 11 point.

Table column headings are in Arial Narrow, 10 pt, with a shaded background.
Table cell contents are Times New Roman, 12 point.



Photograph captions have a top and bottom border to separate them from regular text, and are 12 point Arial font. For example, this is a clip-art butterfly.

References to websites (URLs) are in OCR B MT, 10 point in the printed version. In the electronic version, these are live links. The electronic version is posted at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/angel es/projects/l mp>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/cl evel and/projects/l mp>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/l ospadres/projects/l mp>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sanbernardi no/projects/l mp>

Introduction and Background

The four southern California national forests have completed revision of their land management plans. Four final plans (one for each national forest) have been prepared using the transition language in the recently approved planning regulation (36 CFR 219, 2005). This allows forest plan revisions started under the 1982 planning regulation to finish using the 1982 process and transition to the new regulation within three years. The four forest plans constitute the proposed action to implement selected Alternative 4a as described in a single document (the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the southern California Forest Plan Revisions) that addresses the effects of implementing the four forest plans including alternatives to the proposed action. The draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) included six alternatives including the no action alternative and identified a preferred alternative for each national forest. In response to public comment, a selected alternative was crafted for the FEIS using the preferred alternative as the basis with modifications that include selected elements from the other alternatives.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this proposed action is to produce revised forest plans that describe the strategic direction for the management of the four southern California national forests. Specifically, the purpose of this proposed action is to develop revised forest plans that:

- Meet the objectives of federal laws, regulations and policies;
- Address changed conditions and direction that have occurred since the original plans were adopted; and
- Guide all natural resource management activities on the national forests.

In 1982, instructions to revise land management plans and the basis for revision were described in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 36 CFR 219.10(g):

"A forest plan shall ordinarily be revised on a 10-year cycle or at least every 15 years. It also may be revised whenever the Forest Supervisor determines that conditions or demands in the area covered by the plan have changed significantly or when changes in Resource Policy Act policies, goals or objectives would have a significant effect on forest level programs."

Not only have conditions and expectations changed on the national forests, but all of the current land management plans are at least 15 years old. Current plans for the four southern California national forests were approved between 1986 and 1989.

Since the plans were approved in the mid-80s, there has been a dramatic shift in people's perception of national forest management. Specifically, the need for revision is driven by several key factors including:

- the NFMA requirement to revise forest plans every 10 to 15 years;
- the results of analysis initiated because of numerous changes that have occurred relative to forest health (including biological and ecological systems), fire (including community protection, fuels treatment, and suppression), the anticipated demand for human use of the national forests (including recreation opportunities, access and resource development), since the original forest plans were approved for implementation;
- response to new information from recent assessments; and
- discussion to address the issues identified through public involvement with a series of seven possible alternatives for resolution.

The revisions are based on the concept of identifying the need for change in the various components of the plan, including utilizing a format that clearly describes management intent, is easier to understand,

and easier to use. In affect then, the new format reorganized or changed the entire forest plan for each of the national forests.

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to revise the land management plans (forest plans) for the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests and ensure that management is in conformance with federal law, regulations, and policy. The strategic direction included in the revised forest plans will be used to guide all natural resource management activities on the four southern California national forests.

The forest plans include the provisions of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), the implementing regulations, and other guiding documents. The multiple-use desired conditions and objectives, land use zoning, design criteria (standards), and monitoring all work together to define management direction for the four southern California national forests. However, successful implementation of the direction and the rate of accomplishment of desired conditions is dependent on the congressional budget process and other factors.

The revised forest plans will provide forest-wide strategic direction that is designed to achieve the desired conditions described for each of the southern California national forests. The strategic direction in the forest plans address the Resource Planning Act (RPA) requirements through the incorporation of Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) objectives at the national level. At the local level, the forest plans address the needs of people by addressing issues relative to fire, plants and animals, and people. The revised forest plans clearly portray management intent:

- for the implementation of the National Fire Plan and the emphasis on community protection;
- by managing for motorized access to the national forests on 'designated' National Forest System roads and trails;
- by carefully managing the expansion of facilities and the levels of development on all of the national forests in order to retain the natural or near-natural character of each of them.

The revised forest plans emphasize the protection of threatened and endangered species in all zones and clearly describe the design criteria and other guidance that will be used as activities are implemented. The revised forest plans include management strategies that are designed to accomplish vegetation treatment for forest health, and to contain or reduce the spread of invasive plant species consistent with national direction.

Alternatives

Six alternatives were presented in the DEIS that represented the range of public comment received during the scoping process. Following is a summary of key concepts used in developing these six alternatives.

Alternative 1 (an updated form of the no-action alternative) reflects current forest-wide management direction and emphasis. It meets the NEPA requirement (36 CFR 219.12(f)(7)) specifying that a no-action alternative be considered. "No Action" means that current management allocations, activities, and management direction found in the existing land management plans would continue, as amended, with certain exceptions as discussed in the 2001 programmatic biological opinion from the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). In addition, the terms and conditions of the programmatic and other "high priority" consultations done with the USFWS would continue. The management areas in the 1980 plans have been translated to the land use zones being used now for comparison with the other alternatives, using the same terms and outputs.

Alternative 2 was a modest change in management prescriptions (land use zones) from the current plans in order to provide an increase in special designations and included a major revision in the plan format and content to reflect a consistent approach for presenting forest plan decisions in a three part format.

