

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION OF THE FOREST

25. Wild and Scenic Rivers

Manage the outstanding values of adjacent lands and resources to protect options for formal designation of potential wild, scenic, and recreational rivers on the Forest.

26. Developed Recreation

Provide high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities within a forest environment that can be modified for visitor use and satisfaction and to accommodate large numbers of visitors.

27. Protection

Use integrated pest management for the protection of vegetative resources. Control wildfires and use controlled burning programs that are cost efficient and responsive to MA goals, as well as state and federal smoke management regulations

28. Human Relationships

Provide all persons equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, sex, marital status, age, handicap, religion, or national origin. Communicate openly with the public, other agencies and local governments.

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This section describes what the Forest should be like 10 and 50 years (RPA planning horizon) after the Forest Plan is implemented. It summarizes the anticipated physical and biological changes which would result from planned practices.

The Forest in 10 Years

At the end of the 1st decade, there will be little discernible change in the general appearance of the Forest, although there will be some subtle and significant changes. The following describes the Forest as a whole. A closer view of more local conditions is given with each MA.

Timber harvest levels will be similar to those from 1979 to 1988. Clearcuts of 10 to 60 acres will be interspersed with lands left intact to meet other resource objectives. Conifers will be harvested and replanted where timber production is the goal. In some areas, a mix of conifer and deciduous trees will be planted to provide wildlife habitat. Some trees will be harvested in riparian areas along Class-III streams, but most vegetation along perennial streams will be left intact. Trees will be a variety of ages to meet wildlife habitat requirements. Vegetation will be left on unstable slopes and headwalls to minimize the chance of landslides.

Approximately 280 miles of new roads will have been constructed to aid management, primarily timber harvesting. About 70 miles of new trails will have been constructed in Wildernesses and elsewhere.

Habitat areas for wildlife will provide vegetation needed to sustain viable populations. Most of the old growth in existence at the start of planning period will remain. Old growth will be concentrated in SOHAs and reserved areas such as Wildernesses and Cascade Head Scenic-Research Area. Other old-growth stands and older trees will be scattered through much of the Forest - primarily in MAs 2, 14, and 15.

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Nesting sites for bald eagles will be provided in 125-acre stands with older forest conditions which are generally not readily discernible from surrounding areas. Habitat conditions for several species, such as snowy plover and Oregon silverspot butterfly, will have increased slightly. Less habitat will be available for species dependent on mature conifer and hardwood conditions, but more than enough of these habitats will be available to sustain viable populations.

Elk populations will be greater. Their habitat will be enhanced through more even distribution of clearcuts, new meadows, and clearcuts seeded with forage.

Dead, defective, and other trees will be left standing in clearcuts as habitat for cavity excavators.

Levels of fish habitat will have declined slightly during the last 10 years. The declines will not be concentrated in any one watershed. Any runs of anadromous fish existing below carrying capacity of the habitat at the start of the planning period could have been maintained or increased if spawning runs more fully seeded the habitat.

Wassen and Drift Creek undeveloped areas will be providing opportunities for SPM recreation. Use of these areas and the three Wildernesses will be close to capacity.

The Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (NRA) and Cascade Head Scenic-Research Area will remain as provided by law. The management policies for both areas, including off-road vehicle use in the Oregon Dunes NRA plan, will have undergone review.

Cummins and Drift Creek Wildernesses will have additional trails to facilitate access and visitor use. The Rock Creek Wilderness will not have any trails.

Five Research Natural Areas will be available for scientific use, including three established during plan implementation. Conditions for Wild and Scenic River eligibility will have been maintained and, if Congress has designated any of the Forest's rivers, they will be managed according to that designation.

Soils will remain productive except where facilities have been constructed. Erosion, compaction, nutrient loss, and displacement will be minimal. Water quality will remain high.

Principal access roads will appear suitable for passenger car use, with readily identifiable, paved or gravel surfaces. Signs will assist travelers in finding their destinations. Other less inviting roads will appear rough or primitive, but most will be available for use by more experienced travelers. Some are closed.

In summary, the outward appearance of the Forest will have changed only slightly despite significant changes in management direction and practices. Over time these changes in practices will become more visible and enhance many multiple-use opportunities, as compared to the direction contained in plans replaced by this Forest Plan.

The Forest in 50 Years

If Plan direction is continued unchanged, 50 years from now a visitor will readily notice changes from today's condition. Much of the land suitable for timber production (about 60% of the Forest) will appear to be intensively managed. Stands will be of different ages; trees of the same size will be evenly spaced within stands; the forest floor will be relatively free from fallen trees, and some large dead trees (snags) will be present. Most timber stands in intensively managed areas will be 0 to 90 years old, the amount of recent clearcut land will be slightly more evident than it was 10 years into Plan implementation, and many more of the older plantations will have been thinned.

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There will appear to be a mosaic of even-age stands in MAs 14 and 15. This pattern will be disrupted often; in some places it will be barely perceptible, in other places it will be quite noticeable. These disruptions will include widely scattered 1250-acre and 2500-acre blocks of mature conifer which are being harvested on an average 100-year rotation; scattered patches of soil leave areas; and interconnecting bands of mature timber following perennial stream courses and major highways.

Approximately two-thirds of the known stands of old-growth present when this Plan was first implemented will be still standing, barring some natural catastrophe. Many of the mature stands on lands unsuitable for timber production at the beginning of the Plan period will be nearing or have reached old-growth conditions.

Most of the riparian area will appear undisturbed and in a natural condition. Meeting visual quality objectives will help give the commonly viewed parts of the Forest a more natural appearance.

Most, if not all, of the principal road system (with improved or paved surfaces) will be built prior to the year 2000, although some reconstruction activities will be taking place. Other roads will be closed or available for use by experienced forest travelers with high clearance vehicles. The planned trail system will have been completed, including those in the Wildernesses.

Habitat will be available to maintain viable populations of all wildlife species indigenous to the Forest. Habitat conditions will have improved significantly for certain featured species such as the spotted owl, silverspot butterfly, and bald eagle. Habitat for other wildlife will be approaching conditions necessary to support desired populations. Elk populations will have reached equilibrium with their habitat.

Demand for SPNM and semiprimitive motorized recreation will exceed supply. Planned recreational facilities in Special Interest Areas, developed sites, and the Oregon Dunes NRA will have been built.

Available habitat for anadromous fish will be still responding to mid-20th-century removals of large woody debris from some stream systems and levels will have declined slightly Forest-wide from the 1st decade. Many riparian areas, disturbed in the mid-20th century, will be nearing recovery and will soon be contributing large woody debris to their stream systems. Any fish runs existing below carrying capacity at the end of the 20th century could have been maintained or increased, depending on favorable climatic conditions and ocean fishing regulations allowing spawning stock returns.

Water quality will be good and soil productivity will remain high. As road construction declines, so will erosion. The threat of landslides resulting from vegetation removal will be reduced by more sophisticated identification of potential trouble areas.

In summary, condition of land managed for timber production will have taken on a tree-farm appearance while areas managed for other resources will have retained their natural appearance. Lands managed for wildlife will be noticeable but not obvious. Lands managed either as older forest or for resources other than timber will be much easier to distinguish, as the trees in these areas age and contrast more with younger, surrounding areas.