

## Alternative Themes

**Alternative 1, No Action – current forest plan (1986):** This alternative would continue existing forest plan direction and management. Under the current forest plan, many ecological resources (vegetation, riparian areas, grasses, and soils) are currently departed from historical conditions and are in need of restoration. Fire dependent ecosystems are departed and prone to uncharacteristic, stand replacing wildfire; grass communities and understories are less productive than they were historically; soil function is reduced on much of the forest; and aquatic and riparian ecosystems are functioning, but many are impaired. The forest's ability to contribute to social, cultural, and economic resources is impaired, due to a loss of available forage for livestock and wildlife; sustainable recreation opportunities that do not meet the needs of forest users; and departure of vegetation and water resources that has reduced our ability to provide for traditional uses. The current forest plan only includes areas currently designated as wilderness.

**Alternative 2, Proposed – draft proposed plan:** This alternative would provide management that balances restoration of ecological resources with utilization of forest resources. The proposed forest plan defines desired characteristics for forested ecosystems, including species composition; structural elements, such as tree spacing, density, and grouping; and disturbance regimes, including frequency, severity, intensity, and extent, through a balanced approach of mechanical thinning and fire. In general, wildlife habitat and connectivity for maintaining at-risk species is emphasized. The proposed forest plan defines desired conditions and includes objectives and strategies for restoring and protecting springs, wetlands, and other natural waters that maintain function, habitat, and water quality. There are plan components to decommission unused roads and close temporary roads following project completion. The proposed forest plan defines desired conditions to increase grass production and availability; maintain or improve soil condition and function; develop a sustainable system of recreation infrastructure that is responsive to user trends and demands; and recognize, value, and support enduring traditional uses of National Forest System lands. This alternative may include areas as recommended wilderness.

**Alternative 3 – emphasizes utilization of forest resources:** This alternative would emphasize recreation opportunities, motorized access for forest users, and increased opportunities for traditional users. Habitat and connectivity for at-risk species; watershed restoration and riparian rehabilitation; and vegetation treatments to decrease the risk of fire and improve forest and watershed health are still important. The emphasis though is on utilization, which may result in less decommissioning of roads, trails, and routes; a greater emphasis on road and trail maintenance; an increased trail system; and more opportunities for motorized recreation. This alternative has an increased emphasis on mechanical thinning and timber harvest to support local economies. Forest product removal would require more temporary roads. Opportunities for traditional and cultural uses would still be available. Increasing grass cover for soil retention and forage for grazing and wildlife is still an emphasis. This alternative would have the least amount of recommended wilderness.

**Alternative 4 – emphasizes natural processes:** This alternative would emphasize increased protections for watersheds and riparian areas, greater protections for wildlife and at-risk species. This alternative has components that protect areas for wildlife connectivity, habitat, and important water resources, such as wetlands. There is an increased emphasis on the use of fire for restoration treatments. A greater emphasis is placed on decommissioning of unused roads and routes. Motorized recreation has a reduced emphasis in this alternative. Opportunities for traditional and cultural uses would still be available. Increasing grass cover for soil retention and forage for grazing and wildlife is still an emphasis. This alternative has the greatest amount of recommended wilderness.