



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

Land and Special Uses Report

Colville National Forest Plan Revision

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

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Introduction

This report discusses the affected environment, existing condition, and discloses the potential environmental consequences on the Lands and Special Uses resource that may result with the adoption of a revised lands management plan. It examines the current management direction (no action alternative) and five different alternatives for revising the 1988 Colville National Forest land management plan, as amended.

Revision Topics Addressed in this Analysis

Comments submitted on the proposed action were reviewed to determine how they would be considered in the analysis. Old forest management, motorized recreation trails, road access, Recommended Wilderness, wildlife habitat, and riparian and aquatic resource management were identified as significant issues used to formulate alternatives. No comments were received on the proposed action that were related to Lands of Lands Special Use and drove the creation of an alternative.

This Lands Special Use analysis focuses on the issues likely to affect land special uses including access, Recommended Wilderness, and riparian and aquatic resource management. Recreation Special Uses are addressed in the Recreation Report prepared for the Forest Plan Revision.

Relevant Laws, Regulations and Policy that Apply

All alternatives are designed to guide the Colville National Forest's management activities in meeting all applicable Federal and State laws, regulations, and policies including, but not limited to the following:

Act of 1866 General Mining Law authorizes rights-of-way across public lands for ditches and roads.

Act of March 3, 1925, (43 Stat. 1133, as amended).

The Act of March 4, 1915, as amended July 28, 1956, (16 U.S.C. 497). This act authorizes term permits for structures or facilities on National Forest System land, and sets maximum limits of 80 acres and 30 years.

The Act of November 16, 1973, (30 U.S.C. 185). This act, amending Section 28 of the 1920 Mineral Leasing Act, authorizes the Forest Service to issue authorizations for oil and gas pipelines and related facilities

Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, 1980 provides direction for providing access to non-federally owned land within the boundaries of the Forest.

An Act to Repeal Timber-Culture Laws, 1891 authorizes ditch easements across public lands and Forest Reserves.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 provides the authority for archeological investigations and research permits.

Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1937, Section 31-33 authorizes most rights-of-way, except those on National Grasslands.

Colorado Ditch Act of 1986 (FLPMA amendment) resolves title claims for certain water uses and provides authority for easements for water conveyances.

Energy Policy Act of 2005 directed the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, and the Interior to designate energy transport corridors for oil, gas, and hydrogen pipelines and electricity transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands in portions of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Exchange for Schools Act (Sisk Act) of December 4, 1967 (81 Stat. 531, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 484a, 521c-521i).

Executive Order 11990 (Wetlands) and Executive Order 11988 (Floodplains)

Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 updated authority for management of National Forest lands, provided general authority for use and occupancy of Forest lands, required fair market value for uses on the Forest, and repealed sections of many previous acts.

Forest Service Manual 2700 Special Uses Management

Forest Service Handbook 2709.11 Special Uses

Forest Service Facilities Realignment Act of 2005 (119 Stat 559-563; 16 U.S.C. 580d, as amended).

General Exchange Act of 1922 authorizes land adjustments within Forest boundaries.

Granger-Thye Act of 1950, section 7 authorizes use of government-owned improvements.

Highway Act of August 27, 1958, (23 U.S.C. 317), supplemented by the Act of October 15, 1966 (49 U.S.C. 1651) This act authorizes the Federal Highway Administration to grant easements to States for highways that are part of the Federal-aid system or that are constructed under the provision of Chapter 2 of the Highway Act.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of September 3, 1964

Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended on November 16, 1973, (30 U.S.C. 185(1)) authorizes the issuance of permits and easements for oil and gas pipelines. It requires annual payments in advance which represent fair market rental value and provides for reimbursement to the Government for administrative and other costs incurred in monitoring, construction (including costs for preparing required environmental analysis and documentation), operation, maintenance, and termination of oil and gas pipelines.

National Forest Roads & Trails Act 1964 authorizes construction and/or use of roads and trails by public road agencies and also landowners who join the Forest Service in operating mutually beneficial road systems.

Oil and Gas Pipeline amendment to the Mineral Leasing Act, Section 28 authorizes oil and gas pipelines.

Organic Act of 1897 provides for rules to regulate occupancy and use of the Forest Reserves.

Occupancy Permits Act (March 4, 1915) authorizes use and occupancy of National Forest land for recreation purposes including resorts and recreation residences.

Preservation of American Antiquities Act of June 8, 1906 provides authority for cultural resource survey permits, including site disturbance, excavation and collection.

Small Tracts Act of January 12, 1983 (96 Stat. 2535; 16 U.S.C. 521c-i).

Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-104) provides rules for competition and reduced regulation in order to secure lower prices and higher quality services for American telecommunications consumers and encourage the rapid deployment of new telecommunications. The goal of this new law is to let anyone enter any communications business -- to let any communications business compete in any market against any other.

