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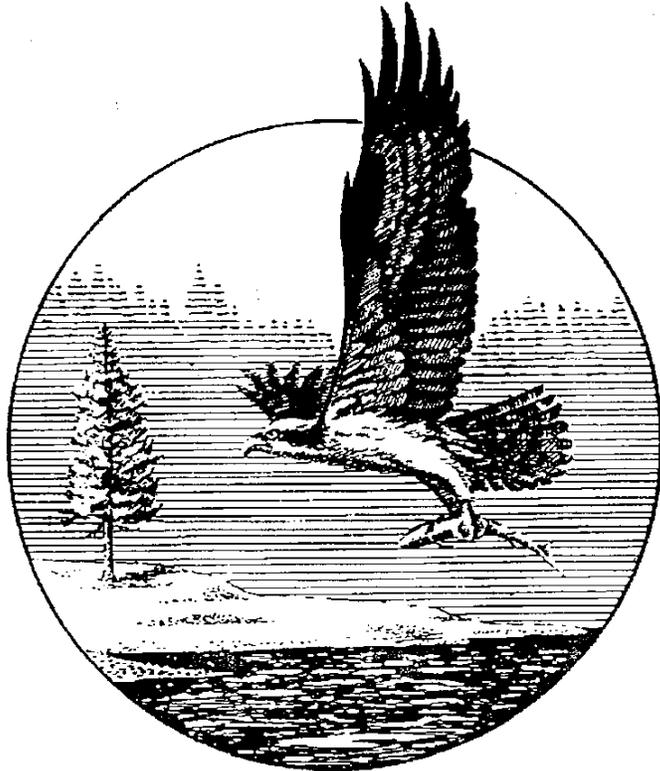
Klamath
National
Forest

July 1995



Record of Decision

for the Final Environmental Impact
Statement for the Klamath National
Forest



Record of Decision

Final Environmental Impact Statement and Land and Resource Management Plan

Klamath National Forest
USDA - Forest Service

Siskiyou County, California and Jackson County, Oregon

This document presents the decision regarding the selection of a land and resource management plan for the National Forest land within the Klamath National Forest. It summarizes the reasons for choosing the Preferred Alternative as the basis for the Forest Plan, which will be followed for the next 10 to 15 years. Estimates of the long-term environmental and economic consequences contained in the Final Environmental Impact Statement were considered in this decision.

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Record of Decision

USDA, Forest Service

Final Environmental Impact Statement Klamath National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

Siskiyou County, California and Jackson County, Oregon

Introduction

The Forest Service has completed a detailed planning process including studies of the lands, resources and socioeconomic interest in this National Forest as well as a detailed study and analysis of many different alternatives for management. Eleven of these alternatives were analyzed and displayed in detail in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Klamath National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan).

This Record of Decision (Klamath ROD) documents my selection and approval of one of these alternatives. The alternative is described in detail in the Forest Plan.

The Decision

Preferred Alternative

My decision is to select the Preferred Alternative to provide direction for managing the 1.68 million acres of the Klamath National Forest (Forest) for the next 10 to 15 years. The Preferred Alternative is a modification of the Preferred Alternative in the Draft EIS issued in September 1993. It was modified in the Final EIS in response to public comment and to incorporate direction from the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (NW ROD, also known as the President's Plan) issued April 13, 1994 by Mike Espy, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Bruce Babbitt, Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior.

This Klamath ROD also provides that the direction set forth in the NW ROD be applied to the lands within the Forest boundary that are not within the range of the northern spotted owl.

This Klamath ROD further modifies the Preferred Alternative (Forest Plan) to require that a watershed analysis be conducted in the watersheds containing the areas identified on the attached map prior to implementing site-disturbing activities in these areas. This Klamath ROD also recommends all Secretary of Interior designated Wild and Scenic Rivers for Congressional designation.

The Forest Plan provides for coordinated multiple-use with an emphasis on maintaining and restoring ecosystem health. An ecosystem approach is used. It includes an Aquatic Conservation Strategy designed to provide quality habitat for aquatic species. A Late-Successional Reserve system, other land allocations, extensive survey and management requirements, and many other standards and guidelines provide an ecosystem approach for maintaining biological diversity with an emphasis on late-successional species. An ecosystem analysis process at the landscape/watershed level will allow forest management to be considered in an integrated, ecological approach. An aggressive fuel treatment program is included to allow fire to play its ecological role and establish healthy ecosystems resilient to change.

Assistance to local communities to help stabilize local economies and develop new technologies and businesses through a Rural Development Program is emphasized.

Governing Regulations

I have reviewed the environmental consequences of the Forest Plan and the alternatives disclosed in the Final EIS. I gave particular attention to public comments on the Draft EIS summarized in Appendix K of the Final EIS. I have also reviewed the public issues and management concerns identified during the scoping process for this Forest Plan (Chapter 1 and Appendix A, Final EIS).

The Final EIS and Forest Plan were developed under a number of laws and regulations, including the National Forest Management Act and its implementing regulations, Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 219 (36 CFR 219) published in 47 FR 43026 on September 30, 1982. The planning actions described in 36 CFR 219.12(b) through (k) have been completed and are properly documented. The National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality Regulations, Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 1500-1508 (40 CFR 1500-1508) were followed.

Major Components of the Forest Plan

The NW ROD, signed April 13, 1994, provides management direction for this Forest Plan. Its provisions are incorporated throughout the following major components of the Forest Plan:

1. Forest-wide Goals and Forest Program Emphasis Goals;
2. The Desired Future Condition of the Forest;
3. Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines;
4. Management Area Identification, Prescriptions and Standard and Guidelines;
5. Adaptive Management Area Direction;
6. Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements;
7. Data Acquisition and Research Needs.

