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Record of Decision

Land and Resource Management Plan

Umatilla National Forest



RECORD OF DECISION

Umatilla National Forest

Land and Resource Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement

**Baker, Grant, Morrow, Union, Umatilla, Wallowa,
and Wheeler Counties in Oregon;
Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Walla Walla Counties in Washington.**

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SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

BASIS AND NEED FOR DECISION

This Record of Decision (ROD) documents my decision and rationale for approving the Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) for the Umatilla National Forest. The Record of Decision also presents my reasons for selecting this particular alternative to be the Forest Plan for the 1.4 million acre area. In making this decision I balanced and considered the estimated environmental, social, and economic consequences of the alternatives described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and proposed Forest Plan were filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on November 20, 1987. Additional details on meetings, notices, and documents preceding the FEIS and Forest Plan are available in the FEIS, Appendix N.

AUTHORITY

The FEIS and Forest Plan were developed under the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 219). The FEIS satisfies requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500)

The Forest Plan is part of a framework for long-range planning established by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA). The Forest Plan establishes general direction for the next 50 years and specific direction for the next 10 to 15 but must be revised at least every 15 years [36 CFR 219.10(q)]. The Forest Plan replaces all previous resource management plans for the Umatilla National Forest.

Subject to valid existing rights, all permits, contracts, and other instruments for the use and occupancy of National Forest System land will conform with the Forest Plan at the earliest possible date.

AFFECTED AREA

The Umatilla National Forest is located in the Blue Mountain Range of northeastern Oregon and southeastern Washington. The planning area includes portions of Morrow, Grant, Union, Umatilla, Wallowa, Wheeler, and Baker counties in Oregon, and Asotin, Columbia, Garfield and Walla Walla counties in Washington. The Forest is headquartered in Pendleton, Oregon. Ranger District Offices are in Walla Walla and Pomeroy, Washington; and Heppner and Ukiah, Oregon.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Pursuant to the intent of NFMA, the Forest conducted a large-scale public involvement program. Formal activities included a Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS printed in the *Federal Register* and an initial issue identification process. After publishing the DEIS there was a formal public comment period and many meetings, presentations, and information distribution sessions. In addition to formal activities, on numerous occasions Forest employees informally explained the purpose of the Forest Plan and how to effectively participate in the process.

Representatives from many diverse interests met regularly in Heppner and in Walla Walla to review development of the Forest Plan. Forest representatives met often with the Federal plans coordinators from both Washington and Oregon and various other state agency representatives to clarify and correct technical problems with the DEIS. On the basis of public response received on the DEIS, additional public discussion, and states' recommendations, the Forest changed some management emphases in the Preferred Alternative. Forest personnel briefed my staff and me on the public comments, changes in the FEIS, and the draft Forest Plan as these evolved. I have used this information to make my decision.

ISSUES

Land and resource management planning began with identification of public issues, management concerns, and resource use and development opportunities through contacts with local civic and community organizations; individuals; local, state, and Federal agencies; private industries; adjacent landowners; various interest groups; Native American tribes; and Forest Service employees. Public comments and management concerns were analyzed, and the major issues were identified. The issues, which are described in detail in the FEIS, Chapter I, and Forest Plan, Chapter III, are specifically addressed in this ROD in Section III, Rationale for the Decisions. The issues centered around the following topics:

- Undeveloped area management,
- big game (deer and elk) habitat management,
- timber production,
- socioeconomic effects,
- riparian areas,
- wildlife,
- recreation,
- water and soil, and
- transportation system.

Other decision factors centered around concerns and opportunities identified by the public and Forest managers through the planning process. These are.

- Cultural resources,
- wilderness management,
- fish management,
- range management,
- minerals and energy resource management, and
- pest management.

WHAT THE FOREST PLAN IS, AND IS NOT

As a long-range strategy for managing the Umatilla National Forest, the Forest Plan and accompanying FEIS are programmatic. The Forest Plan provides management direction to produce goods, services, and uses in a way that maximizes long-term net public benefits. It is not a plan for day-to-day administrative activities of the Forest; it does not address such matters as vehicle and equipment management or organizational structure

The Forest Plan emphasizes application of various management practices to achieve multiple-use goals and objectives in an environmentally sound and economically efficient manner. It does not emphasize site-specific decisions, but through standards and guidelines and management area direction (displayed in the Forest Plan, Chapter 4), it significantly influences design, execution, and monitoring of site-specific activities. Standards and guidelines are principles specifying conditions or levels of environmental quality to be achieved. They are the rules that govern resource management practices (often Forest-wide) and are the key to successful implementation of the Plan. They will not be violated to achieve annual targets. Management areas provide additional multiple-use direction for managing specific areas of the Forest. Each includes expected results and desired future condition statements, area descriptions and locations, and management direction and prescriptions.

If, through monitoring and evaluation, it is determined that management objectives cannot be achieved without violating the standards and guidelines, we will evaluate the need for amending the Plan. If an amendment is needed, one or more of the following could be changed. Projected outputs, land allocations, management prescriptions, or standards and guidelines.

SECTION II. DECISIONS

SUMMARY OF THE DECISION

My decision is to approve, adopt, and implement the Forest Plan which accompanies the FEIS. In the FEIS this is Alternative F/M (Preferred Alternative) for management of the Umatilla National Forest. This alternative is a modification of the DEIS Preferred Alternative. The many revisions and adjustments incorporate ideas, opinions, and concepts suggested by the public and are intended to respond to the issues and concerns in meeting the public needs.

The general goal of the Umatilla National Forest Plan is to provide land and resource management that achieves a more healthy and productive forest and assists in supplying lands, resources, uses, and values which meet local, regional, and national social and economic needs.

The revised preferred alternative includes the following objectives for meeting this goal and responding to issues and concerns:

Maintain all or parts of roadless areas that have strong public interest, including those related to most of the grass-tree mosaic (GTM).

Maintain potential big game populations near the Oregon and Washington state management objective through habitat (including GTM) management.

Provide timber harvest levels at or near recent Forest experience (timber offered at 1979-88 levels), while providing livestock production at or near current levels.

Provide for a high level of anadromous fish production, riparian protection, and area fish management in the North Fork John Day River system.

Provide old growth/mature tree habitat above the management requirements level.

✓ Provide for a mix of unroaded, roaded, and closed road dispersed recreation and a moderate level of off-highway vehicle (OHV) opportunities compatible with other resource objectives.

Increase developed recreation opportunities.

✓ Manage Wild and Scenic Rivers and provide for scenic and special areas.

Provide for visual quality management in most viewsheds.

Further, the Forest Plan establishes multiple-use goals and desired future conditions. These are discussed in detail in the Forest Plan, Chapter IV.

ELEMENTS OF THE DECISION

The program decisions I make here are accompanied by the necessary supporting NEPA analysis and disclosure required by law and regulation. Additional NEPA analysis for these decisions is neither expected nor required. These decisions *may* be revisited or reassessed during implementation, but they do not have to be. The decisions are as follows:

Forest-wide and management area goals and objectives, desired future conditions, and Standards and Guidelines; management area locations; monitoring program and evaluation process; identification of lands suitable and selected for timber harvesting; establishment of a Forest-wide allowable sale quantity; and incorporation of wilderness plans.

Intended Activities

I also intend to carry out certain scheduled activities. Unlike the programmatic decisions listed above, these are *not* accompanied by all supporting NEPA analysis and disclosure required by law and regulation. Additional environmental analysis will be done during implementation of the Forest Plan. These proposed and probable activities are displayed in activity schedules in the Forest Plan Appendix A.

It is important to note that all proposals in the Forest Plan can be accomplished from physical, biological, economic, social, and legal perspectives. It is not certain that these proposals *will* be accomplished. First, outputs specified in the Forest Plan are estimates and projections based on available inventory data and assumptions. When planning assumptions are correct, targets should be obtainable within the standards and guidelines. However, allowable sale quantity and annual targets are secondary to standards and guidelines which will not be violated to achieve annual targets.

Second, all activities, many of which are interdependent, may be affected by annual budgets. The Forest Plan is implemented through various site-specific projects such as timber sales, wildlife habitat improvements, and campground development. Budget allocations for any given year covered by the Forest Plan may cause projects to be rescheduled. The cost of managing the Forest has been and will likely continue to rise. However, the goals and land use allocations described in the Forest Plan would not change unless the Forest Plan itself were changed. If actual budgets are significantly different from those projected over a period of several years, the Forest Plan may have to be amended and, consequently, would reflect different outputs and environmental conditions. The significance of changes related to budgets or other factors is determined in the context of the particular circumstance.

During implementation, when the various projects are designed, site-specific analyses must be performed. These analyses must be disclosed in an environmental document and may lead to an amendment or revision of the Forest Plan. Any resulting documents are to be tiered to the FEIS for the Forest Plan, pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.28.

Recommendations

I am also recommending certain decisions to others with the authority to make those final decisions. Like my final decisions, recommendations are accompanied by all supporting NEPA analysis and disclosure required by law and regulation. However, authority to make a final decision on these issues is not mine. If others with higher authority accept the recommendation, the resulting final decision *will not* ordinarily be revisited or reassessed by the Forest Service during implementation of the Forest Plan. In this Forest Plan, I am recommending six Research Natural Areas to the Chief of the Forest Service in addition to the two that have already been established.

2 RANA's Exist
6 Proposed

Further Actions

I am aware that while the Forest was finalizing the Plan, several issues developed that could logically have been handled by the Plan but were not included. The Plan lists many such inventory, information, and research needs that can be considered during Plan implementation. I am also directing the Forest to examine the following for possible eligibility and nomination as Wild and Scenic Rivers:

North
Rivers

South Fork Walla Walla River,
North Fork Umatilla River, and
Desolation Creek.

This does not preclude consideration or classification of additional rivers for the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

SECTION III. RATIONALE FOR DECISION

I approached my decisions by first looking at the major issues (and the public comments that addressed them) and then comparing the degrees of response shown by various alternatives to those issues. My rationale for these decisions is built upon this comparison and is presented below.