Alternative 2 was originally developed as the "Proposed Action" for the land management plan revisions and was available for public comment in 2001. Alternative 2 was modified from earlier versions of the proposed action to provide additional protection for species-at-risk through species management strategies and land management plan design criteria (standards).

The primary theme of Alternative 3 is an increased emphasis on maintaining and protecting biological diversity and ecological integrity and maximizing special area designations. Recreation and other uses of the national forests are continued but at a lower level, with increased controls. There is more area added in the recommended wilderness and Back Country land use zones that prohibit motorized access than any alternative except for Alternative 6.

The primary theme of Alternative 4 is an increased emphasis on recreation with intensive levels of management controls, and a focused emphasis on offsetting effects to the biological diversity and ecological integrity of the national forests. A wide range of recreation opportunities is emphasized. There are fewer areas added for recommended wilderness than under Alternatives 2, 3, and 5. This alternative includes an increase in Back Country areas zoned for motorized access in a natural setting to allow greater flexibility in designing motorized trail access.

Alternative 5 was developed in response to public comments from groups and individuals who would like increased motorized access to the national forests with no new special designations. The primary theme of this alternative is an increased emphasis on land use zones that are compatible with national forest resource development. There is a large increase in acres in the Back Country land use zones managed for motorized access to areas with a natural setting and no acres in the recommended wilderness or other special designations.

Alternative 6 was developed in response to public comments from groups and individuals who would like increased protection of all national forest resources. The primary theme is a strong emphasis on the protection and restoration of biological diversity and ecological function, and mitigation of existing impacts from all uses on National Forest System land. The most acres of Back Country land use zones managed for non-motorized access were added, as well as the second highest acres of recommended wilderness. Between Alternatives 3 and 6 all special designations recommended during the scoping process are included.

What Has Changed Between Draft and Final

Public comment on the DEIS and draft revised forest plans was analyzed and summarized in Chapter 5 of the FEIS and Appendix M. Each of the six alternatives from the DEIS were carried forward to the FEIS with no changes in the land use zones except to correct mapping errors. The Draft map has been incorporated as the final for Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Alternative 6 was modified in response to comment to allow administrative access to the existing National Forest System roads within the Back Country Non-Motorized land use zone and a change in the grazing suitability criteria identified areas that were suitable for grazing rather than no grazing being allowed as described in the DEIS.

Both the final forest plans and the FEIS have been reformatted to reduce the confusion expressed by many over redundant section headers. In the final documents each major section header is unique and more descriptive of the section contents. Forest Goals have been more clearly articulated in Part 1 of the forest plans including their relationship to the National Strategic Plan.

The primary change is that the preferred alternatives were modified into a selected alternative based on a need to more clearly articulate management intent through the land use zones. The two land use zones mapped adjacent to developed areas (Developed Areas Intermix and Urban/Rural Interface) were combined, because their management direction was virtually identical, to create a new one called Developed Area Interface. This combined zone was included for all alternatives in the FEIS narrative and tables (see table 563, Summary of Land Use Zones by Alternative). Existing maps were not changed;

however, meaning of the new zone is represented on the maps by the old names. A new zone was mapped for the selected alternative designed to clarify those areas where public motorized access is not allowed but administrative access is. This clarification was needed because public comment on all sides of the access issue misinterpreted management intent. Alternative analysis in the FEIS now discusses the distinction between public motorized access and administrative access related to changes in recreation opportunities and the national forests' ability to provide for community protection and public safety.

Table 563. Summary of Land Use Zones by Alternative

Alternative	DAI	BC	BCNM	BCMUR	CB	EW	RW	EF
Alt 1	9.49%	43.11%	14.33%	0.00%	0.10%	32.53%	0.00%	0.44%
Alt 2	6.89%	43.52%	11.28%	0.00%	0.33%	32.53%	5.06%	0.40%
Alt 3	7.01%	23.11%	23.32%	0.00%	0.36%	32.53%	13.27%	0.40%
Alt 4	6.92%	45.13%	12.38%	0.00%	0.33%	32.53%	2.28%	0.44%
Alt 4a	6.94%	20.60%	23.76%	12.98%	0.28%	32.53%	2.46%	0.44%
Alt 5	6.81%	60.19%	0.00%	0.00%	0.04%	32.53%	0.00%	0.44%
Alt 6	7.05%	12.86%	30.23%	0.00%	0.42%	32.53%	16.47%	0.44%

Alternative 4a implements the above changes in the FEIS and was used as the basis for changes to the final revised land management plans. Special designations such as recommended wilderness were based on the preferred alternatives but were modified in response to specific public comment. Lands where the Forest Service's intent is to continue to manage as natural areas with no motorized access were mapped as Back Country Non-Motorized. Lands where administrative access is needed to provide for community protection, access to special-use facilities or private lands were often mapped as Back Country Motorized Use Restricted where motorized public access was not intended. This also displays a clear intent in other Back Country zoned areas to consider appropriate levels of motorized access on designated National Forest System routes to complete ineffective (fragmented) off-highway vehicle trail systems. Table 333: Comparison of Alternative Acres by Land Use Zone (page 18) provides a summary of the acres in each land use zone for all alternatives including Alternative 4a. Maps of land use zones for Alternative 4a are found in each of the forest plans.

Issues to be Resolved

The 'issues' are generally regarded as subjects for which resource conditions, technical knowledge, or public perception of resource management have created a "need for change." The issues by themselves would generally result in a significant amendment of the forest plans because the resolution of the issue could change the overall management direction for large areas of the national forests. The interdisciplinary planning team identified issues and grouped them into five categories after a review of the comments that were received in response to the public meetings and the notice of intent.