Major Provisions of the Forest Plan

The Forest Plan uses active stewardship and participative management to provide for environmental health and community stability in a sustainable manner. The Forest Plan takes an ecosystem approach and an adaptive management approach.

The ecosystem approach includes, but is not limited to, the following features. Late-Successional Reserves and a Managed Wildlife Management Area are designed to provide for all species needing late-successional and old growth conditions, including Threatened and Endangered Species. An Aquatic Conservation Strategy, which includes Riparian Reserves, Key Watersheds, watershed analysis and watershed restoration (as defined in the NW ROD), will help provide water that is of high quality for domestic needs, will provide an adequate amount and quality of habitat for aquatic species needs, and will provide for other resource uses. Ecosystem analysis at the landscape/watershed level, which includes the watershed analysis in the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, is used to assess management concerns in an ecosystem approach and will be an integral part of Forest Plan implementation.

An adaptive management approach will be used throughout the Forest. This approach consists of a continuing process of action-based planning, monitoring, researching, evaluating and adjusting with the objective of improving the implementation and achieving Forest Plan goals. The Goosenest Adaptive Management Area is a specific area dedicated to the objective of development and testing of new approaches for integration and achievement of ecological and economic health and other social objectives.

Biological Diversity - Land allocations and management direction are designed to maintain species, community and genetic diversity. Diversity will be provided through a mixture of vegetative types and seral stages. Early seral stages will be provided by management activities on regulated land and by wildfires. The use of native species will be emphasized.

Ecosystem Health - An aggressive fuel treatment program is expected to reduce the risk of devastating, high intensity wildfires and to return fire to its regulating role in ecosystem processes. Management activities such as salvage, thinning and prescribed natural fire in areas where permitted are expected to improve ecosystem health.

Riparian Management - Riparian areas and many other areas will be managed as Riparian Reserves in accordance with Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives. Boundaries for Riparian Reserves will be

established during implementation of site-specific projects. Interim widths are specified in the Forest Plan on page 4-137. Criteria for stream characteristics are established by standards and guidelines for the purpose of maintaining productive riparian ecosystems and provision is made for adjusting these criteria as new information arises.

Watershed Management - Based on the potential effects at the watershed level as identified by a disaggregation model for sediment production, a cautious approach will be taken in areas with watershed concerns, particularly with regard to timber harvesting and road construction activities. Watershed analysis as part of ecosystem analysis will be required prior to implementing site-disturbing activities in the areas identified on the attached map to determine the kind and degree of concerns. Special standards on pages 4-34 and 4-35 of the Forest Plan guide management of Key Watersheds.

Wildlife - Late Successional Reserves, Riparian Reserves and the other elements of the ecosystem approach such as the Aquatic Conservation Strategy will provide for an adequate distribution, amount and quality of habitat for late-successional species. The mixture of land allocations will provide for early and mid-successional species. Critical habitat for bald eagles, peregrine falcons and northern spotted owls is allocated to a Special Habitat Management Area, which includes Late-Successional Reserves. The Big Game and Forage Management Areas on the eastside of the Forest will provide for the needs of big game and other species that use these types of habitats.

Interim direction for goshawk management includes the establishment of Primary Nest Zones and Foraging Habitat Zones through standards as described on page 4-38 of the Forest Plan. A Managed Wildlife Area on the eastside of Indian Creek and other compatible land allocations will provide habitat for furbearers.

Species Associations described on pages 4-39 through 4-41 of the Forest Plan along with research information and models will be used to assess habitat conditions for terrestrial and aquatic species.

Fisheries - The Forest Plan represents a movement away from single-species management to a broader based ecosystem approach. The emphasis is on all aquatic species and maintaining and restoring aquatic ecosystem health through the Aquatic Conservation Strategy. Watershed restoration is emphasized. Selection of the most beneficial projects will occur through ecosystem analysis at the landscape/watershed level.

Wilderness Management - Five wildernesses located partially or in whole on the Forest make up 23 percent of the total Forest, approximately 381,100 acres. An ambitious program targeting 8,000 acres of fuel treatment per year using prescribed natural fire will be used to allow lightning fires to play their ecological role in wilderness. Trail reconstruction will be emphasized over relocation. Range permittees are required to take a more proactive approach to allotment management, which could help to reduce conflicts between people and cattle in wilderness.

Released Roadless Area Management - The upper portions of the Condrey Mountain Area and the eastern portion of the Kangaroo Area are designated as Backcountry to be managed for semi-primitive non-motorized recreational opportunities, approximately 29,000 acres. No new roads will be constructed within roadless areas in Key Watersheds. All other released roadless areas will be managed according to the direction of the management area in which they occur.

Wild and Scenic River Management - The Klamath River, Scott River, Salmon River and Wooley Creek are Wild and Scenic Rivers, designated by the Secretary of the Interior. These existing components of the National Wild and Scenic River System are recommended for Congressional designation. Detailed final boundaries for each of the existing rivers are established: refer to Appendix J in the Final EIS for boundaries. I also recommend that Congress reclassify a ½ mile segment of the North Fork Salmon River from Wild to Recreational to permit the construction of a dispersed camping area and picnic sites at the trailhead. The Forest Plan recommends 171.3 river miles as additions to the National Wild and Scenic River System. Recommendations include 101.1 miles with a Wild classification, 10.6 miles with a Scenic classification and 59.6 miles with a Recreational classification. Segments of 11 streams are recommended. This management emphasis is the keystone of our recreation program.

