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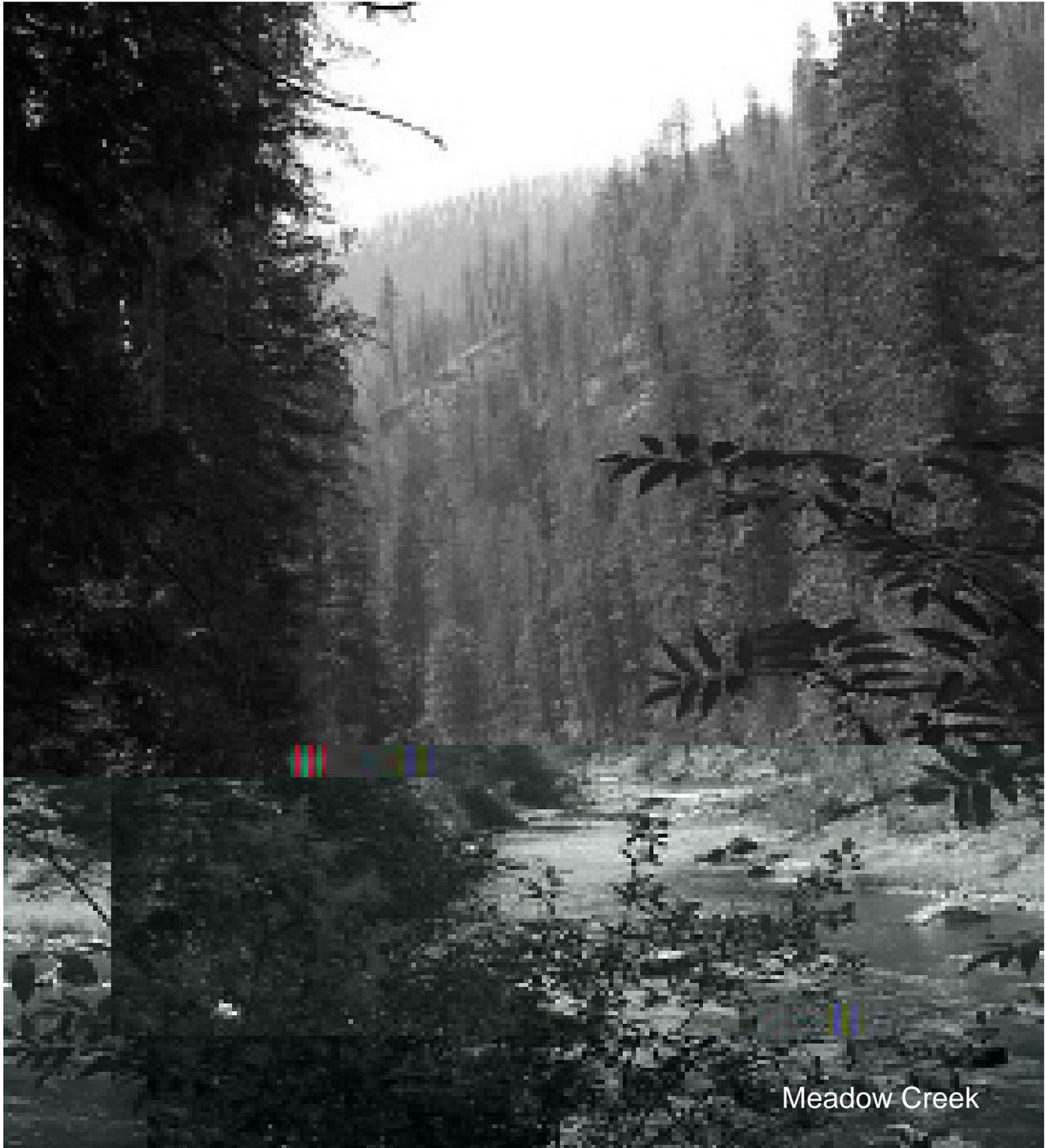
Forest Service



Northern Region

March 2007

Proposed Land Management Plan Nez Perce National Forest



Meadow Creek

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OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Nez Perce National Forest Proposed Land Management Plan is to establish goals and set forth the guidance to follow in pursuit of those goals.

Land management plans do not make project-level decisions, nor do they contain commitments to implement specific projects or actions. Those decisions are made after more detailed analysis and further public comment.

1.1.1 Plan Structure

The format of this Plan is considerably different than the Plan approved in 1987. The 2005 planning rule requires land management plans to include five plan components: (1) desired conditions, (2) objectives, (3) guidelines, (4) suitability of areas and (5) special areas. **Headings for plan components are shaded in gray to make them easy to identify. Additionally, the text of plan components is in bold type. Tables included within the text of plan components are considered to be part of the plan component.**

The five plan components are incorporated into a plan which is divided into three chapters: Vision, Strategy and Design Criteria.

Chapter 1 - Vision

Chapter 1 sets the context for management. It describes desired conditions for the Nez Perce National Forest. This chapter's plan component is:

Desired Condition – Desired conditions are the plan component that describes the ecological, economic and social attributes that characterize the desired outcome of land management.

Chapter 2 - Strategy

Chapter 2 describes how the Nez Perce National Forest intends to move toward or maintain the desired conditions described in Chapter 1. It steps the reader through a program prospectus that begins with a brief performance history followed by a description of the program emphases. Objectives are described for anticipated levels of conditions, uses and activities to achieve or move toward the desired conditions. This chapter also identifies lands as suitable for various uses and recommends lands for special area designation. This chapter's plan components include:

Objectives – Objectives describe the focus of unit management during the next 15 years.

Special Areas – Special areas are places within the National Forest System identified or designated because of their unique or special characteristics. The responsible official may identify, designate or remove special areas that occur within their authority or recommend the designation or removal of those special areas that require a Congressional or higher level administrative decision.

Suitability of Areas – Plans identify areas of the Forest as “generally suitable” for a variety of uses. Social, economic and ecological factors are considered when areas are identified as generally suitable for a land use. Suitability of areas must be consistent with the desired conditions.

Geographic Areas – Since specific management emphasis is sometimes needed for unique areas within the Nez Perce National Forest, the Forest has been divided into 13 subunits called geographic areas. At the end of Chapter 2, readers will find maps and basic information about geographic areas as well as area-specific management emphases and suitable uses.

Chapter 3 – Design Criteria

Design criteria provide information and guidance for subsequent projects designed to achieve or trend toward the management strategy. They include guidelines and references to some other applicable guidance. This chapter’s plan components include:

Guidelines – Guidelines provide guidance and information for carrying out projects and activities that to help achieve the objectives and desired conditions.

Additionally, Forest Plans are required to describe a monitoring program for the Forest that establishes monitoring questions and associated performance measures. A draft Forest Plan monitoring program is available from the revision website http://www.fs.fed.us/cnpz/forest/documents/sup_docs/index_monitor_nez.shtml. Individuals are encouraged to provide feedback regarding these questions and suggest appropriate performance measures.

A Plan Set of Documents and evaluation reports will be assembled to provide supporting Forest Plan documentation. See the *User’s Guide for the Nez Perce National Forest Land Management Plan* for additional information about Supporting Documentation.

1.1.2 Plan Use and Consistency

As required by the National Forest Management Act and the planning rule, all projects and activities authorized by the Forest Service must be consistent with the Plan (16 USC 1604(i) and 36 CFR 219.8(a), (b), and (e)). A project or activity must be consistent with the Plan (36 CFR 219.8(e)) by being consistent with applicable plan components.

The planning rule identifies five plan components: desired conditions, objectives, guidelines, suitability of areas and special areas. Plans may have other content (which is optional) such as: the statements of background, collaboration strategies, existing conditions, glossary, introduction, monitoring questions, performance history, performance measures, performance risks, program emphasis, program guidance, program priorities, proposed and possible actions, roles and contributions, management challenges, or strategies. The optional contents are not “the Plan.” Projects and activities need not be consistent with other contents, but responsible officials may consider them.

Ensuring Project or Activity Consistency with the Plan – Where a project or activity as proposed would not be consistent with the five plan components, the responsible official has the following options:

1. Modify the proposal so that the project or activity will be consistent;

2. Reject the proposal; or
3. Amend the Plan contemporaneously with the approval of the project or activity so that the project or activity is consistent with the Plan as amended. The amendment may be limited to apply only to the project or activity.

The following paragraphs describe how a project or activity is consistent with Plan components and the requirements for documenting consistency.

Desired Conditions (36 CFR 219.7(a)(2)(i)) – A project or activity is consistent with the desired condition component of the Plan if it does not foreclose the opportunity for maintenance or attainment of the applicable desired conditions over the long term based on the spatial scales described in the Plan.

Objectives (36 CFR 219.7(a)(2)(iii)) – Objectives are designed to move toward desired conditions. A project or activity is consistent with the objectives component of the plan if it contributes to the attainment of one or more applicable objectives.

The project documentation should identify any applicable objective(s) to which the project contributes. If there are no applicable objectives, the project is consistent with the objectives components of the Plan; the documentation should state that fact.

Guidelines (36 CFR 219.7(a)(2)(iii)) – A project or activity must be consistent with all guidelines applicable to the type of project or activity and its location in the plan area. A project or activity may be consistent with a guideline in one of two ways:

1. The project or activity is designed in accordance with the guideline, or
2. The project or activity design varies from the guideline but the design is an effective means of meeting the purpose of the guideline, to maintain or contribute to the attainment of relevant desired conditions and objectives.

The project documentation should describe how the project is consistent with the guidelines, and specifically explain whether the project varies from a guideline, and how the variance is an effective means of meeting the purpose of the guideline.

Suitability of Areas (36 CFR 219.7(a)(2)(iv)) – Except for timber production, consistency of a project or activity should be evaluated in one of two ways:

1. The project or activity is a use identified in the Plan as generally suitable for the location where the project or activity is to occur, or
2. The project or activity is not a use identified in the Plan as generally suitable for the location, but the project or activity has been determined in the project analysis documents to be appropriate for that location.

The project documentation should describe whether the project or activity is: (1) a use for which the area is specifically identified in the Plan as generally suitable, or (2) whether the project or activity is nonetheless appropriate for that location.

A project with the primary purpose of timber production may only occur in an area identified as suitable for that use (see 16 USC 1604(k)), and the documentation for such project should confirm that the project would occur in an area identified as suitable for timber production.