Term Permit Act of March 4, 1915, amended July 28, 1956 authorizes recreation residences, hotels, resorts and other industrial and commercial public service facilities.

Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 251 Subpart B (36 CFR part 251, Subpart B).

Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 251 Subpart D (36 CFR part 251, Subpart D).

Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 254, Subpart A (36 CFR part 254, Subpart A).

National Forest Townsite Act of July 31, 1958 (72 Stat. 483; 7 U.S.C. 1012a; 16 U.S.C. 478a) as amended by Section 213 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (90 Stat. 2760).

Water Conveyance Act of 1986 amended FLMPA to authorize permanent easements for agricultural water systems.

Weeks Law of March 1, 1911(36 Stat. 961 as amended; 16 U.S.C. 516).

Affected Environment

The Colville National Forest lies within the northeast corner of Washington State. The Forest encompasses 1.1 million acres and occupies nearly one third of the total area of Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Stevens Counties. To the north, the Forest is bordered by British Columbia; to the west by the Okanogan National Forest; to the east by the Idaho Panhandle National Forest; and to the south by a portion of the Colville Confederated Tribes Indian Reservation, state and private lands.

Many lands within the boundary of what would become the Colville National Forest were severed from the public domain becoming private through a variety of land disposal authorities including homesteading, mineral patents, statehood and Railroad land grants (see Map Figure 1). The majority of the valley floors were patented, and to a large extent, the remaining forested lands in the higher elevations became National Forest Reserves, and later National Forest System (NFS) lands. Railroad grants in Pend Oreille County in 1908 left a checker board pattern of private, state and National Forest lands which continues to the present. Many former railroad grant lands are now owned and managed by a number of private forest resource companies.