Specially Designated Area Management - The Forest Plan allocates approximately 12,500 acres of land for use as 9 Research Natural Areas. The Forest Plan also allocates approximately 22,000 acres as Special Interest Areas. These include 6 Botanical and Geologic, 18 Botanical and 21 Geologic Special Interest Areas.

Butte Valley National Grassland - This 18,100-acre area will be managed to maintain and restore the ecological health of the grassland and wetland ecosystems. Wildlife habitat and forage improvement will be emphasized.

Road Management - There will be no net increase in road miles within Key Watersheds, which comprise about 41 percent of the Forest. There will be no road construction in inventoried roadless areas within Key Watersheds. Less road construction will occur than in the past. Wild River corridors, Research Natural Areas and the Backcountry Management Area will be closed to off-highway vehicle use in addition to the current closures. Analyses will be conducted to determine the need for roads and off-highway vehicle access where these issues are management concerns.

Timber Management - Approximately 354,000 acres, 21 percent of the Forest, was determined to be capable, available and suitable for sustained timber production (regulated land) in the Forest Plan. The average annual Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) is estimated as 51 million board feet (MMBF) in the first decade. ASQ is programmed volume obtained from regulated land. This does not include volume that could come from salvage or thinning on unregulated land. An estimated 20 MMBF is anticipated each year from unregulated land to help maintain ecosystem health.

Both even-aged and uneven-aged silvicultural systems will be used. Green Tree Retention, group selection, sanitation and salvage prescriptions will likely be used most often. Green Tree Retention involves leaving both individual and clumped live trees on at least 15 percent of the area; it is required in all regeneration units. No clearcutting is scheduled and would only be considered under very restrictive conditions if it served to achieve land management objectives.

The genetic tree improvement program will be used to improve forest health and growth on regulated land. Salvage will be emphasized. The development of new markets for biomass and other forest products will be encouraged. Herbicides will be used only where their use is essential to attain a desired future condition that otherwise could not be met.

In areas where timber growth and yields are not emphasized, silvicultural prescriptions will be used to create desired forest conditions to enhance other resource objectives.

The Forest Plan provides for reducing the risk to Port-Orford-cedar from infection by *Phytophthora lateralis*. The Port-Orford-cedar root disease has not been found within the Forest, but does exist elsewhere within the Klamath Province. Port-Orford-cedar occasionally occurs on the Forest, but is not a major component of the vegetation. It occurs predominantly within reserves and administratively withdrawn areas. The Forest Plan further allows for the development of appropriate site-specific mitigation measures during project planning.

Fire Management - Forest Plan direction will expand the size of the fire suppression organization. An aggressive fuel treatment program treating about 27,000 acres per year will reduce fuels with the intent that future fires be less intense and destructive. A primary role of the fuel treatment program is to allow fire to play its regulating role in the ecosystem. The use of prescribed fire and prescribed natural fire will be emphasized. Prescribed natural fire will be used in wilderness, the largest Late-Successional Reserves and in Backcountry.

Range Management - Utilization guidelines will be used to maintain the health of rangeland ecosystems. These guidelines will be updated as more data is collected. Ecosystem analysis, Annual Operating Instructions and Rangeland Project Decision documents will be used to determine appropriate stocking and distribution of livestock to achieve optimum utilization and prevent deterioration of the range and other resources. Range use will be consistent with management area goals. Livestock management will be used as a tool to achieve desired vegetative conditions when consistent with management area goals.

Cultural Resources Management - Inam, Cottimien and Helkau are designated as cultural sites and will be managed to protect Karuk ceremonial values. Any management activities will be closely coordinated with the Karuk Tribe of California through the Tribal Government Program in accordance with the Government-to-Government Agreement. Standards provide for identification, evaluation, protection and interpretation of cultural sites.

Social - The Rural Development Program is emphasized as a means to offset the adverse effects of the reduced timber program on local Communities. Emphasis is on working with local community groups and individuals to identify and remove barriers that impede the flow of financial and technical assistance and transfer of technology to rural communities. Opportunities for non-traditional forest-based commodity production and for increasing local employment in Forest project implementation will be identified.

Forest Plan Implementation

The Forest Plan will be implemented 30 days after the Notice of Availability for the Final Forest Plan EIS and Klamath ROD appear in the Federal Register.

As soon as practicable after approval of the Forest Plan, the Forest Supervisor shall ensure that, subject to valid existing rights, all outstanding and future permits, contracts, cooperative agreements and other instruments for occupancy and use of affected lands are consistent with the Forest Plan as provided for in 16 USC 1604(i).

As provided in 36 CFR 219.10(g), this decision will remain in effect until the Forest Plan is revised. This is normally every 10 to 15 years or as conditions demand. A 50-year planning period was used in the Final EIS so effects of alternative choices could be projected beyond the first decade.

As a management strategy for the Klamath National Forest, this Forest Plan and Final EIS are programmatic. The emphasis in the Forest Plan is not on site-specific decisions. Rather, it provides overall systematic guidance and establishes management direction to govern future actions.

In order to fully implement the Forest Plan (including activities as scheduled, goods and services, mitigation and monitoring), the Forest Plan projects a need for a significant increase in funding over the 1987 base year, or a total of \$41 million per year in the first decade. Actual annual budgets affect the rate of implementation of the Forest Plan and directly affect the outputs produced in any given period. Budgeting levels can change scheduling if evaluation shows a need. Appendix E of the Forest Plan provides additional information on budgeting.