Special Areas (36 CFR 219.7(a)(2)(v)) – Where a plan provides desired conditions, objectives, or guidelines, or identifies suitable uses for a special area, a project or activity must be consistent with those area-specific components. The project documentation should describe how the project or activity is consistent with the area-specific components of the Plan.

1.1.3 Maintaining Plans and Adapting to New Information

The Forest Plan is an integral part of the adaptive management cycle that provides a framework guiding future management decisions and actions. Adaptive management includes: defining measurable objectives, monitoring, learning and changing, and recognizing uncertainties with outcomes.

The cycle of adaptation functions through the monitoring and evaluation requirements of the Plan. The monitoring program is described in more detail in the Plan Set of Documents¹. Key components of the monitoring program² are described below, including an approach for responding to changing conditions or public desires, and to new information including research and scientific findings.

The Forest Plan and Plan Set of Documents will be kept current with evaluation reports, which will reflect changing conditions, science, and other relevant information. Three types of evaluations are used:

1. Comprehensive evaluations (updated at least every 5 years) are used for plan development and plan revision³;
2. Evaluation for a plan amendment where issues arise that warrant change to the Forest Plan; and
3. Annual evaluation of the monitoring information.

Annually, the Forest Supervisor and other managers on the Forest will evaluate the monitoring information and determine if any changes are needed in management actions or plan guidance as informed by those monitoring results. This management review is a part of the environmental management system (EMS) that is established on the Forest. Simply, the environmental management system promotes a “plan, do, check, act”

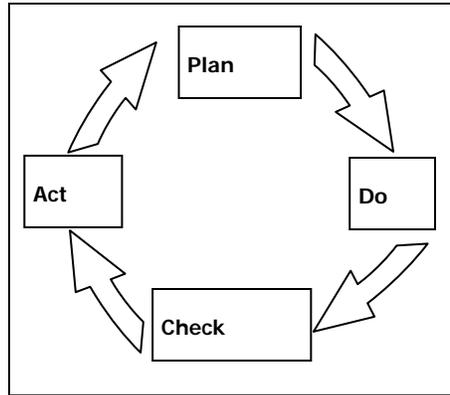
¹ At this time, the Forest’s draft monitoring program is filed in Supporting Documentation (http://www.fs.fed.us/cnpz/forest/documents/sup_docs/index_monitor_nez.shtml)

² A monitoring program consists of monitoring questions and performance measures, a monitoring guide, annual monitoring work plans and evaluation reports, and comprehensive evaluation reports.

³ The Nez Perce National Forest initiated forest plan revision in accordance with the 1982 planning rule. The Forest later transitioned to the 2005 planning rule. Information consistent with the comprehensive evaluation report is compiled in the Draft Analysis of the Management Situation, 2004 Social Assessment and watershed analysis and inventory and assessment documents.

management system (Figure 1.1.3) that tracks the Forest management's environmental performance, identifies needed improvements and results in actions to make those improvements. The continual improvement of environmental performance is focused on achieving or maintaining desired conditions, as described in the Forest Plan.

Figure 1.1.3 Plan, Do, Check, Act Management System



Monitoring information to facilitate the management review addresses the following questions:

- Are projects and activities, which are guided by the Plan, achieving multiple use objectives?
- What are the effects of various resource management activities on the productivity of the lands?
- To what degree is on-the-ground management maintaining or making progress toward the desired conditions and objectives for the Plan?
- What changes needed in the monitoring program to account for unanticipated changes in conditions?

Table 1.1.3 displays the plan components and the kinds of monitoring conducted. The relation to the environmental management system is also provided.

Table 1.1.3 Plan Components, Monitoring Strategy and Relation to Environmental Management System

Plan Component	Monitoring Type	Relation to Environmental Management System
Desired Conditions	<p>This monitoring considers a broad view of ecological and social and economic conditions, recognizing that many factors (natural events, human uses and management activities) influence desired conditions.</p> <p>Monitoring items have a frequency specified in the monitoring guide. While monitoring may occur annually, indications of trends will likely be on the basis of 3-5 years or more.</p>	<p>Information is provided for management reviews on periodic basis. The information may be tied to reports such as the comprehensive evaluations and national/regional inventory systems.</p>
Objectives	<p>This monitoring measures progress towards the objectives. Performance measures, often as identified in the budgeting process, are used to assess progress or accomplishment.</p> <p>Performance (i.e. accomplishment) is generally measured as part of the annual budget process.</p>	<p>Objectives for Environmental Management System can include plan objectives or other objectives to improve environmental performance. Monitoring and measurement will provide the management review with documented progress on improving environmental performance.</p>
Guidelines	<p>This monitoring addresses whether projects and other activities are accomplished within the guidelines used for project design.</p> <p>The agency's administration of projects or authorized uses provides monitoring (e.g. inspection reports) that document that the activity occurs as designed. Audits and other monitoring systems are also used as additional checks.</p> <p>Projects are monitored as they are accomplished. Audits for a sampling of projects occur on an annual basis consistent with audits for Environmental Management System.</p>	<p>Environmental Management System provides for project implementation monitoring and measurement of plan guidelines when those guidelines are part of a significant environmental aspect.</p> <p>Environmental Management System also addresses efforts to evaluate compliance with legal and other requirements. Monitoring results are provided to the management review to document progress on improving environmental performance.</p>

A compilation of potential Forest Plan monitoring questions is available in Supporting Documentation

(http://www.fs.fed.us/cnpz/forest/documents/sup_docs/index_monitor_nez.shtml). The Forest is looking for feedback that can be used to fully develop a Forest Plan monitoring program.

CHAPTER 1: VISION

1.2 Forest Roles, Contributions and Management Challenges

1.2.1 Location

Map 1.2.1 Nez Perce National Forest Vicinity Map

The Nez Perce National Forest is comprised of more than 2.2 million acres in north-central Idaho. The proclaimed boundary stretches from the Oregon border on the west to the Montana border on the east. Included within the proclaimed boundary of the Nez Perce National Forest is the 117,100-acre Hells Canyon National Recreation Area that is managed by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Elevations range from less than 1500 to more than 9000 feet.

Nez Perce National Forest lands lie totally within Idaho County. Bounded on the north by the Clearwater National Forest, it abuts the Bitterroot National Forest to the east and the Payette National Forest to the south. The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest lies to the west in Oregon on the other side of the Snake River.

1.2.2 Description

The Nez Perce National Forest is characterized by vast areas of wildlands. Sixty-five percent of the Forest (877,000 acres) is designated wilderness or inventoried roadless areas. The Forest administers approximately 877,000 acres of Wilderness including sections of the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return Wildernesses as well as the entire Gospel-Hump Wilderness. An additional 60,000 acres of the Hells Canyon Wilderness located within the Nez Perce National Forest is administered by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Another 497,000 acres are inventoried roadless areas.

There are currently 164 miles of designated wild and scenic rivers on the Nez Perce National Forest. Of these, 119 miles are classified “wild” and 45 miles are classified “recreation” rivers. The designated segments are located within the Selway, Middle Fork Clearwater and Salmon Rivers. They provide some of the best whitewater recreation opportunities in the United States.

Outfitters and guides provide important services and outdoor recreation opportunities to visitors from all over the country. There are 27 hunting, three mountain bike/trail ride, and 4 river outfitters on the Forest.

Generally the land is steep and rugged, but high elevation rolling hills are also common. The Forest is drained by several fast-flowing rivers: Snake, Salmon, Selway and South Fork Clearwater. The climate is milder than what might be expected at this latitude due to the influence of the Pacific Ocean.

Most of the Forest soils are moderately productive. Many have the high erosion hazard typically associated with the Idaho Batholith. An ash cap covers many of the soils, adding nutrients, water-holding capacity and increased stability.

Vegetation on the Nez Perce National Forest is as varied as the terrain. Lower elevation southerly aspects along the rivers have native grasslands and shrublands along with ponderosa pine forests. North aspects and higher elevations are forested with grand fir, Douglas-fir, subalpine fir, lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, western larch, western redcedar and Engelmann spruce. Whitebark pine is also found at the highest elevations.

Wildlife species on the Nez Perce National Forest are abundant. Elk, deer, moose, mountain goat, bighorn sheep, black bear, mountain lion, coyotes and reintroduced gray wolves are the most common large wildlife species. Lesser-known non-game species include the flammulated owl, pygmy nuthatch, white-headed woodpecker and mountain quail. The elk herd is nationally known.

Resident fish populations, such as cutthroat trout and bull trout, are nationally significant. The anadromous fish runs (salmon and steelhead) are of international importance. All of the large rivers support anadromous fish runs, and most of their tributaries provide spawning and rearing habitat.

The Forest is the traditional homeland of the Nez Perce American Indian Tribe. Tribal members continue to rely on the Forest for subsistence and cultural purposes.

Modern-day residents have strong ties to the Forest. The land holds diverse resources used for recreational, commercial and related purposes. Commercial uses include timber harvesting, grazing, mining and guided recreational activities conducted by licensed outfitters and guides.

The Forest offers a broad array of recreation opportunities. Undeveloped sites abound in the Forest's vast backcountry. Developed sites provide opportunities along many of the major routes. Popular recreational activities include river floating, hiking, backpacking, camping, hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road vehicle use and wildlife viewing.

There are also historic and scenic resources. The Southern Nez Perce Trail winds across the mountains from the Nez Perce Tribe's homeland on the Camas Prairie to their buffalo-hunting grounds in Montana. The Elk City Wagon Road originates near the town of Stites, Idaho, and winds through the mountains to Elk City. The Millner Trail connects Grangeville to the remote community of Warren.

The Nez Perce National Forest headquarters is in Grangeville, Idaho. The Clearwater Ranger District is also based in Grangeville; the Salmon River Ranger District near White Bird, Idaho; the Red River Ranger District office in Elk City, Idaho; and the Moose Creek Ranger District office at the historic Fenn Ranger Station east of Kooskia, Idaho.

1.2.3 Expected Roles and Contributions

In accordance with the agency's mission and goals, the Nez Perce National Forest strives to achieve quality land management under the sustainable, multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people.

Ecological Roles and Contributions

The Nez Perce National Forest contains some of the most valuable natural resources within north-central Idaho. Maintaining and enhancing these important resources is an overriding priority.