During the period between the draft and final EIS, Umatilla National Forest employees held numerous meetings with interested members of the public. Initially, Forest employees met with the citizens to hear their concerns and clarify issues. Next, Forest employees looked at ways to address these comments. When viable ways were discerned, they were developed into proposals which were in turn used to develop alternatives for me.

In arriving at my decisions, I reviewed the environmental consequences of the Forest Plan and its alternatives. The following discussions summarize the many important factors which I considered. They explain why I believe Alternative F/M, as described in the FEIS, will maximize net public benefits when compared to the other alternatives, including those offered by non-Forest Service groups.

1. Laws, Federal Regulations, Executive Orders. The Forest Plan, to the best of my knowledge, complies with all legal requirements applicable to the Umatilla National Forest.
2. Issues Concerning Management of the National Forests. The early identification of issues affecting the National Forests is consistent with well-reasoned management of public lands. Regulations to implement NFMA require that one or more alternatives in the EIS for the Forest Plan address each of the major issues. The response of each alternative to the ten major issues was a major consideration in the selection of the Preferred Alternative (EIS, Chapter II). The reasons for choosing this Preferred Alternative, as related to each issue, are discussed below.

DISCUSSION OF THE MAJOR ISSUES

The degree of response of each alternative to the major issues was a primary consideration in choosing the selected alternative. The way the issues are addressed by the selected alternative is described below. Additional discussion of the issues and the treatment under each of the alternatives may be found in the FEIS, Chapters I and II.

UNDEVELOPED AREA MANAGEMENT

There are 22 identified Roadless Areas, including 7 that are shared with the Malheur and Wallowa-Whitman national forests. Together their area totals 311,700 acres, of which about 281,100 are on the Umatilla, 20,700 are on the Malheur, and 9,900 are on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forests.

Public comment on the DEIS reaffirmed roadless areas and their management as a focal point for a number of Forest management issues. In developing the final Forest Plan, roadless areas were reviewed with a variety of individuals and groups. There was general disagreement on the appropriate management for most of these areas. However, this was not the case with management of Mill Creek, Grande Ronde, W-T Three, and Greenhorn Mountain. Boundaries for the various management allocations for the Grande Ronde area remained the subject of strong debate.

It is my decision to proceed with implementation of the alternative that directs that 69 percent (195,000) of the inventoried roadless area acres be maintained in a roadless character and managed under multiple-use for this planning period. The remaining 86,000 acres (31 percent) are allocated to management areas involving various levels of development including roading and production of both market and nonmarket outputs.

In choosing this alternative I am increasing, by 49,000 acres, the area that is allocated to strategies maintaining roadless areas in an unroaded status over that which was allocated in the DEIS preferred alternative. Based on comments on the draft documents and on additional public discussion, review, and comment, the Forest has developed a revised set of allocations (alternative designs) for these areas. Principle uses to be provided are undisturbed big game habitat, semi-primitive recreation, scenic areas, and high quality water and fish habitat. The multiplicity of uses accommodated in these unroaded allocations cannot be provided in designated wilderness. Uses that may occur in these unroaded areas that cannot occur in wilderness included structural wildlife habitat improvements; recreation facility developments such as trail shelters, sanitary facilities, and primitive campsites; and under certain conditions, special uses such as small hydroelectric facilities and electronic sites. In addition, the use of mechanical equipment will be allowed in the maintenance and administration of lands in the unroaded allocations. The option for future management for unroaded or other values will remain on over half of the roadless areas

The table on the following page shows the allocations of the 22 roadless areas and briefly compares the treatments prescribed by the draft and final Forest Plans. To fully understand the objectives of the Plan for the various roadless areas, the reader should refer to the *management area descriptions*. They are defined in the EIS Appendix D and in Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan.

The seven areas shared with adjacent forests are Grande Ronde, Hellhole, North Mt. Emily, South Fork Tower, Squaw, Jumpoff Joe, and Greenhorn Mountain. Management allocations on the Umatilla are consistent with those on the two adjacent forests for contiguous parts of the same roadless areas. Of the 13 roadless areas with highest interest, all or parts of 9 are retained as roadless and 2 others fall in the 2,500 to 5,000 acre category. Allocations that retain roadless status also contribute to resolution of other issues. These include meeting long-term demand for semi-primitive recreation and objectives for visual quality and big game needs.

I propose to maintain seven areas, and portions of nine others, in an unroaded condition. No timber harvest activities will be permitted in the Mill Creek Municipal Watershed (Mill Creek Watershed Roadless Area contains a portion not within the municipal watershed itself) No timber harvest will be scheduled on the roadless part of the Walla Walla River area. This is a change from the DEIS, which would have allocated a larger area to scheduled timber harvest. Since the Walla Walla River area was the subject of much public debate over harvesting, the Forest will examine this allocation at the time of the next plan revision (within 10 to 15 years). The Grande Ronde, Jumpoff Joe, and Greenhorn Mountain roadless areas will be managed as scenic areas. The Jumpoff Joe area will remain in the suitable timber base, but it will not have scheduled harvesting nor will it contribute to the ASQ during the next 10 years.

UNDEVELOPED AREA MANAGEMENT ALLOCATIONS

ROADLESS AREAS	TOTAL AREA ¹ (Acres)	TO REMAIN ROADLESS		SELECTED ALTERNATIVE PRINCIPAL MANAGEMENT EMPHASES
		DRAFT EIS	FINAL EIS	
Upper Tucannon	12,600		P	Non Motor Disp Rec./Big Game Mgt Winter Range/Elk-Timber Grass-tree Mosaic (GTM)/Wildlife Hab
Willow Springs	11,100		P	
Asotin Creek	16,900	C	P	
Spangler	5,900		P	OHV Recreation/Viewshed Mgt. Wildlife Habitat Nonmotorized Dispersed Rec.
Meadow Creek	5,000			
Wenatchee Creek	15,500	C	C	
Mill Cr. Watershed ²	26,700	P	P	Municipal Watershed/Wildlife Habitat Undeveloped - Water/Disp Rec /Others Wildlife Habitat
Walla Walla River	34,500	P	C	
Jaussaud Corral	5,500			
Grande Ronde	12,200	C	C	Scenic Area/Wild and Scenic River Wild and Scenic River/Winter Range OHV Recreation/Wildlife Habitat
W-T Three	2,000	C	P	
Lookingglass	5,000		P	
Hellhole	62,000	P	P	GTM/Wildlife Hab /Ded Old Growth Grass-tree Mosaic Roaded Natural Visual Management
Horseshoe Ridge	6,300	C	C	
North Mt. Emily	4,600			
Texas Butte	6,900			Wildlife Habitat, Old Growth Grass-tree Mosaic Grass-tree Mosaic
Skookum	7,700	P	P	
Potamus	5,400	C	C	
South Fork Tower	16,900			Fish Management Area Fish Management Area Scenic Area Scenic Area
Squaw	4,500			
Jumpoff Joe ³	5,500		C	
Greenhorn Mountain	8,400	C	C	

P = Portions of the area to remain roadless

C = Area 90% or more unroaded

1 Umatilla National Forest area only

2 The Mill Creek Watershed Roadless area contains portions not within the Mill Creek Watershed itself

3 Jumpoff Joe will remain in the suitable timber base, although it will not have any harvesting scheduled for the first decade or contribute to the allowable sale quantity calculation

Five areas, including Asotin Creek, most of Hellhole, Horseshoe Ridge, Skookum, and Potamus will be managed to protect the grass-tree mosaic on steep, broad, open slopes. Big game winter range and other values are recognized there. The river corridor in the Grande Ronde and W-T Three (Wenaha) areas will be managed for designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. Substantial parts of two areas, Spangler and Lookingglass, will remain unroaded and provide dispersed recreation opportunities, but will not qualify as roadless areas because they will be less than 5,000 acres in size. In the remaining roadless areas, the Wenaha-Tucannon Special Management Area is proposed for part of the Upper Tucannon Area, and the Special Fish Management Area is recognized in the South Fork Tower and Squaw areas. Big game objectives will also be emphasized in these two areas. Viewsheds will be recognized here, while management in the remaining areas will be divided between timber and wildlife objectives.

Where the management strategy is to develop a previously undeveloped area, the Forest will minimize permanently open roads where they are not needed to meet management objectives. Provision is made for removal of trees due to catastrophic events when it meets the area's objectives.

I have decided to initiate a "sunset strategy" in two areas. The approach was developed and recommended by a public group at Walla Walla: (1) to show that through sensitive resource management one resource can be managed while protecting, sustaining, and enhancing other resource values in an area of resource controversy, and (2) to relieve concerns of interested parties that once an area is assigned a management strategy it can never be changed. Timber management advocates offered to test a development approach in the Jaussaud Corral and Horseshoe Ridge roadless areas to show that timber harvesting can be consistent with other values. In the Jaussaud Corral roadless area, timber harvest is scheduled on about 4,000 acres under the wildlife habitat management area (C4) direction. If the results of timber harvest fail to meet management objectives by the year 2000, the area will revert from the C4 direction to the off-highway vehicle recreation (A2) which has no scheduled timber harvesting. In the Horseshoe Ridge roadless area, a test harvest is planned in the grass-tree mosaic management area (C8) which normally has no scheduled harvest. About 2,900 acres is tentatively suitable for harvest in this area. As with the Jaussaud Corral area, the lands will be withdrawn from "scheduled" harvest in the year 2000 if objectives are not met. If objectives are met, the area will be made available for scheduled harvest through appropriate NEPA review process and approval. These two areas provide the opportunity for developing techniques that will support timber harvest while preserving or protecting other amenities, aesthetics, and resources on the same site.

All of the roadless areas on the Forest have been allocated and management activities will proceed in accordance with these allocations. Proposed timber sales scheduled for roadless areas will receive appropriate environmental analysis and documentation before they are carried out.

My decision will provide a balance between development and preservation of the roadless areas. The land use allocations are displayed in the FEIS, MAP PACKET - Alternative F/M.

