United States Department of Agriculture

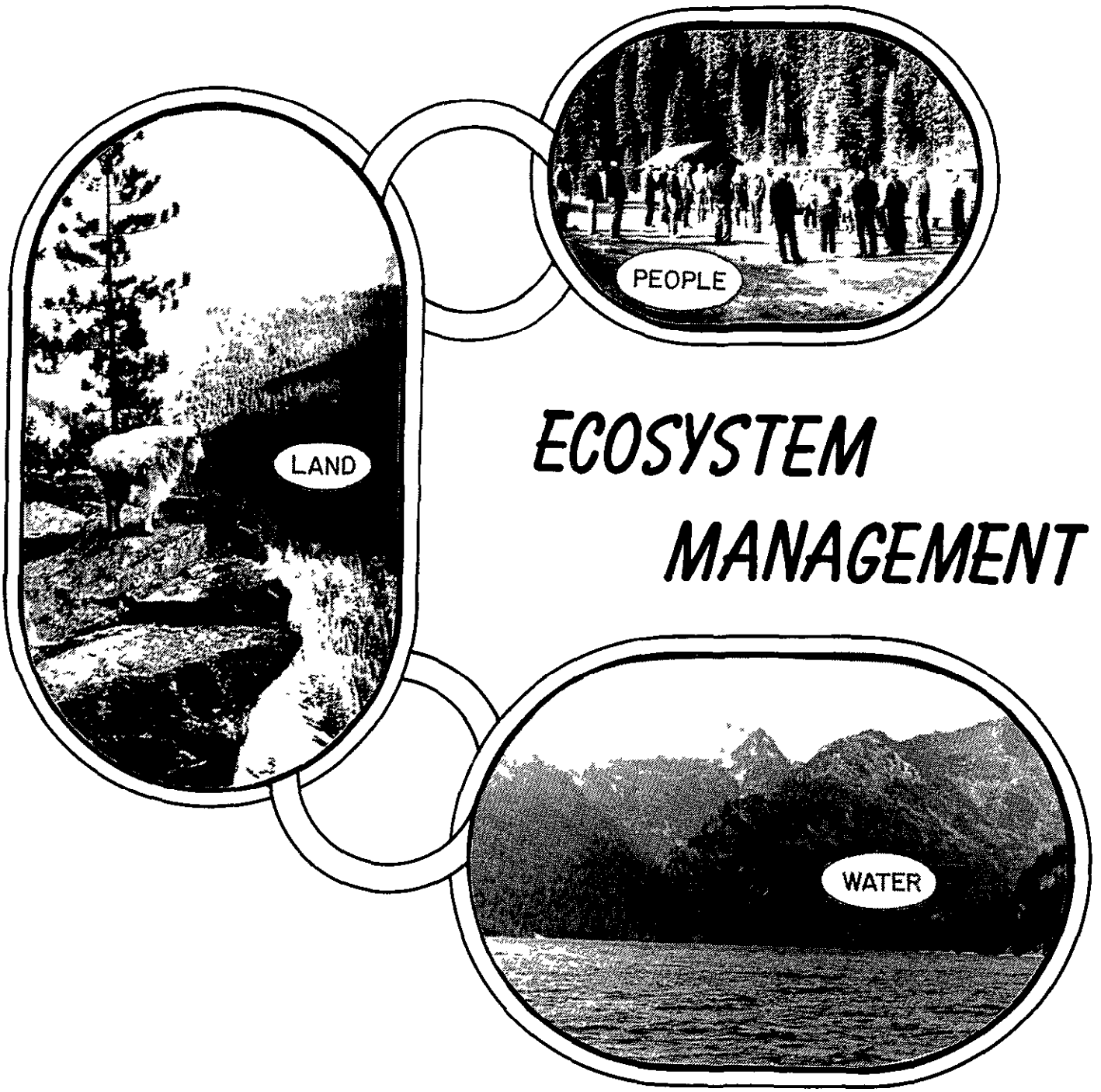
Forest Service

Northern Region

July 1994

FOREST PLAN FIVE YEAR REVIEW

Bitterroot *National Forest*



ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

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PURPOSE

The purpose of a Five Year Review is:

"to review conditions on the land covered by the Plan to determine whether conditions or demands of the public have changed significantly " (36 CFR 219 10(g))

Does the Review make decisions? How will the Review be used to change the Forest Plan?

The Review of the Forest Plan does not make decisions about how land will be managed in the future, but provides an evaluation of the Forest Plan, conditions of the land, and public expectations The Review provides a framework for proceeding with amending and revising the Forest Plan, a compiled list of needed changes

"The process of reviewing our management efforts over the last five years will assist us in making the necessary improvements and adjustments in our work activities to guarantee these valuable resources are here for future generations. We must continually ask ourselves as Forest Service employees.. do our efforts add value or make a difference to the people we serve and the resources we manage?"

Thomas G Wagner Darby District Ranger

ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

One of the most significant changes that has evolved from the first generation of Forest Plans is the idea of **Ecosystem Management (EM)** Ecosystem management is an ecological approach to how the needs of people and environmental values will be met in a way that our forests represent diverse and sustainable ecosystems It is a new framework to arrive at our decisionmaking for multiple-use EM is comprised of four main principles **considering ecological concepts; understanding natural variability; assessing and managing at various scales; and conserving diversity.**

Considering Ecological Concepts The composition of the land (what species and habitats are involved), it's structure (e g patterns of that habitat and how it is distributed) and function (the processes or changes within an ecosystem) are three ways to think about an ecosystem

Understanding Natural Variability As time passes there are natural and human-influenced changes in the abundance health or appearance of most natural resources Land managers are paying more attention to the range of changes within an ecosystem For example, the amount of old growth has varied over the past thousand years and in considering how much old growth to manage for, one consideration is how much was present over a long period of time

Assessing and Managing at Various Scales· Spatial or geographic scales of ecosystems can be thought of in terms of being as large as a global system, or as small as a spring or the underside of a rotting log Each of these extremes and the various spatial or geographic scales in between, defines within context of scale or size a community of biological social and physical components We must consider what we know about each of the resources at any specific scale

Conserving Diversity EM is a way of preserving biodiversity One definition of biodiversity is -- the variety of life and its accompanying processes In order to ensure healthy ecosystems for future generations we must protect the richness of physical cultural and biological diversity found in the current ecosystems

Current Actions: Several efforts are underway to provide the context for Ecosystem Management An Assessment for the Interior Columbia River Basin (eastern Oregon and Washington Idaho, and western Montana) will be completed in 1995 and provide an assessment of the ecosystem processes and functions, species, social systems and economic systems within the Basin This is a multi-federal agency effort affecting Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service public lands Concurrently two EISs are being developed (based on this assessment) and will also be available in 1995. Decisions will be made on management strategies for the Basin Regional Guides and BLM District and Forest Plans may be revised based on these decisions

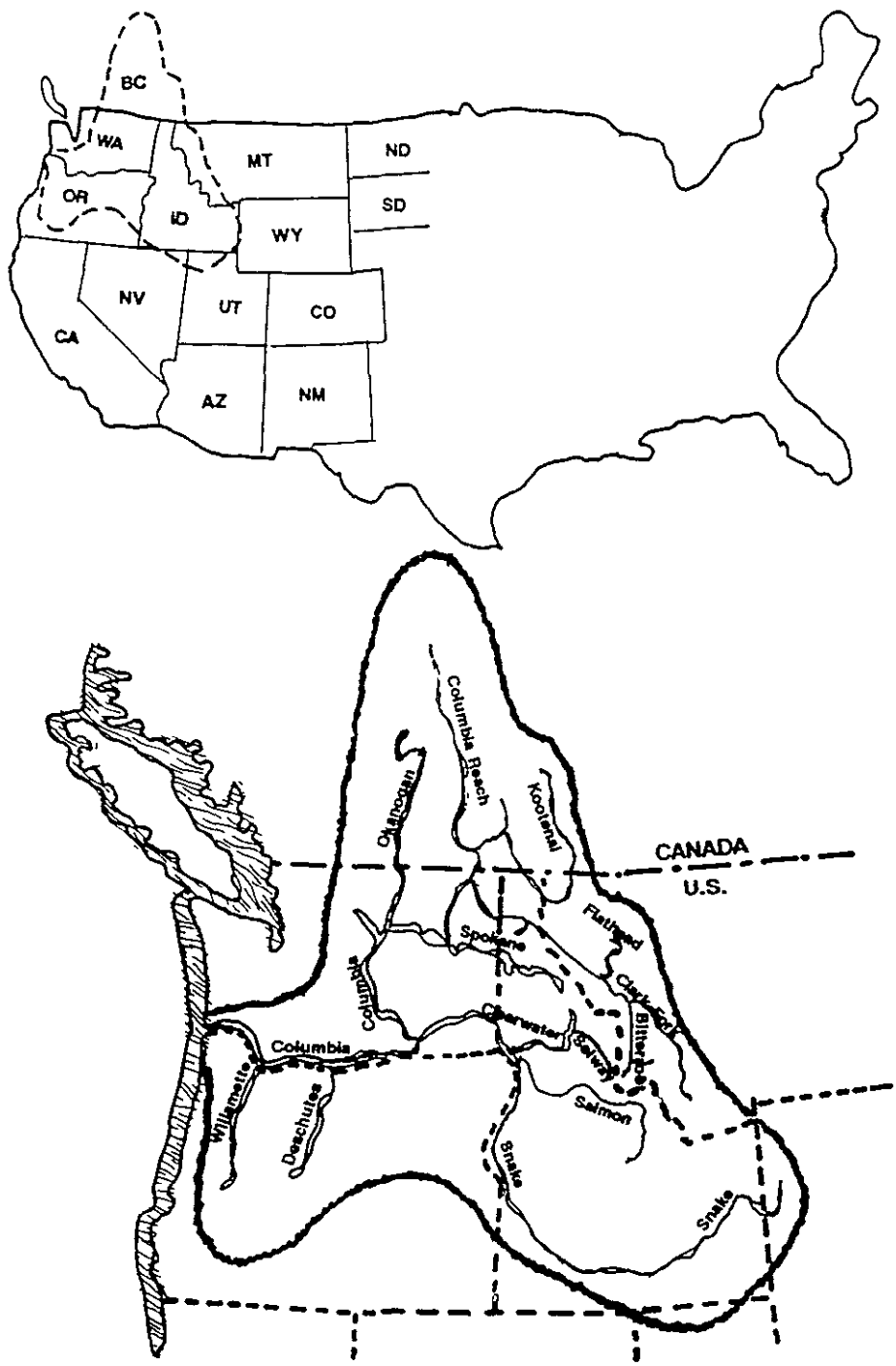
First, we must quickly and successfully implement ecosystem management. Successful implementation will affect more than how we manage National Forest and Grasslands. It will also change how the Forest Service interacts with other land owners; and how we request and allocate resources."