Issue 1 - Public Values and Uses

Public use and enjoyment of the national forests is affected by intense competition among an increasing number of people for a finite amount of resources.

This issue is focused on the ability of the four southern California national forests to continue to offer a variety of opportunities, experiences, uses, and national forest access to an expanding and increasingly diverse population, while at the same time providing appropriate resource protection.

The rugged, wildland landscapes of southern California are valued for the visual contrast they provide in this rapidly urbanizing region. As the population continues to increase, so too does the desire of people to conserve these remaining vestiges of regional open space and scenic heritage in a natural-appearing condition.

The public expects management of national forest heritage resources in a manner that will protect and enhance those resources. The public also has an interest in increased cooperation between the national forests and Native Americans in management issues of mutual concern. These issues include the use of the national forests for traditional, ceremonial or cultural concerns, and that access to resources remains available to American Indians and other cultural groups.

The transportation system is valued for providing national forest access, delivering goods and services, wildfire protection, and recreation opportunities. National Forest road managers recognize that additional segments may be needed to increase the system's effectiveness, that other segments may require attention to resolve resource concerns, and that urbanization of lands along the national forest boundaries has closed off customary points of access to the national forests. The condition of existing recreation and administrative facilities has continued to decline due to diminishing budgets, which greatly increases the facility maintenance backlog. At the same time, additional facility improvements are needed to address increased visitor demand.

These challenges require new considerations in our land-management role, the manner in which we communicate with national forest visitors, and the uses they desire.

Issue 2 - Ecosystem Elements and Function

The trend of increased listing of threatened, endangered and sensitive species and the consequences of management actions on these species must be addressed.

This issue focuses on restoring and maintaining habitats for all native species, particularly the habitats needed for the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered plant and animal species. Habitats for species considered sensitive must also be protected, so that these species are not elevated to the threatened or endangered categories. The four southern California national forests lie within a larger region identified by Conservation International as a "biodiversity hotspot." Approximately 3,400 species of plants and animals are known to occur on or adjacent to the four southern California national forests. Of these, over 470 species are identified as threatened, endangered, sensitive, or as species of concern. When the last of the four land management plans was approved in 1989, 18 federally listed endangered or

threatened species (under the Endangered Species Act) were known or had the potential to occur on the four southern California national forests. Since then, more than 45 additional plant and animal species with known presence or potential to occur on or near the southern California national forests have been listed or are candidates for listing. Some of the factors influencing this trend include historical and ongoing activities on the national forests, rapid urbanization and habitat loss outside the national forests' boundaries, and increased attention to the issue due to higher public interest in biodiversity.

The present fire regime is out of balance, and the threat of wildland fire and risks to humans are increasing. Wildland fire is a critical issue on the four southern California national forests.

Wildfire is a critical issue on the four southern California national forests. The Forest Service agrees with the public that community protection needs should be a priority. As demonstrated by the wildfires of October 2003, the risk of wildfire has increased dramatically due to the extreme drought in 2002, which led to tree and shrub death, and a bark beetle epidemic occurring on portions of the San Bernardino, Cleveland, and Angeles National Forests. Over 100 years of fire suppression has resulted in dense stands of trees. The past four years of unprecedented drought in these dense stands stressed the trees which then became very susceptible to bark beetle attack. There are over 500,000 acres with beetle-killed trees and drought-killed shrubs that present an extreme fire hazard.

Fuel reduction treatments are needed not only to protect human communities but also to minimize or prevent catastrophic wildfire effects on listed species and their habitat. Fire suppression has modified the structure and composition of some stands, and in some cases has changed the stand from one vegetative type to another. Frequent burning is also causing impacts, especially along urban interface areas in coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitats.

A balance needs to be defined between the quantity of water extracted from national forest lands for human uses and the amount retained for ecosystem sustainability.

The four southern California national forests include watersheds that are critical to providing the quality and quantity of water needed for the support of trees, plants, and wildlife, as well as for drinking water. The relationship between groundwater extraction, water diversions, and instream flow requirements to support aquatic species and riparian habitat is critical to the proper functioning of sustainable forest ecosystems and the recovery of listed species. The challenge is balancing the needs of water users with resource needs for the maintenance or improvement of riparian and wetland habitat.

Invasive nonnative animal and plant species are threatening ecosystems.

The infestation and spread of invasive nonnative animal and plant species threatens the health of many forest ecosystems (particularly riparian habitats), reduces biological diversity, and affects threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate and sensitive species on the national forests.

Issue 3 - Commodity Values and Uses

The increased demand for uses and products such as water extraction, oil and gas development and special forest products has intensified human pressure on the national forests.

This issue focuses on traditional, current, and future commodity values, uses, and levels of outputs of goods and services from the national forests. These products or uses include livestock forage, gathering national forest products for personal, traditional, or commercial uses, collecting fuelwood, hunting and fishing, mineral exploration and development, oil and gas production, extraction of groundwater, and surface water diversion. The challenge for the national forests is meeting local and national demand while protecting other national forest resources.

Issue 4 - Urban Development and Forest Habitat Linkages

Growing populations and expanding urban development are increasing pressure on national forest resources.