Alternatives and Issues Considered

Issues Considered

The scoping process to determine the issues, concerns and opportunities for the Forest Plan has been ongoing since 1979. A draft was published in the mid-1980s. Major wildfires occurred on the Forest in 1987 significantly changing the timber inventory and highlighting the emergence of new issues. In March 1988, a letter containing preliminary issues was sent to interested members of the public to re-initiate the planning process and requesting the identification of additional public issues. The refined issues were identified in a newsletter sent to over 1,750 individuals in August 1989.

Issues were grouped into 27 resource categories. The resource categories were also grouped. The Physical Environment group contains issues relating to geology, soils, water and air. The Biological Environment group contains issues relating to biological diversity, riparian, Sensitive plant species, wildlife and fisheries. The Resource Management Program group contains issues relating to management of visual resources, recreation, wilderness, released roadless areas, specially designated areas, the Butte Valley National Grassland, lands program, law enforcement, minerals, transportation and facilities, timber, fire, range, wild horses and cultural resources. The Social and Economic Environment group contains social and economic issues. A complete list of issues can be found in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS. Discussions of how issues were addressed can be found in Chapters 2 and 4 of the Final EIS and Chapter 2 of the Forest Plan. Documentation of the public involvement and scoping processes can be found in Appendix A of the Final EIS.

Alternatives

Of the range of alternatives developed, 11 were considered in detail in the Draft and Final EIS. Information about the alternative development process can be found in Chapter 2 and Appendix A of the Final EIS. Two alternatives proposed by public groups were not considered in detail as they were similar to other alternatives considered in detail (refer to pages 2-7 and 2-9 of the Final EIS).

The Preferred Alternative was the only alternative that received substantial comment during the Draft EIS public comment period. It was the only alternative modified in the Final EIS.

Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative fully implements the President's Plan. The Preferred Alternative provides for multiple use with an emphasis on maintaining and restoring ecosystem health. In particular, providing habitat for aquatic and late-successional species to recover at-risk populations is emphasized. Providing assistance to help stabilize local communities through a rural development program is a priority.

Modifications to the Preferred Alternative in the Final EIS included changes generated in response to public comment as well as changes to incorporate direction from the NW ROD. The most substantial modifications due to the NW ROD included adding more areas to Riparian Reserves, removing a requirement for 180-year timber rotations, and prohibiting road construction within roadless areas within

Key Watersheds. Modifications due to public comment included incorporating a Forest Recreation Strategy, changing visual quality requirements in some areas, and taking a cautious approach to management in areas with watershed concerns as identified on the attached map.

This Klamath ROD further modifies the Preferred Alternative to require that a watershed analysis be conducted in the watersheds containing the areas identified on the attached map prior to implementing site-disturbing activities in these areas. This Klamath ROD also recommends all Secretary of Interior designated Wild and Scenic Rivers for Congressional designation.

Current/RPA Alternative

The Current Alternative is the “no change” alternative. It shows the Forest with a continuation of current management throughout the planning period. These practices are very similar to the management proposed in the 1990 Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) Program, so these alternatives were generally considered together. These alternatives emphasize enhancement of outdoor recreation, wildlife and fisheries outputs as well as a sustainable timber program.

Alternative A

Alternative A provides for multiple uses with an emphasis on timber management. Specific areas of the Forest would be managed to emphasize high quality scenery, backcountry recreational opportunities, motorized recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, water quality and fish habitat.

Alternatives B and B'

Alternatives B and B' provide for multiple uses with an emphasis on visual quality and developed recreational opportunities. Timber outputs would be the natural outflow of integrated, multiple use management. The desired visual condition would guide management activities. Alternative B' differs from Alternative B in that timber yields are not programmed within designated spotted owl habitat conservation areas.

Alternative C

Alternative C provides for multiple use with an emphasis on maintaining a high degree of stand, ecosystem and forest diversity. Habitat linkage areas are established. It highlights unique recreational opportunities and promotes recreational events.

Alternatives D and D'

Alternatives D and D' provide for multiple use with an emphasis on providing a balance of commodity and amenity products. Specific watersheds called refugia would be identified as critical habitat for animal and plant populations. Mitigation measures and an active restoration program for anadromous and resident fish are emphasized. Alternative D' differs from Alternative D in that timber yields are not programmed within designated spotted owl habitat conservation areas.

Alternative E

Alternative E provides for multiple uses with an emphasis on amenity values and on maintaining future options. A mixture of wildlife and fish habitats is provided. Scenic quality and a low level of timber outputs are emphasized. All roadless areas would be management for roadless qualities.

Alternative G (SOHA)

This alternative displays what a continuation of management practices that were implemented on the Forest in 1987 would be like, including Spotted Owl Habitat Areas. It provides for multiple uses with an emphasis of the production of timber and other commodities.

Public Participation

The Forest conducted an active public participation program. It included mailings, open houses, meetings and presentations to the general public, special interest groups, tribal representatives as well as elected

officials and agency representatives of State, local and National governments throughout the planning process. Refer to Appendix A of the Final EIS, Consultation with Others.

A revised notice of intent to prepare an EIS for the Forest Plan was published in the Federal Register on April 1, 1988 when the planning process was re-initiated after the 1987 wildfires. A notice of availability of the Draft EIS and proposed Forest Plan was published in the Federal Register on October 8, 1993 and announced by area news media. Over 500 copies of the complete set of documents (proposed Forest Plan, Draft EIS, Summary and map packet) and about 500 copies of the Summary alone were distributed to the public. Open houses and public briefings were held during the comment period, which lasted through January 6, 1994. Over 300 individuals, organizations and Federal, State and local agencies commented on the proposed Forest Plan and Draft EIS. All comments were considered in the preparation of the final document and in the selection of the Preferred Alternative as the Forest Plan.