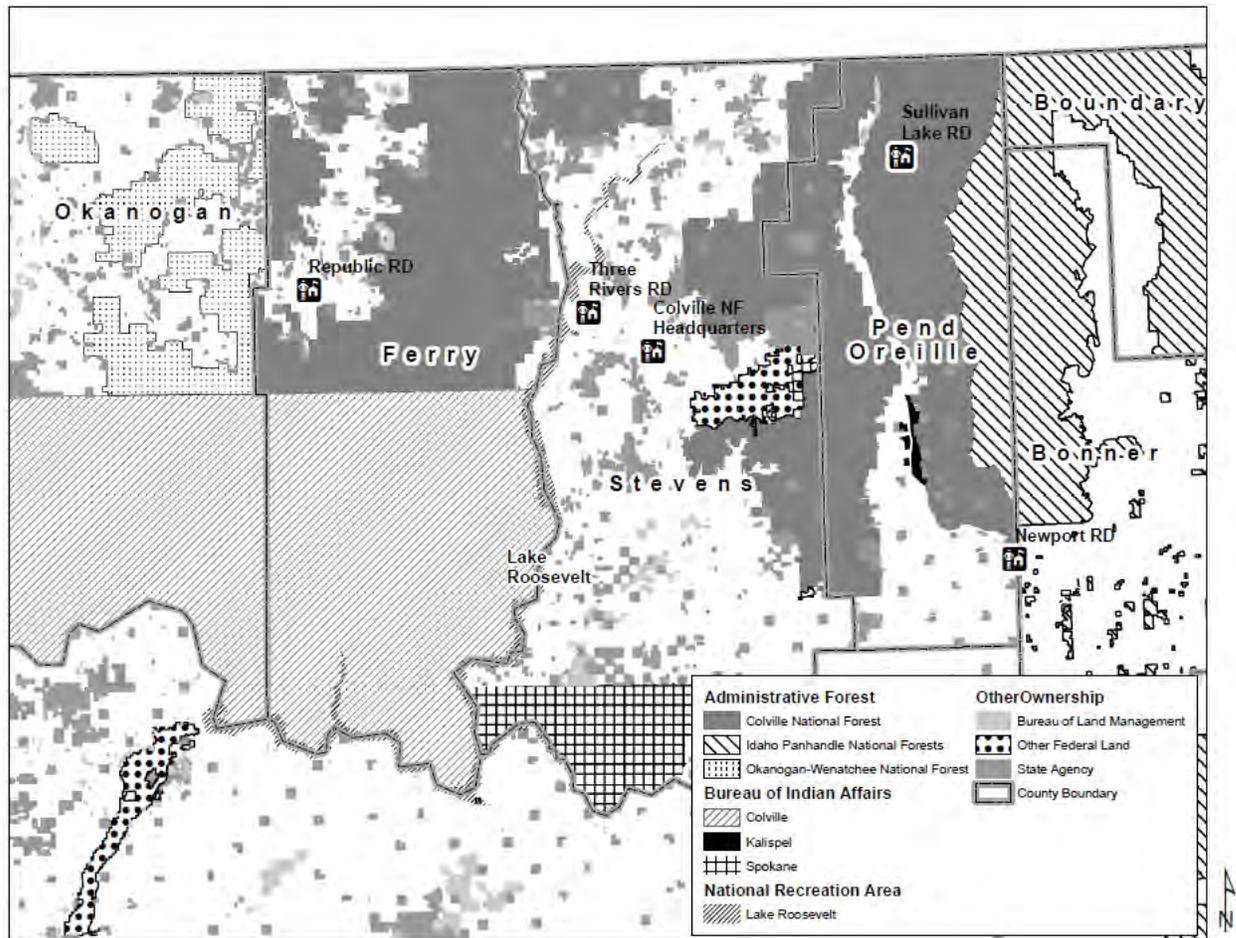


Figure 1. Colville National Forest and adjoining lands

Today, the forest, streams, lakes, mountains, and valleys of the Colville National Forest are literally the backyard of many residents in Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille County. According to the State of Washington's Office of Financial Management (OFM) Forecasting Division, between the years 2004-2014 the populations of Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties were expected to increase 4.93%, 7.86% and 11.1% respectively. Under Washington State RCW 43.62.035, which codifies the Growth Management Act (GMA), the OFM shall determine the percentage increase in population for each county over the preceding ten-year period as of each April 1st for growth management planning. Projections are statements about the future based on a particular set of assumptions. The GMA projections present high, medium, and low growth expectations for each county in the state. The medium series is considered the most likely expectation because it is based on assumptions that have been validated with past and current information. By the year 2040, using medium growth expectations, the populations of Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties are expected to increase 2%, 17% and 9% respectively. (**State of Washington, Office of Financial Management, Forecasting Division, 2012**).

These population trends present opportunities and challenges for both the Forest and its neighbors. Individuals; federal, state and local agencies; private industry; and other entities

benefit from the goods and services the National Forest provides. Increases in county populations are expected to inflate the demand for access, goods and services. At the same time, the Forest must actively manage access, vegetation, recreation, property boundaries, and other issues to protect the interests of the public as a whole. Increased housing density in areas adjoining NFS lands adds to the potential for encroachment, trespass, and unauthorized use and occupation of NFS lands. Balancing the need for goods and services while protecting the interests of the public would be a challenge into the future for the Lands Special Use program because of a downward trend in Forest Service budget allocations and personnel.

The Lands program area includes several different activities: special uses and land ownership/realty actions. The affected environment description is divided into two broad areas. Special use authorizations include permits, term permits, leases or easements which allow occupancy, use, rights or privileges of NFS lands. Land ownership includes boundary management, land exchanges, purchases, and other activities that are primarily real estate type activities.

Special Uses

Occupancy and use of NFS lands for public and private purposes through the issuance of special use authorizations and easements, continues to be allowed where the use is consistent with natural resource management goals. Authorized occupancy encumbers NFS lands which in turn affects management decisions and actions. Special use authorizations are used to authorize occupancy and use of NFS lands by federal, State, and local agencies; private industry; and individuals. Many different public laws regulate activities under special use authorizations as indicated earlier in this report.

Special uses are those that cannot be reasonably accommodated off-Forest, or, in some cases are Forest dependent, and include both Land and Recreation uses. Recreation Special Uses have been addressed in the Recreation Specialist Report. This report addresses Land-type special uses which include, but are not limited to, access to private property, communication sites, utility transmission right-of-ways, research studies, community and water uses. Some special uses are temporary in length, however; some occupancy, especially utility transmission right-of-ways and communication sites are long term commitments of NFS lands and typically have authorization terms of 20 or more years.

As of November 2014, there are 303 Land special use authorizations issued for uses on the Colville National Forest (See Table 1). The Forest anticipates the number of Land special uses would increase during the life of the revised Colville National Forest Land Management Plan (Plan). As the communities around the Forest expand, State agencies, counties, cities and towns, public utilities, and private citizens request new authorizations or amendments to existing authorizations.