**BIG GAME
(Deer and Elk)
HABITAT
MANAGEMENT**

One of the most controversial issues on the Forest has been the management of big game, particularly elk. With one of the Nation's largest herds of Rocky Mountain elk, the Umatilla has a reputation for providing recreation for a large number of hunters during the fall months. The subject of elk management enjoys very strong public interest locally and regionally. The States of Oregon and Washington expect the Umatilla to provide a high level of the Rocky Mountain elk hunting; this is reflected in the states' desired elk and deer population levels (state management objectives (SMO)).

The proposed Plan proposed that the majority of the Forest be placed in management areas that are favorable to big game. Timber harvest on the winter ranges was limited. About 50 percent of the Forest roads were to be closed. As a result, elk populations were projected to increase in the first decade and subsequently decline in the following four decades to about 6 percent below the SMO.

Comments on the draft Plan reaffirmed strong differences over appropriate management of big game. In general, reviewers responded in the following ways:

- Most wanted to maintain or increase deer and elk numbers. Some wanted lowered populations in order to reduce adverse impacts on adjacent private agricultural lands.
- The importance of maintaining, protecting, and/or improving the quality of big game habitats on both summer and winter ranges was expressed. Strong differences of opinion were apparent on how this should be done

- Support for a more aggressive Forest road management program to enhance big game habitat values was strong. Support for keeping existing access open was also strong.
- Many wanted to reduce (restrict) timber harvest levels and activities, including road construction, to minimize adverse effects on big game. Many others wanted to allow standard timber management on summer and winter ranges (maintain or increase timber harvest) because of compatibility with big game management.
- Industry was particularly concerned that high cover requirements on the winter ranges would largely preclude harvesting of ponderosa pine.

The Forest responded to these issues by refining the modeling of elk habitat to better define the timber/cover tradeoffs. The sensitivity of the Habitat Effectiveness Index (HEI) to the component values of cover, forage, and roads was also studied. New management strategies were developed to better address the elk habitat issue. Big game management under the Plan was made more specific and objective-driven by new Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines and management area direction. These various management areas contained varying levels of elk habitat provisions. Although there are other management areas with specific provisions for elk habitat, the following table summarizes the principle ones.

MANAGEMENT AREA DIRECTION FOR BIG GAME

MANAGEMENT AREA	RESOURCE EMPHASIS	ALLOCATED ACRES	HEI LEVEL 1	MINIMUM COVER REQUIREMENTS	
				SATISFACTORY 2	TOTAL COVER 3
C3	Elk Winter Range	152,800	70	10%	30%
C3A	Sensitive Winter Range	8,200	70	10%	30%
C8	Grass-Tree Mosaic	98,500	70	10%	30%
C4	Wildlife Habitat	258,900	60	15%	30%
C7	Special Fish Management	105,300	45	10%	30%
E2	Timber and Big Game	199,500	45	10%	30%
E1	Timber and Forage	91,400	30	none	none

1 HEI - See following discussion

2 Satisfactory Cover - Forest stands used by big game to ameliorate weather effects, characterized by trees 40 feet or more in height and an average crown closure of 70 percent or more.

3 Total Cover - Forest stands consisting of satisfactory and marginal cover (vegetation at least 10 feet high and at least 40 percent crown closure)

Cover quality (the amounts of satisfactory and marginal cover), cover size and spacing, forage quality and quantity, and road density have been determined to be important elements in managing habitat for big game and make up part of the HEI calculation. As seen above, cover standards are provided in most management areas. Size and spacing of cover patches and cover quality (the relative amount of satisfactory and marginal cover) are also elements of the cover provided.

Forage quality and quantity is important for big game survival and productivity and is a factor in the calculation of HEI. Forage is particularly important on winter ranges.

As an element in the overall calculation of HEI, open roads also represent an important issue with the public. Vehicle use is a factor in harassment and disturbance of big game. Explicit in this Plan is a commitment to address the interests of groups and individuals who are concerned with road densities and access on the Forest. An access management plan is being developed on the North Fork John Day District. Motorized Access and Travel Management Plans will be developed on the remaining districts with the cooperation of the local landowners, state agencies, and other members of the public.

Elk management, other resource objectives, and public needs will "drive" the process. Permanently open local roads not needed to meet management objectives will be minimized on the Forest. The Oregon Governor strongly suggested having no more than 1.0 roaded mile per square mile on winter range and no more than 1.5 roaded miles per square mile on summer range to meet big game goals. His suggestions will be given consideration in this process. The Forest intent is to reduce open road density on a Forest-wide basis to meet elk, recreation, and other objectives in management areas.

Big game winter range habitat conditions will be maintained or improved by using specific directions summarized in the Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines and the management areas (those above and others). On winter ranges, directions provide for high levels of habitat effectiveness through maintenance and growth of satisfactory and marginal cover and through providing fewer open roads. Uneven-aged management is emphasized where timber harvest is permitted. Prescribed burning, a principal program and technique, will be used for winter range habitat maintenance, for forage enhancement, and to assist in keeping big game animals on the Forest during the winter.

The Plan assumes that both timber harvest objectives and elk habitat requirements (standards and guidelines) can be met. However, the particular site conditions, the effects of fire, insects, disease, past harvest, and other natural events may make this difficult. Some management area standards and guidelines contain exceptions to the above direction to help manage these situations; short-term reductions of cover may be allowed to meet the objective of producing long-term increases in cover. This will be done through project analyses, consideration of the site-specific conditions, and with adherence to the principal of achieving good elk habitat as well as producing timber yields. The use of HEI, and in particular the integration of this technique with silvicultural techniques, is still being tested and evaluated. Further testing and evaluation will occur during Plan implementation and monitoring.

The potential populations of elk provided by this alternative are displayed below. All of the planned big game habitat management activities will help to achieve the desired potential elk population level (the SMO).

Decade	DEIS Preferred Alternative	Current Direction (Alt. A)	FEIS Selected Alternative	SMO
1	22,700	20,500	21,200	21,056
2	21,800	19,900	20,600	
5	19,900	20,000	21,500	

Note: Potential population figures for the Current Direction (Alternative A) and the FEIS are based on an updated computer model while the DEIS Preferred Alternative is based on an earlier version.

The elk habitat components will be analyzed on a project basis and monitored on the subwatershed basis. The three Blue Mountain National Forests will develop and implement a coordinated monitoring program to determine the effectiveness of elk habitat management prescriptions and standards and guidelines during Plan implementation. The Oregon and Washington departments of fish and wildlife will be invited to cooperate in the development and execution of the monitoring and evaluation program. This program will be initiated within 1 year of Plan implementation for the three forests, and interim results will be evaluated yearly. Appropriate adjustments to the Forest Plans will be initiated within 3 to 5 years, if warranted.

In addition to the joint monitoring program, the Forest will work with the States of Oregon and Washington and other entities through a Blue Mountain Elk Management Initiative to address questions of public and private land interaction with elk habitat management, and other potential strategies for minimizing impacts on elk habitat during plan implementation, project design and execution, and monitoring. These potential strategies will include habitat improvement through prescribed burning in winter range and other nonstructural as well as structural habitat improvement programs.

During the next 10 years, we expect that studies at the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range will yield new insights into the relationships between management of forestland and elk. New information that becomes available as part of the Starkey studies can be incorporated into the next land management plans, or by amendments to this Plan if considered necessary.

**TIMBER
PRODUCTION**

The issue of timber harvesting levels on the Umatilla National Forest has been a major concern throughout development of the Forest Plan. Conflicts between timber harvesting and other resource values were a focus for some publics, while maintaining a healthy supply of fiber to the local mills concerned others. I carefully considered many arguments and points of view in reviewing the timber harvest issue.

Comments on the timber issue in the draft documents centered on four principal aspects:

- Timber harvest levels (ASQ) - the necessary level of wood fiber to provide to local industry and its relation to the amount of natural unroaded area that is appropriate on the Forest.
- Ponderosa pine harvest level - the appropriate amount of ponderosa pine to harvest. This was an area of wide divergence of opinion on the draft Preferred Alternative.
- Silvicultural systems (even-aged and uneven-aged management) - the management systems to apply, where to apply them, and what their various impacts are.
- Timber harvest effects - what timber harvest effects are and should be on the water, big game, landscape, recreation experiences, and other Forest resources.

Some background information on the timber production on the Forest is useful before describing timber outputs from the selected alternative. The Forest has been operating under an adjusted 1963 Timber Management Plan that allows for a programmed harvest of 147.8 million board feet (MMBF/year). During the period from 1979 through 1988, the forest offered an average of 120.0 MMBF/year, but sold only 108.6 MMBF/year. A major reason for the sell being lower than the offered has to do with the difficulty of selling white-fir, which constitutes over 30 percent of the forest inventory. *Ponderosa pine has been and still is the preferred sale species. Average ponderosa pine sell for the 10 years was about 29 MMBF/year. However, ponderosa pine inventories have declined substantially in the last 2-3 decades. The draft Forest Plan, published in 1987, proposed an ASQ of 154 MMBF/year, with about 18 MMBF of that in ponderosa pine. Most of the harvesting involved even-aged silviculture. The Forest has a steady demand for chip material and firewood, especially since the beginning of the 1980's. That demand is expected to continue.*

The commercial forest land within the roadless areas was included in the calculation of the annual potential yield in the amended 1963 Timber Management Plans. However, *timber on these lands was not available for harvest until passage of the WA/OR State Wilderness Act. As a result, harvest levels between 1963 and 1990 were based on a larger land base than was actually available for harvest. Thus, for more than 25 years, timber harvest on the Forest was concentrated on fewer acres than the land base used to determine the annual potential yield in timber management plans. Approximately 173,100 acres, or nearly 62 percent of the unroaded areas, are tentatively suitable for timber production.*

Many changes were made to the alternatives between the draft and final in order to make the analysis more technically correct, resolve or reduce identified conflicts, and *address issues that were better defined through public involvement after the draft was released. I believe the FEIS better addresses the issues.*

In the DEIS, the Forest considered alternatives with first-decade harvests ranging from 81 to 202 MBF/year, while the FEIS displayed and analyzed alternatives with first-decade harvests ranging from 69 to 168 MBF/year. Much of the drop is explained by a 10.5 percent ASQ reduction for all alternatives resulting from an updated timber inventory information and technical changes in the lodgepole pine yields. A departure alternative was included in the DEIS but was not considered in detail in the FEIS, largely due to its minimal acceptance by the public.

