

CHAPTER I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

PROPOSED ACTION

The Inyo National Forest is proposing the implementation of a comprehensive Land and Resource Management Plan (Plan). The Plan will set general direction for the management of all lands and resources administered by the Inyo National Forest for the next ten to fifteen years. This planning process is conducted under the auspices of the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, the Forest Rangeland Renewable Resource Planning Act (RPA) of 1974 and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976.

This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documents the environmental analysis conducted as part of the planning process, including the range of management alternatives that were considered, with their associated outputs and environmental impacts.

The analysis focuses on the public issues, management concerns, and resource and development opportunities of the Forest. The need to ensure the multiple use of the Forest, to provide for a sustained yield of goods and services, and to maximize net public benefit in an environmentally sound manner are addressed in this document. Those laws and regulations that provide direction for this planning process are discussed in the following section.

The concept of net public benefit is central to this planning effort. Net public benefit represents the value of all Forest resources and benefits, minus all management costs. It is the intent of this analysis to generate a Preferred Alternative that maximizes net public benefit.

Chapter I of the EIS describes the planning process and identifies the public issues and management concerns that initiate and provide the basis for the analysis. Chapter II describes the range of alternative management strategies considered, including the Preferred Alternative (the proposed Plan). Chapter III describes the Forest environment in terms of social, economic, and natural resource factors. Chapter IV discloses the major environmental consequences projected for the planning alternatives. The Preferred Alternative is developed and described in the Plan, the document that accompanies this Environmental Impact Statement.

BACKGROUND AND DIRECTION

In the mid-1970s Congress acted upon the need for improved planning for the National Forests. Two pieces of legislation were passed: (1) the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (RPA), and (2) the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA), which amended RPA. This legislation requires that comprehensive, long-range plans replace the separate, and often uncoordinated, resource management plans that had traditionally been used on the National Forests. The United States Department of Agriculture developed implementing regulations for RPA and NFMA (36 CFR 219, Subpart A). RPA, NFMA,

and the planning regulations direct the Forest Service to plan for lands and resources at three levels: National, Regional, and Forest.

Planning at the national level produces two major documents: the RPA Assessment and the RPA Program. The Assessment addresses the amount and location of the Nation's renewable natural resources. The Program sets broad direction for the management of those resources for a ten-year period. The program is reviewed and updated as needed every five years.

Planning at the Regional level produces a Regional Guide. This Guide conveys national direction to the National Forests, establishes Region-wide management standards and guidelines, and responds to Regional issues and concerns.

Planning on each National Forest produces a Plan. The Plan assesses the capability of the Forest to produce goods and services, establishes management direction specific to the Forest, and responds to local issues and concerns. Plans are reviewed at least every five years and are updated (amended) as needed. Plans are revised every ten to fifteen years.

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) established the need to analyze any major federal action that could significantly affect environmental quality. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), created by NEPA, developed implementing regulations for that Act (40 CFR 1500). As the Forest planning process is a major federal action, NEPA and the CEQ regulations apply. The Plan's Environmental Impact Statement (this document) follows the format specified by 40 CFR 1502.10.

In addition to RPA, NFMA, NEPA, and their implementing regulations, Planning for the Inyo National Forest is directed by the Forest Service Manual (FSM) Chapter 1920 and Region 5 Land Management Planning Direction.

PLANNING PROCESS

Land and resource planning at all three levels within the National Forest System is a systematic, interdisciplinary task. The task is performed by an interdisciplinary (ID) team composed of Forest personnel who represent diverse areas of professional and technical knowledge about natural resources and their management. Chapter V lists the ID team members who conducted this environmental analysis and their qualifications and responsibilities.

The ID team addresses the interrelationships of physical, biological, social, and economic aspects of the environment; considers the effects of managing any combination of resources on all other resources; and weighs resource and dollar costs relative to benefits, goods, services, and uses provided. The Forest planning process is defined by 36 CFR 219.12. Those actions are:

1. Identification of purpose and need.
2. Development of planning criteria.
3. Inventory data and information collection.
4. Analysis of the management situation.
5. Formulation of alternatives.
6. Estimation of the effects of alternatives.

7. Evaluation of the alternatives.
8. Recommendation of a preferred alternative.
9. Plan approval.
10. Monitoring and evaluation.