Reasons for the Decision

This section describes the significant factors forming the basis for my selection of the Preferred Alternative as the Forest Plan. These factors took into consideration the issues, concerns and opportunities identified through the planning process, public comments on the Draft EIS as well as new information and changing direction.

No single factor determined my decision. Rather, using professional judgment and experience, many factors were considered and weighed including monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits, land capability, protection of the basic resources, public desires as well as advice and suggestions from other agencies, organizations and experienced Forest officers. Based on consideration of all factors, the Forest Plan sets a course that results in the greatest overall long-term benefit to the public.

Response to Public Issues/Comments

The Forest received varied comments from many different interests during the scoping period and during the comment period on the Draft EIS and Draft Forest Plan. Often, the comments from one person conflicted with those of another. The comments on the Draft EIS were primarily focused on the Preferred Alternative. All comments were considered closely and many were used to help improve the analyses and documentation as well as to modify the Preferred Alternative. Substantive comments and the Forest's response to them can be found in Appendix K of the Final EIS.

The issues highlighted below are critical issues that are not covered elsewhere in this Klamath ROD. A complete summary of how issues were resolved can be found in Chapter 2 of the Forest Plan and in Table 2-16 in the Final EIS.

1. Cumulative Watershed Effects, Riparian Management and Water Quality

These issues were identified as important for maintaining stream channel conditions and quality water for domestic use and aquatic species needs.

I feel that the Aquatic Conservation Strategy in the Preferred Alternative with its large Riparian Reserves, management of Key Watersheds as refugia for at-risk species, extensive watershed analysis requirements and watershed restoration program along with the standards and guidelines will maintain watershed health and minimize cumulative watershed effects better than any other alternative. The watershed, riparian and in-stream restoration programs will also help mitigate past and future activities and restore ecosystem health. The cautious approach to management in areas with watershed concerns distinguishes this alternative from all others.

The projected levels of disturbance in the Preferred Alternative are lower than all but one other alternative. Estimated landslide production due to management activities are lower in the Preferred Alternative than any other alternative due to the relatively small amount of road construction and acres harvested. The Preferred Alternative is expected to reduce cumulative sediment production the most effectively in the long term. This is due to the fuel treatment program, which is expected to reduce the number of acres, burned in high intensity fire; wildfire is a major contributor of sediment.

The Preferred Alternative is expected to have the greatest percent of water meeting water quality objectives in the fifth decade due to low harvesting levels, a small road construction program, the aggressive fuel treatment program and the cautious approach to management in areas with watershed concerns. Ecosystem analysis which includes watershed analysis will be required prior to the implementation of site disturbing activities in the areas with watershed concerns as identified on the attached map.

2. Biological Diversity, Species Viability and Old Growth

Public concern over maintaining adequate biological diversity, in particular adequate old growth, to provide for species viability remained a major issue throughout the planning process.

I believe that the Preferred Alternative will best maintain adequate biological diversity. The emphasis on late-successional species described earlier should provide quality habitat to help recover at-risk species and meet the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. Land allocations and management direction are designed to maintain species, community and genetic diversity. Diversity will be provided through the abundance and variety of plant environments, ecological processes and functions, and connectivity across the landscape. Early seral stages will be provided by management activities on regulated land and by wildfires throughout the Forest.

Large blocks of land with few permitted activities would provide for later seral stages and one type of connective habitat. These areas would be connected through land allocations with similar management direction such as Riparian Reserves, which provide a second type of connective habitat. Green tree retention requirements will provide a third type of connective habitat within the matrix (regulated land).

The most recent scientific thinking indicates that the ecosystem approach of land allocations such as Late-Successional Reserves, Riparian Reserves and the Managed Wildlife Area will be more effective than the more traditional approaches of the other alternatives. I believe that the emphasis on ecosystem management, which emphasizes the sustainability and resilience of ecosystems, will provide multiple benefits including adequate habitat for the needs of a variety of species.

The Survey and Manage requirements in the Preferred Alternative will assure that currently unknown species are identified and adequately provided for during project implementation. Standards and guidelines also provide for special habitat types such as hardwoods, riparian areas, caves, coarse woody debris and snags. Land allocations such as General Forest, Partial Retention and Forage Management Areas should provide for species that need early and mid-successional habitat.

The Preferred Alternative is projected to have the most acreage that meets the "old growth" criteria by the fifth decade. I believe that it has the most potential for maintaining these areas and for maintaining desirable characteristics in Late-Successional Reserves due to aggressive fuel treatments and to permitting silvicultural treatments in reserves to maintain ecosystem health. These activities will reduce the risk of catastrophic stand-replacing fires, insect infestations and diseases.

3. Wilderness, Roadless Areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers

The management of wilderness released roadless areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers were issues throughout the process as was the designation of additional Wild and Scenic Rivers. During the public comment period on the Draft EIS, many people expressed the desire for more wilderness, the retention of roadless areas and for more Wild and Scenic Rivers.

I believe that the standards developed for the management of wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers will maintain the desired characteristics of those areas. Portions of 2 released roadless areas will maintain their roadless characteristics and be managed as the Backcountry Management Area. New road construction will not be permitted in inventoried roadless areas within Key Watersheds that have a roadless character.

I determined that, allocating released roadless areas for other multiple use needs such as habitat for Threatened and Endangered species, Late-Successional Reserves and timber production was a higher need than maintaining options for future wilderness or providing additional backcountry opportunities. Late-Successional Reserves allow for vegetative management to enhance late-successional habitat which is critical for many Threatened and Endangered Species and could not be provided under wilderness designation. Due to the more pressing needs of Threatened and Endangered species and to low projected demand for wilderness use on the Forest over the next 50 years relative to the current supply, I did not feel that additional wilderness recommendations were warranted.