After considering all factors, I selected Alternative F/M with a total average annual chargeable volume, or allowable sale quantity (ASQ), of 22.2 million cubic feet (MMCF/year) or 124 MMBF/year for the first decade. The ponderosa pine harvest volume on the Forest will be about 23.5 MMBF/year in the first decade, tapering to 21 MMBF/year in the second and third decades. In later decades, it will climb to a sustained level of 31 MMBF/year.

The allowable sale quantity (ASQ) is the upper limit of chargeable wood to be sold from suitable forest land during a decade of the planning period. Although it is a 10-year figure, it is most often expressed on an annual basis as the *"average annual allowable sale quantity"*. It is important to note that ASQ is not an actual proposal for timber sale offerings. The annual timber sale offerings include nonchargeable as well as chargeable material and depend on budget appropriations, multiple-use objectives, and market conditions.

A note on units of measure: ASQ will be monitored and controlled on the basis of cubic foot measure. The board foot volume associated with the cubic foot volume (i.e., the board foot/cubic foot conversion ratio) varies from stand to stand depending on the size and form of the trees. Both board foot and cubic foot measure are displayed here since board foot measure continues to be a customary unit of measure.

Chargeable volume (ASQ) is composed of categories of timber which were used in making growth and yield projections during the development of the Plan. On the Umatilla National Forest, the ASQ includes mortality salvage. Other nonchargeable volume was not used in yield calculations because it did not meet regional utilization standards or standards for soundness, or because it is to be harvested from lands not suitable for timber production (e.g., salvage from a special interest area). Generally, this is done only if timber harvesting promotes other resource objectives.

The total volume sold (chargeable plus nonchargeable) is referred to as the Annual Timber Sale Program Quantity (TSPQ). The nonchargeable volume, which consists of firewood, posts, poles, and chip material, will be about 35 MMBF. Therefore, the TSPQ will be 159 MMBF/year. To achieve this TSPQ, yearly targets are developed.

Approximately 2.7 MMCF, or 12 percent of the ASQ established in this Plan, depends upon the application of intensive timber management practices, including thinning. Approximately 21.9 MMCF, or 93.5 percent of the ASQ, depends upon the application of even-aged silvicultural practices and approximately 1.5 MMCF, or 6.5 percent of the ASQ, depends on uneven-aged practices. Whether such practices can or should be used is dependent upon budget appropriations and site-specific analyses, both of which could impact the ASQ and could result in plan amendments.

The ASQ is divided into two categories: Volume scheduled from inventoried roadless areas and volume scheduled elsewhere on the Forest. If the volume scheduled from inventoried roadless areas cannot be sold, that volume will not be replaced by volume scheduled elsewhere. Volume scheduled from inventoried roadless areas is estimated to be 238.8 MMBF (10-year total) or 19 percent of the ASQ.

Timber will be managed on about 618,800 acres. Silvicultural systems will normally use even-aged management, but approximately 90,000 acres will be managed by uneven-aged management to meet resource objectives. Uneven-aged management will be encouraged where feasible and will be emphasized in riparian areas, visual areas, winter ranges, and ponderosa pine stands. Actual silviculture methods will be determined on a site-specific project basis. The recommended ASQ and acres of suitable area are consistent with objectives for the big game, roadless, riparian/water, and other issues. The proposed harvest levels will provide adequate supplies of timber near recently offered levels to meet local needs.

Adequate levels of satisfactory and marginal big game cover will be maintained and created under the direction contained in the Forest-wide Standard and Guidelines. Timber harvest may result in short-term degradation of elk habitat where long-term improvement in cover and habitat quality can be achieved.

Concern has been expressed by the State of Oregon that the timber inventory is out of date. The Forest shares this concern and has initiated a new vegetation inventory (including timber). The vegetation mapping phase will be complete in 1990, and managed stand survey data is expected to be available in 1992. These new data will be compared with the inventory used in the Forest Plan and, if significant differences are apparent, adjustments in the projected ASQ will be made and a plan amendment issued.

SOCIO- ECONOMIC EFFECTS

The availability of goods and services such as wood fiber, forage, quality water, and recreation and aesthetic opportunities as provided by the Forest, will affect local economic activity and lifestyles in a 10-county area. About 11 percent of the local employment is attributed to the Forest through timber harvest, wood processing, and related Forest work. A few communities are strongly dependent on wood produced from the Forest. Hunting and other forms of Forest recreation also contribute to local communities' economies.

Comments on the DEIS showed:

There was a general recognition and agreement that the Umatilla National Forest is a tremendous natural and public asset that should be managed for the use and benefit of the general public (the most good for the most people).

Economic, social, and environmental stability appear to be the general public goals. Overall disagreement is apparent on how to achieve these goals.

Disagreements deal primarily with management emphasis: Should the Forest produce more commodity or amenity goods and services in achieving that stability?

The biggest change in terms of economic activity between the draft preferred alternative and the alternative selected is in the level of harvest offered. The draft would have offered a higher level of timber volume, and the selected alternative contains about the level the local industry has been offered during the last 10 years. Other outputs would also increase, and the potential net effect would be a possible slight increase of local jobs and income. The economic analysis is described in the FEIS, Appendix B, and in Chapter IV, Environmental Consequences.

I believe that this Plan will produce a balance between commodity outputs and amenity values that will contribute to economic and social stability of dependent communities while maintaining the natural character and recreational settings desired by Forest visitors from all areas. County revenues are expected to rise through payments in lieu of taxes as a result of the Plan's outputs. For those concerned about county revenues, it is important to note that these payments are based on receipts rather than on amount of timber sold. If timber value rises, so will county revenues if other factors remain the same. Lifestyles, made up of patterns of work and leisure, customs and traditions, and relationships with family, friends, and others, will generally not be adversely affected by the selected alternative. Overall, the selected alternative will not cause large changes in the socioeconomic environment of the 10-county area.

Decisions in the Forest Plan may have some effects on communities. The Forest Service will work with the affected communities within the framework of the Pacific Northwest Strategy.

RIPARIAN

Riparian ecosystems are distinctive in an otherwise dry region. These areas amount to only about 5 percent of the Forest (70,743 acres), but are the most productive lands for the full range of resources and uses. Approximately one-third of the riparian area acres are adjacent to anadromous fish streams.

Riparian areas on the north half of the Forest are generally in good condition. Less favorable riparian condition is generally found on the south half of the Forest where the areas have been more heavily impacted in the past by gold dredging, grazing, road building, and timber harvest.

Because of the number and interplay of resources, competition for resource use is focused on these areas and involves most of the Forest interest groups.

- All interests generally agree on the need to protect riparian areas but do not agree on how this should be done.
- Numerous groups and interests advocate a high degree of riparian protection, and most prefer little to no development.
- Other interests have preferences that support use and development of riparian areas within guidelines they feel will afford adequate protection.
- From the management perspective, this issue revolves around utilization of the productive capabilities of riparian areas, while minimizing resource conflicts and potential adverse impacts.

Riparian and fish habitat management interacts with nearly every Forest management activity. Most activities have the potential to impact key fish habitat variables and riparian features. The total effect on fish habitat is dependent upon the intensity, duration, and extent of the affecting activity

Since the Forest has a small but important role in anadromous fish production in the Columbia River Basin, one of my concerns is the way we will manage both anadromous and resident fish habitat. Salmon and steelhead runs of the Columbia River system may be directly affected by management of the Forest.

My decision on actions addressing the water/riparian (and fish) issue includes improved riparian direction in the Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines, including adoption of regional range utilization standards, strengthening use of the Best Management Practices (BMP) process and concepts (particularly as they relate to timber management and road building activities), and incorporating objective-driven management for fish and riparian areas based on discussions with the Columbia Basin Intertribal Fish Commission and others. Specifically, the Forest direction includes the following measures:

- The selected Plan applies Management Area C5 (riparian emphasis/limited harvest) to 27,000 riparian acres. The basic direction includes emphasis on stream shading, streambank stability, and large wood for instream habitat. Uneven-aged management is emphasized in riparian areas where timber harvest is permitted.
- In addition, the Management Area C7 (anadromous fish habitat emphasis) strategy is expanded to 105,000 acres of the North Fork John Day River system (the draft called for 76,000 acres). Scheduled timber harvesting is precluded in stream riparian areas in this and other management areas.
- In addition to the Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines, the Mill Creek and Walla Walla River Watersheds will be managed with special protection measures for the water resource.
- The Forest will continue a successful program of fish habitat enhancement (riparian and instream improvements) projects. This has not changed from the DEIS Preferred Alternative.
- Monitoring programs for water, fish, and riparian areas will be improved and expanded in line with the above direction, with emphasis on the Columbia Basin Intertribal Fish Commission's parameters of concern.
- Range allotment management plans will be improved with focus on meeting riparian objectives. Allotments with riparian problems or potential problems will be the first to be analyzed and revised (schedule appears on Forest Plan pages A-21 to 23).

The Forest is committed to careful and detailed monitoring of these objectives. The riparian, fish, and water monitoring plans easily make up the largest portion of the Forest Plan monitoring program. The Forest will amend the Plan if riparian area values are not being protected or enhanced in accordance with the Plan's desired future condition.

The net result of these management directions is to assure that the Forest fish habitat management program clearly supports and assists with the Northwest Power Planning Council goal of doubling the anadromous fish runs by the year 2000. The Forest Plan will meet Oregon and Washington water quality standards and improve overall riparian conditions.

During the past couple of years, Forests and Regional Offices in Regions 1, 4, and 6 have been working closely with Columbia Basin Indian tribes, the Columbia Basin Intertribal Fish Commission, and others on the issue of anadromous fish habitat management. At this time, a Forest Service draft policy and policy implementation guide has been developed; it is expected to be approved in the near future. Upon approval of the policy and implementation guide, the Forest Plan will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) as soon as it's practicable to do so. I believe this policy will be an important factor in helping to achieve a mutual goal of the Tribes and Forest Service to provide strategies for habitat management and anadromous fish production consistent with fish restoration goals of the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program.