Jack Ward Thomas, Chief of the Forest Service

ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

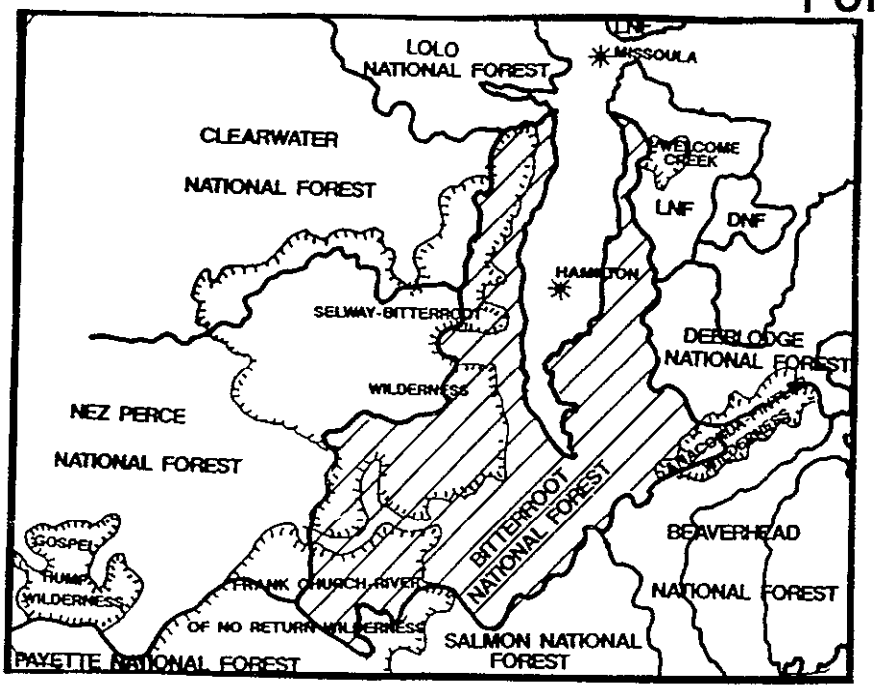
Regional Scale

(Columbia River Basin)

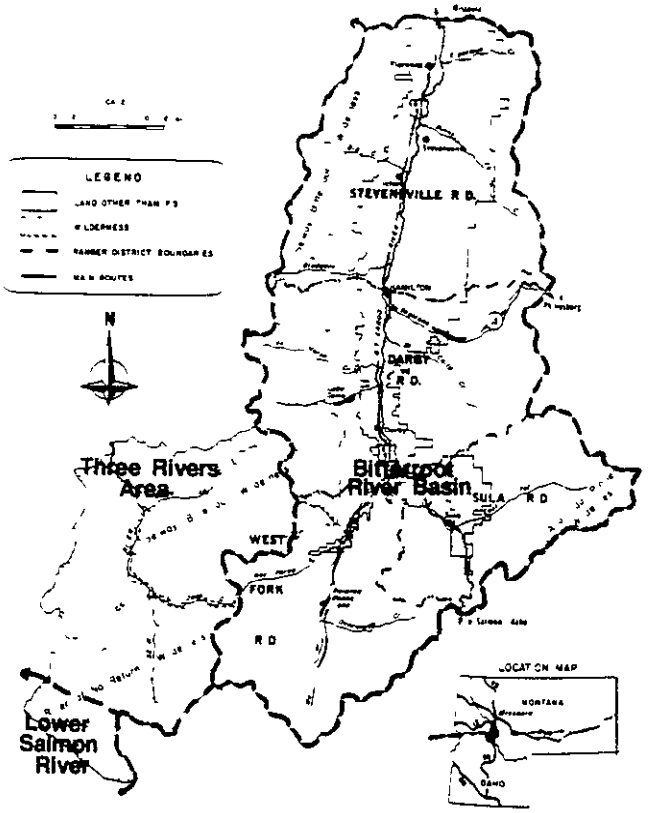


ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING SCALE

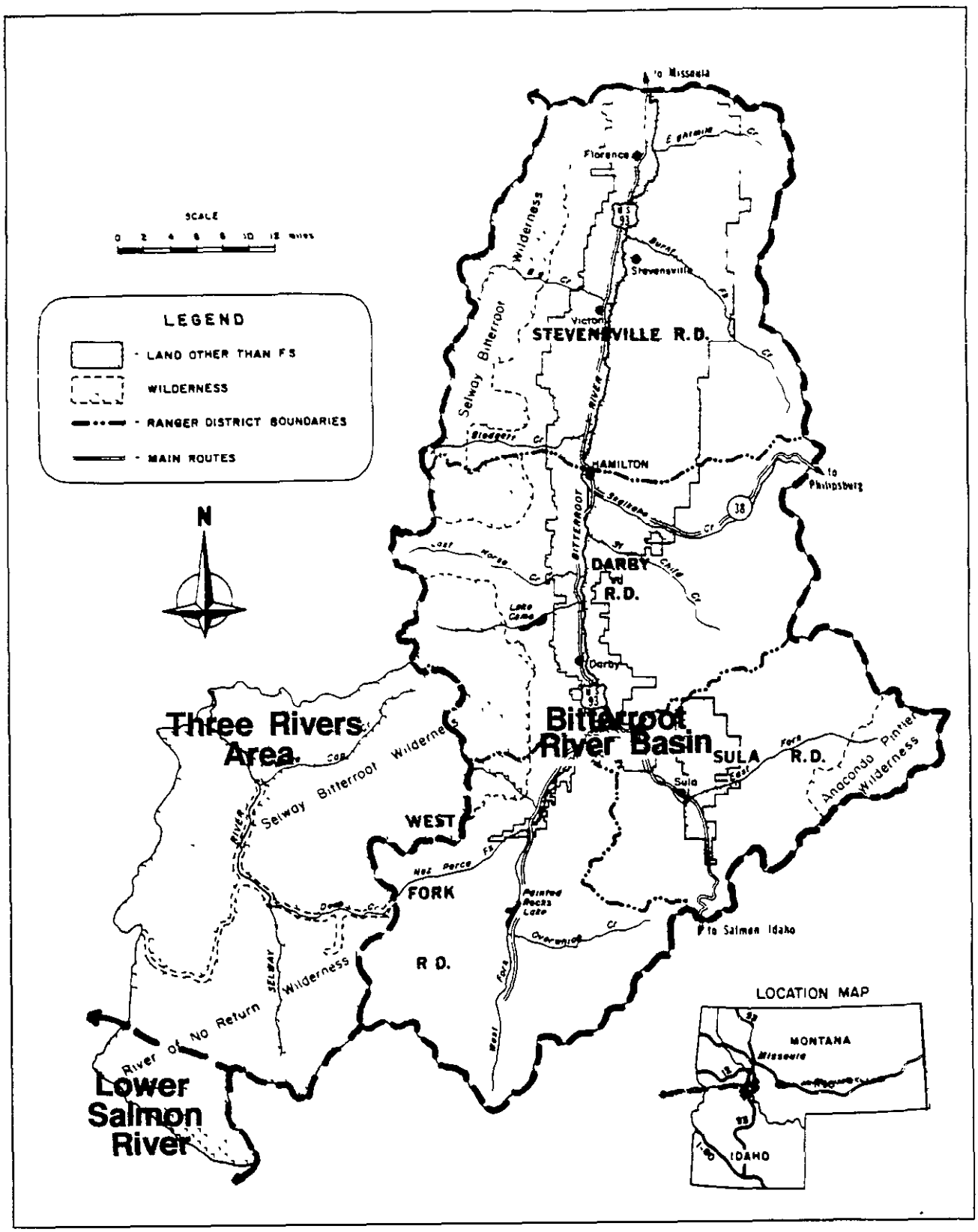
Sub-Regional Forest-Wide Scale



Geographic Area



GEOGRAPHIC AREAS



FOR THE BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST

The current Forest Plan prescribes Management Areas that tend to emphasize single resources With ecosystem management we are looking at whole ecosystems determined by social, biological and physical attributes Three Geographic Areas have been identified for planning purposes, and these areas represent an area of land with similar ecological and social management characteristics These are listed below, along with the attributes commonly associated with each