The Forest features a broad array of landscapes from wilderness, where natural conditions predominate, to more intensely managed areas, where conditions have been altered to meet specific resource concerns as well as social needs.

The basic foundations of ecosystems (air, soil, water, vegetation) are present and in a condition that promotes vegetative growth, hydrologic function, long-term nutrient cycling and natural erosive processes. Air quality falls within acceptable standards. Ecosystems are dynamic and resilient to natural and human-caused disturbances.

Disturbance processes (fires, insects, diseases, floods, landslides) contribute to functioning ecosystems. They remain within the range of natural variability. Fire plays its role where appropriate and desirable, but is suppressed where necessary to protect life, resources and property. It is used to manage vegetation to enhance ecosystem resiliency and reduce hazardous fuel levels.

Forest, grassland, shrubland and riparian plant communities are within a desired range of natural variability for processes (disturbances), composition (species present), structure (size and density) and vegetative patterns. They provide diverse habitat that sustains desired plant, wildlife and aquatic species.

Vegetation forms a diverse network of habitats and connective linkages for wildlife. There are desired numbers of snags and down woody material.

Invasive weed populations do not expand and new invader species do not become established.

Riparian areas connect upland and aquatic habitats and promote stable and diverse stream channel conditions. Streams and lakes provide clean water at appropriate temperatures and support native and desired nonnative species. Water quality is maintained for all state-designated beneficial uses.

Social, Economic and Cultural Goals and Contributions

There is a high level of cooperation and coordination among tribal, federal, state, county, and city governments and local citizens. People with an interest in the management of the Nez Perce National Forest are informed about project proposals. They provide valuable information and ideas. Their contributions are used to craft creative management alternatives. The Forest clearly articulates how public input is incorporated into land management decisions. People understand the rationale behind decisions.

Ecosystems provide a sustainable level (within the land's capability and existing laws) of products and services for current and future generations. Timber, range, recreation, heritage resources, minerals, fish, wildlife, water, heritage and special-use programs offer opportunities for economic development and contribute to local communities.

Resilient, dynamic ecosystems offer a wide range of recreation opportunities, uses and settings. Visitors enjoy a variety of special attractions, including designated wilderness, designated wild and scenic rivers, scenic byways and historic trails.

Opportunities for people to experience the natural environment are provided to both motorized and non-motorized users through a managed system of low-speed trails and roads and non-motorized trails. Areas with roads provide the highest density of motorized routes, but opportunities for semi-primitive motorized experiences are also provided in areas with and without roads. There is an increased emphasis on management of high priority Forest system roads and trails.

The Nez Perce National Forest is a leader in wilderness management and administers sections of the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return Wildernesses and the entire Gospel-Hump Wilderness. These designated wildernesses provide undeveloped, natural landscapes with outstanding opportunities for solitude or unconfined recreation. The three wildernesses managed by the Nez Perce National Forest (Frank Church-River of No Return, Selway-Bitterroot, and Gospel-Hump) sustain important ecological systems and functions and provide outstanding wilderness recreation opportunities.

River segments and corridors identified as “eligible” or “suitable,” and designated wild and scenic rivers are managed to retain their free-flowing status, classification and outstandingly remarkable values.

Forest developed recreation sites are constructed, reconstructed and maintained to provide a variety of recreation opportunities for visitors. Recreation sites are managed along a spectrum of development according to level of use and desired opportunity across the Forest. More highly developed recreational facilities are provided in the heavy-use areas while more rustic facilities are provided in more remote areas and at portals to designated wilderness. Developed sites across the Forest are a mix of fee and non-fee sites.

Recreation use in the general Forest area is provided to those visitors seeking less developed recreational opportunities. This use is managed at identified concentrated use areas such as trailheads, dispersed camping areas, parking facilities, etc. Amenities placed at concentrated use areas are designed and managed to provide for protection of natural resources rather than user convenience.

Commercial recreation developments and outfitter and guides services are authorized to the extent necessary to provide the public with those recreation opportunities that otherwise would not be available. These professional services will broaden the range of recreation opportunities provided on national forest lands.

Recreation opportunities for visitors with needs are provided and expanded. These accommodations are managed and maintained primarily at developed recreation sites, and during reconstruction of some concentrated use areas.

National Forest System lands have been consolidated to facilitate management. Consolidation does not result in tax increases for county residents to compensate for changes in federal land boundaries.

Lands within the Nez Perce National Forest are used to sustain the cultural viability of the Nez Perce Tribe. Important cultural resources are maintained in a condition that sustains tribal and non-tribal cultural activities. Land management decisions are made in consultation with the Tribe and are consistent with treaties, laws, policies and executive orders regarding tribal cultural and religious rights.

1.2.4 Management Challenges

While filling a distinctive role as a public land management agency, the Nez Perce National Forest faces many challenges. The American public cares deeply about their national forests. They are also sharply divided in their beliefs about what activities should occur on National Forest System lands. Forest personnel are constantly challenged to maintain or improve contributions of goods and services to the local economy when:

1. Budgets are flat or declining – The actual funds used to manage the Forest have steadily declined since the 1990s. This trend will likely continue.
2. Resource conditions and needs are changing – Forests are constantly changing through either natural events (e.g. fires, floods, climate change, etc.), or human activities. Resource managers cannot always anticipate and plan for these occurrences.
3. Changes in the environment affect populations of plant and animal species – Several species on the Nez Perce National Forest are listed as “threatened” or “endangered” in accordance with the Endangered Species Act. Recovery of these species is a critical consideration in of forest management.
4. People’s values are conflicting – People generally agree that forest should be healthy and resilient. They disagree sharply about the types of management that are needed to achieve this desired state.
5. The legal landscape is shifting – As new laws are enacted and courts render decisions interpreting existing laws, rules for forest management are constantly evolving.

1.3 Ecosystem Integrity and Sustainability Desired Conditions

Reader’s Note: A companion document, *Existing Conditions for the Nez Perce National Forest Land Management Plan*, provides an overview of the existing conditions for many of the resource areas described in this section.

The Nez Perce National Forest desired conditions contained herein are the product of a variety of land management options generated through internal and external collaboration. These desired conditions were carefully integrated to provide for a variety of multiple uses that will meet the current and future needs and desires of local, regional and national interests. The desired outcome of this integrated resource product is sustainability – social, economic and ecological sustainability.

The Forest Plan provides a framework for sustaining native ecological systems by providing for the ecological conditions that support the diverse native plant and animal species within the Nez Perce National Forest. Plan components, when implemented together, should provide habitats necessary to maintain native plant and animal communities. (See Supporting Documentation http://www.fs.fed.us/cnpz/forest/documents/sup_docs/index_sustain_nez.shtml.)

1.3.1 Forest Vegetation

1.3.1.1 General Vegetation

Vegetation varies widely across the Forest due to variations in elevation, aspect, climatic factors and past disturbances. The National Hierarchy of Ecological Units is used to describe similar settings. The Nez Perce National Forest contains portions of two ecological sections (ecosections): Idaho Batholith and Blue Mountains. Most of the Forest is within the Idaho Batholith section; a portion on the west edge is within the Blue Mountains section. The Blue Mountains section has been included with the Idaho Batholith section in the desired conditions descriptions. The breaklands, uplands and subalpine settings within each section are approximations of subsections as described in *Ecological Units of the Northern Region: Subsections*.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Vegetation reflects native forest diversity for species composition and size classes that would be present if landscape dynamics (fire, insects and pathogens are the primary agents) were fully functioning. Species and size classes are represented in their ecologically appropriate settings at the levels that promote system health and resilience. (Desired conditions are based on several historic descriptions and inventories, including pollen studies, fire histories, John Leiberg's 1898 survey of the Bitterroot Forest Reserve, early 1900s surveys of the Nez Perce and Selway National Forests and a 1939 forest inventory.)

1.3.1.2 Breaklands Setting ([Map 1.3.1.2](#)) 775,690 acres

The landscape is dominated by steep slopes, forming deep canyons through which major rivers (Salmon, South Fork Clearwater, Middle Fork Clearwater and Selway) and their tributaries (e.g., Bargamin Creek, Crooked Creek, Wind River, White Bird Creek, Johns Creek, Silver Creek, Gedney Creek and O'Hara Creek) flow. Soils are derived from weathered granite, border zone rock, basalt, or Seven Devils volcanics. They are inherently erosive due to the steep slopes. Channel scour, colluviation, mass wasting and surface erosion are the dominant erosion processes.

Stream channels are generally high gradient in confined valley bottoms. Channels in first and second order streams are highly influenced by extreme events associated with summer storms or snow melt. Riparian vegetation is mostly forested, with shrubs at the lowest southerly aspects. This vegetation is a key element in channel and bank stability in headwater streams.

This setting is typically warmer and drier than other settings on the Forest. Typical potential vegetation includes ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, dry grand fir, grasslands and

shrublands. Inclusions are moist grand fir types, and western redcedar in the Middle Fork Clearwater and Selway drainages. Frost pockets and higher elevations may have subalpine fir inclusions. Forest cover types are a mix of shade-intolerant (ponderosa pine, western larch, and Douglas-fir) and shade-tolerant (grand fir and western redcedar) vegetation in a range of size classes.

Historically, large, old trees (over 21 inches in diameter) were found on 40 to 60% of the south aspects and 20 to 30% of the north aspects. Frequent fires resulted in a flush of smaller sized dead trees, a few large snags and consumed older dead wood whether standing or on the ground.

The variety of forest conditions provides a mix of forage and cover for wintering big game and forest raptors; large ponderosa pine provides preferred habitat for a variety of birds; and fires and endemic insect infestations provide a continuous supply of standing snags for wildlife nesting, roosting and feeding. Grasslands and shrublands interspersed with the forested sites provide highly diverse habitats.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

On southerly aspects ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir dominate with lesser amounts of grand fir. Grand fir or subalpine fir may occur on lower slopes and along streams. Western redcedar may occur on more moist sites in the Middle Fork Clearwater or Selway River drainages. Grasses or shrubs form the understory.

On northerly aspects, Douglas-fir and grand fir dominate, with inclusions of ponderosa pine on ridgetops. Colder sites may include lodgepole pine. Western redcedar may occur on mesic sites as on the southerly aspects. Understory vegetation is composed of tall mesic shrubs. After disturbance, these shrub species may dominate the site for decades. Desired dominance types are summarized in Table 1.3.1.2a.