This EIS and Plan display both the analysis process and the preferred alternative, together with a record of decision from the Regional Forester documenting recommendation and approval of the preferred alternative over other alternatives. Monitoring and evaluation are ongoing processes that follow publication of the record of decision, and continue over the ten- to fifteen-year period before the Plan is revised.

The Plan will be implemented after approval by the Regional Forester. It can be amended at any time. If an amendment is proposed, an environmental analysis will be conducted to determine whether the amendment represents a significant change from the Plan. If the change is significant, an Environmental Impact Statement and formal public involvement is required. If not, the type and amount of public involvement and documentation needed will be determined by the type and degree of change that is proposed.

The Plan will be revised every ten to fifteen years or as needed because of changing conditions. Monitoring and evaluation will be an ongoing process during Plan implementation.

The Regional Forester's decision to approve the Plan and its EIS is subject to the public's rights of administrative appeal. Preliminary process decisions are not subject to appeal. [See 36 CFR 211.18(b)(11)]

RELATIONSHIP WITH PAST AND FUTURE PLANNING

The Plan supersedes all existing plans for individual resources or land units. These existing plans will be treated in one of three ways: (1) incorporated into the Plan without revision, (2) incorporated into the Plan with direction to be revised or updated, or (3) replaced by the Plan.

EXISTING PLANS INCORPORATED INTO THE PLAN WITHOUT REVISION:

- Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest Management Plan (1958)
- Buttermilk Deer Herd Management Plan (California Department of Fish and Game) (1984)
- Environmental Assessment and Operating Plan for Geothermal Exploration in the Long Valley Caldera (Lease Block I) (1980)
- Environmental Assessment and Operating Plan for Union Geothermal Inyo Domes Project (1985)
- Environmental Assessment for Geothermal Leasing in the Monache Meadows Area (1985)

- Erosion Prevention Plan for Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (1983 update)
- Erosion Prevention Plan for June Mountain Ski Area (1982)
- Fishery Management Plan for Lahontan Cutthroat Trout salmo clarkii henshawi in California and Western Nevada Waters (1986)
- Geothermal Leasing Program for the Mono-Long Valley Known Geothermal Resource Area (programmatic Final Environmental Impact Statement) (1973)
- Golden Trout Habitat and Watershed Restoration Plan for the Kern Plateau (1983)
- Goodale Deer Herd Management Plan (California Department of Fish and Game) (1983)
- Hot Creek Wild Trout Management Plan (California Department of Fish and Game and Inyo National Forest) (1986)
- Inyo-White Mountains Deer Herd Management Plan (California Department of Fish and Game) (1985)
- June Lake Loop - A Review of Current Water Uses and Future Needs (1982)
- Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Draft Recovery Plan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) (1985)
- Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Habitat Management Plan (1983)
- Law Enforcement Plan (1985)
- Long Valley Caldera - Mono Crater Contingency Plan (1983)
- Long Valley Caldera - Mono Crater Fire and Air Operation Plan, (Inyo and Toiyabe National Forests) (1983)
- Mammoth County Water District Water Management Plan Environmental Assessment (1977)
- Management Plan for the Casa Diablo Deer Herd (California Department of Fish and Game) (1985)
- Management Plan for the East Walker Deer Herd (California Department of Fish and Game)
- Management Plan for the Sherwin Deer Herd (California Department of Fish and Game) (1985)
- Monache Deer Herd Plan (California Department of Fish and Game) (1981)
- Mono Lake Deer Herd Management Plan (California Department of Fish and Game)
- Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Management Plan (1981)

- Pacific Coast Recovery Plan for the American Peregrine Falcon (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) (1982)
- Pacific States Bald Eagle Recovery Plan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) (1986)
- Paiute Cutthroat Trout Recovery Plan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) (1985)
- Pronghorn Antelope Habitat Management Plan (Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Fish and Game, Forest Service) (1982)
- Research Natural Area (RNA) Management Plans for established Research Natural Areas:

Indiana Summit	Established 1932
Harvey Monroe Hall	Established 1933
White Mountain	Established 1953
Last Chance Meadow	Established 1982
Sentinel Meadow	Established 1983
- Rock Creek Recreation Area Composite Management Plan (1964)
- Saline Valley and Lee Flat Burro Herd Management Plan (1985)
- Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Recovery and Conservation Plan (California Department of Fish and Game, Forest Service, Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Park, Yosemite National Park) (1984)
- Supplemental Environmental Assessment for Geothermal Leasing in the Mono-Long Valley KGRA (Lease Block II) (1984)
- Watershed Improvement Needs Plan (1982)
- Wild Horse Management Plan for White Mountain and Inyo Mountain Herds (1976)

EXISTING PLANS INCORPORATED WITH DIRECTION TO REVISE OR UPDATE:

- Golden Trout Wilderness Management Plan (1982)
- Hoover Wilderness Management Plan (1977)
- Individual grazing allotment management plans (various dates)
- Interagency Motor Vehicle Use Plan (ORV Plan) (1977)
- John Muir Wilderness Management Plan (1979)
- Minarets Wilderness Management Plan (1979) (revise to include 1984 wilderness additions)

EXISTING PLANS THAT WILL BE REPLACED BY THE PLAN:

- Mammoth-Mono Unit Plan (1979)
- Ranger District Multiple Use Plans (circa 1970)
- Timber Management Plan for Owens River Working Circle (1967).

The Plan and its Environmental Impact Statement will serve as umbrella documents for all future planning on the Inyo. The annual program and budget for the Forest will conform to priorities and guidelines set forth in the Plan. All permits, contracts, cooperative agreements, and other instruments for occupancy and use will conform to the Plan. Environmental analyses for individual projects will be tiered to the Plan EIS and will add only that detail needed for site-specific decisions.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The planning documents are public documents. They are intended to explain the planning and environmental analysis processes in terms that are understandable. It is difficult, however, to describe natural resource management without using a considerable amount of specialized terminology. See Chapter VIII, Glossary, for definitions of the terms discussed in this document.

The data and analysis, decisions and activities upon which the EIS and Plan have been built are documented in the planning records and incorporated by reference into the Plan. The planning records are available for review by the public during regular business hours at the Forest Supervisor's Office, Inyo National Forest, 873 North Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514, phone (619) 873-5841.

LOCATION OF THE PLANNING AREA

The area covered by the Plan includes all National Forest System lands within the Inyo National Forest boundary, (1,931,115 acres) and 25,201 acres of the Sierra National Forest administered by the Inyo. Approximately 114,941 additional acres of land in other ownership lie within the Forest boundary. Wherever Forest acreage is displayed in the EIS and Plan, Sierra National Forest land is included. Land in other ownership is excluded. Exceptions are otherwise indicated.

In September, 1984, Congress designated the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area, which encompasses 116,000 acres of land within the Forest boundary. Detailed resource and development planning for the Scenic Area is being conducted separately from this planning process.

The Planning area lies in east-central California along the Nevada border (see the vicinity map). The Sierra Nevada Crest and its Eastern Escarpment are included, as are most of the Inyo, White, and Glass Mountain ranges.

The communities of Mammoth Lakes, Lee Vining, and June Lake lie within the Forest boundary. The City of Bishop and the communities of Big Pine, Independence, and Lone Pine lie between the eastern and western segments of the Forest. The planning area area lies in California's Inyo, Mono, Fresno, Madera, and Tulare Counties and Nevada's Mineral and Esmeralda Counties.

The Inyo National Forest is a six- to eight-hour drive north from the Southern California population centers of Los Angeles and San Diego, and is easily accessible all year from those areas. The drive from the Sacramento and San Francisco Bay areas also takes from six to eight hours, but the routes cross high mountain passes which are usually closed during the winter months because of snow accumulations. The Forest is a three- to five-hour drive south from Reno, Nevada and is the same distance north from Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Forest has Ranger District Offices in Lee Vining, Mammoth Lakes, Bishop, and Lone Pine. The Forest Supervisor's Office is in Bishop.