WILDLIFE

Presently there are about 191,000 acres of inventoried old growth tree habitat on the Forest (the DEIS reported 165,000 acres), including about 10,000 acres of mature and old growth lodgepole pine. Approximately 69,000 acres of old growth habitat type have been identified in existing wilderness. A variety of wildlife species on the Forest (25 birds and 13 mammals) appear to demonstrate high levels of use of, or dependence on, mature and old growth tree habitat. Past timber harvest activities have removed much of the suitable old growth tree habitat once found on the Forest. The remaining acres are not uniformly distributed. Historically, harvest of old growth/mature tree forests has been the backbone of the local timber industry. The FEIS, in Chapter III, describes the old growth situation on the Forest. The Forest definition of old growth is the one used in the Regional Guide (see FEIS Glossary for definition).

The abundance and distribution of available old growth and mature tree habitat was confirmed as an issue in comments on the draft documents and follow-up discussions with many segments of the public. Various public interests are divided as to the amount of old growth and dead tree habitat to retain on the Forest and on the ways that habitat should be managed.

Some groups, associations, and agencies support utilization of old growth/mature tree forests and dead trees and see these resources as important to timber production, firewood supply, and long-term forest productivity.

A number of individuals and groups have expressed concern over the reduction of old growth/mature tree habitat. Their desire is to maintain existing habitat distribution and amounts for dependent species, forest diversity, and aesthetic values.

Under the Plan, Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines, management areas, and alternative design provide direction and allocation for old growth. Old Growth in Management Areas C1 (Dedicated Old Growth) and C2 (Managed Old Growth) total 52,600 acres. Another 38,500 acres are in riparian and roadless allocations, and 68,900 acres in wilderness areas will be protected indirectly. The acres of old growth/mature tree habitat will be well above the management requirements (MR) level of 35,370 acres.

Regardless of the values that are placed on old growth, continued current timber harvest activities will further diminish and fragment the Forest inventory of old growth/mature tree habitat. Insect infestations, wildfire, and other catastrophic events will also continue to impact this resource.

Dead and down tree habitat under the Forest Plan will also be managed under Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines and Management Area direction. The Plan objective is to provide for habitat with the potential to maintain populations of the wildlife indicator species that are 65 percent (52 percent in the draft Plan) of the Forest-wide maximum potential. An average estimated snag density of about 1.5 snags per acre (1.2 in the draft Plan) will be maintained. Future snags will also be provided in harvest areas. Other areas with restricted timber harvest are expected to contain natural levels of dead and down trees.

RECREATION

The Forest provides a variety of recreation opportunities ranging from moderately developed downhill skiing facilities to remote wilderness. Recreation is a popular and widely supported use of the Forest. Although somewhat remote from major population centers, the Forest is well known for its hunting and other dispersed recreation opportunities. A variety of facilities for recreational use is maintained. Developed sites on the Forest can accommodate about 7,000 persons-at-one-time (PAOT). The capacity for the sites is about 569,000 recreation-visitor-days (RVD's) annually. There are about 735 miles of maintained trails on the Forest, 355 miles of which are within wilderness. There are about 170 miles of groomed snowmobile trails and more are planned.

Comments on the DEIS identified several aspects of this issue.

- A principal aspect of the roadless issue is the provision for a future supply of primitive and semi-primitive recreation opportunity on the Forest
- Concerns expressed about the need for additional trails and road access reflect other aspects of the recreation opportunity that people want the Forest to provide.
- Off-highway vehicle (OHV) opportunities on the Forest have declined. OHV users and clubs want more opportunity to enjoy their pursuits.
- Past reductions in OHV opportunities have caused an increase in conflicts between recreation uses.
- Many people expressed concern about the scenic qualities of the Forest. Most desire little noticeable change in the landscape, while some of these people worry that the amount of protection given scenic resources could hinder production and reduce future supplies of forest products.

It is my decision to proceed with the preferred alternative that will provide semi-primitive recreation opportunities in roadless areas as follows:

- Three roadless areas, totalling about 21,000 acres, will be managed as scenic areas and involve the Grande Ronde River, Vinegar Hill-Indian Rock, and Jumpoff Joe areas;
- four areas are to be managed for their dispersed recreation opportunities, totalling about 27,000 acres;

- six other areas will continue to be managed in an unroaded condition and total about 119,300 acres; and
- the Mill Creek Watershed is a municipal watershed and recreation entry is limited to protect water quality. Thus, the area is not counted as a dispersed recreation opportunity.

A total of about 75 miles and about 7,600 acres (outside of wilderness) of 3 rivers within Forest boundaries (Grande Ronde, North Fork John Day, and Wenaha rivers) will be managed as part of the Wild and Scenic River System. New trails will be constructed and substandard existing trails reconstructed at the rate of 30 miles per year.

OHV opportunities will increase above current levels with the development of loop trail and road systems; however, use may be limited to certain times or areas to minimize impacts on big game. An estimated 307,000 acres will be available for OHV use, including 200 miles of trails for trail bike use.

Visual quality management is emphasized on 23 viewsheds including state highways, key forest travel routes, and major water related areas. About 46 percent of the Forest (includes wilderness) will be managed to meet a high visual quality objective (partial retention or higher).

Many other recreation opportunities are addressed in the Forest Plan. Developed sites will remain at current levels; however, if demand rises, provisions are made so key sites may be expanded. Winter sports will be enhanced, but may be modified if conflicts with big game winter range arise. A variety of special areas, including three Wild and Scenic Rivers (Grande Ronde, Wenaha, and North Fork John Day), six botanical areas, eight Research Natural areas, two historic sites, one geologic area, and two scenic areas will contribute to the diversity of recreation.

WATER AND SOIL

The Forest currently produces almost 2.5 million acre-feet of water runoff annually. Quality of water flowing from the Forest is currently well above minimum state standards. Analysis shows that the Forest has little opportunity to increase water yields or increase late season low flows through management practices.

- Maintaining adequate quantities of high quality water is an objective of many diverse interests. Many developmental activities and uses are thought by these groups to cause pollution and sedimentation. They suggest limiting developmental activities.
- The timber, livestock, and mining industries feel that developmental activities can be successfully accomplished while protecting water supplies and quality.
- Many people felt that Mill Creek should receive maximum protection. A good number of people were concerned about adequate water supplies from the Walla Walla River for irrigation. Many specifically advocated maximum protection (very limited timber harvest or none at all) and many others supported the higher level of harvesting shown in the proposed Plan.

Water and soil protection and management receive emphasis in the selected alternative primarily through Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines (including Best Management Practices (BMP's)) and application of certain management areas (also see Riparian issue). The following are ways the Forest Plan responds to the issues:

- The Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines provide objectives and direction for protection and management of water (based on BMP's), for dispersion of harvest activities, for riparian areas, and for all soil-disturbing activities in order to maintain soil productivity.
- As noted in the Riparian issue discussion, no scheduled timber harvest is permitted in the Mill Creek Municipal Watershed (Management Area F2), most of the Walla Walla River, or in some tributaries of the North Fork John Day, Umatilla, and Grande Ronde River systems (under a variety of management area direction).
- Limited timber harvest is permitted on other major streams under C5 (Riparian/Fish and Wildlife).
- Management Area C7 (Special Fish Management) is applied to parts of the North Fork John Day River system, limiting harvest activities in the watershed.

Overall, sediment production resulting from management of the Forest in the first decade is expected to be 8 percent below current direction (Alternative A) levels but will increase above background levels by about 15 percent. Although an increase in sediment is expected above natural levels, water quality will be in an excellent condition and will not be changed significantly by management activities. Based on barometer watershed results, water quantity, including peak flows and low flows, is not expected to change significantly due to management activities.

Changes from the DEIS are primarily clarifications of long-term effects of timber management on water yields and timing of flows. Sediment yields have been analyzed by major basin. Changes have been made in the standards and guidelines governing activities in riparian areas, emphasizing riparian values

TRANSPOR- TATION

The transportation system is an aspect of the timber, big game, and recreation issues. Two elements were identified in the transportation issue; both were areas of strong differences of opinion.

- Road system development and its associated impacts drew many concerned comments.
- Road (access) management and its effects on big game and other forest resources was a worry to many commenters.

Since the transportation system is integrally linked to other issues, the response to this issue is primarily through alternative design and falls under outputs and effects (objectives) of planned management. Both construction and reconstruction of the road system in this Plan respond primarily to the planned timber management program. The alternative I have selected includes construction of about 925 miles of road in the first decade. The final Plan will keep about half the Forest roads open.

Access and travel management plans are being developed under the Forest Plan. All districts will eventually have such plans (see discussion in the Big Game section). Across the Forest, closures will be used to maintain suitable elk habitat and to meet recreation, soil, water, and economic criteria. Open road density will vary greatly between management areas and subwatersheds (allocation zones), depending on the resource objectives being achieved. All of the arterial roads, about half of the collector roads, and some local roads will be managed for passenger cars. The remainder of the collectors and open local roads will be managed for high-clearance vehicles. Most main roads and some secondary roads will remain open for passenger cars. Some of the remaining secondary Forest roads will be kept open only for high clearance vehicles.

The process of developing access and travel management plans will continue to be an open one involving the public. This process will take into consideration the recommendation of the State of Oregon for no more than 1.0 mile per square mile of open road in elk winter range and no more than 1.5 miles per square mile in summer range, unless these limits do not allow the achievement of Forest Plan objectives.

OTHER DECISION FACTORS – CONCERNS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following discussion includes six areas of concern or opportunity identified in the planning process. They were considered in addition to the issues on the previous pages in developing the alternatives. They are extremely important and will be considered in all project proposals. Two other areas are concerns I have regarding management of the Forest. The follow discussion highlights my rationale for dealing with these eight factors.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Federal law requires protection of significant cultural and historical resources on public lands for future generations.

My decision involves activities which have a moderate to high likelihood of both discovering and impacting cultural resources. Timber harvesting, road building, and on certain sites, fish, wildlife, and recreation improvement projects may have high potential to impact the Forest cultural resources.

