

Descriptions of Potential Forest Resource Areas on the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

This is a brief overview of some types of forest areas to be included in the revised Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest (HLC) Forest Plan. Management of forest resources could span across all of these areas and may not be limited to a single category.

Wilderness

Relatively undeveloped pieces of land that provide opportunities for primitive, non-motorized, and unconfined recreation that allows for natural processes with few human impacts present.

- *Designated Wilderness*-areas that have already been designated by Congress as wilderness
- *Recommended Wilderness*-relatively undeveloped areas that the Forest Service has recommended through previous planning processes. These are pieces of land that have wilderness characteristics and are candidates for Designated Wilderness. **Note: no decisions have been made to date on any new recommended wilderness areas.**
- *Wilderness Study Act Areas*-designated by Congress and managed as Designated Wilderness

Areas that May be Suitable for Timber Production

- *Timber production* is the purposeful growing, tending, harvesting, and regeneration of regulated crops of trees to be cut for industrial or consumer use.
- *Timber harvest* is the removal of trees for multiple-use purposes.

If an area is deemed suitable for timber production it doesn't mean that every acre will necessarily be managed with intensive harvest. The designation of "suitable for timber production" simply means that the land is legally available, capable of growing timber, and managing for timber production is consistent with the objectives for the area. Conversely, harvest may occur in some unsuitable areas to meet resource objectives other than timber production, if specified in the forest plan.

Distinct Recreation Areas

Distinct recreation areas typically have certain types of recreation uses featured such as a large lake or reservoir, developed ski area or year-round resort, large campgrounds, or trail systems for featured recreational activities. These areas could have specific management direction in the forest plan according to what types of activities these areas support.

Special Areas

Special areas contain outstanding examples of scenery, plant and animal communities, geological features (e.g. caves), or other attributes that merit specific management. Designated special areas are managed to emphasize the specific values for which they have been identified. Other uses are permitted in the areas to the extent that these uses are compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated.

Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs)

The IRAs are relatively large, undeveloped areas (generally without roads), finalized in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule. IRAs provide a variety of motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities. Trails are the primary improvements within IRAs. In some areas, lookouts, cabins, or other structures are present as well as some evidence of management activities. There are approximately 1.45 million acres of land within IRAs across the HLC, or roughly 50% percent of the entire lands administered by the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forests. **Note: the IRA boundaries were created in a separate process and will not change as part of the HLC plan revision.**