Table 1
Lands Administered by the Inyo National Forest

<u>County</u>	<u>NFS** Acres</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Mono (California)	811,049	42.0
Inyo "	794,352	41.1
Tulare "	186,165	9.7
Madera "	50,406	2.6
Fresno "	25,256	1.3
Esmeralda (Nevada)	49,884	2.6
Mineral "	14,003	0.7
TOTAL	1,931,115	100.0

* All acreage figures displayed in the planning documents are derived from the Forest data base. They may differ from acreage figures displayed in other documents. These acreage figures are used for planning only. They could not be used as a basis for legal action without site-specific survey information.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

This section discusses the issues and concerns that were identified in the original public involvement process for this Plan. Public issues and management concerns are aspects of natural resource management that receive special emphasis in Forest planning. The issues and concerns collectively

indicate the scope and nature of the analysis needed for the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Inyo National Forest identified public issues by interacting with individuals and organizations that expressed interest in this planning process. Management concerns of the Forest Service include those from national, regional, and Forest levels. The Final Plan was developed in response to comments received on the Draft Plan, submitted to the public for review in October 1986. Forest Service responses to these comments are displayed in the Public Response Appendix.

Not all public issues and management concerns related to Inyo National Forest management are appropriate for inclusion in this planning process. Those that have been selected for consideration address concerns that can be resolved by the Forest Service at the Inyo National Forest level, require land allocation decisions or broad management direction, have long-term importance, and have not been resolved in other recent decisions that were made with significant public involvement.

Each selected issue or concern is representative of public comment, legislation or litigation decisions, management evaluation of resource conflicts, or supply and demand analyses. In most cases, both the public and management have expressed interest in each general resource subject. Issues and concerns have, therefore, been consolidated and identified as "issue/concerns".

This section only displays those issues and concerns that were identified prior to distribution of the Draft Forest Plan. Those comments that were received in response to the Draft Plan are incorporated in the Public Response Appendix and are answered in more detail by the Forest Service in that document.

The following list displays the general concerns that relate to specific resources of the Forest. Each of these contains several specific issues or concerns that were identified in the initial scoping effort of this planning process. Public issue/concerns are indicated by (p); management by (m). Economic and social issue/concerns are addressed first, followed by natural resource issue/concerns.

ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Issue/Concern: How can the Forest produce goods and services to maximize economic efficiency?

- Thoroughly discuss discount rates and value of non-market goods and services showing the possibilities of different results under different assumptions (p)
- How can long-term and short-term economic benefits be balanced? (p)
- Do Forest Service programs help maintain economic stability and employment in local communities? (p)

SOCIAL ASSESSMENT

Issue/Concern: How does the management of the Inyo National Forest influence the local social environment and lifestyle?

- Which segments of the population and which communities might be impacted by Forest management policy? (m)
- Where does the Forest have an influence on the public and community? (m)

AIR QUALITY

Issue/Concern: What can the Forest do to influence air quality?

- Dust, smoke, and regional haze are the most serious air quality problems on and near the Forest. (m)

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Issue/Concern: How should the Forest manage cultural resources and provide for the use of Forest lands by American Indians for traditional practices?

- Archaeological sites should be inventoried and protected, including restrictions on motorized access. (p)
- Native American religious and ceremonial sites should remain inviolate. (p)
- Cultural resource interpretive activities on the Forest are very well attended. (p)
- Local American Indians wish to use Forest land for traditional cultural and religious practices. (p)
- There is a need to effectively integrate the management of cultural resources with the management of other resources. (m)

DIVERSITY

Issue/Concern: What is a desirable level of vegetative diversity for the Inyo National Forest, and what should the Forest do to maintain or achieve that level?

- Manage natural forces (such as insects, disease, and fire) to maintain diversity in the long term while minimizing the disruptive effects of those forces in the short term. (m)
- Respond to the demand for land uses (such as hydroelectric and geothermal developments, road and utility corridors, campgrounds, timber management, and mineral extraction) that threaten to reduce diversity. (m)

- Riparian areas and coniferous forests suitable for timber management have the greatest potential diversity and are the most threatened by management activities. (m)
- Full control of wildfires reduces diversity. (m)

ENERGY

Issue/Concern: How does energy development fit in with the overall resource management program on the Forest? Geothermal energy is addressed under Minerals.

- Resolve conflicts between hydroelectric projects and water-dependent resources. (p & m)
- Resolve potential conflicts between wind farms and visual resources, soil stability, and other land uses. (m)
- Keep energy development consistent with other resources, allowing no irreparable damage. (p)
- Encourage hydroelectric use outside wilderness and Further Planning areas. (p)
- Consider energy resources such as wind, solar, wood fuel. (p)

FACILITIES

Issue/Concern: What level of facility construction and maintenance is needed to support Forest management objectives?