The Forest Service cultural resource compliance process is designed to minimize disturbance to significant cultural resources and is incorporated into Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines. In brief, a cultural resource inventory will be undertaken prior to any potentially ground-disturbing Forest Service authorized activity. The Forest will develop a consultation memorandum of agreement with the affected Native American tribes to coordinate efforts in this area.

Sites will be evaluated for their potential to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Eligible sites will be nominated to the Register and management plans prepared to ensure protection. Ineligible sites will be evaluated for the potential research or interpretive values. Interpretive plans will be prepared for sites selected for public use.

Specific mitigating measures are provided in the Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines. They will be used to eliminate undesirable effects or recover values of the properties prior to their alteration. As additional sites are discovered, opportunities for enhancement and interpretation will be considered. Mitigation measures will be designed and implemented in consultation and coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT

The Forest has three wildernesses: Wenaha-Tucannon, North Fork John Day, and North Fork Umatilla.

My decision will require administrative emphasis on protecting and, in some cases, rehabilitating the natural environment. Implementation of the selected alternative will substantially increase the amount of primitive wilderness recreation opportunities over the current situation. Management actions will be tempered by Congressional intent for classifying the wildernesses, when they do not conflict with the 1964 Wilderness Act.

Wilderness management plans will be implemented for each wilderness. Visitor information and education will be used to minimize impacts. Indirect methods will be favored over direct methods to influence visitors so that management actions are subtle and unobtrusive. The Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process will be fully implemented to provide the framework for establishing acceptable and appropriate resource and social conditions (especially the amount and type of use) in wilderness settings

Fire will be considered an inherent part of the general wilderness ecosystem. My intent is to use planned and unplanned ignitions to: (1) Reduce the risks and consequences of wildfire within the wilderness, or escapes from the wilderness, and (2) allow fire to play its natural ecological role in wildernesses. The decision to allow naturally caused fires to burn will only be done within constraints detailed in the fire management section of the wilderness management plans. Fire management direction will spell out circumstances which must occur before a naturally caused fire will be allowed to burn. If, after close monitoring, the fire threatens to exceed these parameters, then immediate steps to suppress the fires will be taken.

**RANGE
MANAGEMENT**

The Forest has two types of range. One is called "rangeland", defined as areas with less than 10 percent tree cover. About 302,000 acres (22 percent of the Forest) are classified as "rangelands." Most of the Forest acreage are "transitory range," which produces forage on forested or partially forested land as a result of some activity. About 60 percent of the Forest forage is produced on transitory range. With the exception of several small areas, the Forest has allotment plans on all allotments. Range allotments cover 77 percent of the Forest acreage.

My decision will provide a potential to increase use of available transitory range with some minor reductions of livestock use on certain winter ranges and added protection measures for riparian areas. The additional transitory range results from timber management activity which creates additional available forage. Protection measures for riparian areas will reduce some range use capacity. The net result will be a potential to increase permitted livestock use capacity by 6 percent. Management will be intensified and there will be an increase in range improvements over current levels. Condition and diversity are maintained at or above current levels.

An update of the Forest range allotment management plans will be completed which will implement the forage use objectives. As noted earlier, planning emphasis will be on allotments with riparian problems or potential problems. Allotment plans will continue to implement improved management systems on about 76 percent of the Forest (5 percent receives only extensive use and 19 percent is not available for livestock use) and continue the trends toward improved rangeland and riparian conditions. Key big game winter ranges will be re-analyzed to determine total forage production and to assure that the allocation of that forage between big game and livestock is correct.

**FISH
MANAGEMENT**

The environmental consequences of management activities on fish are interwoven with those of riparian and water (see earlier discussion of issues). The Forest has determined that the limiting factors for fish are high summer water temperatures, adequate rearing habitat, and summer low flows.

The Forest fish habitat enhancement and riparian management are designed to ameliorate the first two conditions. Fish habitat improvements are designed to promote long-term bank stability, in-stream habitat, and water quality. Construction will be timed to avoid periods of high stream flow, anadromous fish spawning, and egg incubation in the gravel

The selected alternative has one of the highest potentials (when compared to the other alternatives) to increase anadromous fish production through fish habitat enhancement and riparian management. Planned fish habitat enhancement is at the highest level of the alternatives, accounting for the major share of improved fish habitat capability and increased fish populations. Increases are expected in anadromous and resident fish production above the 1980 base. In the knowledge that downstream user actions will have an effect on fish populations, the Forest is assisting in meeting the goal of doubling fish runs in the Columbia River Basin.

**MINERALS
AND ENERGY
MANAGEMENT**

The Forest has potential for oil and gas development and extraction of common variety minerals such as gravel. A small area near Ukiah has minimum potential for geothermal reserves. Deposits of coal are located north of Elgin. The south end of the Forest has historically been mined for nonenergy minerals like gold, silver, and nickel. Forest Service management is concerned about, and committed to, maintaining access to the Forest for mineral exploration and development.

My decision will coordinate other management work to assure that the mineral and energy resources are available to potential developers without undue restrictions evolving from other Forest management activities. Only restrictions to protect surface resources and improvements will be placed on mineral/energy activities.

All mineral activities are controlled by either the Federal Land and Policy Management Act of 1976 or by existing laws and regulations governing leasable and locatable minerals.

**PEST
MANAGEMENT**

The Forest has historically experienced large-scale insect infestations of forested areas. It is doing so currently. The attacks have created large stands of dead and dying trees. These large-scale pest epidemics have major impacts on wildlife habitats, recreation opportunities, timber growth and yield, visual resources, fire hazards, and other resources. A number of groups, agencies, and individuals are concerned about the damage and commensurate losses.

Under the Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines and other direction, cost-effective, integrated pest management approaches are used to prevent and control forest pests. The principal approach in preventing the spread is through vegetation management activities. When prevention fails, early detection and aggressive control action may assist in alleviating large pest outbreaks. The appropriate control method for forest pests will continue to be determined through separate environmental analyses.

About 86 percent of the harvest acres would be managed under even-aged silvicultural methods, resulting in a potential for high control effectiveness. The risk of losses from insects and diseases should be reduced because of acres receiving thinning and other cultural practices. The selected alternative would result in approximately 42 percent of the total forested area in an older forest condition which may have a higher risk for insect and disease damage.

My decision has the potential to reduce insects and diseases and possible losses from these pests in the long run.

**WILD AND
SCENIC
RIVERS**

Since the DEIS was published in 1987, three rivers — Grande Ronde, North Fork John Day, and Wenaha — have been designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers under the Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988. Actual corridor boundaries and joint multiagency management plans are to be completed by October 1991 by an ad hoc task group representing the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests, BLM, and others. Interim river management will follow direction in Management Area A7 and the land along those rivers will be managed to maintain and protect the identified outstandingly remarkable values. The rivers that the Forest will be studying in the future (see Section II. DECISIONS, Further Actions) will also be protected. The Forest Plan will be amended to incorporate each river management plan when completed. Please refer to the Forest Plan on page 4-22 for river segment classifications.

The Forest studied the Tucannon River and found it to be ineligible for consideration further for Wild and Scenic River designation. However, due to public concern about protection of the values along the upper two segments, I have decided to preclude harvest activities for this planning period.

**AMERICAN
INDIAN
TREATY
RIGHTS**

The Forest worked closely with the local Native American people to consider their needs and their rights under the treaties of 1855. Specifically, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and Nez Perce Tribe representatives were consulted during the Forest Plan development process. The tribes assisted by reviewing and commenting on various parts of the Plan during the DEIS review period and have continued to provide additional consultation. I greatly appreciate this assistance.

Three of these treaty-protected rights that are considered in the selected alternative are fishing, hunting, and root and berry gathering. Anadromous fish are a resource having subsistence, ceremonial, and commercial value to tribal members. The selected alternative would have the greatest effect of increasing fisheries and would contribute to the goal of restoring fish habitat in the area. The Forest will contribute to a doubling of the fishery by the year 2000.

In addition, the selected alternative will promote elk populations, which are important to tribes for both subsistence and ceremonial purposes. The Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines also require identification, inventory, and protection and management of Native American traditional food sources; among these are roots and berries that are collected for their cultural and ceremonial values. Livestock grazing and protection of Native archaeological sites are also provided for by the Plan.

I expect the Forest to continue close coordination with the tribes in the future on implementation and monitoring of the Forest Plan.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

A series of eight multiple-use Forest Plan alternatives were developed and analyzed. Each provided a unique means of resolving the issues that were identified in the planning process. One or more of the issues are emphasized in each alternative. For example, some alternatives emphasize maintaining roadless areas while others emphasize timber production. The issues are listed in Section I of this document and are described in detail in Chapter I of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Several additional alternatives were suggested by the public during the DEIS review period. In addition, the State of Oregon provided a draft State Alternative just prior to publication of the FEIS. A "Citizens Multiple Use and Resource Conservation Alternative" that emphasized commodity outputs from the Forest and a "Citizen's Alternative E" which promoted noncommodity and amenity goods and services were considered but eliminated from detailed analysis because they were close approximations of other alternatives. Concepts and suggestions from the two public alternatives and the State of Oregon draft proposal were used in developing the final Plan and modifying several other alternatives. While they were developed and tested, several departure alternatives and three other alternatives were included in the DEIS analysis but were not presented in detail because their resource objectives could be met with other alternatives and because they lacked public support.

Each of the fully developed alternatives, and the basis for each, are detailed in Chapter II of the FEIS. Chapters II and IV of the EIS disclose the tradeoffs and environmental effects, respectively, of all alternatives considered in detail. The alternatives are very briefly described here as follows:

ALTERNATIVE A (Current Direction) Alternative A continues management direction as prescribed in the existing six unit plans and resource plans and policies, standards, and guidelines. This is the "No Action" alternative required by the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Forest Management Act and represents the existing situation insofar as possible. All of the management requirements (MR's) and other requirements defined in the National Forest Management Act are incorporated.

Current direction emphasizes commodity production and represents a combination of intensive timber management and big game habitat management with roaded dispersed recreation opportunities. Current direction also calls for visual management on most viewsheds and for maintaining two scenic areas while providing a moderate level of range outputs. Commercial fisheries enhancement at moderate levels is planned.