Table 1. List of Special Use Authorizations

Special Use Authorization	Type	Number of Permits
Agriculture	Lands	1
Community Service	Lands	7
Trespass	Lands	2
Site Survey and Testing	Lands	2
Weather Station	Lands	2
Observatory	Lands	1
Military Training School	Lands	1

Special Use Authorization	Type	Number of Permits
Educational Center	Lands	1
Cultural Resources	Lands	2
Temp. Construction	Lands	2
Warehouse/Storage	Lands	1
Stockpile Site	Lands	1
Hydroelectric Facilities	Lands	2
Gas Pipeline	Lands	1
Power line	Lands	19
Airport	Lands	1
Helicopter Landing	Lands	1
DOT Easement	Lands	1
Forest Road and Trail Act Easement	Lands	132
Federal Land Management Policy Act Easement	Lands	24
Federal Land Management Policy Act Permit	Lands	38
Communication Uses	Lands	12
Communication Facility Managers	Lands	3
Telephone and	Lands	5
Fiber Optic	Lands	5
Irrigation Ditches	Lands	2
Irrigation Pipelines	Lands	9
Water Pipeline/Water developments	Lands	20
Livestock Water Easement	Lands	1
Dams	Lands	1
Weir	Lands	1
Stream Gaging Stations	Lands	2
Total Special Use Authorizations		303

Source: SUDS (Special Use Data System)

Note: Current in 11/2014

Road Authorizations

Road authorizations comprise 64% of the Land special uses issued on the Forest. Permits and easements granted by the Forest Service provide access across the Forest to non-NFS land where appropriate. These authorizations ensure the protection of NFS lands and resources. Authorization holders contribute to road maintenance commensurate with use.

Over 130 Forest Road and Trail Act (FRTA) Easements are granted to forest product companies, county and state public road departments, and to state resource management agencies. The majority of FRTA easements have been granted in Cost Share areas, where forest product companies and/or the state have granted reciprocal easements to the United States over their lands to facilitate the construction and maintenance of a mutually beneficial road system. The remaining FRTA easements have been granted to Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties and are maintained as part of their county road system.

Over 60 Federal Land Management Policy Act (FLPMA) Easements and Permits have been granted or issued to private property owners and/or associations for access to their property. These roads are generally not part of the forest road transportation system, and authorization holders are responsible for maintenance of these roads. The number of applications submitted by landowners requesting access to private property has increased appreciatively in the past several years, and that trend is expected to continue.

Requests for private access roads across NFS lands are increasing as residential development occurs on adjacent private lands, and as people retire to live on property that was formerly used on a seasonal basis. As of the year 2000, 20-30% of housing in Pend Oreille County was considered seasonal and/or recreational housing, with a high likelihood of many housing units transitioning to retirement properties (**State of Washington, Office of Financial Management; Decennial Census, 2010**).

Communication Sites

The Forest has nine (9) designated communication sites (Sites) where federal, state and local agencies have located their internal communication equipment, and commercial telecommunication companies are authorized to transmit and receive communications (See Table 2). Each of these Sites has an approved Communication Site Plan that defines the maximum power permissible at the site; protects NFS resources including soil, vegetation and scenery; and guides the operation, maintenance and development of the Site. No additional Sites are proposed for development at this time, and new proposed Sites would be analyzed on a case by case basis.

These Sites are located on the tops of mountains, have a limited capacity for expansion, and where snow accumulation limits access during the winter. Occupancy is authorized under a Communication Site Lease or Communication Site Permit for federal agencies. Three Leases are issued to facility owners who rent space to other users including state and county governments and wireless service providers. Some single use Sites are authorized to wireless service providers, state agencies, and the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. All Sites on the Forest are designated for low power uses. Infrastructure associated with these Sites includes roads, power lines, propane tanks, and telephone service.

For the past several years wireless service providers (Verizon, AT&T Mobility/Cingular Wireless) have expanded their data delivery capabilities (4G/LTE) which in turn have required infrastructure replacement and/or the addition of back-up generators at several Sites. Tower standards have recently changed, and existing tower load capacity is challenged with the addition of new antennas and microwave dishes. Communication towers installed at several Sites are reaching the ends of their useable lifespan and need replacement. Requests for Site improvements and replacements are expected to continue into the future, and challenge the Forest's ability to respond with limited available budget and personnel.

Table 2. List of Designated Communication Sites

Communication Site Name/Lease Holders	County	Location
Bisbee Mountain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verizon • Washington State Dept. of Transportation 	Ferry	Latitude 48 38' 02.54" North Longitude 118 09' 25.75" West
Bodie Mountain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washington State Department of Natural Resources • Forest Service 	Ferry	Latitude 48 49' 38.58" North Longitude 118 49' 58.024" West
Chewelah Peak <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBA Structures 	Stevens	Latitude 48 17' 01.21" North Longitude 117 34' 22.79" West
Deer Mountain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pend Oreille PUD #1 	Pend Oreille	Latitude 48 47' 57.39" North Longitude 117 26' 37.45" West