Bitterroot River Basin

The Bitterroot River Basin is similar in its boundaries to Ravalli County and encompasses the Bitterroot Valley National Forest System lands contribute to the scenic and economic elements of the Bitterroot Valley Approximately 73 percent of the land base in Ravalli County is National Forest System lands Major ecological subsections of the Bitterroot National Forest include the Bitterroot Mountain Range on the west-side of the Valley and the Sapphire Mountain Range on the east-side of the Valley The East Fork of the Bitterroot River and the West Fork of the Bitterroot River are two major subdrainages in the Basin Vegetation runs from open old growth Ponderosa pine, to mixed conifer Douglas fir-Lodgepole pine stands, to high elevation white bark pine/subalpine fir stands The Bitterroot Valley provides a home to more than 27,000 people who reside in or near its seven rural communities This land was once the homeland of the Flathead Salish people and served as travel routes for other Tribes

Three Rivers Area

The Three Rivers Area includes all lands tributary to the Middle Fork of the Clearwater River above the town of Kooskia, Idaho This includes the entire Selway River drainage (including the Bitterroot National Forest portion), the entire Lochsa River Drainage and streams draining directly into the Middle Fork of the Clearwater above Kooskia Public lands include the Nez Perce, Clearwater, and Bitterroot National Forests with minor inholdings of BLM lands The area is recreation oriented (hunting and river activities) with Highway 12 as the major travel corridor and wild and scenic river influences The area encompasses the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness in Idaho.

Lower Salmon River

The Lower Salmon River Area includes all lands tributary to the Salmon River between its confluence with the Snake River and the mouth of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River Public lands include the Nez Perce, Bitterroot, Payette and Salmon National Forests and some BLM lands Common ecological components include a canyon climate with adjacent uplands and an important anadromous fishery. The area includes portions of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness and the Wild and Scenic Salmon River

PUBLIC AND

Our approach to open communication and good working relationships with people continues to be a mainstay of Bitterroot National Forest management Partnerships, the Job Corps Community Council, public meetings, governmental coordination, and brown bag lunch seminars and field tours are all examples of these efforts Our hope is to build upon these relationships where we work jointly with other agencies, local, tribal and state governments, and interested citizens to enhance or maintain the quality of life and healthy ecosystems

We have begun to expand our relationships with interested governments, agencies, and local groups Much more will be done in this area as our Forest Plan is revised and further implemented

Trapper Creek Job Corps Center

The Trapper Creek Job Corps Center is expanding its relationship with the Forest and neighboring communities In 1994, the Center will celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Job Corps Program During the nearly three decades that the Trapper Creek Center has been operating, there have been countless contributions made to the Forest and to local communities by the Center's job training programs, and through the corpsmembers' volunteer efforts Within the past two years the Center has expanded its program to include an Urban Forestry curriculum The Center's Community Council remains an important link between the Forest Service and the Center, and the communities we strive to serve

Relationship with Tribes

For the past four years, we have worked to strengthen our relationship with, particularly, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes The Bitterroot continues to be important to these people, the land once being the homeland of the Flathead Salish and travel routes for other Tribes We have learned a great deal about the resources, and the Tribes' cultures from the many tribal members who work with us Greater good will come from our continued emphasis on these relationships

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Cooperative efforts with Communities and Ravalli County
Our interaction with local communities and the County has changed significantly since our Forest Plan was first implemented We have expanded our efforts in working with neighboring communities, and in coordinating our activities with Ravalli County We entered this new program of rural economic development with the hope of contributing to the health and economic vitality of communities within Ravalli County, we have found that we have received more benefits than perhaps we have given to others through these efforts

Coordination with other Agencies
Our cost-shared Fishery Biologist position is only one, but perhaps the best, example of how we are trying to collaborate with other agencies to improve our knowledge of, and thus the quality of our decisions regarding, the resources we manage Chris Clancy's work has done much to expand our knowledge and awareness of issues pertaining to fish populations and habitat in the Bitterroot River system We also work closely with the Soil Conservation Service, other Fish, Wildlife and Parks representatives, the Bitter Root Resource Conservation and Development Organization, the Wildlife Refuge (U S Fish and Wildlife Service) and many other state and federal agencies.

Chris Clancy
Montana Department of
Fish Wildlife and Parks

Steve Powell
Ravalli County Commissioner

"There are basic policy questions we are going to have to face.... It's best to do it with coordinating goverments."

Steve Powell, Ravalli County Commissioner

EVOLVING FOREST PLANS

A COMPARISON ● ● ● ● ●

The Forest Plan will be revised to more fully incorporate new concepts such as Ecosystem Management and Collaborative Relationships The following comparison reflects some of the changes we anticipate in the revised Forest Plan

Current Forest Plan	Future Forest Plan
● Focus on National Forest lands and outputs to dependent communities	● Focus on how National Forest lands fit into the broader ecosystem of all lands within a geographic scale, and how our decisions might link with local, regional and national Visions and Goals
	● Emphasis is on Community and County Relations, Coordination with other Governments including Tribal Relations, and Partnerships
● Geographic Scale Primarily looking at the Bitterroot National Forest	● Geographic Scale There are several important scales (as depicted on the previous pages) which will be considered as management options are explored and decisions are made
● Sustainability is focused on individual resources, e g , Timber	● Sustainability is focused on ecosystems Individual resources are considered in the context of what role they play in the ecosystem
● Output-oriented for both amenity and commodity resources, (e g , board feet, AUMs, catchable trout)	● Focus on ecological outcomes conditions of the land and public expectations (e g biological diversity, long term site productivity, health of local community).
● Focus on Species diversity at site or stand level.	● Focus on diversity within ecosystems at the geographic scales
● Analytic modeling of resource relationships to derive outputs (Objectives and Standards)	● Qualitative descriptions of a geographic area which mesh social needs and desires with land capability and health (Goals, Objectives, and Desired Future Conditions).

● ● ● ● COMPONENTS OF A FOREST PLAN

Certain components of a Forest Plan articulate decisions or direction which will influence all future decisions and activities guided by the Plan These decisions are entitled, "Goals", "Objectives", "Standards", "Management Area Direction" and "Monitoring" Changes in these Forest Plan decisions will require a Forest Plan amendment or revision and compliance with NFMA and NEPA Other components of the Forest Plan such as "Desired Future Condition" and "Guidelines" provide a long term vision and "how to" type of direction, respectively, and do not require amendments to the Forest Plan when they are updated or changed

The following paragraphs define these components of the Forest Plan

GOALS A goal is a concise statement that describes a desired condition to be achieved sometime in the future Goals are the "why" for an objective and subsequent management direction Goals can be made for any geographic scale but will be specific to the land area in which they relate (Past Forest Plan Goals tended to be general and not unique or specific to the Forest)

OBJECTIVES Objectives are developed from goals and are measurable changes necessary to meet a Goal Objectives are the "what" to achieve a goals Objectives can be made for any geographic scale, but will be specific to the land area in which they apply

STANDARDS Standards describe requirements which must be met

MANAGEMENT AREA DIRECTION Management Areas are distinctive subunits of Geographic Areas and contain direction specific to a subunit They will be defined on the basis of ecological and social characteristics that are logical for defining management outcomes (Current Management Areas are not based on Ecosystem Management principles, but rather are based on specific individual resources focusing on outputs rather than ecological outcomes)

MONITORING Monitoring will monitor whether Forest Plan Goals and Objectives are achieved and whether actions are in compliance with Standards Forest and other geographic scale assessments will monitor to determine how societal expectations knowledge or conditions of the land have changed