Table 1.3.1.2a. Desired Dominance Types: Breaklands

Dominance Type	Desired Range	Existing
Ponderosa Pine/Mix	21% to 41%	29% ⁴
Douglas-Fir	19% to 37%	19% ⁴
Lodgepole Pine	3% to 7%	2% ⁴
Western Larch/Douglas-Fir	3% to 7%	0% ⁴
Grand Fir/Western Redcedar	11% to 21%	29% ⁴
Subalpine Fir/Spruce Mix	2% to 4%	1% ⁴
Seral Grass/Shrub	8% to 16%	4% ⁴
Non-Forest	16%	16% ⁵

⁴ Existing forest cover types are from Forest Inventory and Assessment data for the Nez Perce National Forest, measured from 2000-2002.

⁵ Existing non-forest, not measured in Forest Inventory and Assessment inventory, is taken from potential vegetation maps, landtype maps, and inventory and satellite imagery.

On southerly aspects the forest is one- or two-storied. Younger trees occur as even-aged groups interspersed among the long-lived, shade-intolerant species. Disturbances promote an open canopy of large old trees. Large trees are very common on these southerly slopes. Some of these stands of large trees are “old growth.” On southerly aspects, “old growth” is typically ponderosa pine with some Douglas-fir and grand fir, often found on midslopes and ridges. This is primarily old growth type 1, with some type 4A, in moist inclusions, and types 4B and 7 in the cedar types in the Selway and Middle Fork Clearwater drainages (Green and others, 1992, errata corrected 2005). These have at least 8 trees per acre over 21 inches in diameter. Old growth trees are at least 150 years old. Total basal area in the “old growth” stands is at least 40 square feet per acre.

Northerly aspects tend to have complex stand structures with even-aged patches interspersed among two- to multi-storied forests. It is made up of more Douglas-fir and grand fir than the southerly aspects. This reflects the mixed severity fire regime that was most common on these sites. Large old trees tend to be found on upper slopes, ridgelines or in riparian areas. Those on the ridgelines are generally ponderosa pine or western larch, while the riparian old forests are more often grand fir, spruce or even western redcedar. “Old growth” tends to be found on ridges and upper slopes. This is primarily old growth type 4A, with inclusions of type 1. Moist sites in the Selway/Middle Fork Clearwater drainages have types 4B and 7 on cedar sites. The desired size class distribution is summarized in Table 1.3.1.2b.

Table 1.3.1.2b. Desired Size Distribution: Breaklands

Size Class	Desired Range ⁶	Existing ⁷
Non-Forest	16%	16%
Seral Grass/ Shrub	6% to 15%	4%
0" to 5"	3% to 7%	1%
5" to 15"	25% to 49%	20%
15"+	21% to 43%	59%

On south aspects these stands are open (typically 25 to 150 mature trees per acre), with basal areas at maturity of 80 to 250 square feet per acre. On northerly aspects, stand densities are generally at the higher end of the range: 75 to 150 mature trees per acre, with basal areas of 150 to 250 square feet per acre.

On southerly aspects large soft snags are uncommon. The accumulation of dead wood ranges from 5 to 15 tons per acre of material over 3 inches in diameter. On northerly aspects, there are slightly higher dead wood accumulations: 10 to 20 tons per acre would be typical. The complex stand structure leads to more snags across a wide size range.

⁶ These are an average of conditions on north and south aspects.

⁷ Existing size classes are from FIA data.

Larger sizes of snags and down wood are preferred, if available, for longer persistence in the soil and enhanced wildlife habitat. Recommended numbers of snags are 1 to 5 per acre over 20 inches in diameter. Arrangement may vary from individual trees to groups. On southerly aspects, new snags are created every 10 to 25 years. Northerly aspects have a more dynamic snag system, with longer intervals between high levels of snags. Riparian habitats support the greatest density of large snags.

Low severity disturbances (fire or harvest) occur every 5 to 50 years, reducing trees per acre and retaining the larger trees. Steep slopes and narrow riparian habitats result in a disturbance interval in riparian and moist habitat inclusions that rarely exceeds 150 years. On northerly aspects, mixed severity disturbances occur every 40 to 120 years and maintain a patchy mosaic of younger stands mixed with older forest. Disturbance boundaries generally follow topographic boundaries such as draws, ridges and changes in aspect.

Insects and disease, western pine beetles, Douglas-fir beetles, Scolytus beetles and Armillaria and Schweinitzii root rots are at light to moderate endemic levels in the landscape, causing sporadic mortality in overstory trees.

1.3.1.3 Uplands Setting ([Map 1.3.1.3](#)) 475,396 acres

This landscape is dominated by gentle, rolling hills with shallow canyons that contain relatively small fish-bearing streams. Soils are deeper than the breaklands, and have a volcanic ash surface layer that buffers surface erosion. Streams are moderate gradient. Meadow and shrub complexes occur in some valley bottoms. The largest of these are in Red River and American River, with smaller examples in Crooked River, Newsome Creek, Mill Creek and both the Selway-Meadow Creek and South Fork Clearwater-Meadow Creek. Riparian vegetation, both forested and herbaceous, is key to channel and bank stability.

This setting is typically cool and moist. Typical potential vegetation includes grand fir, western redcedar, and shrubs (Sitka alder and fool's huckleberry on the grand fir mosaic). Subalpine fir types occur as inclusions on colder sites, ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir occur as inclusions on warmer, drier sites. Forest cover types include a mix of shade-intolerant species (ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, western larch) and shade-tolerant species (grand fir, subalpine fir, and western redcedar).

Historically, stands of large, old trees made up 5 to 20% of the setting. Infrequent, mixed severity fires produced moderate numbers of snags and amounts of dead wood.

A mix of species and size classes provides a mix of forage and cover for summering big game species; riparian areas with large old trees provide excellent fisher habitat; and dead wood provides habitat for a variety of cavity-dependent species such as bats and woodpeckers.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Douglas-fir, western larch and lodgepole pine often form the majority of the seedlings that establish after disturbance. Colder, drier sites are likely to have nearly pure lodgepole pine stands; warmer or moister sites are usually a mix of

species. Ponderosa pine is less common than on breaklands, but is long-lived, and often an influential part of the stand. Grand fir is also a common species. Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir occur on cooler sites. Grand fir and Engelmann spruce predominate on grand fir mosaic sites. Riparian habitats are often characterized by mature grand fir, western redcedar, or spruce. Shrubs are prolific and diverse on these sites, and may persist for 30 years after disturbance. Desired dominance types are summarized in Table 1.3.1.3a.

Table 1.3.1.3a. Desired Dominance Types: Uplands

Dominance Type	Desired Range	Existing
Ponderosa Pine/Mixed	11% to 23%	1% ⁴
Douglas-fir	11% to 23%	17% ⁴
Lodgepole Pine	15% to 29%	16% ⁴
Western Larch/Douglas-fir	3% to 7%	1% ⁴
Grand Fir/Western Redcedar	21% to 41%	43% ⁴
Subalpine fir/Spruce Mix	2% to 4%	14% ⁴
Seral Grass/Shrub	3% to 7%	3% ⁴
Non-Forest	4%	4% ⁵

The forest is commonly even-aged or two-aged and may have grand fir mixed with the shade-intolerant species. As forests develop after stand-replacing disturbance, they begin to develop additional age classes due to low-intensity disturbances from harvest, insects, pathogens and low-severity fires. For the largest size class, the typical forest character is 5 to 25 large, old ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, or western larch trees per acre with a mix of small to large-sized grand fir. The large size class is most widespread and persistent in riparian areas and adjacent uplands. This large size class is where stands classed as “old growth” would be found, though not all of the large size class will be “old growth”. “Old growth” on these diverse sites may be made up of any species. It is primarily old growth type 4A with inclusions of types 1, 4B and 7. It has at least 10 trees per acre over 21 inches in diameter, or 25 inches in diameter for cedar. Old growth trees are at least 150 years old. Total basal area in old growth stands is at least 80 square feet per acre, or 120 square feet in cedar types. Overall, desired size class distributions are summarized in Table 1.3.1.3b.

Table 1.3.1.3b Desired Size Distribution: Uplands

Size Class	Desired Range	Existing ⁷
Non-Forest	4%	4%
Seral Grass/Shrub	3% to 7%	3%
0" to 5"	6% to 13%	7%
5" to 15"	21% to 41%	51%
15"+	36% to 72%	35%

These stands are generally well-stocked except in the grand fir mosaic. Density varies as small openings develop in the stands over time. Typical basal areas at

maturity are 180 to 250 square feet per acre. In the grand fir mosaic, densities in older stands are 100 to 200 square feet of basal area per acre.

Large, dead wood accumulations typically range from 20 to 40 tons per acre in old forests. Seven to 15 tons per acre of material over 3 inches in diameter is the desired level in younger forests. Larger material, if available, is preferred for long-term soil maintenance and greater value as wildlife habitat. Recommended numbers of snags are 2 to 4 per acre over 20 inches in diameter, and an additional 8 to 13 per acre that are 10 to 20 inches in diameter. These may be grouped in clumps, or found as individuals. Riparian habitats support the greatest density of large snags and down wood.

Disturbance (fire or harvest) occurs every 30 to 50 years, reducing stand density, removing smaller trees, and making openings in the canopy. At 120 to 200 years, stand replacement occurs, typically leaving about 20% of the overall canopy, mostly in riparian areas and isolated upland patches.

Root disease, Douglas-fir beetle, western spruce budworm and mountain pine beetle are the most common insects and pathogens. Most of the time they act to move the forest toward climax stand conditions and maintain more open stand conditions. Insects and disease should be at moderate endemic levels in the landscape.

Douglas-fir is only moderately long-lived on these sites due to root rot susceptibility. On more moist sites, it is often gone from the stand by 80 years after stand-replacing disturbance. On the drier end, it may persist for over 150 years.

Lodgepole pine is perpetuated by stand-replacing disturbances about every 100 to 150 years.