ALTERNATIVE D The goal of this alternative is to emphasize habitat quality for high populations of wildlife, big game, and fish while producing timber harvest at or near current timber offered levels (1979-88) and providing moderate levels of unroaded recreation opportunities and visual management. The alternative focuses on the identified issues and concerns related to wildlife, timber, and other forest resources.

ALTERNATIVE E/M The natural biological, ecological, and aesthetic values of the Forest are emphasized in this alternative by promoting noncommodity resources and services (those without established market prices). Vegetation management, including timber harvest, is relatively low and directed at economically and environmentally feasible levels that maintain or improve noncommodity resources. The alternative was formulated to resolve a range of issues and concerns related to amenity and aesthetic values.

This alternative in the FEIS is a modification of Alternative E in the DEIS that incorporates suggestions proposed in Citizens Alternative E (as summarized in FEIS Appendix N).

ALTERNATIVE F/M (Selected) Alternative F/M provides a mix of resources including timber, livestock grazing, big game, roadless, fish, and recreation opportunities in a way that provides some issue resolution for each. The alternative also provides for application of management area direction specifically designed for areas of high public interest and management concern. It is modified from the DEIS Alternative F in order to better address public comments.

- ALTERNATIVE G** Providing a "maximum response" to increasing potential big game populations is the principal goal of the alternative. It also emphasizes associated benefits including quality water, commercial fisheries, and dispersed recreation in closed-road settings.
- ALTERNATIVE H/M** The alternative emphasizes production of commodity outputs (those with established market prices) blended with elk management to produce potential elk populations near state management objective. It also provides some issue resolution for amenity resources. Increasing receipts to local governments is an important goal.
- This alternative is a modification of "H" in the DEIS that includes several suggestions proposed in the Citizens for Multiple Use Alternative (as summarized in FEIS Appendix N).
- ALTERNATIVE I** Goods and services having established market prices are emphasized in the alternative with focus on production of timber, wood fiber, and forage on a high percentage of the tentatively suitable forest lands. High returns to local governments are again an important goal.
- ALTERNATIVE J** Alternative J combines a high emphasis on noncommodity (nonmarket) resources with the need for commodity production. The alternative also emphasizes management for a variety of Forest dispersed recreation opportunities. Timber is emphasized on key suitable areas and where compatible with achievement of other resource objectives.

ALTERNATIVES WITH HIGHER PRESENT NET VALUES

Present Net Value (PNV) is the primary quantitative measure of economic efficiency for the alternatives. It provides a partial estimation of net public benefits (NPB's). PNV is defined as the difference between the discounted value (benefits) of all outputs to which monetary values or established market prices are assigned and the total discounted costs of managing the planning area for the period extending to the planning horizon. A higher PNV often means a greater total PNB, unless modified by net nonpriced outputs.

The table below summarizes the PNV's associated with the eight alternatives. Differences in PNV between successional ranked alternatives can be seen. The data provide an estimate of the net economic value of priced resource outputs to be foregone if a lower ranked alternative is selected over a preceding one.

Three alternatives (I, H/M, and A) have higher Present Net Value's than does the alternative I have selected. The principal factor which influences differences in priced benefits, costs, and PNV is the timber harvest. Since timber harvest has relatively large investment costs and dollar returns, the extent of harvest is the primary determinant of the magnitude of the economic variables in each alternative. The progressive decline in PNV from Alternative I to Alternative E/M is due to a greater decline in timber production benefits than in costs of the timber program and road development. Benefits and costs for other resources are relatively stable among the alternatives and have only a relatively small influence on changes in PNV. Recreation benefits have an influence on the overall magnitude of PNV, but have a minor effect on changes between alternatives because they are relatively the same for each.

Alternative	PNV (MM\$)
I	1,076
H/M	1,049
A (Cur. Dir.)	1,022
F/M (Selected)	1,000
D	977
G	918
J	861
E/M	817

Alternative I would emphasize the production of commodity outputs and has the highest PNV. It has the highest output of timber with an average annual allowable sale quantity (ASQ) of 168 million board feet per year. About 94 percent of the tentatively suitable land would be managed for timber production, the highest of all the alternatives. It would also provide the lowest level of primitive and semi-primitive recreation opportunities, all of which would occur in dedicated wilderness.

Alternative H/M would emphasize commodity outputs blended with elk habitat management. A small decline in PNV is accounted for by a slightly lower level of timber production and range benefits. Other benefits from priced resources would increase. Discounted costs are only slightly lower than those in Alternative I.

Alternative A (Current Direction) is similar to Alternative H/M in that both would emphasize commodity outputs blended with elk habitat management. Most priced benefits, including timber and recreation, are lower than in H/M or A. The alternative provides fewer acres of primitive and semi-primitive recreation opportunity than Alternative H/M by about 10 percent.

The preferred alternative (F/M) has a PNV slightly less than Alternative A. The principal change is that the total discounted benefits from the timber resource diminish substantially. The timber benefits decrease by roughly \$156 million due to a reduction in the ASQ of 37 million board feet per year. Benefits from recreation and fish increase above A, which helps to offset some of the differences in PNV.

Alternative F/M achieves a better balance with respect to the issues than any of the three alternatives which have higher PNV's. F/M provides a much higher level of area remaining in an unroaded condition than any of the other high PNV alternatives and it utilizes a smaller amount of suitable land for timber harvesting. Sediment yields are lower for F/M than for any of these other alternatives as well. These added resource provisions in the alternative I have selected increase the cost of resource management, lowering the PNV with respect to these other alternatives.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally preferable alternative is defined by the Council on Environmental Quality as the alternative causing the least impact to the biological and physical environment. This alternative would have the lowest level of ground and vegetation disturbing activities and would best protect, preserve, and enhance historic, cultural and natural resources.

The environmentally preferable alternative, based on the above definition, is Alternative E/M. It provides the highest levels of old growth and dead and down habitat and would potentially provide the highest elk populations in part because it has the highest level of prescribed burning on winter ranges. This alternative schedules the lowest level of timber production and would program much less ground-disturbing activities during the next 10 to 15 years than does the alternative I have selected. Alternative E/M would emphasize amenity resources and maintain all of the 22 roadless areas in an undeveloped condition. Vegetation management is relatively low and natural conditions are also given emphasis. Grazing lands are reduced in this alternative as well.

Alternative J would combine a high level of noncommodity outputs with the need for commodity production. It would maintain 77 percent of the roadless acres in an undeveloped condition and would hold grazing at the current level. Alternative J is also preferred over Alternative F/M from an environmental impact standpoint.

I did not select one of the more environmentally preferred alternatives because I do not believe they provide the balance between economic benefits and environmental concerns provided by the selected alternative. Selecting Alternatives E/M or J would not adequately respond to my concern for the needs of the local economies in northeastern Oregon and southeastern Washington in terms of timber harvesting, grazing, or fish enhancement.

Additional information on the environmentally preferable alternatives and other alternatives considered is found in the FEIS, Chapters II and IV. For a comprehensive display of the major environmental factors of each of the alternatives, the reader should refer to Table II-6 (Outputs and Effects) and II-8 (Comparison of Issues by Alternative), which can be found in the FEIS starting on page II-87.

Numerous efforts were made to ensure that the selected alternative considered the goals of the States of Washington and Oregon, other Federal agencies, Native American tribes, and local agencies. Comments and letters from agencies were reviewed and analyzed extensively; numerous meetings and field trips were conducted with officials from other agencies (see the FEIS, Appendix N), and actions were taken to address their concerns.

I believe Alternative F/M is compatible with, and complementary to, the goals of other agencies and Native American tribes. Coordination with many agencies, groups, and individuals will continue as projects are implemented.

I have selected Alternative F/M because, in my judgment, it maximizes net the public benefit of the Forest. The term "net public benefit" is necessarily subjective. Many people may disagree with this evaluation, and in fact, therein lie the controversies surrounding these decisions. Due to the controversial nature of the decisions I am making, I have shared with you, the reader, the factors considered. I compared the selected alternative to the "environmentally preferable alternative" and to alternatives with higher present net values, (note that "Environmentally preferable" is also a subjective term) and I have explained the basis for my necessarily subjective conclusion.

SECTION IV. IMPLEMENTATION

SCHEDULES

The Forest Plan will be implemented through identification, selection, and scheduling of projects to meet its management goals and objectives. These projects are displayed in the Forest Plan, Appendices A and B. Implementation will begin no earlier than 30 days after the Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement appears in the Federal Register (36 CFR 219.10(c)(1)).

Project schedules will be available for review at the Ranger District Offices and Supervisor's Office. Schedules of possible projects will routinely change as projects are implemented or removed from the lists for other reasons and as new projects take their place. Adjustments to schedules may occur based on results of monitoring, budgets, and unforeseen events.

The Forest Plan provides direction in the form of goals and objectives, standards and guidelines, monitoring requirements, and probable scheduling of management practices. It does not cover projects on specific sites except in a broad manner. Each proposed project will be subject to site-specific analysis in compliance with NEPA. This process may result in a decision not to proceed with a proposed project, even though the project is compatible with the Forest Plan.

The Forest Plan's scheduled projects are translated into multi-year program budget proposals. The schedule is used for requesting and allocating funds needed to carry out planned management direction. Upon approval of a final budget for the Forest, the annual work program will be updated and carried out.

The Forest program of work will implement management direction of the Forest Plan. Outputs and activities in individual years may differ significantly from those shown in Forest Plan, Chapter IV, depending on final budgets, new information derived from updated inventories and monitoring, and any future amendments or revisions of the Forest Plan.

All timber sales offered after issuance of the Forest Plan will comply with direction contained in it. Timber Sales now under contract will be administered under provisions of existing contracts. Changes to existing timber sale contracts may be proposed on a case-by-case basis where overriding resource considerations are present.

The Forest Plan incorporates the Pacific Northwest Region's EIS for Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation. In implementing the Forest Plan project activities, the Forest will comply with the Record of Decision issued by the Regional Forester on December 8, 1988, and the mediated agreement of August 1989. Use of all vegetation management techniques is allowed, but the use of herbicides is allowed only when other methods are ineffective or will unreasonably increase project costs. Emphasis must be placed on prevention and early treatment of unwanted vegetation and on public involvement in all aspects of project planning and implementation. Information about the vegetation management EIS, its Record of Decision, and the mediated agreement is available for review at Forest Service offices throughout Washington and Oregon.