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION A DFC (Desired Future Condition) describes a future condition to be achieved The desired condition is a long-term vision and may express, in detail, desired ranges of vegetative composition (for example) The DFC integrates the goals and objectives, and reflects social, economic, and environmental considerations The DFC is a component of the Forest Plan, but is not considered a Forest Plan decision

GUIDELINES Guidelines are "should" statements These are instructions to a manager of how to conduct a task, not the conditions to be achieved Guidelines are an important aspect of a Forest Plan but do not portray a decision

INTRODUCTION

This section includes a Summary of the Findings and a Table which lists more than 30 topic areas that identify needs to change the Forest Plan An Appendix to this report contains more detailed narratives on most of the findings

The purpose of the Summary is to highlight some of the overall findings The Table of Findings includes the following

Finding	A narrative description of the conditions of the land, public expectations and Forest Plan disposition that warrants change or updating The highlighted statements after the narrative describe the kinds of changes needed
References	A list of the sources of information used in forming the finding
Next Steps	Describes where we go from here In many of the cases, the ongoing Upper Columbia River Basin Assessment and EIS will be the next step towards revising the Forest Plan

Many of the findings will focus on the need to integrate ecosystem management more fully into the Forest plan As reported in the 1992 Monitoring Summary the Forest has been making significant strides in applying ecosystem management principles About four years ago we started this effort by applying ecological principles at a site or stand level At that level it meant keeping large ponderosa and other trees in cutting units This kept a variety of tree sizes in the cutting units and was one step in more closely reflecting what would have occurred naturally We moved from that to completely changing cutting prescriptions reflecting natural looking stands This dramatically reduced the amount of clearcutting done on the Forest

We have now entered a new phase of ecosystem management as we better consider how biological needs at the landscape level (e g west side of the Bitterroot valley) fit with public expectations The two are often inseparable and are both a part of ecosystem management To have a better understanding of this and how the findings fit into ecosystem management ecosystem management principles will be briefly discussed

Ecosystem Principles

First a definition is needed Simply put, ecosystems are any complex community of organisms that work together with their environment For the purpose of this definition, environment includes non-living factors such as climate water soils, etc So, the word ecosystem can be used to describe a number of different communities of various sizes For example it could be a pond, river basin, or the world as a whole.

As you can imagine, the relationships between organisms and their environment are extremely complex. Many organisms are linked and depend on other organisms or certain elements of their environment for survival Affecting one organism or its environment can affect many other organisms

These organisms are also affected by and often dependent on natural processes in the ecosystem. These processes drive cycles in the ecosystem In the nutrient cycle, plants take minerals from the soil and store these minerals in their vegetation The plants die and return the minerals to the soil Some processes which can accomplish this return to the soil are decay from fungus, insects, and fire

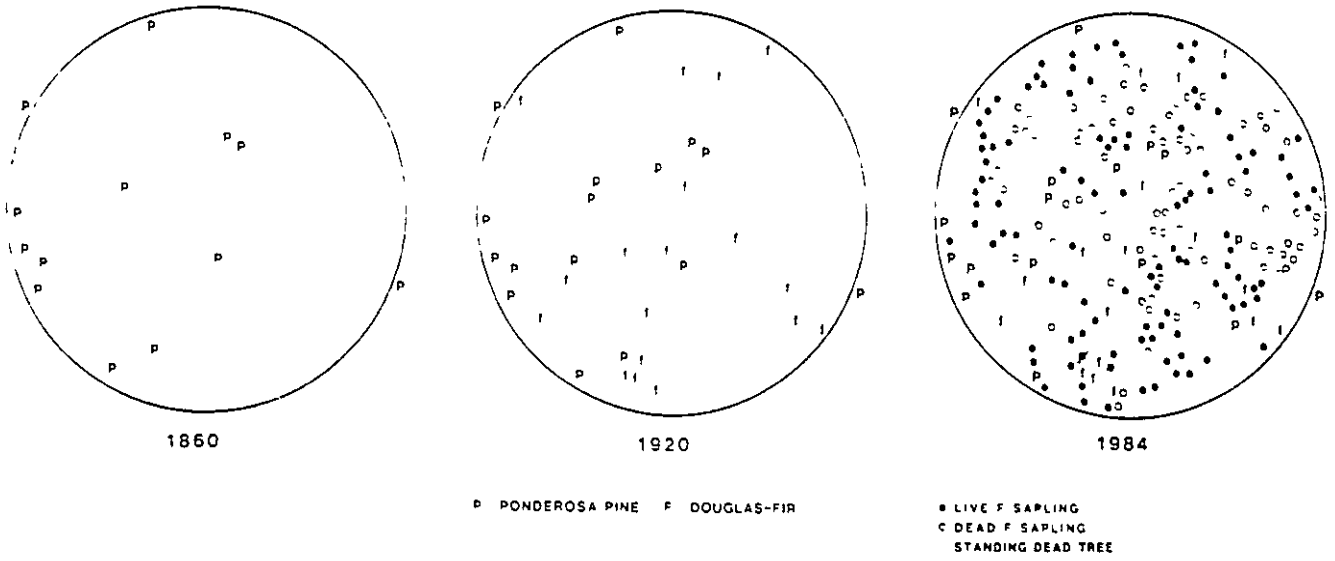
We know if we upset these processes we can affect the interactions between living organisms and their environment This can have a domino effect on other organisms, the full results of which are impossible for us to predict and fully comprehend However, we do know a species can become endangered if a process or interacting species is removed We also know if we remove a process for a period of time, pressures can build and when a disturbance occurs, it can be much more intense For example, if fires normally burn

five to ten years, the fire intensity is much less than if fuels are allowed to build up for sixty years The increased fire intensity when the area finally burns could then upset normal interactions between a number of species and their environment

We believe that we can sustain ecosystems if we can keep the processes working similar (but not necessarily identical) to how they work under natural conditions

Ecosystem Health (Conditions of the Land)

Unfortunately, a number of processes are not working at natural levels For example, fire suppression over the last fifty years has excluded fire from a number of ecosystems This has resulted in a significant change in those ecosystems The plot shown below illustrates what has happened from 1860 - 1984 on a typical dry ponderosa pine site



Reconstruction of the forest overstory (capital letters) and understory trees (lower case) in Pattee Canyon plot during three times periods, 1860 1920 and 1984 Pre 1900 fires maintained this warm, dry habitat type as a ponderosa pine parkland Post-1900 fire exclusion has favored Douglas-fir invasion
(Old-growth ponderosa pine-western larch forest in western Montana Ecology and Management - James R Habeck 1990)

Note how frequent ground fires kept the ecosystem in a parklike stand of scattered old ponderosa pine trees as illustrated in the 1860 depiction The vegetation gradually filled in over the next 124 years A fire in the 1984 plot during dry conditions will probably kill the entire overstory In addition to this, past harvesting that focused on cutting large ponderosa pine trees further reduced the number of large trees and may have upset other ecosystem linkages

At the same time, standards used to build roads to harvest this and other timber during the middle of the century were not adequate to prevent an upset of balances in our aquatic ecosystems While the standards have been corrected for newer roads, we have numerous aquatic ecosystems that need to be restored This restoration has been started and needs to continue

In addition to ponderosa pine, whitebark pine ecosystems are declining due to the interruption of the fire process Whitebark pine has also been impacted by an exotic species, whitepine blister rust.

Exotic species introduction can significantly impact the linkages in an ecosystem as they out compete and replace natural occurring species Our rangelands are especially susceptible to invasion and may be the most threatened terrestrial ecosystem in the valley

Implications of Land Conditions

Some changes can be made in ecosystems as long as they are along the line of natural processes Timber harvest, wildlife management, recreation, fire suppression and other management activities can occur if they fall within the range of natural processes If the activities fall outside of the range for a long enough period of time, they may affect the sustainability, productivity, and health of ecosystems (and the species within the ecosystems)

If the interruption of natural processes is severe enough entire ecosystems can break down and begin operating in ways very different from the way they naturally would For example, in the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon fire suppression and possibly past logging practices changed open areas with large trees to very closed stands of dense foliage This has led to large scale epidemic insect and disease problems which killed the overstory Fire intensity and occurrence has dramatically risen These intense fire situations caused increases in water and sediment yield to the point the stream banks have broken down Just to the west of us, the Boise and Payette National Forests are undergoing a similar series of events On the Boise National Forest, 400 000 acres have burned in the last seven years

Past Monitoring

Our past monitoring has not been focused on evaluating the condition of our ecosystems It has instead examined specific management activities primarily recent timber harvesting and road building

However there are other events or actions that may have greater implications on ecosystem health than the levels of road building and timber harvest that have occurred in the past five years These trends are more unobtrusive and not necessarily within the control or management of the Forest Service Five such situations include

- Fire suppression activities for 60 years creating close stands with dense foliage and a resulting increase in the number and intensity of fires on the Forest
- Introduction and spread of exotic plant and animal species, e g "noxious weeds", which affect native species and ecosystems
- Water use and diversion from stream channels,
- Changing and conflicting social values concerning acceptance of natural processes (e g , fire/smoke) and human activities (e g , timber harvest) on the land