- Eliminate the backlog of building and utility maintenance to meet health and safety codes. (m)
- Provide for the expansion of administrative facilities where needed. (m)
- There is a need for a materials management and development plan. (m)
- There is a need to coordinate with local fire districts when planning structural developments on the Forest. (m)
- Determine the feasible mass transit options on the Forest. (m)
- There is a need for more roads for recreational access. (p)
- There is a need to reduce roads to prevent environmental damage. (p)
- Construct roads only where environmental damage can be minimized. (p)
- There is a need to regularly examine agreements between the Forest Service and Inyo and Mono Counties regarding the maintenance of roads that come under both jurisdictions. (m)

- There is a need for more trails and better maintenance of existing trails. (p & m)
- The need for trails specifically includes nordic skiing, hiking, OHV, and handicapped-access trails. (p & m)
- There is a need to locate, design, and construct trails to provide the desired experience while minimizing resource damage. (p & m)
- The need for new trails is greatest in concentrated recreation use areas and nordic ski areas. (m)

FISH

Issue/Concern: How should fish habitat on the Inyo National Forest be managed?

- Protect stream habitat from grazing, recreation development, and water diversions. (p)
- Improve stream habitat quality for resident trout. (m)
- Meet the increasing demand for fishing. (m)
- Assure population viability of all resident fish species. (p)
- Protect lands surrounding streams and lakes with the potential for classification as wild trout waters. (p)
- Address the impact of small hydro development on fisheries. (m)
- Manage habitat for the recovery of threatened Paiute and Lahontan cutthroat trout. (p & m)

FURTHER PLANNING AREAS

Issue/Concern: How should Further Planning Areas on the Forest be managed?

- There is a need for more wilderness. (p)
- There is a need for no more or not much more wilderness. (p)
- Consider watershed values when recommending wilderness. (p)
- Resist the pressure from industry to immediately "road" those areas made available for non-wilderness uses by the California Wilderness Act (thus precluding possible future wilderness recommendations). (p)
- Resist the pressure from wilderness advocacy groups to manage non-wilderness areas as "de facto" wilderness. (p)

- Make well-considered recommendations for the wilderness or non-wilderness management of Further Planning Areas. Consider the suitability and manageability of each area for wilderness and the trade-offs between wilderness designation and other resources and activities. (m)
- There is a need to coordinate Inyo National Forest wilderness recommendations with BLM recommendations for adjoining lands. (m & p)

GEOLOGY

Issue/Concern: What is the role of geologic resources and services in the overall Forest management program?

- There is a potential demand for groundwater as a domestic water source for Mammoth Lakes. (m)
- There is a need to assess groundwater resources on a Forest-wide basis. (m)
- There is a need to recognize and make allowance for the risk to planned Forest projects posed by geologic processes such as landslides, earthquakes, and volcanic events. (m)
- There is a need to protect outstanding geologic features that are vulnerable to damage or destruction. (p & m)

LANDS

Issue/Concern: What land use and landownership adjustment policies and procedures are needed to respond both to local community needs and to the demands of regional and national publics?

- Should National Forest lands adjacent to growing communities be available (through exchange) for private development programs? (m)
- As the Mammoth and June Lake communities expand, there is an increasing demand to locate community service facilities on public land under special use permit. (m)
- Electric energy conveyors have expressed their need for a future utility corridor paralleling the major north-south interstate Pacific DC Intertie transmission line. (m)

MINERALS

Issue/Concern: How can the Forest best encourage mineral (including geothermal) exploration and development while protecting surface resource values and other land uses?

- To what extent should National Forest land be available for geothermal exploration and power plant development? (p)

- What effects would geothermal development have on the environment and on the recreational attractions that support the local economy? (p & m)
- What are the long-term effects on surface resources and on groundwater of removing geothermal fluids? (p & m)
- Consider the impact of additional wilderness and/or additional mineral withdrawals on mineral activities. (p)
- There is a need to address the impacts of mineral exploration and development on surface resources such as visual quality, soil stability, vegetation, and wilderness values. (m)

PEST MANAGEMENT

Issue/Concern: What is the appropriate pest management strategy for the Inyo?

