

Glossary of Terms

The variety of technical terms and inevitable acronyms used in the Planning process can make for some pretty confusing reading, and even more confusing conversations. The following collection of definitions and descriptions is an attempt to clarify some of the terminology used in the Planning documents and at public meetings during the Plan Revision process. It is hoped that this will help people wade through the language of Forest Planning. Additional definitions and description will be made to this page as needed.

The descriptions and definitions are in alphabetical order.

[\[A\]](#) [\[B\]](#) [\[C\]](#) [\[D\]](#) [\[E\]](#) [\[F\]](#) [\[G\]](#) [\[H\]](#) [\[I\]](#) [\[J\]](#) [\[K\]](#) [\[L\]](#) [\[M\]](#)

[\[N\]](#) [\[O\]](#) [\[P\]](#) [\[Q\]](#) [\[R\]](#) [\[S\]](#) [\[T\]](#) [\[U\]](#) [\[V\]](#) [\[W\]](#) [\[X\]](#) [\[Y\]](#) [\[Z\]](#)

[A]

ACID DEPOSITION – This occurs when acidic particles, gases, and precipitation leave the atmosphere and settle on land. Acid deposition has two components: wet (commonly know as acid rain) and dry deposition.

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE (ATV) - An engine-driven device which has a net weight of 650 pounds or less, which has a width of 48 inches or less, which is equipped with a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and which is designed to travel on 3 or more low-pressure tires.

ALLOWABLE SALE QUANTITY (ASQ) - The amount of chargeable timber volume, which can be sold from a Forest, cannot exceed the Allowable Sale Quantity standard established for the Plan area. Each Forest Plan, which provides for a timber sale program must establish a standard setting the ASQ. The quantity is a ceiling, it is not a future sales level projection or a target, and it does not reflect all of the factors that may influence future sale levels.

ALTERNATIVE - A set of possible solutions to the collection of Problem Statements. A number of Alternatives, which address the management problems to varying degrees, are identified and evaluated for their effects on people and the environment. Each Alternative must address each of the management problems to some level within the range of possible solutions.

ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA (AMA) - Area of a forest environment where management emphasis is on restoration of key elements of ecosystem structure, function and composition using innovative silvicultural prescriptions and other creative strategies. AMA's are located where the existing habitat presents the best opportunities for restoring or maintaining these ecosystem elements. The goal of an AMA is to prescribe compatible management which contributes to ecological restoration, and yet allows for a continued flow of goods and service, including wood products.

ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGEMENT SITUATION (AMS) - Using the Resource Assessments and the existing Forest Plan as background, the AMS documents existing Forest Plan direction for a particular resource concern; speculates on the expected results should the existing direction continue; evaluates the kinds of problems which may occur should the existing direction continue; discusses whether or not these problems need to be resolved and determines the potential to resolve them in a Plan Revision. If the Plan Revision can resolve the problems, the AMS proposes a range of values within which a possible solution may occur.

[B]

BASE CATIONS – Positively charged ions such as Magnesium, Sodium, Calcium, and Potassium that are released when water flows over rocks and through the soil. The release of base cations increases the pH of water. Base cations provide essential nutrients for plants and buffer soil and water from the acidity that comes from Sulfates and Nitrates deposited by air pollution.

BASE CATION DEPLETION – The loss of base cations occurs naturally through weathering of rocks and soil formation. However, the loss of base cations has increased due to acid deposition caused by industry and vehicles. This accelerated loss affects forest productivity.

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY - The variety of life forms and processes within an area. Included in the consideration of diversity are the complexities of genetic variation, number and distribution of species, and the ways in which the variety of biologic communities interact and function.

[C]

CANDIDATE RESEARCH NATURAL AREA (CRNA) - An area which has the potential for designation as a Research Natural Area; but which needs formal evaluation. Given that a CRNA meets the criteria, it must then be nominated to Congress in order to be considered for RNA designation.

COMMERCIAL FOREST LAND - Forest land that is producing, or is capable of producing, crops of industrial wood, and:

1. has not been withdrawn by Congress, the Secretary of Agriculture, or the Chief of the Forest Service;
2. existing technology and knowledge is available to ensure timber production without irreversible damage to soils productivity, or watershed conditions; and
3. existing technology and knowledge, as reflected in current research and experience, provides reasonable assurance that adequate restocking can be attained within 5 years after final harvesting.

CONGRESSIONALLY DESIGNATED WILDERNESS - An area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, so as to preserve its natural conditions and which:

1. generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable;
2. has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation;
3. has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and
4. may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

[Back to Index](#)

CONNECTIVITY - Condition in which the spatial arrangement of land cover types allows organisms and ecological processes (such as disturbance) to move across the landscape. Connectivity is the opposite of fragmentation.