Communication Site Name/Lease Holders	County	Location
Flagstaff Mountain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBA Structures Verizon Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol Forest Service 	Stevens	Latitude 48 54' 31.38" North Longitude 117 52' 09.41" West
Flume Creek <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pend Oreille County Emergency Management Department of Energy, Bonneville Power Administration 	Pend Oreille	Latitude 48 55' 08.53" North Longitude 117 24' 57.71" West
Owl Mountain* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orient-Laurier TV Club 	Ferry	Latitude 48 58' 32.377" North Longitude 118 14' 6.851" West
Ruby Mountain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pend Oreille Telephone Company 	Pend Oreille	Latitude 48 30' 08" North Longitude 117 19' 32" West
Sand Ridge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol 	Pend Oreille	Latitude 48 49' 05.79" North Longitude 117 19' 05.42" West

*The Orient Laurier TV Club is removing their facilities the summer of 2015

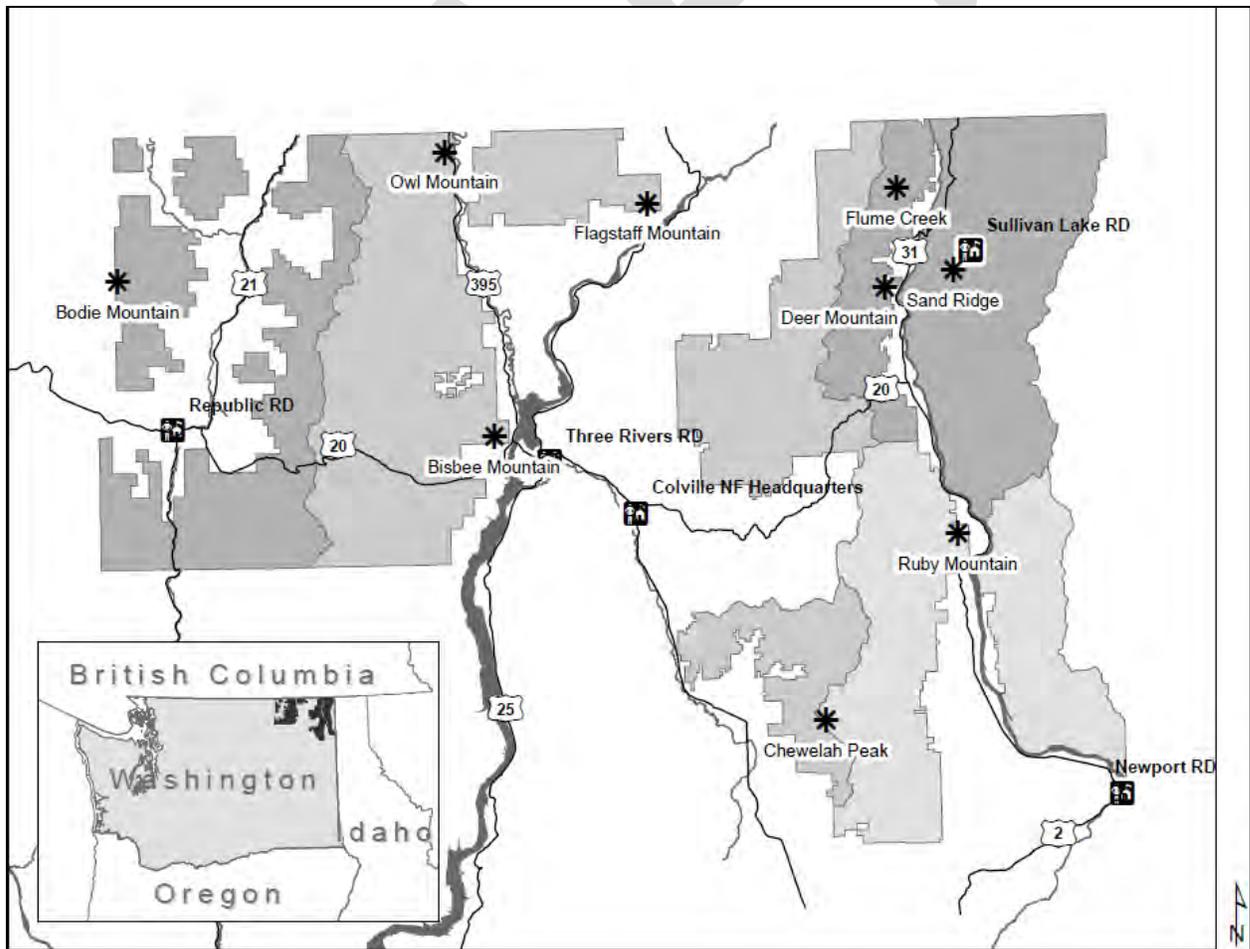


Figure 2. Locations of Designated Communication Sites

Forest Service Administrative Repeater Sites

There are thirteen (13) radio repeater sites used for Forest Service administrative communications, including two at designated communication sites listed above. Most of the Forest Service communication facilities are located on NFS lands; one on tribal lands, and two on state owned lands. The Forest Service leases space at those sites for our occupancy. The Forest's administrative communication sites currently do not have Communication Site Plans. Administrative Communication Site Plans should be developed that describe the extent of each Sites development potential, with the intent of protecting the integrity of critical Forest Service communications and equipment.