- It is desirable to use cultural, biological, or mechanical controls instead of chemical pesticides. (p)

PROTECTION

Issue/Concern: What is the appropriate fire management strategy for the Inyo?

- Allow natural fires to burn in appropriate areas. (p)
- There is a need to determine the most cost-effective fire organization for the Inyo National Forest, depending largely on the combination of fire suppression strategies implemented. (m)

RANGE

Issue/Concern: How should the Inyo balance the needs of the range program (domestic livestock and wild horses and burros) with the need to protect and/or produce other resources?

- Full fire control contributes to declining range forage outputs. (p)
- Cattle overgraze riparian areas and key wildlife wintering and fawning areas, resulting in increased erosion and loss of vegetation for forage and cover. (p)
- The grazing program should not be reduced or prevented from increasing as a result of the issues listed above. (p)
- How many animals are appropriate for a wild horse or burro Chapter I management territory? How is the range resource equitably apportioned to wild horses and burros, native wildlife, and domestic livestock? (p)

- There are many factors limiting the ability of the Forest to meet the President's target for red meat production (46 percent increase over specified base level). (m)

RECREATION

Issue/Concern: What is the best recreational opportunity program for the Inyo (considering supply, demand, other resource management and development opportunities, and environmental protection needs)?

- Recreation development is of concern to many people, and of vital concern to some, especially to local area residents. (p)
- The public is collectively interested in the entire range of development options. (p)
- The resource values that attract recreationists to this area are extremely important and should rarely be compromised. (p & m)
- The public is dissatisfied with the reduced use seasons and deteriorating facilities they have encountered in recent years. (p & m)
- The supply of overnight facilities is falling behind demand. (m)
- Day use facilities, such as trails and interpretive sites, are insufficient to meet needs. (m)
- There are major potential conflicts between recreational developments and small hydroelectric development, geothermal development, and timber harvest in the red fir forest east of San Joaquin Ridge. (m)
- Should more land be made available immediately for added alpine ski area capacity? (p)
- Alpine ski area potential should not be compromised by other management activities on identified potential ski areas until the demand for skiing begins to level off. (m)
- Alpine ski areas have impacts on visual quality, soil stability, water quality and quantity, transportation patterns, safety, the local community, and landownership patterns. (m)
- Community growth in response to increased alpine skiing could negatively affect summer recreation sites on Forest lands near growing communities. (m)
- There is a need for more opportunities for OHV use. (p)
- There is a need for more restriction on OHV use. (p)
- Remove OHV routes from sensitive areas. (p)

RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS

Issue/Concern: What contribution should the Inyo make to the national and regional systems of Research Natural Areas (RNAs)?

- Research Natural Areas should be identified and established. (m & p)
- The Inyo should confirm the fact that all botanical RNA targets assigned to the Forest have been met. (m)

RIPARIAN AREAS

Issue/Concern: What is the significance of riparian areas on the Forest, and how should riparian area-dependent resources be maintained, enhanced, and/or restored?

- Maintain and increase riparian vegetation. (p)
- Livestock grazing, recreation, and water diversion have impacts on riparian areas. (p)
- Energy developments, mineral activities, and timber harvest represent actual or potential conflicts with riparian area-dependent resources. (m)
- Accelerated erosion in wet meadows (including active streambanks and channel degradation) is of special concern. These problems are most severe in the White Mountains and on the Kern Plateau. (m)
- The current policy of full wildfire control prevents the use of unplanned ignitions to eliminate woody vegetation encroaching on wet meadows. (m)

SENSITIVE PLANTS

Issue/Concern: How should the Forest manage habitat for sensitive plant species?

- Protect threatened and endangered species. (p)
- Consider the effects of Forest management on all native plant species. (p)
- What is the best overall approach to managing the sensitive plant program? (m)
- How should potential conflicts between the needs of sensitive plants and other resources and activities be mitigated? (m)

SPECIAL INTEREST AREAS

Issue/Concern: Should the Forest consider establishing any additional Special Interest Areas?

