



CHAPTER I

Introduction



MENDOCINO NATIONAL FOREST

LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) has been developed to direct the management of the Mendocino National Forest. The goal of the Plan is to provide a management program reflecting a mix of activities for the use and protection of the Forest. It fulfills legislative requirements while addressing local, regional, and national issues. To accomplish this, the Forest Plan:

- establishes the management direction and associated long-range goals and objectives for the Forest;
- specifies the standards, approximate timing, and vicinity of the practices necessary to implement that direction; and
- establishes the monitoring and evaluation requirements needed to ensure that the direction is being carried out, and to determine if outputs and effects have been reasonably estimated.

The Forest Plan will be reviewed at least every ten years, and revised if necessary. The Forest Supervisor will review the condition of the lands covered by the Plan at least every five years to determine whether conditions or demands of the public have changed significantly.

Preparation of the Forest Plan is required by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA), as amended by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and the implementing regulations of NFMA (Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations 219).

FOREST PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The direction contained in this Plan will be adopted upon approval and issuance of a Record of Decision by the Regional Forester, Pacific Southwest Region. Implementation of programs different from current programs is planned to begin in Fiscal Year 1995. The rate of Plan implementation and accomplishment of planned goals and objectives, is dependent on the level of funding received through the annual budget process and may vary accordingly from one year to the next. Subject to valid existing rights all future permits, contracts, etc. will be brought into compliance as soon as practicable.

Three key processes would be implemented: interagency coordination; adaptive management, and watershed analysis. Interagency coordination will ensure coordinated and consistent implementation of management strategies, particularly in the areas of late successional and old growth habitat and anadromous fisheries. Adaptive management is a continuing process of action-based planning, monitoring, researching, evaluating, and adjusting with the objective of improving the implementation and achieving the goals of the standards and guidelines and land allocations of this alternative (USDA/USDI 1994). Watershed analysis will be the process used to implement ecosystem management. Watershed analysis will focus on collecting and compiling information within the watershed that is essential for making sound management decisions. It will be an analytical process, not a decision making process. It will serve as the basis for developing project specific proposals, and determining monitoring and

restoration needs for a watershed. The information from the watershed analysis will contribute to decision making at all levels. (USDA/USDI 1994)

See Chapter V of this Plan for more discussion of Forest Plan implementation.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE FOREST PLAN TO OTHER PLANS

Development of Forest Plans is an integral part of the overall planning process used by the Forest Service. This process calls for the development of plans at the National (RPA), Regional (Regional Guide), and the National Forest (Forest Plan) levels.

The RPA Program establishes National level goals and objectives for the Forest Service and provides the basis for development of Forest Service funding requests. The RPA goals and objectives are disaggregated to each of the Forest Service Regions based on the Region's capability to provide the goods and services necessary to achieve the RPA Program.

Through Regional Planning and development of Regional Guides, the RPA Program is further disaggregated to the National Forest level based on land capability and suitability, as determined through Forest Planning and the development of Forest Plans.

The Forest Plan provides the land allocations, management direction, standards, and guidelines necessary to provide the level of goods and services to meet the Forest's share of the RPA Program goals and objectives.

When approved, this Forest Plan will replace existing Ranger District Multiple-Use Plans, the Forest Timber Management Plan, and other selected resource management plans. Refer to Appendix A for the disposition of current resource management plans. Current project plans will be reviewed for conformance to the Forest Plan and revised as necessary. Specific additional project plans needed for implementation of the Forest Plan will be prepared.

FOREST PLAN AMENDMENTS, REVISIONS, and APPEAL RIGHTS

The Forest programs and activities will be carefully monitored during Plan implementation to validate assumptions and data used in the development of the Forest Plan, and to provide a basis for proposed amendments due to unforeseen effects or conditions.

The Forest Supervisor is responsible for determining the need for, and the extent of, changes based on budget, the results of monitoring, or other changing conditions which may warrant adjustment of the Plan. The following excerpt from the NFMA Regulations, 36 CFR 219.10(f), discusses the concept of Plan amendments:

Based on an analysis of the objectives, guidelines, and other contents of the Forest Plan, the Forest Supervisor shall determine whether a proposed amendment would result in a significant change in the Plan. If the change resulting from the proposed amendment 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 resulting from the amendment is determined not to be significant for the purposes of the planning process, the Forest Supervisor may implement the amendment following appropriate public notification and satisfactory completion of the NEPA procedures.

The Forest Supervisor has the responsibility to revise the Plan if the situation, conditions, and assumptions that have been used in the development of the Plan have changed so as to require significant

changes in outputs, mitigation measures, or management emphasis and distribution throughout the Forest

The process for Plan revision is essentially the same as that used to develop the Plan with major scoping, analysis, draft documentation, public involvement, and Regional Forester approval of the proposed changes. The following excerpt from the NFMA Regulations, 36 CFR 219.10(g), provides a discussion of the concept of Plan revisions:

A Forest Plan shall ordinarily be revised on a 10-year cycle or at least every 15 years. It also may be revised whenever the Forest Supervisor determines that conditions or demands in the area covered by the Plan have changed significantly or when changes in RPA policies, goals, or objectives would have a significant effect on Forest level programs. In the monitoring and evaluation process, the ID team may recommend a revision of the Forest Plan at any time. Revisions are not effective until considered and approved in accordance with the requirements for the development and approval of a Forest Plan. The Forest Supervisor shall review the conditions on the land covered by the Plan at least every five years to determine whether conditions or demand of the public have changed significantly

Decisions that approve, significantly amend, or revise the Forest Plan are subject to appeal under 36 CFR 217. Non-significant amendments of the Forest Plan are subject to appeal under 36 CFR 215. Preliminary planning decisions made prior to release of Final Plans and other environmental documents are not appealable until issuance of decision documents

ORGANIZATION OF THE FOREST PLAN

The Forest Plan is organized in several chapters. Chapter II displays the public issues, management concerns, and opportunities which are addressed by the Plan. Chapter III contains a summary of the management situation for the economic, social, and resource elements. Chapter IV is the heart of the Plan. It describes Forest goals, Forest-wide standards and guidelines, the management practices and activities that are applicable to specific areas of the Forest, and a schedule of outputs and activities. Collectively, these form the management area prescriptions and are directly related to the management area maps. Chapter V contains direction on implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and amending the Plan.

The analysis which supports the direction contained in the Forest Plan is presented in the accompanying *Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)*. The Forest Plan and FEIS are companion documents; neither is complete in itself. The FEIS describes the alternatives considered in arriving at the Forest Plan. It also assesses the environmental effects of implementing the Plan and the alternatives considered.

The FEIS for the Forest Plan will be used as a tiered Environmental Impact Statement (40 CFR 1508.21). All environmental analyses for project implementation will use the Forest Plan direction as an umbrella. Additional detail may be required in the analyses for project level decisions. *Environmental Assessments and Decision Notices will be tiered from the Forest Plan Environmental Impact Statement.*

LOCATION

The Mendocino National Forest is situated in the North Coastal Range of California in portions of Colusa, Lake, Glenn, Mendocino, Tehama, and Trinity Counties. The Forest is readily accessible from the Bay Area and Sacramento metropolitan areas.

Upon approval, the Forest Plan will direct management of the 894,399 acre Mendocino National Forest. See Figure 1-1 for the general location of the Forest within the State of California and the Pacific Southwest Region of the Forest Service.

FIGURE 1-1 VICINITY MAP

MENDOCINO NATIONAL FOREST

California

Vicinity Map