1.3.1.4 Subalpine Setting: ([Map 1.3.1.4](#)) - 857,595 acres

This landscape occurs on gentle to steep slopes at higher elevations. Soils are highly erodible, especially on south aspects with little volcanic ash. Streams are generally high gradient in confined valley bottoms in the steeper areas, or low to moderate gradient in areas with gentle slopes. Sediment has filled low-gradient valleys in places and formed meadows with meadow/shrub complexes interspersed with forest. Riparian vegetation is key to channel and bank stability of streams. Debris torrents can increase after disturbances such as large fires. Large wood in streams is important for channel stability, sediment storage, cover and pool formation.

Higher elevations generally have shallower soils and shorter growing seasons than lower elevations within this setting.

This setting is typically cold, with a wide range of moisture conditions. Typical potential vegetation includes subalpine fir, cool grand fir, shrublands, and some whitebark pine. Inclusions on warmer sites are dry grand fir, Douglas-fir, and western redcedar types. Forest cover types are a mix of shade-intolerant (lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, western larch, whitebark pine) and shade-tolerant (subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce, grand fir) trees in a variety of size classes.

Historically large, old trees dominated 5 to 15% of the setting. Infrequent, stand-replacing fires produced large numbers of medium-sized snags. Between fire events, snag numbers were low and scattered across the landscape.

This variety provides habitat for summering big game and forest raptors; the higher elevations provide habitat for wide-ranging carnivores; mature forests and mountain meadows are used by boreal owls; and a continuous supply of snags provides habitat for cavity-nesting species such as woodpeckers.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

On more moderate sites within this setting, Douglas-fir, western larch and lodgepole pine often form the majority of the stocking after disturbance. Subalpine fir is the most common understory species. Colder, drier sites are likely to have nearly pure lodgepole pine stands; more moderate sites are usually a mix of species. Riparian habitats are often dominated by mature spruce, subalpine fir or grand fir. Shrubs are prolific and diverse on these sites, and may dominate for 30 years after disturbance. The highest elevations support whitebark pine in pure or mixed stands. Table 1.3.1.4a summarizes the desired dominance types for the subalpine setting.

Table 1.3.1.4a. Desired Dominance Types: Subalpine

Dominance Type	Desired Range	Existing
Ponderosa Pine/Mixed	0% to 0%	0% ⁴
Douglas-fir	4% to 7%	8% ⁴
Lodgepole Pine	12% to 23%	18% ⁴
Western Larch/Douglas-fir	3% to 6%	0% ⁴
Grand Fir Mix	0% to 0%	8% ⁴
Subalpine Fir/Spruce Mix	29% to 58%	42% ⁴
Seral Grass/Shrub	3% to 6%	4% ⁴
Non-Forest	20%	20% ⁵

On the more moderate sites young stands are commonly an even-aged mix of species, both shade tolerant and shade intolerant. There are often large old subalpine fir and spruce found in small groups or as scattered individuals. Starting about 50 years after stand-replacing disturbance (harvest or fire), forests begin to develop additional age classes. The younger trees under a canopy of older trees or in small openings are characteristically subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce or grand fir. The typical old forest character is large old spruce and subalpine fir with scattered western larch, Douglas-fir or lodgepole pine. It is most persistent in riparian areas but may also be found on slopes and ridges. The large size class contains stands that are “old growth,” though not all are “old growth.” These are north Idaho old growth types 2, 4, 5, 8 and 9. “Old growth” for most species, has at least 10 trees per acre over 17 inches in diameter. Old growth trees, other than lodgepole pine, are at least 150 years old. Total basal area in the old growth stands is at least 80 square feet per acre. Lodgepole pine old growth is over 120 years old.

It has at least 10 trees per acre over 13 inches in diameter, and basal area is over 60 square feet per acre.

On the colder and drier sites, forest structure is quite patchy, with openings and a mix of size classes. This develops due to slow reforestation after disturbance on these harsh sites as well as continuing low-level disturbance. Desired size class distribution is summarized in Table 1.3.1.4b.

Table 1.3.1.4b Desired Size Classes: Subalpine

Size Class	Desired Range	Existing ⁷
Non-Forest	20%	20%
Seral Grass/Shrub	3% to 6%	4%
0" to 5"	10% to 20%	4%
5" to 15"	23% to 47%	53%
15"+	8% to 16%	19%

At young ages, these stands tend to have high numbers of trees per acre, though density varies as the stand ages and disturbances create small openings in the stand, or remove understory layers. Typical basal areas at maturity are 130 to 200+ square feet per acre. Wetter sites, including much of the grand fir mosaic, often have the lower basal areas, with a rich, diverse shrub and forb layer.

Large dead wood accumulations typically range from 10 to 50 tons per acre in old forests. Ten to 25 tons is the recommended range. Snag presence is very dynamic. Large expanses of snags are created about every 100 years. Those snags are the larger sizes, but as they fall, snag numbers decline sharply. Between these periods of extensive snag distribution, snags would be present at lower numbers, about .5 to 3 per acre over 20 inches in diameter, and an additional 7 to 14 per acre that are 10 to 20 inches in diameter.

Disturbances frequently (every 30 to 50 years) reduce stocking levels and create openings that range from less than an acre to 5 acres in size. Less frequently (120 to 175 years) those disturbances replace the stand, initiating a new even-aged forest. Remnants of the previous stand cover up to 20% of the area, usually in riparian areas and isolated patches. Drier sites tend to have mostly stand-replacing disturbances, while more moist sites have more mixed disturbances.

Root disease, Douglas-fir beetle, spruce budworm and mountain pine beetle are the most common insects and pathogens. Most of the time they act as a catalyst to move the forest toward uneven-aged, climax stand conditions, but also maintain more open stand conditions. Lodgepole pine across the landscape represents a variety of size and age classes so that not all of it is susceptible to mountain pine beetle at the same time.

As stands develop, mixed severity disturbances occur, creating variable-sized gaps. The result is increasing heterogeneity in species composition and size classes over time. These diverse stands are the most common structure on the landscape. Streams and wet areas are important factors that often remain forested when surrounding forests have stand-replacing fire or harvest.

1.3.2 Grassland and Shrubland Vegetation

Grasslands and shrublands are composed of grasses, forbs and shrubs. They are found on sites that generally do not support forest tree growth due to climate or soils, or are maintained in a non-forest condition by periodic disturbances such as fires or floods.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Non-forest sites are dominated by native grasses, forbs and shrubs.

On the breaklands, dry grassland species include bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue and sand dropseed at lower elevations. Dry shrubland species include mountain mahogany, netleaf hackberry, bitter cherry and snowberry. Moist shrubland species in riparian stringers on southerly aspects and across the hillside on northerly aspects include nine bark, oceanspray, snowberry, maple, and other associated shrubs. On breaklands, shrubs are most commonly found in riparian stringers on southerly aspects and across the hillside on northerly aspects. Frequent fire kills the above-ground portions of the fire-adapted shrubs, which resprout vigorously due to the health of individual plants and the flush of nutrients following fire.

Higher elevation grasslands have blue wildrye and mountain brome. Cool upland shrublands are dominated by Sitka alder and fool's huckleberry (menziesia). On uplands, conifers do not encroach on the riparian meadows or grassy balds. Native grasses, sedges, forbs and shrubs dominate.

On subalpine settings, conifers do not encroach on riparian meadows or grassy balds. Native grasses, sedges, forbs and shrubs dominate. Cold subalpine shrublands have heather and grouse whortleberry among other species.

Riparian meadows on all settings are dominated by native species such as *Carex aquatilis* and other riparian grasses, sedges, and forbs. They are primarily maintained in an open condition by a seasonally high water table, and also by fire or harvest of encroaching trees.

1.3.3 Rare Plants

Rare plants are found throughout the Nez Perce National Forest (See Supporting Documentation

(http://www.fs.fed.us/cnpz/forest/documents/sup_docs/index_rare_plants_nez_shtml). They can be grouped by their habitat needs into about 12 groups: mesic conifer, ponderosa pine savannah/grassland, forested riparian, canyon riparian, mid- to high-elevation seral, grand fir mosaic, cool meadows, cold cedar/grand fir/subalpine fir, basalt outcrops in dry forest, subalpine parkland, and seral grand fir.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Habitats for rare plant species of concern and species of interest are conserved.

Cooperative partnerships with the state of Idaho and Nez Perce Tribe contribute to understanding and conservation of rare plants on the Forest.

1.3.4 Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat

Typically, the majority of wildlife habitat diversity is a reflection of forest and non-forested vegetation composition and structure, and the disturbance processes on breaklands, uplands, and subalpine settings. In addition, the motorized road and trail network influences the quality of habitat available to wildlife species seasonally and year-round.

1.3.4.1 Terrestrial Habitat

In general, wildlife habitats are based on the desired landscape-level habitat conditions, as described in the vegetation and watershed sections. The attainment of those forest-wide vegetation and watershed desired conditions will normally sustain habitat and species diversity (see Supporting Documentation http://www.fs.fed.us/cnpz/forest/documents/sup_docs/index_wildlife_nez.shtml and http://www.fs.fed.us/cnpz/forest/documents/sup_docs/index_sustain_nez.shtml). Additional desired conditions are described below. Several species are mentioned as examples, but are not intended to be complete lists.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Forest-wide

Diverse vegetation composition, structure, patch sizes and distribution provides for diverse and sustainable wildlife habitats that support native and desired non-native wildlife species including species evaluated through the species of concern and species of interest process. Common species continue to thrive, and rare or uncommon species find suitable habitats. Changes in habitat availability, similar to natural disturbance processes, provides for species population dynamics. Habitats are available for existing terrestrial species, both common and rare, and those that have lived here during the past 100 years. Vegetation desired conditions, well-distributed across breaklands, uplands, and subalpine settings provide connectivity between wildlife habitats. The range of desired vegetation species and size classes, (identified in Plan sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2), is well distributed across the Forest and supports the needs of a broad spectrum of wildlife species. The full range of habitat conditions is generally well distributed and available in each watershed.

Old forest habitats contain the structural conditions to sustain the old forest-associated wildlife species. Old forest habitats are distributed across the Forest on all ecosection settings and in all watersheds.

Patch composition, size, structure and distribution reflect the disturbance dynamics and patterns expected in each watershed and ecosection setting.