In addition to these trends, there are past problems to address Examples of current needs affected by past activities are

- Recovery of watersheds impacted by roads and other activities,
- Recovery of clearcuts and terracing that affects a natural-appearing Forest,
- Recovery of old growth ponderosa pine due to timber harvest emphasizing this specie;
- Recovery of partial cutting (timber harvest) that resulted in proliferation of dwarf mistletoe, and
- Riparian (streamside) impacts from management activities

The past and current trends mentioned above affect the various plant and animal species and vegetative communities differently Species vary in their ability to adapt to changes in the environment and some actions (either individually or cummulatively) Currently, potential habitat for five Threatened or Endangered species occurs on the Bitterroot National Forest

In addition forty-one species are listed as sensitive seven wildlife four fish, and 30 plant species These species are those for which the Regional Forester has determined there is a concern for population viability *A viable population consists of the number of individuals adequately distributed throughout their range* necessary to perpetuate the existence of the species in natural, genetically stable, self-sustaining populations

Of the sensitive species, bull trout have been considered by the U S Fish and Wildlife Service for listing under the Endangered Species Act, due to a decline in its distribution and abundance A variety of impacts have been attributed to this decline As a component of healthy ecosystems bull trout decline may reflect many of the conditions and trends described above Major impacts identified by researchers to date include loss of habitat quality, water diversions and dewatering competition with exotic species and loss of migratory corridors These influences on bull trout cross social political and physical "boundaries" -- illustrating that management and recovery of this and other native species will require a collaborative effort involving the public State local and Tribal governments and industry

Because ecosystems cross political and administrative lines, ecosystem management requires greater cooperative efforts with other governments communities and people It also means sharing information about the capability of the land so that choices in how land is managed will sustain both ecosystems and communities

Community and People's Well Being (and Relation to the National Forest)

People have long been a part of the Bitterroot National Forest ecosystems We have been dependent upon and influenced these ecosystems for thousands of years However, in the last 100 years, our interaction has rapidly increased

People continue to move to the Valley for the quality of life (rural lifestyle, lack of crime and the scenic beauty) In the 1990's Ravalli County is the fastest growing County in the State with a growth of 9 7 percent within the last two years Population is estimated at 27 450 and has doubled since 1960 Changes in the economy have continued from a primary reliance on ranching, farming, mining, and timber harvest to one that is more diverse and includes commuters who work in Missoula, businesses tied to tourism, and cottage industries and businesses tied to markets outside the Valley Land development patterns have incrementally resulted in more and more residents living next door to the National Forest The rural nature of the area is being significantly altered as the Valley becomes peppered with homes

Dealing with change in the Valley has been a focal point for local governments within the last five years The Bitterroot Forest has been part of a Rural Development program that provides support and leadership to local community or valley-wide organizations that are interested in improving the quality of life and the economic health of the Bitterroot Valley Forest employees have worked closely with the valley-wide Chamber of Commerce, city and county governments, civic clubs, and economic sector organizations to work towards these goals In addition, communities and groups are showing an increased interest and desire for natural resource information and education

The Bitterroot National Forest continues to work closely with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the Nez Perce Tribe The Bitterroot Forest and Valley is the traditional homeland of the Flathead Salish people The Forest has coordinated projects underway, and the Flathead Cultural Committee has continued to expand the cultural and historical awareness of employees and community members

A diversity of lifestyles and economic ties brings a host of residents with strong and conflicting opinions on how the Bitterroot National Forest should be managed From project plans, the Forest has heard a variety of environmental concerns How is the Forest Service managing to protect plant and animal species? How are biological corridors provided to ensure the movement of larger ranging animals and to ensure the genetic integrity of species? On the other hand comes frustration from those residents who have depended upon logging or milling for their livelihood over the time it takes for the Forest Service to make decisions to harvest timber These same residents also express concern with the increasing environmental safeguards that are applied to harvest units which result in less timber harvested per acre

The trends of population growth, settlement patterns, and economic change continue to modify the character of the Bitterroot Valley The five year review of the Forest Plan is timely to address several issues that are recurrent in project planning Community and County planning

- Is the Forest Plan adequate as an ecological framework with which to manage National Forest lands?
- What is the Forest Service's role as a neighbor and contributor to local communities and all people who enjoy and use the National Forest? How does the Forest reconcile a downtrend in providing wood products to dependent communities?
- How can the Forest Service share, cooperate and plan for the future by working closely with County Commissioners local and state governments and Indian Tribes?
- In what ways can the Forest continue and enhance our partnerships with the public?

Conclusion

Ecosystem management brings all of these components together We are dependent on the Forest for products to sustain our local economies, quality of life, scenic beauty recreation and spiritual revival As we work to reduce conflict and meet these needs we will need to do so in a manner that will sustain ecosystems so that future generations can also be assured the Forest will meet their needs

LAND

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
	Ecosystems	
1	Sustaining Ecosystems (incl Biological Diversity, Corridors, Fragmentation, Roadless/Wilderness)	Fires and other disturbances, like insects, pathogens and avalanches, create different vegetative patterns and mosaics on different areas or landforms in the Bitterroot Valley Past logging and fire suppression have changed these ecosystem patterns, changing natural levels of forest fragmentation, linking once separated ecosystems, and altering corridors Our ecosystems have responded poorly to effects of fire suppression introduction of exotics and some past logging methods Ecosystem health is threatened by changing natural succession pathways and forest structure We have increased the risk of fires and epidemics beyond what used to occur naturally Current Forest Plan direction contains little emphasis on ecosystem management (through goals and objectives) although Standards provide for protection of various resources Public awareness and concern about maintaining biological diversity has heightened in recent years Several conservationists recently outlined factors that they deem important to biological diversity These include maintaining roadless and Wilderness; biological corridors riparian areas, old growth, snags, and managing open road density and motorized travel **Research and assessments (Monitoring) are needed to gain a better understanding of ecosystems and the natural processes** **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives are needed to ensure and guide management of the land in sustaining ecosystems. (Findings specific to various ecosystems follow)**
2	Rangeland	Rangelands (grasslands and shrublands) are potentially one of the most threatened ecosystems on the Forest They are currently threatened by the spread of noxious weeds Currently, the "Range" objectives in the Forest Plan are commodity oriented and do not encompass the broader scope in term of the health of the rangelands Noxious weed objectives need to be updated **Coordination with the County Weed Board will continue.** **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives are needed which will provide for a systematic treatment of noxious weeds and enhancement of native species within grasslands and shrublands.**

LAND

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
1	Forest Project Analyses, FS Chief Direction in Ecosystem Management (1992), Monnig and Byler, USDA-FS 1993, Arno USDA-FS, Mutch USDA-FS 1993 Fisher&Bradley 1987 Brown & Bradshaw, 1983, Regional Fire Management 1994, Noss 1989 McClowsky, Public comment	The Interior Columbia River Basin Assessment will provide a scientific information base (July 1995). The Upper Columbia River Basin EIS will provide an ecosystem management strategy upon which Forest Plans will be revised (DEIS, Sept 1995) Project planning will continue to be ecosystem management based and will continue to contribute to the data base for the Bitterroot NF
2	Mack (1986), Losensky (1987), Research Natural Area Monitoring (1993)	Coordination will be ongoing (Next step is the same as Item 1)

LAND

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
	Ecosystems	
3	Ponderosa pine	An extensive belt of low elevation, park-like, old growth ponderosa pine has been changed by logging and fire suppression Now, these forests are dominated by Douglas-fir, multiple-storied and overstocked Disturbances have shifted from under-burns and low levels of insect and disease activity to stand replacing fires and epidemics Private home development is occurring adjacent to many of these high risk wildfire areas The Forest Plan does not address the restoration of this ecosystem but monitors the harvest of ponderosa pine **Coordination with Ravalli County and Rural Fire Departments will continue.** **Continue to provide information to residents about fire risks and prevention and the need for allowance of fire in the ecosystem** **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives are needed to guide management of the ponderosa pine ecosystems and reductions of fuels in high fire risk areas.**
4	Mid-elevation Douglas-fir and Lodge- pole pine	Cycles of insect and pathogen activity followed by fires have been key agents of change in mid-elevation Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine forests Past timber harvest and fire suppression have altered landscape patterns With increasing portions of this ecosystem in older age classes, there is increasing potential for increasingly wide-reaching fires and insect and disease mortality The Forest Plan sets as a goal that "pest-caused losses are reduced to acceptable levels" However, objectives are not set nor are "acceptable levels" well defined, in relation to historical or natural processes **Research and assessments are needed to fully understand the natural ranges of insect and disease infestations as compared to recent trends.** **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives are needed to guide treatments within this ecosystem**
5	Whitebark pine	Whitebark Pine on the Forest is threatened by infestations of white pine blister rust, lack of fire and subalpine fir encroachment Some of the major occurrences of this habitat are in Wilderness where restoration (human activity) would be controversial The Forest Plan contains no direction for this ecosystem. **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives are needed to guide restoration and/or enhancement of Whitebark Pine.**