CROSS-COUNTRY ATV USE - This refers to the use of ATV's off of established trails, roads or routes.

CULTURAL RESOURCES – See Heritage Resources.

[D]

DECISION CRITERIA - The primary rules or standards for evaluating Alternatives and selecting a preferred Alternative.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION - A portrayal of the land and resource conditions that are expected to result if goals and objectives are fully achieved.

[E]

ECOSYSTEM - A community of living plants and animals interacting with each other and with their physical environment. A geographic area where it is meaningful to address the interrelationships with human social systems, sources of energy, and the ecological processes that shape change over time.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION - The process of reestablishing, to the extent possible, the structure, function, and composition of ecosystems.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)– This is the most rigorous level of environmental analysis, and typically provides several alternatives and analyzes the environmental consequences of each. The EIS is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for any activity with a “significant impact on the human environment.”

EVEN-AGED MANAGEMENT - The application of a combination of actions that results in the creation of stands in which trees of essentially the same age grow together. Regeneration in a particular stand is obtained during a short period at or near the time that a stand has reached the desired age or size for regeneration, and is harvested.

[F]

FOREST PLAN - The Forest Land and Resource Management Plan is a document, which guides all natural resource management activity and establishes management standards and guidelines for a National Forest, embodying the provisions of the National Forest Management Act of 1976.

[Back to Index](#)

FOREST PLAN REVISION - A formal modification of an existing Forest Plan to address changes in the natural, social and economic environment, new information about resources on and off National Forests, and new scientific knowledge which shed new light on the assumptions of the existing Plan, and make the predicted impacts of the existing Plan less accurate and/or acceptable. Federal planning regulations require the Forest Service to revise a Forest Plan every 10-15 years.

FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLE (4WD) - A full-sized vehicle with four-wheel drive, which is registered with the state, and legal to operate on public highways. Any Sport Utility Vehicle would fall in this class, although a 4WD may be a modified vehicle intended primarily for off-highway use.

FRAGMENTATION - Breaking up of contiguous areas into progressively smaller patches of increasing degrees of isolation from each other.

[G]

GOAL - A concise statement that describes a desired condition to be achieved sometime in the future. It is normally expressed in broad, general terms and is timeless in that it has no specific date by which it is to be completed. Goal statements form the principle basis from which objectives are developed.

GUIDELINE - A preferred or advisable course of action, or level of attainment that promotes the achievement of Forest Plan goals and objectives. Guidelines are developed when:

1. professional expertise is needed to address resource management questions;
2. site conditions are variable; and
3. they contribute to the achievement of goals. A project-level analysis and a signed decision (by the responsible official) are required in order to deviate from an established guideline.

[H]

HABITAT - The environment in which an organism (plant or animal) lives.

HERITAGE RESOURCES - Resources that provide physical evidence of past human behavior relating to the disciplines of archeology, architecture, ethnology, and history. Sometimes referred to as cultural resources.

[Back to Index](#)

[I]

INTERIOR FOREST - An area of late successional or old growth forest that is large enough, and of an appropriate shape to provide conditions that minimize predation, parasitism, and microclimate fluctuations associated with forest edges. These interior forest conditions provide critical habitat for a diversity of wildlife and plant species.

[L]

LAND TYPE ASSOCIATION (LTA) - One of the most basic ecological units for Forest-wide planning; describes areas of common ecosystem characteristics and generally (but not always) numbering in the thousands of acres. LTA's are defined by similarities in general topography, geomorphic process, geology, soil and potential plant community patterns.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS AND DESIGN (LAD) - A process for synthesizing information about landscape character, and then building upon this information to describe and depict, spatially and temporally, sustainable landscape patterns. This process involves developing an inventory of functional representatives of the characteristic landscapes; conducting an assessment, or suitability analysis, of the best ecological opportunities for protection, restoration, and traditional forest management, as well as the integration of related ecological issues; and laying out a framework for broad-scale landscape design and planning.

LANDSCAPE PATTERN - The spatial arrangement of forest patches composed of different species or successional stages. The term may also be applied to patches of different land uses, such as residential, commercial or agricultural. A landscape is a heterogeneous land area composed of a cluster of interacting ecosystems that is repeated in similar form throughout.

[M]

MANAGEMENT INDICATOR SPECIES (MIS) - Species selected for monitoring because their population changes are believed to indicate the effects of management activities on habitats.

MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS (MP) - The Forest Plan provides a blend of different management objectives in management prescriptions across the forest. The Forest Plan emphasizes native plant and animal communities, provides for large, undisturbed forest ecosystems, and provides for biological diversity on both local and regional scales. Each MP has a unique value that needs to be protected and that the public needs access to.