The Preferred Alternative recommends 171.3 river miles as additions to the National Wild and Scenic River System, the third highest of the alternatives. Not all river segments identified by the public are recommended. Some rivers identified by the public did not have truly outstandingly remarkable values when compared with other rivers in the Forest and in the region. Other rivers proposed by the public were judged to provide greater benefits when allocated to other resource uses. Some rivers are recommended at a classification that is less than their highest potential eligibility because I determined

that greater multiple use benefits would be provided if those areas were available for other resource needs.

4. Timber Outputs and Community Stability

The level of timber outputs that should be scheduled from the Forest and how this and other factors affect community stability are important issues.

The projected Preferred Alternative ASQ for the first decade is 51 MMBF per year. The ASQ is expected to increase to 89.2 MMBF per year by the fifth decade. The ASQ for Key Watersheds and non-Key Watersheds will be disaggregated and displayed separately due to the higher level of uncertainty regarding future sale levels within Key Watersheds. In addition, an estimated unscheduled volume of about 20 MMBF per year could be generated from lands not programmed for sustained timber yields to help achieve objectives of ecosystem health.

The Forest provides a number of outputs that contribute to the local economy. Many jobs are tied to the Forest by its resource programs. Timber-related activities have the largest economic impact. Other important activities are recreation, grazing and special use permits. Timber outputs will decrease from historical levels, but the other three resources will likely remain fairly stable, although there might be some small decrease in grazing use and a small increase in recreational use.

The Forest will not be able to contribute as much to wood product industries as it has in the past. The ASQ is expected to be more stable than it has over the past 15 years when changes in laws and regulations continually reduced the land base available for timber production. The Rural Development Program and the Forest Plan emphasis on encouraging the use of non-traditional and of Native American traditional forest products should help diversify and stabilize local communities after a certain period of time. However, the transition will not be easy.

Changes in Management Direction

The Draft and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (NW SEIS), also known as the President's Plan, was developed during the planning period for the Draft and Final Forest Plan EIS. The May 1993 Preferred Alternative that the Forest was developing for the Draft Forest Plan EIS provided the basis for the alternatives in the Draft NW SEIS. The Draft NW SEIS modified the Preferred Alternative in the Draft Forest Plan EIS as described in the Addendum to the Draft Forest Plan EIS. The Draft NW SEIS described the relationship to the proposed Draft Forest Plan (Draft NW SEIS, page 2-12).

The NW ROD was signed April 13, 1994. Changes made between the Draft and Final NW SEIS were described in the Final NW SEIS and the NW ROD. Modifications to the Final NW SEIS were relatively minor and did not warrant issuance of another supplemental EIS.

The relationship of the President's Plan to the Draft and Final Forest Plan was explained further in the Final NW SEIS and NW ROD. The Final NW SEIS supplements the Draft Forest Plan EIS. The NW ROD provides management direction for the Final Forest Plan (NW ROD, pages 12 and A-2).

The Final Forest Plan for the Klamath National Forest fully implements the President's Plan and is consistent with the NW ROD.

Economic Efficiency

Each alternative considered in detail is a combination of resource objectives, direction and outputs that portray a certain management scenario. All alternatives were designed to achieve the greatest net public benefit. Net public benefit is the overall long-term value of all outputs and benefits minus all associated inputs, adverse effects and costs. Factors that cannot be measured in monetary terms are included as well as those that can.

The primary measure used in determining economic efficiency is present net value (PNV). PNV is an estimate of the market value of resources after all costs have been subtracted. The Preferred Alternative has the lowest PNV of all alternatives considered in detail.

While PNV is a useful comparison of commodity outputs and costs, it is not the only criteria used in selecting an alternative for implementation. Intangible benefits that cannot be measured in dollars such as maintaining species viability and water quality are also considered. Both priced and non-priced benefits are used to determine net public benefit, which is an expression of the overall, long-term value to the Nation of all outputs and costs.

The Preferred Alternative has the highest dollar costs due to the aggressive fuel treatment program, emphasis on restoration, road closure and surfacing requirements, and extensive requirements for surveys and analysis, which are designed to achieve the goal of maintaining or restoring ecosystem health. Recreational improvements, protection of cultural resources and the public information program constitute other dollar costs that are associated with non-priced benefits.

Contribution to the Production of Goods and Services

The Preferred Alternative serves to adjust the output targets of the 1990 RPA Program as assigned to the Klamath National Forest. The Preferred Alternative meets RPA goals as well as or better than the other alternatives with the exception of ASQ. The Preferred Alternative, along with Alternatives D and D', treats the most acres for watershed improvement needs, over 3½ times as much as the RPA goals. The Preferred Alternative is the only alternative that is within the RPA limit on road construction. The Preferred Alternative's ASQ of 51 MMBF in the first decade is only about a third of the RPA ASQ of 145 MMBF due to the provisions included for watershed, riparian and ecosystem health, visual quality and species viability. This is the second lowest ASQ of all alternatives. The alternatives are relatively equal for all other RPA goals.

Social Effects and Economic Stability

The Forest plays an important role in the social and economic life of those living within or adjacent to Forest boundaries. Residents of Siskiyou County are most directly affected by Forest activities. Shasta, Humboldt and Del Norte Counties in California and Jackson, Josephine and Klamath Counties in Oregon are also affected. In addition to environmental considerations, factors such as jobs, local government revenues, recreational opportunities, the needs of future generations and social and economic stability were considered in my decision.