Table 3: List of Forest Service Repeater Locations

Forest Service Repeater Site Name	County	Land Ownership
Bodie Mountain	Ferry	Forest Service
Calispell Peak	Stevens	Forest Service
Flagstaff Mountain	Stevens	Forest Service
Grizzley	Ferry	Colville Confederated Tribal Lands
Jackknife	Ferry	Forest Service
Monumental	Stevens	State of Washington
Mt. Leona	Ferry	Forest Service
North Baldy	Pend Oreille	Forest Service
Red Top*	Stevens	*Forest Service (To be constructed in 2015)
Stensgar**	Pend Oreille	**State of Washington (To be removed in 2015)
Sullivan	Pend Oreille	Forest Service
Salmo	Pend Oreille	Forest Service
Togo Mountain	Ferry	Forest Service
Quartz Mountain	Ferry	Forest Service

Water Uses

There are 34 special use authorizations issued on the Forest for water related uses including irrigation ditches and pipelines, domestic water developments, and municipal water systems that include dams and weirs. Holders of those authorizations have demonstrated they hold a state water right for the diversion of water for a beneficial use. Forest Service authorizations do not confer a water right but allow the occupancy for the storage and transmission of water, and for water system infrastructure. The U.S. Geologic Survey and the Pend Oreille Public Utility District #1 hold permits for stream gaging stations to monitor temperature and flow rates of streams and rivers.

Utilities

Utilities include power lines, gas lines, telephone and fiber optic lines. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 directed the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, and the Interior to designate energy transport corridors for oil, gas, and hydrogen pipelines and electricity transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands in portions of Arizona, California,

Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. There are no Energy Policy Act designated energy corridors on the Colville National Forest.

There are 19 special use authorizations issued on the Forest for low and high energy power lines. Public Utility Districts in Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille County deliver low voltage (12Kv and less) to their customers in their respective counties. These power lines are frequently located along road corridors on NFS lands. The Department of Energy Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) operates and maintains 5 high voltage power lines in large right-of-ways that bisect the Forest, delivering power generated from the Pend Oreille Public Utility District #1 (PUD) Box Canyon Dam, and Seattle City Light's (SCL) Boundary Dam to the western power grid. In addition to the power lines, access roads and trails are also authorized to BPA to facilitate operations and maintenance of their improvements. Power line pole replacements, road maintenance, hazard tree removal and other vegetation treatment activities are performed regularly by these utilities. Additional utilities and/or upgrades to existing utilities should be concentrated within existing permit corridors before new permit areas are authorized.

There is one gas line authorized under permit on the Forest. The gas line provides service to the Republic Ranger District compound in the town of Republic, Washington in Ferry County.

Telephone and fiber optic lines provide a backbone of communication for businesses and the citizens of Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille County. The majority of telephone lines are overhead lines, with service connections buried when conditions allow. Fiber optic lines are usually buried underground to protect the lines and conduit. All new telephone service connections and fiber optic lines should be buried whenever and wherever possible.

There are no solar or wind generation farms authorized under permit on the Forest, and low potential for those renewable energy sources to be developed.

Military Training Survival School

The U.S. Air Force AETC, 336th Combat Crew Training Group, located at Fairchild Air Force Base, Spokane, Washington, operates a SERE (Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape) School on the Colville National Forest. The Survival School has been permitted on the Colville National Forest since 1966. This school is operated under a long term Special Use Permit that expires 12/31/2030. The school provides training to all Air Force crewmembers, future survival instructors, combat rescue officers, and specialized training to all branches of the military. The Survival School consists of both classroom and outdoor training. Most of the outdoor training occurs on the Colville National Forest. The training requires small groups of students live on the Forest under primitive conditions and practice techniques for personal sustenance, overland travel, shelter and recovery. The Survival School is supported by two command posts located on the Newport Ranger District.

Other Authorized Uses

The remainder of the Forest Land special use authorizations include agricultural uses, public service infrastructure (stockpile sites, warehouse's), an airstrip operated by the Washington State Department of Transportation, research and site surveys, and education uses. These uses are expected to continue on the Forest. Persons, who have personal property that is in trespass, are issued short term permits to remove their property from NFS lands.

Hydropower

The abundant water resources in northeast Washington support hydroelectric projects on the Forest which are authorized under Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Licenses. The FERC License is the authorizing instrument that contains the conditions under which the Licensee operates and maintains the hydroelectric project and lands within the License boundary. The Forest Service is a cooperating agency to the FERC regarding the management NFS lands and resources within the License boundary.