MONITORING - The process of collecting information to evaluate whether the objective and anticipated or assumed results of a management plan are being realized, or if implementation is proceeding as planned.

[Back to Index](#)

[N]

NEED FOR CHANGE (NFC) – A document that describes the process forest managers use to identify specific changes that are needed in the Forest Plan Revision to accomplish our goals and objectives.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) of 1969 - An act requiring that an analysis be made of the nature and significance of a proposed action and its reasonable alternatives in order to determine and evaluate their predictable environmental effects, including physical, biological, economic, and social consequences and their interactions; short and long term effects; and direct, indirect, and cumulative effects. Such an analysis may result in preparation of an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement or finding that the action can be categorically excluded from the need to prepare either document.

NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT (NFMA) of 1976 - The act requiring comprehensive planning at both Regional and Forest levels. It sets forth regulations and procedures.

NON-NATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES – A species that did not originate in the location it is living and has no natural predators or disease to keep it in check. As a result, it can out-compete other species for space, food, and water negatively impacting entire populations of species.

NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI) - A formal statement by the Forest Service informing the public of the intent to revise the existing Land and Resource Management Plans. The Notice of Intent is published in the Federal Register.

[O]

OBJECTIVE - A concise, time-specific statement of measurable, planned results that respond to pre-established goals. An objective forms the basis for further planning by defining both the precise steps to be taken and the resources to be used in achieving identified goals. Objectives are action oriented, and specifically describe measurable results or desired conditions.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE (ORV) - Any motor vehicle which can be operated cross-country without benefit of a road or trail over land, snow, and other natural terrain, and includes all of the following: Multi-track and multi-wheeled vehicles, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), motorcycles and related 2, 3, and 4-wheeled vehicles, amphibious machines (water to land, and back), hovercraft, and any other vehicles that use mechanical power, including 2 and 4-wheel drive (4WD) vehicles that are highway registered, when operated off highways and roads. This definition includes snowmobiles.

OLD GROWTH FOREST - A community with dominant trees at or near biological maturity. The age and structure of an old-growth community varies with species and site. Old growth stands are sometimes characterized by a multi-layered, uneven age and size class structure; a high degree of compositional and structural patchiness and heterogeneity; and significant amounts of woody debris and tip-up mounds.

[Back to Index](#)

[P]

PLANNING CRITERIA - Rules which direct completion of the analysis used in developing the Forest Plan. Criteria may include: Management philosophy, use of science, scale of analysis, use of information, use of classification systems, preparation of documents, collaboration/consultation, and public involvement.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE - From amongst the Alternatives developed to address the range of possible solutions to the management problems of the Forest, the selecting official," using the Decision Criteria, selects that Alternative which he/she feels best resolves the management problems within the context of the mission and priorities of the Forest Service. The selected Alternative then becomes the basis for the Draft Forest Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

PROBLEM STATEMENT - A concise summary of the management concerns for a particular resource area, as identified in the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS). The Problem Statement identifies the specific concerns, and a range of possible solutions. The Plan Revision establishes Goals and Objectives to resolve the Problem Statements; the Plan Revision Alternatives and the Standards and Guidelines identify the means to resolve the Problem Statements.

[R]

RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM (ROS) - A formal Forest Service process designed to delineate, define, and integrate outdoor recreation opportunities in land and resource management planning. ROS classes are used to describe all recreation opportunity areas: from natural, undisturbed, and undeveloped to heavily used, modified and developed. ROS designations attempt to describe the kind of recreation experience one may have in a given part of the National Forest.

RESEARCH NATURAL AREA (RNA) - Congressionally-designated areas which are permanently protected and maintained in a natural condition, and which include:

1. unique ecosystems or ecological features,
2. habitat for rare or sensitive species of plants and animals; and
3. high-quality examples of common ecosystems.

The national network of RNA's helps to protect genetic, species, ecosystem, and landscape level biological diversity. RNA's that represent natural condition, common ecosystems serve as a baseline or reference areas which can be compared with similar ecosystems undergoing silvicultural or other management prescriptions.

[Back to Index](#)

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT – This is a compilation of background material on the status of a particular resource area, on a local, regional and national scale. The Resource Assessment describes the present condition of a particular resource, and speculates on the future condition of the resource based on current and expected trends. For example, an Assessment of the recreation resource would include reliable data on national trends in outdoor recreation, and the role of National Forests in addressing these trends; a discussion of outdoor recreation trends in the Upper Great Lakes region, how they may differ from national trends, and how the region's National Forests have been impacted; and, finally, a discussion on outdoor recreation trends in the area, the demands and impacts on the Ottawa National Forest, and the role of this National Forest in meeting local, regional and national trends in outdoor recreation.