Disturbance processes (i.e. wildland fire, insects and disease) contribute to diverse vegetation and therefore wildlife species diversity. Burned areas are available and provide unique habitat components for associated wildlife species. Insect-killed trees are also found across the forest and provide unique habitat that tends to be distributed either as small patches or individual trees throughout the Forest or, in the case of mountain pine beetle in lodgepole pine, in large expanses at higher

elevations. This provides habitat for wildlife associated with dead trees such as black-backed woodpeckers and Lewis' woodpeckers. Fire generally limits tree encroachment into meadow and grassland habitats.

Native vegetation dominates. Invasive weeds generally do not degrade or dominate sites such that wildlife habitat is reduced.

Desired conditions for dead wood described in section 1.3.1 support wildlife species diversity. Standing dead and down wood is present in various decay classes, and is representative of the sizes in the current or previous forest. Sufficient large live trees are present to replace this dead material over time.

Desired riparian conditions described in section 1.3.7.3 provide the tree cover and moist forest conditions that attract wildlife use and provide habitat for riparian-associated species such as amphibians, mollusks and others. The riparian conservation areas provide ties between patches of old forest, and facilitate wildlife use and movement across the entire Forest.

Special habitats such as wallows, mineral licks, talus slopes, wet fractured bedrock, rocky outcrops, calcareous geology, caves and abandoned mines and buildings are available for wildlife use. Travel routes on ridgetops and in saddles are available for wildlife use and facilitate wildlife use of adjacent areas.

Breaklands

Two distinct desired conditions, generally south and north aspects, reflect different moisture regimes for this setting. The non-forest and early seral desired conditions in the vegetation section 1.3.1 describe the open and early seral type conditions that provide habitat for a variety of wildlife. Medium and large tree desired conditions, with the more complex stand structures that develop as the forest ages, provide a variety of habitats used by wildlife including shade in the summer, tree cavities and snow-interception during the winter.

Invasive weeds do not dominate the vegetation cover in the early seral and non-forest areas. Native grasses, forbs and shrubs provide desired forage and browse species for wildlife such as mountain quail, small mammals, elk, bighorn sheep and mule deer.

Open-grown forests, found on southerly aspects, generally stay in the open-grown condition through periodic disturbance. They provide habitat for wintering ungulates and bird species that prefer large, old trees (e.g. flammulated owls, pygmy nuthatches, whiteheaded woodpeckers, etc.) and provide habitat for mountain quail. Ponderosa pine is common in the breaklands of the Salmon River, Selway River, and South Fork Clearwater drainages. Ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir and western larch habitats on warmer and drier south-facing slopes consist of single- or two-storied stand structure, relatively open canopies, open understories and contain scattered large snags. Disturbance every 5 to 25 years rejuvenates forage plants, creates scattered snags and down wood concentrations, maintains open forest habitat conditions and maintains a mix of smaller forested and non-forested habitats within larger landscape patches.

On north aspects, Douglas-fir and grand fir habitats occur in an ever-changing mosaic of age and size classes. Forest patches are generally one- or two-storied with closed canopies and contain greater numbers of snags and amounts of down wood than southerly aspects. Disturbance processes create and maintain habitat patches that are generally larger and more uniformly forested than on warmer and drier aspects. Disturbance is less frequent than on warm, dry aspects, every 40-120 years. Generally, these conditions are more similar to habitat conditions on upland settings than warm, dry breaklands.

Patch sizes for the seral shrub and seedling/sapling sizes are most often less than 100 acres, but 25% may range up to 5000 acres. Old forest patches are the remnants of these young forests that have survived over 150 years of frequent disturbance. Generally, about 50% of the old forest acreage is in patches over 1000 acres. About 2/3 is found on southerly aspects, and 1/3 on northerly aspects.

Unique and rare habitats such as native grasslands, cliffs, talus, limestone geology and aspen are persistent on the landscape, in healthy, functioning condition. They provide high quality habitat for associated species.

Uplands

Structural complexity, horizontally and vertically, including canopy closure, canopy openings, canopy layers and dead wood, facilitate wildlife habitat use and dispersal.

The juxtaposition of forest and opening here, together with high moisture regimes, provides habitat for wildlife species that utilize a wide range of forest composition and structure, and use forest edges. Disturbance every 30 to 50 years increases stand structure complexity by creating small openings, encouraging establishment of small, dense patches of young trees, and maintaining a diverse shrub and forb understory. Stand replacement at 120 to 200 years produces seral shrub fields used by many birds and small mammals as well as browsing ungulates. It also provides opportunities for establishment of seral tree species such as ponderosa pine and western larch that are preferred by many wildlife species. These conditions provide habitat to sustain species such as great gray owl, fisher, lynx, goshawk, and most wide-ranging species.

The grand fir mosaic is a unique habitat here, often supporting very old forests. This mosaic of forest canopy and alder, coneflower or bracken fern openings with high moisture levels supports high densities of small mammals and excellent summer habitat for ungulates as well as other species.

Patch sizes for the seral shrub and seedling/sapling sizes are generally less than 40 acres, but up to 25% may range up to 1000 acres. Old forest patches are the remnants of these young forests that have survived through 150 to 200 years or more of mixed severity disturbances. Generally about 50% of the old forest acreage is in patches over 200 acres in size.

Unique and rare habitats such as aspen, wet and dry meadows, limestone geology and fens are persistent on the landscape, in healthy functioning condition. They provide high quality habitat for associated species.

Subalpine

Complex stand structures support a variety of wildlife species. Small to large openings, from an acre to over 100 acres, so

Areas important at specific times for specific uses, such as calving, fawning, nesting, denning and wintering habitats, among others, generally have higher security levels at those specific times than at less vulnerable times. Wildlife sensitive to human disturbance use habitats effectively, at critical times and critical places.

The sizes of security areas, distributed in each subwatershed, are sufficient to reduce levels of disturbance for vulnerable species at vulnerable times.

Riparian conservation areas and ridgetops provide a network of secure connections between larger patches of secure area. Wildlife can find secure habitats as they move across the landscape.

Access management provides for habitat connectivity and security as well as resource management and public access across landscape settings.

1.3.5 Invasive Weeds

Two conservation themes define invasive weed conditions: “conserve” and “restore.” Conserve areas are those with no weeds or low populations. In conserve-designated areas, the emphasis is early detection and rapid treatment to prevent the establishment and spread of newly discovered invaders. Restore-designated areas are those with well-established weed infestations. These areas have either a “contain-and-control” or “restoration-and-rehabilitation” emphasis and are prioritized as high, moderate or low based on the presence of new invaders and the long-term treatment of well-established weed infestations.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Native and desired non-native plant communities are healthy and self-sustaining. Invasive weeds are a minor component. Invasive weed species do not dominate native vegetation.

High priority “restore” watersheds trend toward “conserve” status. Weed densities in moderate priority watersheds are reduced by 50% or more where weeds are firmly established. Conserve-designated watersheds have very low weed populations.

Table 1.3.5 displays the desired numbers of conserve and restore watersheds.

Table 1.3.5 Desired Invasive Weed Conditions and Treatment Priorities

Conservation Themes and Priorities	Number of Watersheds Meeting Desired Conditions
Conserve	10
Restore	23

(Map 1.3.5) Invasive Weeds Desired Condition

1.3.6 Soil Productivity

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

The ultimate goal is to maintain natural soil structure and fertility. Soil conditions support vegetation, wildlife and hydrologic functions within a range of natural processes and disturbances. Soils are productive and ash caps are in place or restored to the extent feasible. There are desired numbers of snags and down woody material and desired levels of soil organic matter. Dead wood contributes to maintaining long-term soil productivity.

1.3.7 Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems

Existing conditions for watersheds and aquatic ecosystems have been summarized at the subwatershed scale into two conservation themes for the Nez Perce National Forest: “conserve” and “restore.”

Conserve-designated subwatersheds display stream channel, riparian and upland vegetation conditions and patterns that reflect a historic range of watershed disturbance processes. Self-sustaining populations of native and desired, non-native aquatic species are present and well distributed in available habitats. Sediment amounts and stream flow regimes are within an expected historic range of frequency, duration and intensity based upon the eget an6Asetsting and disturbance(proc)Tj0.0014 Tc -0.0004 Tw 12 0 0 12 253.25995 415.8006 T

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Seventy-five percent⁸ of the Forest subwatersheds and aquatic ecosystems achieve conserve status (Table 1.3.7, [Map 1.3.7](#)). Watershed and aquatic ecosystem condition and processes within conserve-designated subwatersheds support designated or existing beneficial uses. For high priority restore subwatersheds, at least 90% of all subwatershed and aquatic habitat desired conditions listed below are met. As least 80% of all desired conditions are met in low or moderate priority restore-designated subwatersheds.

Table 1.3.7 Existing and Desired Watershed Condition

Conservation Themes	Existing Condition (2006) Number (%) of Subwatersheds	Desired Condition in 20-50 Years Percentage of Watersheds ⁸	Desired Condition in 100 Years Percentage of Subwatersheds ⁸
Conserve	69 (55%)	(75%)	(90 to 100%)
Restore	55 (45%)	(25%)	(0%)

1.3.7.1 Watersheds***Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)***

Watershed scale processes reflect forest diversity for species composition and size classes that would be present if landscape dynamics (primary agents are floods, landslides, fire, insects and pathogens) were fully functioning. Watershed scale conditions, as measured by the amount and timing of water release to streams, soil erosion and channel sediment loads, are resistant to change from small disturbances. They rebound within 3 to 5 years into a water and sediment balance following subwatershed scale disturbances.

Soil physical processes reflect natural process and patterns as if landscape dynamics were fully functioning. As a result, watershed scale erosion, in-channel sediment, and stream flow regimes are within an expected range of frequency, duration and intensity. Land uses and human activities do not strongly influence landscape pattern and processes as indicated by desired forest composition and structure, minimal road effects and few stream crossings. Sediment delivery from streamside facilities, roads and trails does not measurably impact pool frequency, residual pool depths, or fish spawning habitats.

Landscape disturbance frequency, severity and area extent create a large range of watershed conditions depending upon geology, topography and elevation. Types of natural landscape disturbances are erosion, fire, floods, insects and disease. Land use activities mimic these disturbance patterns and processes.

⁸ Achieving recovery in some watersheds may require much longer time periods, from decades to centuries. There are a variety of reasons for this long recovery, including climate change, slow vegetation recovery time frames, etc.