LAND

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
3	Forest Project Analyses, Research work-Arno, Losensky (1992)	Coordination will continue (Next step is the same as Item 1)
4	Losensky (1987), Forest Project Analyses	(Next step is the same as Item 1)
5	Forest Project Analyses Research-Keene	(Next step is the same as Item 1)

LAND

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
	Physical Structure	
6	Geology	Road failures or slumps have occurred in unstable geologic areas in the past For example the McClain Creek slide on the north end of the Forest occurred from a road failure and has resulted in the slide and erosion and deposition of material down slope and down stream The Forest Plan does not mention that consideration of geologic conditions is needed in resource and land management planning, e g , *integration of information on geologic hazards and special interest areas, ground* water, mass wasting, soil parent material, waste disposal, etc. **Assessments should include new or refined geologic maps at scales to match various levels of analyses as well as delineation of geologic conditions and resources described above.** **Forest Guidelines are needed to ensure that management activities are appropriate for the geologic conditions of the area or site.**
7	Soil Productivity	Ground-skidding and dozer piling have in several cases exceeded Forest Plan Standards and resulted in detrimental soil disturbance In addition, the amount of woody debris left on site after harvest is of concern and the Forest Plan does not specify an amount of ground cover desirable to retain Soil damage in the form of displacement compaction and puddling from timber harvest and from grazing in riparian areas has also been observed within the last five years The Forest Plan does not have soil quality standards or guidelines with regard to grazing **Forest Plan Guidelines and/or Standards may need to be modified to provide more specific guidance with regard to soil protection.**

LAND

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
6	FSM 2880 and FSH 28 09 14	Forest Guidelines will be formed Project plans will include appropriate geologic information.
7	Forest Plan monitoring	Forest Guidelines will be formed

LAND

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
	Communities/Habitats	
8	Old Growth	Assessing old growth on a landscape level and specific to various ecosystems may be more appropriate than the current Forest Plan Standard (old growth percentage required within a Management Area and third order drainage) The quantity and distri· ·on of old growth needs to be placed in the context of the range of natural variat to better ensure viability of old growth dependent wildlife species Current *Forest Plan old growth definitions have been superseded by new Regional definitions* **Research and assessment are needed to gain an understanding of the historic ranges of old growth by ecological type and current trends.** **Site specific amendments may be made for variance to the Old Growth Standard where project analysis show it to be ecologically sound.** **Forest Plan Standards and/or Guidelines need to provide an ecological base for assuring adequate amounts of old growth are restored or retained**
9	Stand Structure	The intent of the Forest Plan snag guideline was to retain some vertical structure within regeneration harvest units Retention of snags has not occurred to the degree planned because of safety hazards to timber fallers (State of Montana and OSHA standards) and the demands of the public for firewood Silvicultural prescriptions developed with ecosystem management principles will respond to the need for vert· versity across the landscape including the snag and dead tree component **For an Standards need to be clarified to provide for retention of vertical stru in regeneration harvests and/or Guidelines (how to) developed to assure provisions**
	Species of Con·	
10	Native Plants/Noxious Weeds	Land areas in the Bitterroot Valley and National Forest continue to change as exotic *species spread, out compete native species, and dominate habitats Spotted* knapweed is an example of a well established species, however, new species are taking hold, e g , sulfur cinquefoil and leafy spurge Blister rust is expected to significantly reduce whitebark pine populations Treatment strategies such as the use of herbicides or human ignitions of fire in wilderness areas continue to be controversial The Forest Plan needs to be updated to address the current trends and new knowledge Tribes are concerned about the diminishing rate of native plants that have been traditionally of interest **Coc nation needs to continue with the County Weed Board and Tribal entities.** **Gui es are needed to define how the Forest will proceed with implementing new - gional policy to revegetate disturbed sites with native species.** **Forest Goals and Objectives are needed to define provisions for native species/ habitats and control or reduction of noxious weeds or other exotic species.**

LAND

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
8	Forest project analyses (Stevi SW) Green et al USDA-FS 1992 Public comment	(Next step is the same as Item 1)
9	Forest Plan monitoring public comment	(Next step is the same as Item 1)
10	Use of Vegetative Materials, USDA-Region 1, 1993	Forest Guidelines will be formed for revegetating sites Coordination will continue. (Next step is the same as Item 1.)

LAND

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
	Species of Concern	
11	Threatened Endangered and Sensitive Species	The Forest currently has three Threatened and Endangered Animal Species (Peregrine Falcon Bald Eagle and Chinook Salmon) and contains potential habitat for the Gray Wolf and Grizzly Bear Sensitive species include 30 plant species seven wildlife species and four fish species Health of habitat or species is influenced by many factors (including off-Forest influences) Habitat and species relationships are *in many cases not well understood at this time The Forest Plan provides general* direction for the maintenance and enhancement of the habitat for these species, however conservation strategies for the Sensitive species have not been completed and incorporated **Research and assessments (Monitoring) are needed over time to improve understanding of particular species.** **Coordination with the U S Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Fish and Game, and MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks will continue** **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives are needed to address the conservation of Sensitive Species**
12	Management Indicator Species	The concept of "Management Indicator Species" was to ensure the viability of species (36 CFR 219 19(6)) Four species were selected for the Bitterroot Forest Plan, and populations were monitored The results have been less than meaningful The species approach does not adequately cover the health of the ecosystem and all components The presence or absence of the species from surveys does not necessarily indicate trends and is without assessments of natural ranges of variation **Through Guidelines, the Forest or Region should establish the role of Ecosystem Management and Assessment to ensure the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the National Forest The concept of Management Indicators may still be used, while ecological land types and rare habitats may also be monitored.**
13	Big Game	Big game habitat standards and guidelines (for winter range, security) are not *consistent with the most recent information this area The Forest Plan methods for* analyzing elk numbers and herd structure and resulting standards such as EHE (Elk Habitat Effectiveness) need to be updated to better reflect current research Winter range (amount and conditions) as used by big game animals (primary focus is elk) has changed and is changing Increasing human population and the subdivision of farm and ranchlands affect availability of winter range and elk migration Road access and hunting pressure also result in greater importance of hiding cover The MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks has issued a State Elk Plan which has not been addressed by the Forest Plan **Coordination with the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and Idaho Fish and Game will continue.** **Update Guidelines and change Standards to reflect most recent works of Hillis, Christensen, and Lyons, and tie to ecosystem management, including the concepts of corridors, fragmentation, and patch size and distribution.** **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives are needed.**

LAND

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
11	Lesica & Shelly 1991, Northern Region Sensitive Plant List 1991 Montana Natural Heritage Program publication and data	Coordination will continue (Next step is the same as Item 1)
12	Hunter 1990 Noss Monitoring	(Next step is the same as Item 1.)
13	Hillis et al , Christensen and Lyons, 1993, State Elk Plan-MT 1992	Coordination will continue (Next step is the same as Item 1)

LAND

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
	Species of Concern	
14	Neotropical Migratory Birds/ Raptors	Neotropical migratory birds attract national public attention due to a general decline that is well documented in the eastern hardwood forests So far the declines of the east have not been detected in the west (U S), but at least 7 species, 5 of the prairie grasslands have shown declines Although monitoring is occurring in the Bitterroot Valley Forest no conclusions or trends have resulted The Forest Plan currently does not provide guidance with regard to neotropical migratory birds. Raptors are another category of birds for which there is public interest Some are on the Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive list (See discussion above) **Research and assessments (Monitoring) are needed to make a better connection between habitat/community conditions and species conditions**

AIR

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
15	Air Quality	Smoke will continue to be of concern to residents S· ›ke levels may increase with emphasis on restoring fire as a natural process to so· ₹ Forest habitats and as well with more residents living in the Valley and some relying on wood-burning stoves for heat Nationally, there is a need to monitor the influence of air pollutants like sulfur (from power plants smelters autos etc) on air Currently, the Forest Plan does not set objectives for air quality or identify air quality as a monitoring item **(See Wildfire-Urban interface issue)** **Continue to cooperate with air regulatory authorities to prevent significant impact of air pollution and smoke.** **Forest Goals and Objectives are need to reflect Air Quality Related Values (AQRV) within wilderness areas and to control or minimize air pollutant impacts.** **Identify Forest Monitoring for the Air Resource and establish historical ranges of smoke levels with natural fire disturbances.**

LAND

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
14	Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program monitoring	(Next step is the same as Item 1)

AIR

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
15	Clean Air Act (amendments of 1977 and 1990) Selway Bitterroot AQRV Plan 1992 Monitoring Report CO2 Monitoring Study	Coordination will continue The Monitoring framework will be adapted to recognize air resource (Next step is the same as Item 1)