This issue looks at the effects of urbanization on the national forests. Maintaining open space and the natural setting of the national forests while accommodating urban infrastructure needs is a challenge. More than 20 million people live in southern California and this number is expected to increase over the life of the revised forest plans. The national forests routinely receive requests to locate special-use sites, communication facilities, and urban infrastructure including highway corridors, communication sites, and utility routes on National Forest System lands. The trend toward development of private land within the national forest boundaries also creates a need for increased infrastructure across the national forests.

Private land development both within and outside the national forest boundaries is steadily reducing the habitat linkages that wildlife species need to connect large blocks of national forest lands with other public and private open space and habitat reserves. In the last decade, the national forests acquired about 30,000 acres of private land. Continued acquisitions of private land within the national forest boundaries would be beneficial, especially given the effect that development of these lands has on the surrounding national forest land. In addition, some people would like the national forests to pursue acquisition of lands outside the national forest boundaries that are important for species habitat linkages.

There is a need for increased coordination with adjacent community, county, state, and tribal governments and other federal agencies to help ensure coordinated land management.

Issue 5 - Special Area Designations

The designation of "special areas" offers protection of resources but can result in the reduction of current opportunities, experiences or uses.

Some areas of the national forests may be given formal recognition as special areas based on their unique or outstanding physical features, environmental values, or social significance. The designations impart long-term protection of these special resources. The special areas include recommendations to Congress for wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, and administrative designations that include research natural areas and special interest areas. Compatible uses are retained to the maximum extent possible; however, the designations can result in the reduction of some level of opportunity, experience, or use that may have been occurring in the area.

Major Conclusions

Comparison of how each alternative is expected to affect long-term trends of key environmental indicators is the focus of Chapter 3 of the FEIS. Chapter 3 includes detailed documentation of the anticipated environmental effects. This section includes a summary of the major environmental indicators in response to expected changes in management emphasis resulting from Land Management Plan Decisions for each of the alternatives. These outcome indicators are organized around the forest goals found in Part 1 of the forest plans.

Forest Goal 1.1 - Community Protection

Improve the ability of southern California communities to limit loss of life and property and recover from the high intensity wildland fires that are a natural part of this State's ecosystem.

This goal is a primary emphasis both nationally and for each of the four southern California national forests. Through strategies targeted at improving wildland fire suppression effectiveness, the national forests hope to reverse the long-term trend of increasing losses to more frequent wildland fire. A key part of this strategy is reducing fire hazard in the Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI) through vegetation treatments designed to provide direct community protection. Tracking the acres of vegetation treatment and changes in vegetation condition class over time monitors accomplishment of this goal. Forest plan decisions that influence this goal include establishment of desired conditions for each major fire regime, designation of land use zones (including special designation overlays), establishment of program objectives and strategies to implement the National Fire Plan, and establishment of design criteria including standards.

Implementation of the National Fire Plan community protection goals is a national priority and is therefore incorporated in all alternatives. Fire staff have estimated that the WUI Defense zone treatments are likely to be accomplished within the next 10 to 15 years while Threat zone treatments are likely to be fully implemented in the chaparral but not conifer forests at current rates of accomplishment. The trend of increasing fire frequency documented in recent fire history studies is expected to continue and is not likely to be significantly influenced by vegetation treatments in the WUI. The goal is to reduce the threat of wildland fire to life, property and natural resources using tools that are appropriate to each fire regime. All alternatives are expected to reduce future loss of life and property as vegetation treatments in the Wildland/Urban Interface are implemented and fire hazard is reduced.

Management for wildlife values is emphasized in the WUI; however, some direct loss of wildlife habitat is expected to occur due to vegetation type conversion in the WUI Defense zone. Less intensive vegetation treatments in the WUI Threat zone are likely to result in short-term habitat loss that is rotated through different parts of the national forests; however, long-term retention of habitat values can be expected through appropriate project design.

Forest Goal 1.2 - Restoration of Forest Health:

Restore forest health where alteration of natural fire regimes have put human and natural resource values at risk.

The focus on community protection during at least the first part of the planning cycle is expected to allow little direct vegetation treatments outside the WUI with the exception of strategically located fuelbreaks and associated prescribed burns. Vegetation condition in fire regime IV is at risk from inadvertent type-conversion from excessively frequent fire. The fire regime condition class may be used as a tool to monitor those areas at risk over time. Focused fire suppression and prevention are the primary strategies identified in all alternatives to address this concern. Due to the trend of continued urbanization, it is anticipated that more land area will be at risk from excessively frequent fire in the future.

Forest Goal 1.2.1 - Reduce the potential for wide-spread losses of montane conifer forests caused by severe, extensive, stand replacing fires.

The focus on community protection during at least the first part of the planning cycle is expected to allow little direct vegetation treatments outside the WUI with the exception of strategically located fuelbreaks in all alternatives. Incorporation of forest plan desired conditions into wildland fire suppression strategies is expected to make progress toward this goal; however, a trend of increasing loss of forest cover is expected to continue in all alternatives outside of the WUI. The condition class of fire regime I vegetation may be used to measure progress toward the goal of reducing risk to loss from altered fire regimes in montane conifer forests. Alternative 6 would direct more attention to protection of bigcone Douglas-fir through vegetation treatments and is therefore more likely to reduce the rate of loss that has been observed.

Forest Goal 2.1 - Invasive Species

Under Alternative 1 there is no explicit direction to develop and implement a province-wide noxious weed management strategy. Each Ranger District would continue to manage noxious weeds on a case-by-case basis with little coordination across Ranger Districts or national forests. Control of arundo and tamarisk in riparian areas would remain a priority on all units. Management of invasive nonnative plants and animals would likely continue at their current rates on other units of the four southern California national forests.