At the subwatershed scale, surface erosion and subsequent instream sediment yield generally occurs in pulses and rapidly recovers to pre-disturbance levels within 3 to 5 years. Desired frequency, amount and duration of subwatershed conditions following disturbance are generally dependant upon landform setting.

Within the breaklands setting, disturbances occur every 10-25 years. The resulting sediment yield peak to area streams and rivers is less than 30% over base level the first year following disturbance.

Within the uplands and subalpine settings, disturbances occur every 40 to 60 years. The resulting sediment yield peaks to area streams and rivers are less than 40% over base level the first year following disturbance. Once every 100 to 120 years in subalpine, and every 200 years in uplands settings, sediment yield peaks may exceed 100% over base levels following stand-replacing events.

Within all settings, surface soil erosion amount diminishes rapidly following disturbance. Stream channel sediment yield, as measured by percent over base, rapidly declines to less than 10% over base within 2 to 5 years in restore-designated subwatersheds, and less than 5% over base in conserve-designated subwatersheds. Water yield peak increases over base are less than 20%.

Road density may be used as one indicator of watershed condition. Road density desired conditions at the subwatershed scale are at the minimum network necessary to provide access for other resources and minimize effects to aquatic resources. In restore-designated subwatersheds, road densities are less than 3 miles per square mile where current densities exceed that density. In “conserve” subwatersheds, road densities are less than 1 mile per square mile. Road densities within riparian conservation areas are less than 1 mile per square mile in conserve-designated subwatersheds, and less than 2 miles per square mile in restore-designated subwatersheds. Road densities on landslide-prone soils are less than 1 mile per square mile of landslide-prone area.⁹

1.3.7.2 Water Quality and Water Uses

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

The Nez Perce National Forest provides water quantity and quality needed for domestic uses, agriculture, recreation and aesthetics, and instream flows to protect and maintain aquatic and riparian related resources.

Water quality meets designated or existing beneficial uses. In cooperation with state and federal agencies, tribes and holders of valid water rights, state of Idaho water

⁹ Acknowledging that the impacts of roads vary by location, road densities are coarse filter indicators of desired conditions. The minimum network necessary for long-term resource management may exceed road densities listed above while meeting overall aquatic ecosystem and watershed conservation desired conditions. Other indicators such as fish passage, riparian vegetation, stream habitat conditions, and water quality are used in conjunction with road densities to determine subwatershed condition.

quality standards are attained for currently-impaired water bodies and stream segments.

Municipal watersheds on the Nez Perce National Forest provide surface water quality at a minimum to meet state of Idaho surface water quality standards. The likelihood that surface and ground water drinking supplies will become contaminated is minimal.

1.3.7.3 Riparian Vegetation

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Vegetation in riparian conservation areas is composed of a diverse structure of native plant communities that perpetuate the distribution of woody debris, soil cover, bank stability and thermal control characteristic of resilient aquatic and riparian ecosystems. Ground cover is typically comprised of organic litter, shrubs, grasses and forbs. Measured by stream reach, the exposed mineral soil is less than 1% in conserve-designated subwatersheds and less than 5% in restore-designated subwatersheds.

Riparian forest vegetation composition and structure are similar to what would be expected within natural disturbance processes functioning and would vary by ecoregion setting. Proportional to expected disturbances at the watershed scale, the dominant condition is a closed-canopy, older-age stand of conifer and deciduous trees with standing snags ranging from 13 to 19 per acre on breaklands, 13 to 17 per acre on uplands, and 12 to 19 per acre on subalpine settings. Down wood is found at the upper end of desired levels by setting. On breaklands, the range for riparian wood is 10 to 15 tons per acre; on uplands, 20 to 40 tons per acre; and on subalpine settings, 15 to 20 tons per acre. (See the vegetation section for information about distribution and dynamics of dead wood.)

Periodic floods, low-intensity fire and wind-throw are the primary disturbance factors shaping vegetation patterns in riparian conservation areas. Fire severity in riparian areas tends to be lower than on the adjacent uplands, due to generally higher humidity, higher soil moisture, and resulting higher fuel moistures. Fires create patchy openings, or a green strip of trees along stream courses and surrounding lakes, ponds, and wetlands. Size and frequency of openings decrease with increasing valley bottom width. Reduced fuel loads in adjacent uplands reduce frequency of high severity fire within riparian areas. Flood timing and duration follow expected patterns based upon amount of precipitation, season, aspect, elevation and upland vegetation condition. High flows exceeding bankfull discharge for a short number of days at least every 1 to 2 years provides for flood-dependent vegetation and channel maintenance. Base flows support riparian vegetation and instream needs, at a minimum that is median monthly flow (equaling 50% exceedence interval).

1.3.7.4 Aquatic Habitats

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

The Nez Perce National Forest provides aquatic habitat to support well-distributed native and non-native vertebrate and invertebrate populations. Stream channel conditions are within the range consistent with the riparian and aquatic ecosystems in which they developed.¹⁰

The lower and upper thresholds defining this range are the desired stream features listed below.

Habitat Connectivity: Native fish species have access to historically occupied habitats.

Water Temperature - Cold Water Biota: Habitat complexity provides daily, seasonally, annually and spatially variable water temperatures within expected normal ranges. Generally this is less than 22° C with a maximum daily average no greater than 19° C. Specific life stage desired water temperatures are:

- Salmonid summer rearing temperature is between 10 and 16° C,
- Salmonid spawning and incubation temperature is less than 13° C,
- Bull trout summer rearing temperature less than 12° C,
- Bull trout spawning temperature is 5 to 9° C, and
- Bull trout egg incubation is 2 to 4° C.

Pool Frequency: One pool every 5 to 7 channel widths in pool-riffle stream channels and 1 to 4 channel widths in step-pool stream channels.

Pool Size, Maximum Depth and Pool Cover: Pool quality rating is greater than or equal to a rating of 4 in alluvial streams.

Width to Depth Ratio: Less than or equal to 10:1 for confined channel types (Rosgen channel types A, E and G); less than 20:1 for moderately confined channel types (Rosgen channel type B); and less than 40:1 for unconfined channel types (Rosgen channel types C and F).

Channel Substrate Condition: Less than or equal to 20% fines (<6.4mm) as measured by percent surface fines in spawning reaches at pool tails; or cobble embeddedness less than 30% in Rosgen channel types A2 and A3, B2 and B3, C2 and C3, E3, G2 and G3.

¹⁰ The dynamic nature and complexity of aquatic systems can result in a wide range of values that make selection of precise target values difficult. These habitat features may not all occur within a specific stream segment all the time, but generally should be achievable through time and be represented within the watershed. However, these desired stream features may change as scientists gain a greater understanding of aquatic ecosystems processes and function.

Large Woody Debris (applies to forested systems): Near-natural patterns in size and amount of in-channel, large woody debris and potential wood on stream banks and flood plain.

Bank Stability: Bank stability greater than 95% for A and B and E channel types; greater than 90% for C channel types within 80% of any stream reach.

1.3.7.5 Aquatic Species

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Native and desired non-native aquatic species (fish, amphibians, invertebrates, plants and other aquatic-associated species) are present and well distributed in historically occupied habitats. Stronghold populations continue to thrive and expand into neighboring unoccupied habitats and depressed populations increase in numbers. Native aquatic animals exhibit genetic integrity and life history strategies necessary to assure self-sustaining populations. Spatial extents of habitat disturbances are less than the area occupied by aquatic species of concern, in order to preserve their population structure and life history strategies.

Populations of native and non-native fishes are consistent with federal recovery goals and state and tribal population goals. Cooperation and coordination with state agencies, federal agencies, tribes, and other groups ensures efficient and effective program implementation toward conservation of native and desired, non-native aquatic species.

1.4 Cultural, Social and Economic Desired Conditions

1.4.1 Designated Wilderness

The Nez Perce National Forest manages a total of 877,000 acres of designated wilderness. The Forest administers sections of the Selway-Bitterroot, Frank Church-River of No Return Wildernesses, and the Gospel-Hump Wilderness. An additional 60,000 acres of the Hells Canyon Wilderness located on the Nez Perce National Forest is administered by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

Due to the lack of a larger metropolitan area nearby, visitor use is considered moderate to low in these wildernesses when compared to other units in the National Wilderness Preservation System. There are areas of the Selway-Bitterroot and the Gospel-Hump Wildernesses that have moderate to high use for short durations. The Nez Perce National Forest provides world class wilderness and river recreation opportunities.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Wilderness values and resources (e.g. solitude, natural processes, desired wildlife/fish populations and primitive recreation opportunities) are provided in designated wilderness.

Wilderness areas provide for native plant and animal communities with minimal presence of invasive species.

1.4.2 Designated and Eligible Wild, Scenic and Recreation Rivers

There are currently 164 miles of rivers designated as “wild” or “recreational” in the National Wild and Scenic River system. Of those, 118.8 miles are designated “wild”: 56 miles of the Salmon River, 36 miles of the Selway River and 26.8 miles of Rapid River. Rivers segments designated as “recreational” include 22 miles of the Selway River and 23 miles of the Middle Fork of the Clearwater.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Designated rivers and river segments and corridors identified as eligible or suitable for recommendation as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System are managed to retain their free-flowing status, classification and outstandingly remarkable values.

1.4.3 Research Natural Areas

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Research natural areas maintain a representation of natural systems found on the Nez Perce National Forest as a baseline for research and monitoring. Fire, insects, and pathogens continue to affect vegetation, reflecting the dynamic forests they represent.

1.4.4 Areas Recommended for Wilderness Designation

The 1987 Forest Plan does not identify any areas to be recommended for consideration by Congress as additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System. An update of the inventoried roadless areas on the Forest was completed in 2005 ([Map 1.4.4](#)). This updated inventory was analyzed using criteria from the Northern Region’s *Wilderness Needs Assessment – 2003* to determine if the Forest should recommend additional areas to Congress for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

1.4.5 Road Management

There are approximately 3873 miles of National Forest System roads on the Nez Perce National Forest. The system roads are important facilities that provide access for the public and facilitate implementation of forest management activities for a variety of resources (e.g. fish and wildlife, heritage properties and areas, water quality, vegetation and administrative facilities).

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

The Nez Perce National Forest has a transportation system of roads that is aligned with budget levels and is managed consistently with other resource and social desired conditions.

