

- The Forest Service has demonstrated a commitment toward partnerships for the conservation of lynx and lynx habitat on a programmatic level. In March 1998, the Forest Service, BLM, and NPS began a collaborative process with the Service to collect and analyze existing information on lynx (the Science Report) and assess the conservation needs of lynx and develop a lynx conservation strategy (LCAS) applicable to Federal land management. From 1999 through 2002, the Forest Service conducted extensive surveys to detect lynx presence on Forests across the contiguous U.S. lynx DPS (J. Claar, pers. comm. 2006 *in* NRLA BO). In 2006, the agencies initiated an update and clarification of the LCAS in order to incorporate new science and other information regarding the impacts of forest management on lynx.
- A large proportion of lynx habitat on Forest Service lands in the SRLA area (32 percent) occurs in lands with non-developmental status where management focuses on the maintenance of natural ecological processes, or conservation of rare ecological settings or components.
- Negative effects on lynx may not be totally eliminated, but are significantly reduced by the proposed management direction compared to the direction in existing Forest Plans. In at least 95.5 percent of lynx habitat in the SRLA area, vegetation management projects on Forest Service lands would be designed under the management direction and guidance of the proposed action to the point that they are likely to avoid adverse effects on lynx. Further, in the remaining 4.5 percent of this area, many fuels management projects can be designed in compliance or in partial compliance with the proposed standards and guidelines. Other project types that are likely to adversely affect lynx, such as recreation development, are constrained by standards mandating maintenance of connectivity (the major adverse impact) and affect a relatively small proportion of lynx habitat within the SRLA area.
- The adverse effects of the action to lynx due to the exemptions for fuels management and pre-commercial thinning in the WUI constitute a small portion of the lynx habitat in the SRLA area (3 percent per each Forest). The adverse effects of the action to lynx due to exceptions for pre-commercial thinning outside the WUI (no more than 1 percent per LAU) and other vegetation management (0.5 percent per each Forest) also constitute a small portion of the lynx habitat in the SRLA area. Monitoring and recording of fuels treatment actions are required as decisions are signed to ensure that the number of acres treated does not exceed these exemptions and exceptions.
- The proposed action is consistent with section 7(a)(1) of the Act through Forest Service commitments to undertake proactive management actions to benefit lynx.