Decisions contained in the Forest Plan will affect communities. The Forest Service will work with communities to address these effects within the framework of the Pacific Northwest Strategy.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Monitoring and Evaluation Program is the management control system for the Forest Plan. It will be used to provide information on progress and results of implementation. One result of monitoring will be an assessment of needs for amending or revising the Plan. Monitoring and evaluation are discussed in more detail in the Forest Plan, Chapter 5. The necessary funding for monitoring is also provided there and as part of the Forest budget presented in the Plan Appendix A.

Monitoring is intended to keep the Forest Plan current and responsive to change. Monitoring and evaluation each have a distinctly different purpose and scope. Monitoring consists of gathering data, observations, and information. During evaluation, the data and information are analyzed and interpreted. This process allows determination of whether conditions are within the bounds and intent of Plan direction. Forest Plan monitoring program supplements existing monitoring activities. Many activities are currently being monitored on the Forest to comply with administrative and legal responsibilities. (FSM - Admin. Review Procedures).

Monitoring and evaluation will provide information to:

- Compare planned with applied management standards and guidelines to determine if objectives are achieved [36 CFR 219.12(k)];
- Quantitatively compare planned versus actual outputs and services [36 CFR 219.12(k)(1)];
- Measure effects of prescriptions, including significant changes in land productivity [36 CFR 219.12(k)(2)];
- Determine planned costs versus actual costs associated with carrying out prescriptions [36 CFR 219.12(k)(3)];
- Determine population trends of the management indicator species and relationship to habitat changes [36 CFR 219.19(a)(6)];
- Evaluate effects of National Forest management on adjacent land, resources, and communities [36 CFR 219.7(f)];
- Identify research needs to support or improve National Forest management [36 CFR 219.28];
- Determine if lands are adequately restocked [36 CFR 219.12(k)(5)(i)];
- Determine, at least every 10 years, if lands identified as unsuitable for timber production have become suitable [36 CFR 219.12(k)(5)(ii)];
- Determine whether maximum size limits for harvest areas should be continued [36 CFR 219.12(k)(5)(iii)]; and
- Ensure that destructive insects and disease organisms do not increase to potentially damaging levels following management activities [36 CFR 219.12(k)(5)(iv)]

Results of evaluations will lead to the following types of decisions:

- Continue practice, no change necessary.
- Refer the problem to the appropriate Forest officer for corrective action.
- Modify the management practice through Plan amendments.
- Modify land designation through Plan amendments.
- Revise output schedules.
- Revise unit output costs.
- Revise the Plan.

Three types of monitoring and evaluation will be conducted:

- IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING - will determine if plans, prescriptions, projects, and activities are implemented as designed and in compliance with Forest Plan objectives and Standards and Guidelines.
- EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING - will determine if plans, prescriptions, projects, and activities are effective in meeting management direction, objectives, and the Standards and Guidelines.
- VALIDATION MONITORING - will determine whether initial data, assumptions, and coefficients used to develop the Plan are correct, or if there is a better way to meet Forest planning regulations, policies, goals, and objectives.

Evaluation of results of the site-specific monitoring program will be documented in an annual evaluation by the Forest Interdisciplinary Team. Any need for further action is recommended to the Forest Supervisor.

Actions directed by the Forest Supervisor could include one or more of the following:

- A determination that no action is needed.
- District Ranger(s) may be directed to improve application of management direction.
- Management direction for a particular piece of land may be modified as a Forest Plan amendment.
- The standards and guidelines may be modified as a Forest Plan amendment.
- The projected schedule of outputs may be modified as a Forest Plan amendment.
- The needed action may singly or cumulatively be so significant as to cause the Forest Supervisor to initiate revision of the Forest Plan.

If, through monitoring and evaluation, it is determined that management objectives cannot be achieved without violating the Standards and Guidelines, the plan will be amended. In amending the plan, one or more of the following can be changed: Allocations, management prescriptions, projected outputs, or Standards and Guidelines.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation measures constitute a general category of actions that may be undertaken to avoid, minimize, reduce, rectify, or compensate for the effects of human-based activities on the Forest. The mitigation measures that can and will be taken on the Forest are many and varied. All alternatives have built-in mitigation measures in varying degrees through standards and guidelines, Best Management Practices, management requirements, management area directions, and other resource direction and practices, as follows:

- The Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines represent, in part, the necessary mitigation and resource coordination measures required by existing laws, regulations, and policies to deal with potential adverse environmental effects; they also provide direction on how activities (management areas) will be implemented on the ground.
- Best Management Practices (BMP's) are included in the Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines to protect and enhance water quality. BMP's will be selected and tailored for site-specific conditions to arrive at project-level BMP's for the protection of water quality.
- Management requirements (MR's) were the starting point for mitigation, since the measures were identified as mitigation in the implementing regulations for NFMA (36 CFR 219.27). MR's were incorporated into the Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines
- Within each management area, a set of management practices is designed to create or perpetuate a desired condition, develop or protect some combinations of resources, and mitigate potential adverse impacts.
- Each alternative varies in amount and location of management areas and associated constraints in responding to the ICO's. Therefore, the contribution toward, and magnitude of, mitigation also varies. Each of the various mitigation forms is used in the alternatives, although emphasis tends to be on pre-activity and during-activity approaches.
- Most site-specific consequences will be addressed, within the framework of the preferred alternative, in subsequent project analyses and in plans in which the physical settings are known. Additional mitigation measures will be provided and implemented through operating permits, plans, and contracts for the projects.
- Activities and their effects, including effectiveness of mitigation, will be monitored, as shown in the Forest Plan.

AMENDMENT AND REVISION PROCESS

This Forest Plan may be changed either by an amendment or a revision. Such changes may be made as a result of monitoring or project analysis (see Forest Plan, Chapter 5). An amendment may become necessary as a result of situations such as;

- Recommendations of the Interdisciplinary Team based on their review of monitoring results;
- Determination that an existing or proposed permit, contract, cooperative agreement, or other instrument authorizing occupancy and use is not consistent with the Forest Plan but should be approved, based on project level analysis;
- Adjustment of management area boundaries or prescriptions;

- Changes necessitated by resolution of administrative appeals;
- Changes needed to improve monitoring plans or information and assumptions used in the Plan; or
- Changes made necessary by altered physical, biological, social, or economic conditions.

Based on an analysis of the objectives, guidelines, and other aspects of the Forest Plan, the Umatilla National Forest Supervisor shall determine whether a proposed amendment would result in a significant change to the Forest Plan. If the change is determined to be significant, the Forest Supervisor shall follow the same procedure as that required for development and approval of the Forest Plan. If the change is not determined to be significant, the Forest Supervisor may implement the amendment after appropriate public notice and compliance with NEPA. The procedure is described by 36 CFR 219.10(e) and (f), 36 CFR 219.12(k), FSM 1922.51-52 and FSH 1909.12.

As Regional Forester, I will approve significant amendments and the Forest Supervisor will approve "non-significant" amendments. The determination of significance must be documented in a decision notice and would be appealable under 36 CFR 217. A mailing list will be maintained to provide notification and invitation to comment on proposed amendments.

The amendment documentation will include as a minimum:

- A statement of why the Forest Plan is being amended (some possible reasons are mentioned above);
- The actual amendment will be described;
- Rationale for the amendment;
- A statement of significance related to FSM 1922.51; this is the NFMA significance and relates to changes to the Forest Plan;
- A statement of NEPA compliance (40 CFR 1500-1508, FSM 1950, and FSH 1909.15) regarding effects on the environment, and how effects disclosed in the Plan EIS may change as a result of the amendment; and
- A statement of appeal rights.

NFMA requires revision of the Forest Plan at least every 15 years. However, it may be revised sooner if physical conditions or demands on the land and resources have changed sufficiently to affect overall goals or uses for the entire Forest. If an early revision becomes necessary, procedures described in 36 CFR 219.12 will be followed.

SECTION V. APPEAL RIGHTS

This decision may be appealed in accordance with the provisions of 36 CFR 217 by filing a written notice of appeal within 90 days of the date specified in the published legal notice. The appeal must be filed with the Reviewing Officer:

F. Dale Robertson, Chief
USDA Forest Service
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

A copy must be sent simultaneously to the Deciding Officer:

John F. Butrulle
Pacific Northwest Region
USDA Forest Service
319 S.W. Pine
P.O. Box 3623
Portland, OR 97208-3623

The notice of appeal must include sufficient narrative evidence and argument to show why this decision should be changed or reversed (36 CFR 217.9).

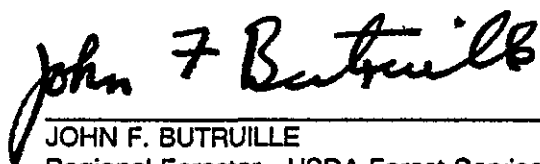
Requests to stay the approval of this Land and Resource Management Plan shall not be granted [36 CFR 217.10(a)].

For a period not to exceed 20 days following the filing of a first level notice of appeal, the Reviewing Officer shall accept requests to intervene in the appeal from any interested or potentially affected person or organization [36 CFR 217.14(a)].

Decisions on site-specific projects are not made in this document.

The schedule of proposed and probable projects for the first decade is included in the appendices to the plan. Final decisions on these proposed projects will be made after site-specific analysis and documentation in compliance with NEPA.

I encourage anyone concerned about the Plan or Environmental Impact Statement to contact the Forest Supervisor or the Planning Staff Officer in Pendleton, Oregon, 503-276-3811; or one of the Umatilla District Rangers before submitting an appeal. It may be possible to resolve the concern or misunderstanding in a less formal manner.



JOHN F. BUTRUILLE
Regional Forester - USDA Forest Service
Pacific Northwest Region
319 SW Pine, P.O. Box 3623
Portland, OR 97204-3623

JUNE 11, 1990

Date