Under Alternatives 2 through 6, revised forest plan direction would provide a strategy (for all four southern California national forests) for invasive species that includes objectives for education, prevention, control, restoration and research. Revised forest plan standards would decrease the risk that invasive nonnative plants and animals become established on the national forests of southern California. There would be less risk that seeds, mulches or animal feed used on National Forest System land would be contaminated by weed seeds. There would be less risk that vehicles and machines authorized to travel off-road (such as fire engines) would introduce invasive nonnative plants. There would be less risk that special-use permittees would use or dispose of invasive nonnative plants and animals.

In Alternatives 2 through 6, invasive nonnative species would continue to persist at many current locations and may also increase in range and abundance. This is due to the current presence of numerous populations of invasive nonnative plants and animals on the national forests, the presence of numerous vectors such as people and vehicles, and the continued disturbance of many acres of land. This would occur despite revised forest plan direction, concurrent efforts to control invasive nonnative plants and animals, and increased opportunities to implement control measures. About 60 miles of stream would be treated annually for invasive nonnative species such as arundo and tamarisk, and about 300 acres of uplands would be treated for a variety of invasive nonnative plants.

Forest Goal 3.1 - Managed Recreation in a Natural Setting

Recreation visitation and use are expected to increase in all alternatives; however, the location, type, rate and intensity are expected to vary. Some peak-season visitors would be displaced or would be unable to find their desired recreation setting or opportunity, especially in popular high-use places. Because desired uses vary considerably, each alternative has general advantages for certain groups of users while being less desirable for other groups. Conflicts among uses and natural resources protected by existing legislation (such as the Endangered Species Act) are expected to occur. Alternatives differ in their resolution of these conflicts by varying where and when activities are allowed.

Most visitors now participate in recreation activities that involve driving for pleasure, viewing natural features and wildlife, walking and general relaxation. These activities would generally remain the same for Alternative 1; there would be a greater emphasis on motorized recreation in Alternative 5 and a greater

emphasis on non-motorized recreation in Alternatives 3 and 6. Alternative 4 provides the most emphasis on accommodating recreation demand and use, and Alternatives 2 and 4a emphasize continuing a mixture or range of recreation opportunities. Some motorized and developed recreation opportunities would be lost or foregone in Alternatives 3, 4a and 6 if road systems are reduced or if campgrounds and picnic areas are closed to reduce resource impacts. Satisfaction throughout all alternatives would be mixed, mostly depending on which activities are available to which user groups and how well the national forests accommodate increased visitation. The broadest range of recreation opportunities is expected in Alternatives 4 and 5, and to some degree Alternatives 2 and 4a. The range of opportunities is less in Alternatives 3 and 6.

Operational capacities are being reached and exceeded at some popular facilities now. Many more facilities (especially large, more developed sites near urban areas during the summer season, weekends and holidays) would reach and exceed this limit over the next 15 years, especially in Alternatives 1, 2, 3 and 6. Alternative 4 is the only alternative that is projected to meet most future recreation demands. Alternative 5 focuses primarily on accommodating the increased demand for motorized uses.

Dispersed vehicle camping offers a unique recreation opportunity to visitors from heavily urbanized areas in southern California. Resource impacts result not only from the dispersed campsite location and associated activities but also from off-road driving and creation of roads to the campsite. Dispersed vehicle camping impacts pose a major threat to the viability of a number of plant and wildlife species and their habitats, riparian areas and water quality. These concerns are the greatest in Alternative 5 and the least in Alternatives 3, 4a and 6; Alternatives 1, 2 and 4 are in between primarily because of accessible acreage according to land use zones. Specific national forest policies would continue to differ in each alternative.

Conservation education and partnership programs and projects would continue to be an emphasis in all alternatives at varying levels. These programs and projects remain beneficial to the Forest Service, partners and the public, varying by alternative theme.

Wilderness education is emphasized in Alternatives 2, 3, 4, 4a and 6 in an effort to protect wilderness values. In all of the alternatives, information, management and regulation enforcement are also expected to help protect wilderness values.

Alternative 1 continues the current minimal level of programs and projects. Alternatives 2, 4 and 4a would increase conservation education and partnerships and focus on recreation. Alternatives 3 and 6 would develop a maximum use of a focused and coordinated conservation education program and partnerships focused on habitat and species-at-risk. Alternative 5 would minimally use conservation education and would focus on motorized activities.

Currently, national forest landscapes are largely natural or natural-appearing, except for a few areas that have been noticeably altered. The most obvious general effects on scenic resources are derived from unplanned natural occurrences, such as wildland fire, and from vegetation and landform alterations associated with management activities to address tree mortality, forest health, fire suppression, road construction and utility and communication-site infrastructure. Landscape management strives to meet the public's scenery expectations for the management of national forest landscapes.

The Scenery Management System recognizes the interdependence of aesthetics and ecological systems and promotes natural-appearing landscapes. In most alternatives, landscapes would be managed to maintain a natural appearance, characterized by scenic integrity objectives of high and very high.

Forest Goal 3.2 - Retain a Natural Evolving Character within Wilderness.

Visitor satisfaction in wilderness is gauged by the general level of development expected in adjacent areas and key indicators of how well the wilderness system can be expected to provide solitude, challenge and untrammled ecological processes desired for these areas. Existing wilderness is retained in all

alternatives leaving areas recommended for designation as the primary measure of variation between alternatives.