WATER

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
	Ecosystem	
16	Riparian Systems	Riparian areas link water and land ecosystems providing key habitats for wildlife, fish and quality water for domestic use downstream The current Forest Plan distinguishes between fishery and nonfishery riparian areas, monitoring has shown that this is not a meaningful distinction In addition, standards for managing livestock grazing may not be adequate for protecting riparian areas Since the direction for managing riparian areas was written in the Forest Plan (1987) and Riparian Management Guidelines (Bitterroot Supplement No 1, 1988), the Streamside Management Zone Act has passed and ecosystem management poses different information about riparian area diversity, function, and management **Research and assessments (Monitoring) are needed over time to gain a better understanding of riparian ecosystems.** **Forest Plan Standards are needed to incorporate requirements from the Streamside Zone Management Act and/or Guidelines on how riparian areas will be evaluated**
17	Watershed Health and Restoration	Watershed conditions on the Forest are not recovering as quickly as assumed in the Forest Plan Current road standards and implementation of Best Management Practices have been effective in preventing impacts to streams However, many of the past system of roads were constructed for different purposes than they are being used for today (e g dry season versus all season use and temporary versus long term roads) Consequently these roads are contributing sediment to streams Lack of vegetative recovery in some areas have contributed to higher water yields and increased sedimentation In addition, storm events such as what occurred in Overwhich show that more understanding is needed with regard to storm events, risk of fire and fuel geologic conditions and flood risk **Incorporate as Forest Guidelines, the Bitterroot Watershed Evaluation Process** **Research, data collection, and Basin-wide watershed assessments (Monitoring) are needed to gain a better understanding of watershed conditions, prescribing treatments for ecosystem or watershed restoration, and determining water recovery rates.** **Complete a watershed fire risk coarse filter.** **Forest Plan Goals, Objectives, and Standards are needed to ensure an active water restoration program and ensure consistency with laws and regulations.**

WATER

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
16	Streamside Management Zone Act, Public Comment	(Next step is the same as Item 1)
17	Streamside Management Zone Act Bitterroot Watershed Evaluation Process Frissell et al, Overwich Monitoring 1992 Report Forest Data Base of Stream Conditions Stormwater Regulations, Decker April 1994,Public Comment	Forest Guidelines will be formed (Next step is the same as Item 1)

WATER

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
	Species of Concern	
18	Native Fish Species	As a part of aquatic ecosystems, maintenance and enhancement of native fish species is of concern Bull trout as an example, is designated as a sensitive species in Region 1 and considered by the U S Fish and Wildlife Service for listing as a Threatened or Endangered species Monitoring indicates that bull trout are more sensitive to sediment and changing watershed conditions than cutthroat trout. Bull trout would appear to be a better Management Indicator Species than cutthroat trout Other factors affecting bull trout are competition and hybridization with Brook trout, an exotic species and the limited distribution of Bull trout due to barriers such as water diversions from streams to the main stem of the Bitterroot River. On the other hand some public do not believe that bull trout are diminishing and fishing (catchable trout) is of interest Currently, the Forest Plan does not provide specific guidance for sensitive species such as bull trout nor specify provisions for the Threatened and Endangered Specie Chinook Salmon **Research and assessments (Monitoring) are needed for better understanding of existing habitat conditions and trends (Basin-wide information)** **Coordination with the U.S.Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Fish and Game, and Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks will continue.** **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives are needed to address the conservation of Bull Trout and other native species.** **Incorporate Standards for the T&E specie, Chinook Salmon.**

WATER

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEPS
18	Rieman and McIntyre 1993. Forest Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Report Forest project analyses. BNF Watershed Coarse Filter Analysis EA-Interim Standards for managing anadromous fish. March 1994 Public comment	Coordination will continue (Next step is the same as Item 1)

PEOPLE

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
	Social/Economic	
19	Communities Lifestyles, Vision of the Future	Significant population growth residential settlement along National Forest borders, and economic change continue to modify the character of the Bitterroot Valley Public expectations and values toward National Forest lands have changed since the Forest Plan was implemented e g , less clearcutting and timber harvest With 73% of Ravalli County in National Forest ownership, the Forest Service has an important role in working closely with the County, communities, and people to complement their goals and needs for economic sustenance and quality of life Likewise, the Forest Service needs to provide information about the conditions of the land, air and water so that choices about use of National Forest will sustain those ecosystems The Forest Service will also have a role in expressing National needs for the National Forest as well as the interests and values of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Nespelum of the Confederated Colville Tribes, and the Nez Perce Tribe for their aboriginal territories Currently the Forest Plan has a general orientation to emphasize commodity production while protecting amenity values Orientation today is ecosystem management, including provisions for people's needs This orientation requires more knowledge about the land and natural processes Products and uses are provided in ways that are compatible with these natural systems **Through implementation, the Forest will continue to work with Communities in obtaining grants for furthering their goals and objectives as well as working together on other cooperative efforts** ***Coordination with the Tribes will continue to be important to ensure that these peoples interests and heritage are protected ar J provided for.*** **Partnerships and other public participation efforts will continue to be important.** **Through an MOU with Ravalli County, the Forest Service will continue to work closely with the County** **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives need to reflect the Forest Service's role as a neighbor and contributor to local communities.**
20	Fire Management Wildland Fire-Urban Interface	Fire historically, has had a major role in the changes within the Northern Rocky Mountain ecosystems The Forest Service has maintained a successful fire suppression effort for the last 60 years Within the last five years, there has been an increase in acres burned and acres per fire which indicate increased fire intensities Since 1960, the population of Ravalli County has doubled and more residents are living next to National Forest borders Some of the greatest wildfire risk is along these borders and access to homes (bridges/roads) may be inadequate for fire trucks Currently, the Forest Plan does not specify goals for reduction of fuels in high wildfire risk areas nor incorporate ecosystem management and fire processes within overall direction **Coordination with Ravalli County and Rural Fire Departments will continue.** **Information will continue to be provided to residents and the public about fire risks, prevention, and the role of fire in the ecosystems.** **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives are needed to guide reductions of high fire risk areas.**

PEOPLE

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
19	Montana Futures Project Community Action Plan for Darby Bitterroot Communication Plan Study 1992 Monitoring Summary MOU with Ravalli County, Bitterroot Futures Study Montana Council for Rural Development paper Ravallic County Draft Comprehensive Plan, Public Comment	Coordination and Involvement will continue (Next step is the same as Item 1)
20	Research-Arno Fisher & Bradley, 1987, Brown & Bradshaw 1983 Forest Plan monitoring, Regional Fire Management paper Mutch, USDA-FS, 1993 County Planning and coordination	Coordination will continue (Next step is the same as Item 1)

PEOPLE

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
	Economic Ties to the Forest	
21	Timber Supply	Timber supply continues to be an important need for local communities and industry Although the local economy has diversified and overall health is less reliant on timber production the interest in this Forest's supply has expanded from the Bitterroot Valley to include Salmon Idaho, Missoula and outlying areas Some of the public continues to feel that the Forest Plan ASQ (Allowable Sale Quantity) exceeds the Forest's capacity to maintain or enhance other values (i e wildlife, pleasing scenery, clean water) Monitoring shows that the actual timber harvest level has been significantly lower than the ASQ level due to public opposition to clearcutting, harvest, and roading provisions for sensitive species, water quality, and other resource considerations, and lower budgets **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives need to provide the public and industry with an estimate of future timber supply given land capability, implementation of treatments designed to sustain ecosystems, and social and budgetary concerns. ASQ (a ceiling) is required by NFMA regulations and will need to be updated.**
22	Recreation/Tourism	The Forest Plan recognizes the outstanding recreation opportunities on the Bitterroot National Forest However because of its general guidance, there is not a common understanding of the Bitterroot National Forest recreation objectives and priorities and how these link with public demands and economic opportunities Public demands types of uses and expectations have also changed in five years, and the Forest Plan does not reflect these changing emphases The outfitting and guiding industry is also changing with public demands Requests for permits are increasing and reflect non-traditional uses Determining use days and responding to these requests consistently is of challenge Within the last year, a Forest task force has completed a Recreation Strategy to better portray the recreation program for the Forest **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives are needed to reflect current emphasis in recreation.** **Forest Guidelines are needed to deal with outfitter and guide requests in a consistent fashion.**
23	Dams and Water Use	Dams along the Bitterroot Range provide a critical water storage for irrigation and water use in the Bitterroot Valley Some of these dams are within Wilderness. Currently the Forest Plan does not recognize dams as existing facilities nor make provisions for their maintenance and operation **Coordination will need to continue with permittees, SCS, and the State.** **Forest Guidelines are needed to provide for the maintenance and operation of dams and water uses on the Forest.**

PEOPLE

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
21	Forest project analysis, FY 1992 Monitoring and Evaluation Report Summary, Chief's direction to implement EM Public Comment	(Next step is the same as Item 1)
22	Forest Recreation Strategy, Forest Service Rural Development program America's Outdoors Challenge Cost Share direction Watchable Wildlife Program	(Next step is the same as Item 1)
23	Dams Safety Act, Regional Wilderness Dam Policy Paper 1992	Forest Guidelines will be formed Coordination will continue.