Seattle City Light operates Boundary Dam (FERC Project #2144) on the Pend Oreille River in northern Pend Oreille County. The FERC issued SCL a new 42-year License on March 20, 2013. Conditions were incorporated into the License that requires SCL to perform mitigation measures on NFS lands outside of the Licensed area. Some of those mitigation measures would require the issue of temporary or longer term permits for the occupancy of NFS lands. On March 20, 2013, the FERC issued an Order "Accepting the Surrender of License and Authorizing Disposition of Project Facilities" to the PUD for the Sullivan Creek Project (FERC Project #2225) located on Sullivan Creek, a tributary to the Pend Oreille River in northern Pend Oreille County. The Surrender of the License is expected to be effective by the year 2021 following completion of all Surrender conditions including the removal of Mill Pond dam and the restoration of the former impoundment. The Sullivan Lake dam and impoundment would be retained by the PUD and authorized under special use permit. The PUD also operates the Box Canyon Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project # 2042) on the Pend Oreille River.

The PUD also operates the Box Canyon Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project # 2042) on the Pend Oreille River. One-hundred-ninety (190) acres of NFS lands are directly affected by the Project operation. The PUD, Forest, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, state agencies and others are working to implement 4e and 10a License Conditions on NFS lands, including, but not limited to, recreation administration and maintenance, and off-site mitigations to improve fish habitat.

Boundary Management

The Forest protects its property boundaries through a Boundary Management program. The program also provides support for all resource areas including vegetation management; trespass and encroachment identification/resolution; as well as land and easement grant, purchase, or exchange. Work is performed by state licensed Forest Service Land Surveyors or state licensed Land Surveyors contracted by the Forest Service. Trespasses/encroachments onto NFS lands are identified and resolved as soon as practicable by coordination between the District Ranger and landowner.

Each year a portion of the Forest's 1500 miles of boundary line are surveyed or maintained to the Forest Service's standards. Currently, the Boundary Management program surveys or maintains 15 – 30 miles of the total 1500 miles of Forest boundary line annually. The known lifespan of a marked boundary is 30 years, with decay of this valuable infrastructure beginning at 15 years.

The occupancy and use of land adjacent to the Forest has been on the rise, and is expected to further increase in the years ahead. Instances of trespass and encroachment are also expected to increase. Because of this, boundary line maintenance would become more and more critical to the successful protection of NFS lands. The expected increase in Road Authorizations over time would require an increase in Boundary Management support for road/easement mapping purposes as well.

Land Ownership: Exchange, Acquisitions, and Access

The Forest acquires and disposes of lands through land exchange, purchase, donation, transfers or sale consistent with national policy, regional priorities, and budget. The acquisition of private timberlands in the Sheep Creek drainage in northern Stevens County is ongoing and should be completed by the end of 2015.

The Forest acquires access rights-of-way across non-NFS lands as needed to meet resource management objectives and public access needs. Rights-of-ways are acquired from landowners using easements, term easements, limited easements or permits for roads crossing private lands. Temporary or limited rights-of-way may be acquired when landowners are unwilling or unable to grant full public access, or when permanent access is not in the public interest or necessary to address long-term resource management objectives.

Need for Change

Comments submitted on the proposed action were reviewed to determine how they would be considered in the analysis. Old forest management, motorized recreation trails, road access, Recommended Wilderness, wildlife habitat, and riparian and aquatic resource management were identified as significant issues used to formulate alternatives. No lands issues drove the creation of an alternative.

Old Forest Management and Timber Production

In the revision of the Forest Plan, three broad-scale concerns drove the need to consider how we address old forest management, especially the current reserve system approach at the landscape scale. These are:

- The recent history of uncharacteristic levels of disturbances resulting from fire and insect and disease activity that would likely continue into the future.
- The interaction between disturbances and climate change that elevates the importance of restoring landscape resiliency.
- Uncertainty about the recovery and viability of old forest-dependent species given the increased risk of uncharacteristically severe disturbances that is likely to be exacerbated by climate change impacts.

Motorized Recreation Trails

The current land management plans provide direction for summer and winter motorized uses, including identifying areas where such use may not be authorized or is limited, mainly for protection of aquatic, plant, and wildlife habitats.

The goal for recreation settings and experiences would include providing a spectrum of high quality, nature-based outdoor recreational settings where visitors access the Forest, including access to the biological, geological, scenic, cultural, and experiential resources of the Forest. Where the visitor's outdoor recreational experience involves few conflicts with other users, access is available for a broad range of dispersed recreation activities such as dispersed camping, rock climbing, boating, mushroom and berry picking, hunting, and fishing and these experiences are offered in an environmentally sound manner, are within budget limits, and contribute to the local economy.