Visitation in most existing wilderness is expected to increase regardless of alternative, mostly in the form of day hiking, backpacking and equestrian use. Corresponding increases in recreation-associated impacts on sensitive wilderness resources at trail and camping hotspots can be expected, especially in the more popular wildernesses near urban areas. Most of the wilderness backcountry will remain unvisited because of steep terrain and dense vegetation. Additional areas recommended as wilderness (if designated) could redistribute some of this use. In some cases, the use in existing relatively undisturbed areas could increase as a result of that wilderness designation. Alternatives 3 and 6 have the most opportunity for additional areas to provide wilderness experiences. Wilderness education will be emphasized in Alternatives 2, 3, 4, 4a and 6 in an effort to protect wilderness values. In all alternatives, information, management and regulation enforcement are expected to also help protect wilderness values. Additional management could include strategies such as greater conservation education, field presence (including volunteers), quota and permit systems, group size limits, camping and fire restrictions, and designated campsites.

Roads are not allowed within wilderness; however, construction and reconstruction of roads near wilderness boundaries can potentially affect wilderness resources by increasing access to the wilderness. Road-building activities near wilderness boundaries have the potential (in some types of terrain and vegetative cover) to increase inappropriate wilderness use by creating potential unauthorized motorized entry points. In the short-term, increased noise levels would change the user's perception of being in a remote area. Improved access could also result in increased recreation use. Alternative 5 would allow the most roaded access. There are few buildings in existing wilderness and few effects are anticipated. It is anticipated that few, if any, new non-motorized trails will be constructed in any designated wilderness. Existing trails within wilderness are mostly in fair to poor condition; insufficient trail maintenance has the potential to allow soil movement and loss and to increase public safety concerns. More emphasis on reconstruction or maintenance of non-motorized trails would be placed in Alternatives 2, 4, 4a and 6.

Forest Goal 4.1a - Administer Minerals and Energy Resource Development while protecting ecosystem health.

Reserving and withdrawing lands from mineral entry has the effect of reducing the amount of lands available for minerals location, leasing, and mineral materials development. Alternatives 3 and 6 consistently anticipate considerably larger acreages of mineral withdrawals, while Alternative 5 anticipates little to no increase from current (Alternative 1) levels. Alternatives 2, 4 and 4a have moderate increases in withdrawn acres anticipated.

The impact of conditions and stipulations on minerals and energy operations depends mostly on where those operations are located and what resources or activities they may affect. Those restrictions are likely to be similar under all alternatives for any given area. Alternatives 6, 3 and 4a could impose additional restrictions for increased protection of species, habitats and watersheds.

Forest Goal 4.2 - Infrastructure needed to transport energy into and out of southern California and between sub-regional areas is developed in designated utility corridors.

The key consideration or main factor that affects the management of non-recreation special-uses (and the designation of sites and corridors) is the suitability of land use zones for consideration of these uses. The land use zones suitable for consideration of non-recreation special uses and the designation of sites and corridors on National Forest System land are the Developed Area Interface, Back Country, and Back Country Motorized Use Restricted zones. Alternatives that include more acreage zoned as suitable for

these uses (and include more access) would have a higher potential to consider and meet the demand for non-recreation special uses.

Forest Goal 5.1 - Improve watershed conditions through cooperative management.

The watershed resource consists of surface water, groundwater, riparian areas, and the landscapes that make up the watersheds. Generally, adverse impacts on watersheds can be minimized or eliminated when all applicable measures (as described under the resource protection measures) are effectively applied. Alternative 6 has the lowest risk to watershed resources and involves the most diverse types of restoration efforts. Watershed resources quantity and quality are expected to increase under Alternative 3. Because Alternatives 4 and 4a are proactive in response to possible detrimental effects through mitigation and an adaptive management approach, watershed resources are at less risk than under Alternatives 1, 2 and 5. Under Alternative 2, watershed resources are sustained at slightly above the level that is found in Alternative 1, which would not substantially change the current risk to watershed resources. Alternative 5 has the highest risk to water resources quantity and quality and to aquifer integrity because of its increased land disturbance and increased pressure to develop water sources on the national forests.

Forest Goal 5.2 - Improve riparian conditions.

Water and riparian resources receive protection from national forest management under all alternatives through the application of design criteria (standards) that would limit the extent and duration of any adverse environmental effects. Nevertheless, some adverse effects are unavoidable.

The possibility for damage to the riparian ecosystem is greater in those alternatives with more ground-disturbing activities (for example, road building and reconstruction, recreation facility construction and commodity development), such as in Alternative 5 and somewhat in Alternatives 4 and 4a. The resource protection measures described above should prevent widespread or long-term deterioration of water or riparian resources. During implementation of this plan, some short-term adverse effects can be expected, but no long-term negative effects are anticipated. It is impractical to complete a cumulative watershed effects analysis at the scope and scale of this strategic level of forest planning. Cumulative watershed effects analyses using the USDA Forest Service, Region 5 methodology (FSH 2509.22) will be developed and discussed at the project level.

Forest Goal 6.1 - Move toward improved rangeland conditions as indicated by key range sites.