- Establish special areas to protect archaeological sites, threatened and endangered species, botanical, geological, and visual quality areas. (p)
- The Forest is directed to identify candidates for geologic Special Interest Areas. The Inyo has many outstanding geologic features. (m)
- The Forest needs to evaluate National Natural Landmark nominees proposed by the Department of Interior and to consider nominating other outstanding features on the Forest for National Natural Landmark listing. (m)

TIMBER

Issue/Concern: What is the best balance between timber (including fuelwood) production, other resource management and development opportunities, and environmental protection needs?

- Establish a regulated forest to meet long-term sustained yield on all available, suitable timber land. (m)
- Integrate silvicultural practices with other resource values. (p & m)
- Determine the size of the managed timber base, resolving conflicts between timber and other resources. (m)
- Provide public-use fuelwood to meet demand. (p)
- Maintain the opportunity for active management of pinyon-juniper. (p & m)
- Consider the conflict between public fuelwood gathering and other values such as wildlife habitat and unique or outstanding vegetation types. (m)

VISUAL RESOURCES

Issue/Concern: What role does visual quality play in the overall resource management program, and how can that quality be protected and enhanced?

- Maintain and manage for visual quality. (p)
- Resolve conflicts between visual quality and other resources. (m)
- Maintain or enhance current visual resources and scenic attractions. (m)

WATERSHED

Issue/Concern: How should the Forest respond to the needs for water quality, increased water yields, water rights for Forest resource management, and healthy watershed condition?

- Soil productivity is declining. (m)
- There is a need to rehabilitate damaged or deteriorated watersheds. (m)
- Adopt policies in timber management, grazing, and recreation that enhance watersheds. (m)
- There is a lack of legal mechanisms for obtaining water rights for nonconsumptive water uses (those dependent on water in place). (m)
- There is a public demand for more water yield and availability. (p & m)
- There is competition between consumptive and nonconsumptive water uses. (m)

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

Issue/Concern: What recommendations should the Forest make for the management of candidate wild and scenic rivers?

- Potential additions to the wild and scenic rivers system should not be threatened. (p)
- Preserve free-flowing rivers unspoiled in their natural state and consider for wild and scenic rivers system. (p)
- Assess candidate rivers for inclusion in the wild and scenic rivers system. (m)

WILDERNESS

Issue/Concern: Is there any need for change in the management of designated wilderness on the Forest?

- Examine existing wilderness management plans for consistency and responsiveness to current conditions. Provide for the needed changes in the Plan. (p & m)
- There is a need to establish direction for wilderness designated by the California Wilderness Act of 1984. (p & m)

WILDLIFE

Issue/Concern: How, where, and to what degree should wildlife habitat be maintained and enhanced, and how should wildlife needs be coordinated with other resource management and development opportunities on the Forest?

- What is a desirable level of diversity, amount, and distribution of wildlife habitat? (p & m)
- What relative emphasis should be given to habitat for the various wildlife species? (p & m)
- How should wildlife needs be balanced with the needs of competing resources? (p & m)
- Full control of wildfires reduces habitat for wildlife dependent on early seral stages. (m)
- What contribution can management make to the growing demand for wildlife-related recreation (hunting and nature study)?
- Deer numbers have declined over the past twenty to thirty years. (p & m)
- The Forest must analyze the opportunities for meeting the 1980 RPA Program goal of increasing mule deer numbers 20 percent. (m)
- Sage grouse populations are declining. (p & m)
- Blue grouse habitat should be protected. (m)
- There is a need to manage endangered species on the Forest (bald eagle and peregrine falcon) for species recovery. (m)
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- How many goshawk nest sites are needed to maintain population viability?
How many of these sites should be maintained in stands of suitable timber?
- Sierra Nevada mountain sheep should be reintroduced into historic range.(p & m)
- The management of Nelson mountain sheep should be emphasized. (p)
- Protect habitat for sensitive and special interest species not addressed in specific issues or concerns. (m)
- Maintain enough snags, down logs, and overall habitat diversity to ensure population viability for snag-dependent species. (m)
- The Forest would have difficulty meeting the 1980 RPA Program goal for cavity-nesting birds while meeting the RPA timber target. (m)
- Manage riparian habitat to ensure the viability of dependent wildlife. (p & m)
- Manage Great Basin shrub habitat types so that the viability of wildlife dependent on early seral stages is ensured. (m)