The transportation system provides reasonable and legal access for resource management, rights-of-way and recreation management.

1.4.6 Motorized and Non-Motorized Recreation Uses

On the Nez Perce National Forest 65% of roads and 33% of trails are open yearlong, or seasonally, to motorized uses by a variety of vehicle types. Additionally, the majority of the Forest outside of designated wilderness is open to motorized use off roads and trails year-round except in areas closed to protect wildlife, sensitive soils, some recreation sites or cultural resources.

The Forest Service published new travel regulations in November 2005. The new regulations are intended to provide sustainable access for motor vehicles, including off-highway vehicles, on national forests and grasslands. These regulations require each forest to designate those roads, trails, and areas that are open to motor vehicle use.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Roads and trails are located across the Forest to provide a variety of recreation opportunities in diverse terrain and scenic outdoor settings.

Motorized use occurs on roads and trails that provide for the safety of users and minimize environmental impacts and conflicts with other users.

Snowmobile access is available outside of designated wilderness areas.

Unauthorized routes do not exist on the landscape.

Open roads and trails are safe and available for public use.

1.4.7 Developed Recreation Sites

There are approximately 42 campgrounds, picnic areas, and other developed recreation sites. These sites are an adequate mix of fee and non-fee sites providing a spectrum of developed recreation opportunities to the visitor. Sites along the Salmon, Selway and South Fork of the Clearwater rivers are more highly developed, while small family campgrounds scattered across the Forest are managed at a lower level of development.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Recreation facilities, campgrounds, picnic areas, rest sites and other developed sites provide a recreation opportunity that includes MPovi are

Developed sites in riparian conservation areas contribute to keeping stream and river water clean. Stream banks are stable and vegetated, providing streamside shade.

1.4.8 General Forest Area Recreation

Recreation use in the general Forest area is diverse and provides a wide range of recreation opportunities. Visitors enjoy this type of recreation because it is relatively free of regulations or confined areas. The Nez Perce National Forest is a regional destination and favorite of local residents for hiking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, whitewater rafting and jet boating, camping, winter sports, snowmobiling, mountain bike riding, and driving for pleasure. Access is provided by the Forest road and trail system. Concentrated use areas, such as dispersed campsites, trailheads and parking facilities, are strategically located.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Site development at concentrated use areas maintains or improves aquatic resources, soil resources and provides for meeting other Forest Plan desired conditions.

Forest users are knowledgeable about low impact recreation practices included in the *Tread Lightly* and *Leave No Trace* programs and they practice them.

Nordic ski and snowshoe routes provide a dispersed winter recreation opportunity.

The Forest is a place where visitors and employees feel safe and resources are free from damage that results from negligent behavior and criminal activities.

1.4.9 Recreation Special Uses

Recreation special uses authorize the occupancy and use of national forest land by private individuals or companies for a wide variety of recreation activities such as outfitter and guide services, recreation events, resorts and other private or commercial recreation uses. Recreation special uses provide opportunities for commercial services or group events to the public who require them and for which there is a demonstrated need for those services. The partnership between the Forest and permitted outfitter and guide operations is strengthened by a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Forests and Bureau of Land Management in Idaho and the State of Idaho Outfitter and Guide Licensing Board.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Outfitter and guides provide high quality public services for residents and non-residents while assuring public health and safety and protecting resources. They avoid degradation of social settings and experiences.

New and existing recreation special use authorizations and permits serve the public interest, meet national standards and complement recreation opportunities.

Opportunities are provided for recreation events that have negligible impacts to natural or social resources or other visitors.

1.4.10 Scenery Resources

Scenic quality and landscape settings vary from heavily roaded and managed areas to primitive natural landscapes showing the effects of large wildfires and insect and diseases.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Scenic quality across the Nez Perce National Forest meets or exceeds applicable scenic integrity levels ([Map 1.4.10](#)).

1.4.11 Heritage Resources

American Indians, Chinese, and Euro-Americans each historically utilized the greater Clearwater Mountains of central Idaho. The area encompassing what today is the Nez Perce National Forest was originally a part of the Nez Perce Tribe's aboriginal area, of which large parts were ceded to the federal government in 1855 and 1863. The Nez Perce Tribe continues to utilize the forested landscape for a variety of traditional cultural and religious activities which have occurred for centuries.

Historic activities and features (i.e. mining, wagon roads, trails, homesteading, administrative sites, backcountry aviation, livestock management and recreation), in addition to a large assemblage of American Indian related archaeological resources, have resulted in hundreds of historic properties located throughout the Forest. There are five Nez Perce National Forest properties listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Heritage resources are identified, managed, stabilized, protected and interpreted to preserve heritage values.

Heritage properties have been identified and evaluated for eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Priority heritage assets listed in the Forest database will be nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The public's awareness and understanding of heritage resources improves due to appropriate interpretation and management.

Adjustments to uses and access in the Pilot Knob geographic area improve management of cultural resources, enhance the use of this area by the Nez Perce Tribe and appropriately accommodate other visitors.

1.4.12 Economic Contribution

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Ecosystems provide a sustainable (within the land's capability and existing laws) level of products and services to economic systems. Timber, range, recreation, minerals, fish, wildlife, water and special-use programs offer opportunities for economic development and contribute to local community and economic needs. Forest employees are involved in community economic development efforts and work in partnership with communities and counties.

1.4.13 Timber Availability

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Silvicultural systems for timber harvest reflect the natural disturbance regimes for the site and maintain forest resiliency. The sustainable flow of commodities from Nez Perce National Forest lands is a result of treatments used to move the current vegetation pattern toward a desired vegetation pattern and do not exceed the long-term sustained yield of 4,875 million cubic feet of timber annually. (This is approximately 25.35 million board feet of timber annually.) Products are made available to mills.

1.4.14 Wildland Fire, Fuels and Air Quality

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Generally fire will be used for resource benefit, using appropriate management actions on natural, unplanned fire ignitions. Wildland fire use may be considered on all national forest lands. Fire should be the primary tool used to modify vegetation on undeveloped lands. Management-ignited fires may be used on all lands to move vegetation closer to desired conditions. Both fire and mechanical fuels treatments may be used throughout the Forest to achieve desired conditions.

Wildland fires within the wildland urban interface are generally non-lethal ground fires, meaning less than 20% of overstory trees would be killed.

Fire risk in the wildland urban interface is generally low due to low stand density, the presence of fire-tolerant tree species and low fuel loads.

Generally continue to choose appropriate management responses to wildland fire.

Air quality is generally very good, and there are no areas the state has identified as non-compliant with current state air quality standards. Involvement with the Montana Idaho Airshed Group ensures that state, regional and tribal standards are not compromised by management activities.

1.4.15 Livestock Management

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Livestock grazing provides for healthy and self-sustaining native and desired non-native vegetation communities and healthy watersheds.

Desired use levels of forage vegetation by livestock are not exceeded.

The introduction, establishment, spread and impact of invasive weeds by livestock is minimized.

Municipal watersheds are generally free from adverse impacts from livestock management.

Livestock use is adjusted to meet resource management objectives.

1.4.16 Minerals

The Nez Perce National Forest has had several locations with significant amounts of precious metals. The majority of the prospecting and exploration operations occurs within the Red River and Salmon River Ranger Districts. There are no known oil and gas occurrences on the Forest.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Provide for the orderly exploration, development, and production of minerals and energy resources while minimizing environmental impacts and meeting Forest Plan direction for other resources.

Mineral materials are available to support resource management (e.g. road surfacing or protective rip-rap), personal use (e.g. landscape rock), and some commercial uses.

1.4.17 Lands

Special use permits authorize the occupancy and use of National Forest System lands by private individuals or companies for a variety of activities such as roads, utility corridors, communication sites and other commercial uses that cannot be accommodated on private land.

Surveying and posting the national forest boundary, maintaining posted property lines and defending public lands from trespass or encroachment are activities that maintain the integrity of the National Forest System.

Land ownership adjustments are one of the tools utilized to simplify and improve management of Forest lands. Public access is ensured through the ongoing acquisition, protection, and management of road and trail rights-of-way.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

New and existing special use permits are processed in a timely manner, serve the public interest and do not compete with private businesses.

National Forest System property lines adjacent to private land and boundaries of special areas, such as National Wilderness Preservation System lands and scenic easements, are clearly marked where inadvertent trespass and encroachment is most likely.

Public access to National Forest System land is provided and additional access is provided by acquisition of new road and trail rights-of-way.

Developed recreation sites and lands adjacent to recreation sites are retained in federal ownership.

1.4.18 Utilities and Communication Sites***Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)***

Utility corridors and communication sites are planned and constructed to provide for authorized uses, meet Forest Plan direction for other resources and provide for public safety. They are managed according to approved management plans.

Obsolete or unused facilities are removed from the Forest.

Communication sites are provided at cost-efficient locations. They maintain important heritage resources and cultural properties.

1.4.19 Administrative Facilities

There are 286 administrative buildings located on the Forest. These include, but are not limited to, ranger stations, work centers, lookouts and emergency airfields.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

Forest administrative sites provide safe facilities and areas for both the public and Forest employees. Sites are managed to achieve cost-efficient objectives.

1.5 Tribal Desired Conditions**1.5.1 Tribal Treaty Rights and Trust Responsibilities**

The Nez Perce National Forest is rich in tribal history. The traditional homeland of the Nez Perce people includes 17 million acres in Idaho, Oregon and Washington. The Treaty of 1855 reserved 7.5 million acres, which includes the present-day Nez Perce National Forest, for tribal use. The treaty also preserved fishing, hunting and gathering rights for the Nez Perce people.

Desired Conditions (PLAN COMPONENT)

The Nez Perce National Forest fosters and maintains government-to-government relationships with the Nez Perce Tribe. Agency consultation procedures are followed. A tribal liaison facilitates discussions between the Forest and Tribe.

Management activities are planned and implemented in a manner that protects and respects Nez Perce treaty rights.

Forest and tribal employees forge partnerships to accomplish important land management work. These partnerships promote understanding that results in economic opportunities for the Tribe and tribal entrepreneurs.

The Nez Perce National Forest maintains healthy, vibrant ecosystems that support plant and animal species of cultural significance to the Nez Perce Tribe. Traditional cultural areas are identified and protected. Culturally significant plants are sustained and available for tribal gathering at traditional locations.