PEOPLE

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
	Other Forest Uses	
24	Access and Travel Management	Most resource programs and services on the National Forest are directly affected by the level and type of access that the public has to National Forest lands Current approaches to travel management have generally been resource driven with little integration of public needs There is limited direction on travel management in the Forest Plan Travel management needs must be assessed and met within the context of the principles of ecosystem management This will require an approach which provides the level and diversity of access and travel on the national forests while sustaining ecological conditions over the long term **As a part of Implementation, the Travel Access Map needs to be updated to reflect project decisions over the last five years.** **Coordination on access and travel management will continue with Ravalli County, and MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks.** **Forest Plan Goals and Objectives are needed which will reflect where types of travel (motorized and nonmotorized) will be featured on the Forest.**
25	Visual Management	Visual management direction in the Forest Plan assumes clearcutting and regeneration harvests as primary harvest methods Ecosystem management, a more recent policy, reduces the use of clearcutting but also poses that if disturbance occurs, that it will resemble in pattern and process those disturbances (i.e , fire) that occurred naturally Efforts such as those to restore ponderosa pine ecosystems may warrant treatment over a landscape (selective type harvesting), but changes may be apparent to the viewer Visual management in the Forest Plan does not reflect these newer approaches nor have examples on the ground been implemented to get the public's opinion on acceptable visual changes **Forest Plan Guidelines need to reflect the use of other harvest method and application of ecological principles**

PEOPLE

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
24	Forest project analyses Monitoring, Road Management Proposal Christensen 1993, Public comment	The Travel Access Map will be updated (Next step is the same as Item 1)
25	Forest project analysis	Forest Guidelines will be formed

PEOPLE

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
	Other Forest Uses	
26	Oil and Gas Leasing	Regional Office direction requires that the Forest Plan "identify lands which have been found administratively available for leasing" (36 CFR 228 102 (d)) Administration of oil and gas must comply with NFMA, NEPA, and FOOLGRA (Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987), known as the Leasing Reform Act Currently, there is no demand for oil and gas leasing on the Bitterroot National Forest **National Forest lands need to be mapped to identify lands available for leasing. Forest Plan Standards would contain lease terms and resource protection provisions**
27	Non-traditional Forest Products	(This finding represents more of an "emerging" public use that perhaps demonstrates the need for continual monitoring of public expectations and land conditions) Recently the Flathead Culture Committee of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes raised the concern about whether the Forest is aware and monitoring public use or gathering (particularly for commercial purposes) of forest products such as Bear Grass (for floral arrangements) mushrooms, berries, seeds mosses, tree cones and other plants An adjacent Forest is currently considering proposals for "permits" to allow such products for harvest In April of 1994, a regional public conference (in part, sponsored by the Forest Service) was held to discuss the *opportunities for economic diversification of Forest products. Currently, public use* or requests on this Forest are low and the Forest Plan does not provide guidance in this area **Continued monitoring of this public interest and use is needed in order to provide opportunities (permitted use) to meet requests and ensure sustainable Forest resources** **Forest Plan Standards or Guidelines may be needed if demand and requests increase on this Forest**

PEOPLE

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
26	USDA-FS Region 1 1993 36 CFR 228 102	Incorporate maps when Forest Plan is revised
27	Tribal and public comment Public Conference Agenda 1994 Nez Perce Forest permit proposals memo 1994	Amend Forest Plan or form guidelines as needed

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
28	Lost Trail Ski Area	Currently there is contradictory information in the Forest Plan concerning the possible expansion of the Lost Trail Ski Area The Forest Plan allows for expansion but the most logical area for expansion is in lands mapped as MA5 (500 acres) MA5 standards are not consistent with the level of development associated with a downhill ski area **Forest Plan Management Area boundary change is needed**
29	Wilderness	Forest Plan direction for Wilderness was general and not reflective of the complexity of Wilderness management Efforts ensued after the Forest Plan (e g , LAC & fire management plans) *and several appendices or Wilderness Plans have resulted Currently, the* Selway Bitterroot Wilderness is amending the Forest Plan for vegetative management The Anaconda Pintler Wilderness "Plan" is being updated and incorporated into the Forest Plan For the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, planning is is ongoing to address current issues and mesh 3-4 Wilderness plans into one **Forest Plan (Goals, Objectives, Standards, Management Area Direction and Monitoring) may be needed to fully reflect the management direction for Wilderness.**
30	Wild and Scenic Rivers	As a result of the American Rivers Forest Plan Appeal some eligible river segments were added for study as wild and scenic rivers Some segments still need to be added to complete the agreement The appeal resolution also agreed upon some new Forest Plan Standards which have not yet been incorporated into the Forest Plan **Forest Plan Standards from the American Rivers Forest Plan Appeal need to be added to the Forest Plan and segments of river for study added to the current listing.**
31	Research Natural Areas	The 1983 Northern Regional Guide developed a systematic framework for identifying and establishing a research natural areas (RNA's) network The objective was to assure that representative examples of forests, shrublands, grasslands, alpine areas and aquatic systems were protected as baseline areas for research and monitoring The Regional Guide assigned 34 vegetation and aquatic targets to the Bitterroot National Forest The Bitterroot National Forest identified 10 proposed RNA's to meet the assigned targets through the Forest Plan There are four Research Natural Area (RNA) issues that need to be addressed 1) *Not all of the areas proposed as RNA's in the Forest Plan have been designated,* 2) Specific management area direction for each RNA has not been developed; 3) Not all of the RNA targets have been filled, and 4) The RNA targets in the Forest Plan may not adequately represent all the significant natural ecosystems of the Bitterroot National Forest as baseline areas for research and monitoring Additionally, there is no recognition of special or unique sites on the Bitterroot National Forest that qualify and/or have been proposed as special interest areas (SIA's) **Examine the role of Research Natural Areas in a Forest monitoring system (see** Monitoring Finding) **Complete the designation of RNAs and form Forest Plan direction for each RNA.**

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
28	Forest Plan, pg. III-70; Public Comment; Ski Permit Act of 1986	Amend Forest Plan or incorporate with Forest Plan revision.
29	Merigliano, 1993; Wilderness Plans	Amend Forest Plan for Vegetation for the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. Amend Forest Plan direction for Anaconda Pintler Wilderness. Amend Forest Plan direction for Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. (Next step is the same as Item 1.)
30	American Rivers Forest Plan Appeal and Settlement Agreement	Amend Forest Plan or incorporate with the Forest Plan revision.
31	USFS Northern Regional Guide, 1983; USFS Assessment of Representativeness of RNAs, 1993.	Amend Forest Plan or incorporate with the Forest Plan revision. Complete Monitoring Framework.

FOREST PLAN ASSUMPTIONS/FRAMEWORK

LINE #	ISSUE	FINDINGS
32	Monitoring	The current Monitoring and Evaluation for the Forest Plan is incomplete in its monitoring of the "conditions of the land" and in response to ecosystem management principles. As a part of this framework, the Bitterroot NF did receive a national grant to examine the role of Research Natural Areas in monitoring and is exploring other aspects of a monitoring framework with Research. Monitoring and Evaluation is key in communicating with the public about the land, public demand, and changes and ultimately in the credibility of the Forest Service as the land managing agency. **A new framework for Forest Plan Monitoring needs to be developed.**
33	Suitable Timber Land	The Forest Plan directed that only salvage timber harvest would take place on unsuitable lands and then only to meet the goals and standards of the Management Area. However, this direction or determination of suitability did not consider the use of vegetative treatments (including timber harvest) for the purpose of ecosystem restoration. Due to the lack of fire on some unsuitable lands, vegetative treatment (timber harvest) may be needed for site restoration purposes. Concern by some public is that ecosystem restoration is not well understood and that actions will be applied too broadly (affecting roadless areas). **Forest Plan Standards need to allow vegetative management (timber harvest) on unsuitable lands for the purpose of ecosystem restoration.** **Site specific amendments may be made in the interim where project analysis shows it to be ecologically sound.**

FOREST PLAN ASSUMPTIONS/FRAMEWORK

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
32	Chief's EM direction, Public comment: Landres, USDA-FS, 1993; Bitterroot RNA Grant, 1993	Form updated Monitoring Framework.
33	Forest project analyses, Public comment	(Next step is the same as Item 1.) Amend site specifically as needed.

FOREST PLAN ASSUMPTIONS/FRAMEWORK

LINE #	REFERENCES	NEXT STEP
32	Chief's EM direction, Public comment: Landres, USDA-FS, 1993; Bitterroot RNA Grant, 1993	Form updated Monitoring Framework.
33	Forest project analyses, Public comment	(Next step is the same as Item 1.) Amend site specifically as needed.