The forest plan does not make site-specific decisions on which grazing areas will be grazed. Existing active grazing areas would continue under Alternatives 1 through 5 with a reduction in Alternative 6. Vacant grazing areas recommended for closure vary in Alternatives 2 through 4a and 6. Rangeland condition is most likely to be affected by the overall intensity of grazing that can be expected. Alternatives 1 through 5 apply suitability criteria that are expected to retain grazing use at moderate levels. Alternative 6 would limit where grazing could occur due to a change from 60 percent to 20 percent in the slope suitability criteria; as a result, grazing would occur only in the flatter, more productive areas (lands with the greatest forage productivity) at moderate levels. Annual and long-term monitoring of rangeland condition in key grazing areas would continue in all alternatives. Slow improvement in condition is anticipated based on forest plan design criteria and observed trends.

Forest Goal 6.2 - Provide ecological conditions to sustain viable populations of native and desired nonnative species.

Biological diversity will be managed in all alternatives but will vary by the theme of each alternative and the emphasis of each program area (see table 202: Alternative comparisons with respect to conservation emphasis areas, page 14). A wide variety of plant and animal species will receive protection from impacts of national forest management activities through the application of standards that would limit the extent and duration of disturbance that could occur. Standards are the same in Alternatives 2 through 6. Federally listed species receive the greatest level of protection and benefit through standards, with Forest Service sensitive species having only slightly less. Because there are so many listed and sensitive species on the national forests of southern California distributed across a variety of habitat types, however, the protection provided by standards would help sustain many other species as well.

The degree to which alternatives would maintain or improve habitat conditions for species that are at risk from Forest Service activities varies, based primarily on the extent of motor vehicle access that would be allowed by land use zoning and secondarily on the amount of emphasis that would be put into carrying out habitat improvement activities. Many of the activities that pose a threat to sustainability of species and habitats are associated with motor vehicle access (see table 203: Threats to plant species-at-risk). The projected effects of forest plan decisions, including land use zones and special designations, on the expected distribution and persistence of 149 species identified as being potentially at substantial risk from Forest Service activities were expressed as viability outcomes for forest plan alternatives.

Table 203. Threats to Plant Species-At-Risk

Potential Threats	Percent of plant species-at-risk that are affected (from species accounts)
Private land development	20
Vegetation management, including W.U.I and fuel treatments	24
Recreation	14
Narrow endemism	14
OHV Use	10
Grazing	10
Roads	9
Weeds	6
Altered hydrology	5
Mining	4
Frequent fire	4
Infrequent fire	4

Table 202. Comparison of Conservation Emphasis in Alternatives

Conservation Emphasis	Existing Situation**	Relative Changes	Relative Changes	Relative Changes	Relative Changes	Relative Changes	Relative Changes
	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 4a	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
Education/Information/Interpretation	Periodic (not focused)	Periodic (not focused)	Frequent (focused)	Continuous (focused)	Continuous (focused)	Occasional (not focused)	Frequent (focused)
Survey/Inventory/ Increased Knowledge	Continued gradual increase	Moderate increase	Rapid increase	Gradual increase	Moderate increase	Gradual increase	Rapid increase
Habitat Restoration/Improvement	Continued progress	Moderate	Strong	Limited (focused on developed recreation sites)	Moderate (focused on developed and dispersed recreation sites)	Limited	Strong
Monitor and Mitigate	Relatively little	Relatively little	Less needed	More needed	Less needed	Most needed	Least needed
Habitat Protection	Continued progress	Better	Better	Better	Better	Worst	Best
Overall progress towards Desired Condition (Rating 1st = fastest, 7th = slowest)	6th Slow	5th Slow	2nd Substantial	4th Substantial	3rd Substantial	7th Little or none	1st Substantial

**Existing situation is qualitatively described in Alternative 1. The other alternatives are qualitatively described in relation to changes from Alternative 1.

For most animal species, Alternatives 3, 4a, and 6 would produce the greatest number of more favorable viability outcomes compared to the current situation (Alternative 1) for at-risk species, followed by Alternative 2. Alternative 6 would provide the most favorable outcomes for at-risk insect and plant species, with Alternative 3 second. Alternatives 4a and 2 would have next highest numbers of favorable viability outcomes for insect and plant species. Alternative 4, which would make the greatest effort to accommodate increased recreation demand while emphasizing biodiversity protection, would have slightly more favorable viability outcomes than Alternative 1 for at-risk species. Alternative 5 would have fewer favorable viability outcomes than under current conditions due to the increased area available for public motorized access, which would result in greater levels of potential habitat disturbance and alteration, and greater emphasis on accommodating requests for special uses, which frequently result in habitat disturbance.

Native and desirable nonnative species not considered to be at-risk from Forest Service activities would persist in more or less their current abundance and distributions under all alternatives. However, Alternatives 6 and 3 (which emphasize biodiversity conservation and more wilderness recommendations), and Alternative 4a (which has more acreage in Back Country Motorized Use Restricted zoning) would be more likely to result in improved habitat conditions for these species, particularly when compared to Alternative 5.

Forest Goal 7.1 - Retain natural areas as a core for a regional network while focusing the built environment into the minimum land area needed to support growing public needs.

Numerous early laws that guided acquisition, disposal, reservation and management of public lands largely patterned the original land reservations for the national forests. The resulting ownership pattern of the national forests became one of mixed ownerships between public and non-public lands that still remain to this day. Modern management emphasis of the recent forest plans has been toward consolidation of National Forest System lands for better manageability and to sustain natural resources. Continued emphasis on reducing landownership complexity would promote administrative efficiency, improve habitat condition, protect watersheds, improve access, and provide community protection and foster retention of clear title to National Forest System land.