Activities in the Preferred Alternative will generate about 2,310 jobs per year in the first decade, 85 percent of what the Current Alternative would generate. Lower timber harvests are the primary reason as described above.

County revenues from the Preferred Alternative are estimated at about 4 million dollars per year for National Forest Fund receipts. Although lower than all other alternatives except Alternative E, this is the same as the average of annual receipts to counties for the years 1980 to 1993. The majority of these receipts have come from timber sales in the past with minor amounts from range allotment payments, recreational user fees and special use permit fees. The Preferred Alternative is estimated to generate about \$400,000 per year in yield taxes to Siskiyou County. This is lower than all alternatives except Alternative E. Yield tax receipts for Siskiyou County have averaged \$425,000 per year in the past.

Although priced economic benefits will be lower than in the past due to lower timber harvest levels, I believe that the harvest level with the Preferred Alternative is sustainable overtime based on ecosystem management principles. This should provide stability for local economies, rather than the wide fluctuations experienced in the last 15 years. In addition, the Rural Development Program described earlier will help local economies diversify and attain economic stability.

Local communities are in an economic transition as forest management shifts towards other multiple use emphases besides timber production. All of the National Forests in California are affected by this change. I am aware of the hurt and frustration that accompanies this transition from those directly or indirectly affected. The reduction in timber supplies from National Forest, State and even private land is a regional issue.

This Forest Plan will not satisfy everyone. It comes during a time of rapidly changing social values and forest management direction. However, I believe the Forest Plan provides a diverse and sustainable mixture of goods and services that benefit all people. By providing a high level of environmental quality and a variety of recreational opportunities to support tourism, the Forest Plan will contribute to the long-term economic health of the area.

The Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The environmentally preferable alternative protects, preserves and enhances historic, cultural and natural resources; attains the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation; and achieves a balance between population and resource use which permits high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities.

Based on the analysis in Chapter 4 of the EIS, I judge the Preferred Alternative to be the environmentally preferable alternative. It emphasizes water quality, air quality, biological diversity, species viability, ecosystem health and resilience, visual quality, recreation and cultural resources. It best provides habitat for late-successional and aquatic species.

Compatibility with the Goals and Plans of Other Public Agencies

Compatibility with the goals and plans of other public agencies was considered throughout the planning process. The primary areas of possible conflict were identified as wildlife, fisheries and visual resource management.

Development of the President's Plan, which provides direction for this Forest Plan, provided extensive coordination of Federal agencies relating to issues affecting late-successional and aquatic species. The land allocations on the eastside of the Forest for Big Game and Forage Management were closely coordinated with the California Department of Fish and Game.

Critical habitat and consultation requirements as defined by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for Threatened and Endangered Species will be followed.

Efforts for coordinated planning for fisheries have been on-going for a number of years. The Preferred Alternative emphasizes continuing these efforts such as the current inter-agency Klamath River Basin planning effort.

Based on public comment on the Draft EIS, the few inconsistencies in scenery management that remained in the draft were resolved in the Final Forest Plan. This information is summarized at the end of Chapter 4 of the Final EIS. The middle ground and foreground views from eligible State Scenic Highways will be managed for Partial Retention Visual Quality Objectives per agreements with the State of California.

Reasons for Selecting the Forest Plan

The Preferred Alternative was chosen because it best meets the needs and concerns of the people of the United States. While other alternatives may be more desirable with respect to a single activity, output, or resource; none provides a better mixture of resource benefits and uses while maintaining a healthy and diverse natural environment. The Preferred Alternative also responds more positively to the issues, concerns and opportunities raised by the public throughout the planning process.

I believe that the Forest Plan provides the best balance of all alternatives for the Klamath National Forest. It incorporates the strongest points of many of the other alternatives considered in detail. The ecosystem approach provides for maintaining a wide variety of habitats that will contribute to maintaining species viability and biological diversity. The Preferred Alternative has the highest likelihood of providing for the widest array of individual species and groups of species at both the Forest and the regional level of all alternatives.

The Preferred Alternative will maintain the highest level of water quality in the long-term due to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, cautious approach to watershed management, and the aggressive fuel treatment program. I believe that the strong emphasis on using prescribed fire and prescribed natural fire to allow fire to play its regulating role is the best choice for the fire ecology ecosystems of the Klamath Mountains Province.

A level of timber production that is supportable and sustainable is identified. Helping communities achieve economic stability through diversification is emphasized to mitigate some of the adverse effects of a timber program that has been reduced from the historical levels of the last 15 years.

The adaptive management approach in the Preferred Alternative will allow the Forest the flexibility to respond to the rapidly changing needs and desires that characterize modern times as well as to incorporate new information as it becomes available.

I selected the Preferred Alternative because, in my judgment, it provides the highest net public benefit. Net public benefit is inherently subjective as many Forest outputs and effects have qualitative values that are not easily measured. I have shared the factors I considered before selecting the Preferred Alternative in this Klamath ROD. I believe that the Preferred Alternative promises the greatest long-term public benefit.

Findings Required by Other Laws

National Forest Management Act

The Forest Plan is consistent with the Pacific Southwest Regional Guide as amended by the NW ROD. Direction from the NW ROD for management of habitat for late-successional and old growth forest related species was incorporated directly. The Forest Plan is consistent with the direction in the Pacific Southwest Regional Guide on pages 3-1 through 3-11 for the 8 standards and guidelines required by 36 CFR 219.9. Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan complies with those standards and guidelines which are harvest cutting methods, size of openings, dispersal and size variation of openings, definition of openings, management intensity, utilization standards, transportation and utility corridors and air quality.