Access

Three broad concerns drove the need to address road density:

- The Forest can no longer afford to properly maintain the road system at current operational maintenance levels,
- The current road system is not aligned with current and future resource management objectives, and
- The existing road management direction is confusing and difficult to follow because it is scattered throughout current Forest Plan (Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan), Forest Plan amendments (East-side Screens, Interim Inland Native Fish Strategy for the Intermountain, Northern, and Pacific Northwest Regions [INFish, USDA Forest Service 1994c and 1995]), national-level decisions (the Roadless Rule), and interim policy (e.g., Grizzly Bear No-Net-Loss, Lynx Agreement, the Interior Columbia Basin Strategy).

Recommended Wilderness Areas

By law, all Roadless NFS lands must be evaluated for possible wilderness recommendation during the plan revision process. The result of that evaluation shows whether a need exists for additional wilderness and what trade-offs may exist if the area is eventually designated part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Currently, the Salmo-Priest Wilderness covers about 3 percent of the Colville National Forest and evaluation showed a need for additional wilderness opportunities on the Forest. A review of possible areas showed some are available to fill this need.

Riparian and Aquatic Resource Management

The current Forest Plan includes riparian management direction from the Inland Native Fish Strategy (INFISH, USDA Forest Service 1994c and 1995). This approach appears to have either maintained or improved riparian and aquatic habitat conditions at the watershed and larger scales.

Objectives for Riparian Management Areas would give emphasis to maintaining or restoring the riparian and aquatic structure and function of intermittent and perennial streams, confer benefits to riparian-dependent plant and animal species, enhance habitat conservation for organisms that are dependent on the transition zone between upslope and riparian areas, contribute to improved water quality and flows, and contribute to a greater connectivity of the watershed for both riparian and upland species.

Desired conditions for Riparian Management Areas within any given watershed are to have compositions of native flora and fauna and a distribution of physical, chemical, and biological conditions commensurate with natural processes.

Environmental Consequences

Methodology

This section describes the methodology and analysis processes used to determine the environmental consequences on lands and special uses from implementing the alternatives.

Environmental consequences are not site-specific at the broad forest planning level and are described with qualitative descriptions supported by past trends, records, special use authorizations, and changes in land ownership.

Assumptions

- Regardless of the alternative, Land special uses would continue to occupy certain portions of the Forest where those uses are compatible with management area direction.
- New uses would be proposed, and existing holders of instruments would request changes or alterations to their existing permitted uses.
- Existing permit holders may be required to implement best management practices and/or resource protection measures to comply with new Forest standards and guides.
- Requests for access to private lands within the Forest boundary would continue as populations increases, land parcels are subdivided, and conversions of recreation property to full time residential property continue.
- Land special uses have to comply with federal and state laws and regulations. These include but are not limited to laws such as Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act.
- Special use permits would be issued in accordance with Forest Service Manual 2700, Forest Service Handbook 2709.11, and regulations found in 36 CFR 251 Subpart A.

Methods of analysis

Methodology and analysis process for this report included query of the Natural Resource Manager (NRM) Special Uses Database (SUDS), Land Status Atlas, Forest Service records and case files, and census data to review population trends.

Spatial and Temporal Context for Effects Analysis

This analysis is completed for all NFS lands within the administrative boundaries of the Colville National Forest. It is assumed that the effective life of the plan would be 15 years and this analysis discusses the effects to lands and special uses over this time period.

Incomplete and Unavailable Information

Special use proposals and applications are submitted by federal, state and local agencies, commercial interests, and private individuals throughout the year. On average, approximately 35 new proposals and applications are submitted annually. This trend is expected to continue.

Summary of Effects Common to All Alternatives

In all alternatives, the issuance and administration of Land special use authorizations would continue to the level allowed by staffing; and directed by law, regulations, policy and direction. Special use proposals shall be evaluated in part on the suitability of the proposed use within the land allocation, and the first and second level screening process defined in 36 CFR 251.54 . The Forest Service would continue to cooperate with the FERC and Licensees on implementation of License conditions and settlement agreements. Special Use authorizations would be issued on NFS lands outside the License boundaries to support License condition implementation. Boundary line survey and maintenance would continue to support Forest program areas and defend Forest boundaries, as allowed by funding and staffing. Land realty actions would

continue to support national and regional policy and objectives. The Forest would continue to aggressively pursue the acquisition of permanent and temporary access across non-NFS lands to meet resource management objectives and public access needs.

Acronyms

FERC – Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

FLPMA – Federal Land Management Policy Act

OFM - State of Washington's Office of Financial Management

NFS – National Forest System

NRM – Natural Resource Manager

SUDS – Special Use Database System

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References

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December 18, 2014

State of Washington, Office of Financial Management; Decennial Census, Census 2010 Data, Percent Change in Population by County: 2000 to 2010.

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