Over time, adjustments to consolidate landownership have increased the land base of the national forests at a rate of about 2,000 acres per year while decreasing the amount of boundary with non-National Forest System lands by about 30 miles per year within the Congressional boundaries of the national forests. This rate of adjustment is expected to continue for all alternatives whereby the theme of each alternative would influence which parcels are selected for adjustment and benefits obtained.

Table 333. Comparison of Alternative Acres by Land Use Zone**Alternative 1**

	ANF	CNF	LPNF	SBNF	Grand Total
BC	270,255	203,839	720,079	328,029	1,522,201
BCNM	119,947	84,048	161,298	140,655	505,948
CBZ	2,481	1,210	0	0	3,691
EF	15,429	0	0	0	15,429
EW	81,924	75,523	860,678	130,362	1,148,487
DAI	172,947	56,258	39,325	66,706	335,236
Grand Total	662,983	420,877	1,781,380	665,753	3,530,993

Alternative 2

	ANF	CNF	LPNF	SBNF	Grand Total
BC	308,914	191,066	723,119	313,580	1,536,680
BCNM	80,009	88,466	91,484	138,303	398,261
CBZ	3,534	6,001	0	1,967	11,502
EF	14,145	0	0	0	14,145
EW	81,924	75,523	860,678	130,362	1,148,487
RW	80,904	16,415	62,363	18,923	178,605
DAI	93,553	43,407	43,736	62,619	243,314
Grand Total	662,983	420,877	1,781,380	665,753	3,530,993

Alternative 3

	ANF	CNF	LPNF	SBNF	Grand Total
BC	181,047	119,903	301,139	213,978	816,066
BCNM	180,392	94,871	428,064	120,169	823,497
CBZ	5,247	4,922	798	1,848	12,816
EF	14,145	0	0	0	14,145
EW	81,924	75,523	860,678	130,362	1,148,487
RW	107,632	81,840	143,809	135,339	468,620
DAI	92,596	43,818	46,891	64,056	247,362
Grand Total	662,983	420,877	1,781,380	665,753	3,530,993

Alternative 4

	ANF	CNF	LPNF	SBNF	Grand Total
BC	321,671	192,307	733,086	346,604	1,593,668
BCNM	133,715	102,775	97,858	102,820	437,169
CBZ	3,793	6,001	0	1,834	11,629
EF	15,429	0	0	0	15,429
EW	81,924	75,523	860,678	130,362	1,148,487
RW	12,321	485	46,192	21,514	80,511
DAI	94,129	43,786	43,566	62,619	244,099
Grand Total	662,983	420,877	1,781,380	665,753	3,530,993

Alternative 4a

	ANF	CNF	LPNF	SBNF	Grand Total
BC	161,392	77,064	332,050	169,786	740,292
BCMUR	52,791	50,356	319,884	37,553	460,584
BCNM	248,399	161,320	171,035	239,936	820,690
CBZ	3,920	2,131	1,762	2,281	10,094
DAI	85,828	43,107	60,150	59,408	248,493
EF	15,498	0	0	0	15,498
EW	81,924	75,523	860,678	130,362	1,148,487
RW	13,231	11,377	35,821	26,428	86,857
Grand Total	662,983	420,878	1,781,380	665,754	3,530,995

Alternative 5

	ANF	CNF	LPNF	SBNF	Grand Total
BC	469,459	301,481	881,722	472,471	2,125,133
CBZ	1,440	0	0	0	1,440
EF	15,429	0	0	0	15,429
EW	81,924	75,523	860,678	130,362	1,148,487
DAI	94,730	43,873	38,980	62,919	240,503
Grand Total	662,983	420,877	1,781,380	665,753	3,530,993

Alternative 6

	ANF	CNF	LPNF	SBNF	Grand Total
BC	123,063	57,578	138,153	135,445	454,240
BCNM	198,268	168,887	426,295	274,133	1,067,583
CBZ	4,729	6,715	852	2,426	14,721
EF	15,429	0	0	0	15,429
EW	81,924	75,523	860,678	130,362	1,148,487
RW	144,861	67,958	310,955	57,883	581,656
DAI	94,709	44,216	44,447	65,504	248,876
Grand Total	662,983	420,877	1,781,380	665,753	3,530,993

Where to get Additional Information

Additional information is available in a series of documents related to this decision:

The Record of Decision (ROD) for each national forest details the decisions in the selected alternative and the decision makers rational for the decision.

The revised forest plans, including Part 1 (Vision), Part 2 (Strategy) for each national forest including maps representing plan decisions, and Part 3 (Design Criteria) are the proposed action. These are the documents the national forests will use to implement the plan decisions.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) details both the proposed action and alternatives considered. It also documents expected environmental consequences in detail and response to public comment.

More information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/angel/es/projects/imp/>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland/projects/imp/>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/lospadres/projects/imp/>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sanbernardino/projects/imp/>

Answers to specific questions related to one or more of the four southern California national forests may be obtained by calling the closest Forest Service administrative office:

Angeles National Forest	701 N. Santa Anita Ave., Arcadia, CA 91006	626-574-1613
Cleveland National Forest	10845 Rancho Bernardo Road, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92127-2107	858-673-6180
Los Padres National Forest	6755 Hollister Avenue, Suite 150, Goleta, CA 93117	805-968-6640
San Bernardino National Forest	1824 S. Commercenter Circle, San Bernardino, CA 92408-3430	909-382-2600