ROAD - Any corridor on the land which is capable of being traveled by a full-sized vehicle; and which is not designated as a trail (with the expressed purpose of restricting full-sized vehicles).

ROAD ABANDONMENT - Method of road obliteration in which the road is rendered unusable to motorized vehicles.

ROAD CLOSURE - Process of closing a road to public vehicle traffic. Closures are used on system roads (roads intended for future use) for the purpose of limiting or prohibiting particular types of travel. System roads may be closed to all motorized traffic; or they may be closed to vehicle traffic, but remain accessible to trail vehicles (such as snowmobiles or ATV's). Gates may be used as closure devices when the intent is to restrict public traffic but permit administrative traffic, or to restrict traffic periodically or seasonally. Less flexible closure devices, such as berms, rocks, tank traps or downed trees may be used when the intent is to close the road to any vehicle traffic and essentially "mothball" the road until it is needed again some years in the future. Temporary roads may be closed during their period of operation, but will be obliterated when their utility is complete.

ROAD DENSITY - The quantity of roads per unit area, measured as miles per square mile.

ROAD OBLITERATION - Process of removing a road from the landscape. Obliterations are used on system and temporary roads, which are to be removed from service (decommissioned). Obliteration can include removing evidence of any access points; removing any structures from the roadbed (such as culverts, bridges, signs, guiderails, etc.); and restoring wetlands and riparian areas.

RECORD OF DECISION (ROD) – This is a public document that identifies all alternatives, provides the agency's final decision, and the rationale behind the decision. It accompanies the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

[Back to Index](#)

[S]

SCENERY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SMS) – This system integrates aesthetics with biological, physical, and social/cultural resources when considering forest scenery during forest planning and project design.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA (SMA) - National Forest System lands (except Wilderness) that contain outstanding examples of plant and animal communities, geological features, scenic grandeur, or other special attributes. Special Management Areas can be designated administratively or by legislation. SMA's are managed to emphasize recreational and other specific related values. Other uses are permitted within SMA's to the extent that they are in harmony with the purpose for which the area was designated.

SPECIES VIABILITY EVALUATION (SVE) – This process requires the Forest to evaluate the viability of existing native and desired non-native species. The process includes identifying species at risk, compiling information about the species, and evaluating potential risks to viability under each of the plan alternatives.

STANDARD - A required course of action, or level of attainment that promotes the achievement of Forest Plan goals and objectives. Standards are developed when:

- unacceptable impacts are expected (without the standard);
- they are critical to Forest Plan objectives; and/or
- laws or policies do not address a proposed course or when they need further clarification.

Standards are mandatory. A Forest Plan amendment is required in order to deviate from an established standard.

SUCCESSION - A series of dynamic changes by which organisms succeed one another through plant community (seral) stages leading to a potential natural community or climax. In the Plan Revision process, these are generally referred to as early, mid and late successional stages. Stages are transitory in nature, and describe a plant community from its earliest growth condition to a condition of full maturity.

[T]

TOTAL ROAD DENSITY - The measure of all roads per unit area, whether open or closed to traffic.

TRAIL - Any corridor on the land intended exclusively as a pathway for travel by foot, stock (i.e. horseback), or trail vehicles - such as bicycles, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, and motorcycles (dirt bikes).

TRAFFIC SERVICE LEVEL (TSL) - A classification system developed by the Forest Service to describe a road in terms of the standard of vehicle one can expect to operate and the travel experience one can expect to encounter on the roadway.

[Back to Index](#)

[U]

UNEVEN-AGED MANAGEMENT - The application of a combination of actions needed to simultaneously maintain continuous forest cover, recurring regeneration of desirable species, and the orderly growth and development of trees through a range of diameter or age classes. This can be applied to a specific stand of trees or an entire ecosystem.

UNSUITABLE FOREST LAND – Forest-land not managed for timber production because:

- Congress, the Secretary of Agriculture, or the Chief of the Forest Service has withdrawn it from suitability;
- it is not producing or capable of producing crops of industrial wood;
- technology is not available to prevent irreversible damage to soils productivity, or watershed conditions;
- there is no reasonable assurance based on existing technology and knowledge, that it is possible to restock lands within 5 years after final harvest, as reflected in current research and experience
- there is, at present, a lack of adequate information about responses to timber management activities; or
- timber management is inconsistent with or not cost efficient in meeting the management requirements and multiple-use objectives stated in the Forest Plan.

[Back to Index](#)