The Forest Plan implements the requirements of 36 CFR 219.14 through 219.28. The provisions in Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan comply with these requirements. Some key provisions include the identification of lands not suited for timber production in accordance with 36 CFR 219.14(a) and (c), the determination of an ASQ of 51 MMBF for the first decade and a calculation of long term sustained yield in accordance with 36 CFR 219.16, the re-evaluation of 18 roadless areas released for multiple use management by the 1984 California Wilderness Act for potential wilderness designation in accordance with 36 CFR 219.17 as documented in Appendix C of the EIS, the development of standards and guidelines for management of fish and wildlife habitat designed to provide habitat adequate to maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species in accordance with 36 CFR 219.19, and the development of standards and guidelines designed to provide habitat adequate to maintain a diversity of plant and animal communities and tree species in accordance with 36 CFR 219.26.

Pages 1-7 and 4-167, Chapter 6, Appendix A and Appendix K of the EIS document how the coordination and public participation requirements of 36 CFR 219.6 and 219.7 were met. This includes coordination with Federal, State and local governments and agencies as well as consultation with Indian tribes.

National Environmental Policy Act

The Final EIS and Forest Plan were developed using National Environmental Policy Act procedures as required by the National Forest Management Act implementing regulations. These procedures will also be used in reaching decisions on projects developed to implement Forest Plan direction as described on pages 4-11, 4-44 and 4-71 through 4-72 of the Final Forest Plan. National Environmental Policy Act procedures are designed to consider the likely environmental effects of proposed actions and to inform the decision-makers and the public of those effects prior to their implementation.

Endangered Species Act

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on direction incorporated from the NW ROD for management of habitat for late-successional and old growth forest-related species was concluded with the issuance of a Biological Opinion provided under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act dated February 10, 1994. A second programmatic level Biological Opinion on implementation of these and other provisions of the Klamath National Forest Plan was issued in 1995. The USFWS determined in its Biological Opinion that adoption of the Klamath Forest Plan is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of any designated critical habitat for those listed species.

Consultation or conferencing as appropriate will also be conducted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on projects that may affect species listed or proposed for listing. Consultation or conferencing as appropriate with National Marine Fisheries Service is initiated as anadromous fish species are proposed for listing or listed. At this time, the steelhead in the Klamath Basin have been proposed, while coho salmon and steelhead outside the Klamath Basin are being reviewed for possible listing.

Clean Air Act

Air quality within the Forest is in compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The Marble Mountain Wilderness is a designated Class I Air Quality Area. The State of California does not have an approved air quality implementation plan, so a conformity determination can not be made at this time. The Forest coordinated with local air pollution control districts during the development of the Forest Plan. The goals and standards and guidelines designed for air quality and smoke management in Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan and the overall level of activities contemplated under this programmatic plan are projected to maintain air quality.

National Historic Preservation Act

In accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Forest Plans are not undertakings under the National Historic Preservation Act so consultation pursuant to Section 106 of the Act is not required at the Forest Plan level; refer to FSM 2361.24. Consultation on project undertakings that implement Forest Plan direction will be conducted as required by the Act and as described on pages 4-68 through 4-70 of the Forest Plan. The standards and guidelines described on these pages support a program for the identification, evaluation and protection of heritage resources in accordance with Section 110 of the Act.

Clean Water Act

The Forest Plan is programmatic and does not authorize dredge and fill activities. Permits are obtained as required for project level activities that implement Forest Plan direction. The Forest Plan includes goals and standards and guidelines developed in compliance with the Clean Water Act (Chapter 4 and Appendix D of the Forest Plan). Implementation of the Forest Plan is expected to contribute to protecting or restoring the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the waters of the United States in accordance with the Act.

Mitigation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Many of the components of the standards and guidelines in Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan are mitigation measures. Singularly and collectively; they avoid, rectify, reduce, or eliminate potentially adverse environmental effects of forest management activities. These management requirements were developed through an interdisciplinary process and incorporate agency as well as Federal, State and local requirements to mitigate or eliminate any long-term adverse effects. Additional mitigation measures will be developed where appropriate at the project level.

To the best of my knowledge, all practical mitigation measures to avoid or minimize environmental harm have been adopted. Land use allocations also play an important role in mitigation through the separation of incompatible uses.

The purpose of the monitoring and evaluation program is three-fold: (1) to determine if the Forest Plan is being implemented as designed, (2) to determine if implementation is effectively meeting Forest Plan objectives and (3) to determine the validity of the initial assumptions used to develop the Forest Plan.

The adaptive management approach and the direction for the Gooseneck Adaptive Management Area in the Forest Plan emphasize the use and value of monitoring. Monitoring can help keep the Forest Plan current and responsive to change. Monitoring and evaluation have distinctly different purposes. Monitoring consists of gathering data. Evaluation analyzes and interprets the information gathered during monitoring. The two processes together allow a determination of whether conditions are within the desired bounds and intent of Forest Plan direction. When there is substantial deviation, Forest Plan amendments or revisions may be required. Evaluation of results of site-specific monitoring will be documented in an annual report available for public review.



Planning Records, Amendments and Revisions, and Administrative Review

Planning Records

Planning records contain the detailed information used, and records of decisions made, in developing the Forest Plan and Final EIS as required in 36 CFR 219.10. These records are incorporated by reference into the Final EIS and Forest Plan. They are available for review during regular business hours at the following location.

Forest Supervisor's Office
1312 Fairlane Road
Yreka, CA 96097
(916) 842-6131

Amendments and Revisions

The National Forest Management Act requires revision of the Forest Plan at least every 10 to 15 years. The Forest Plan may be changed sooner by amendment or revision when needed. The need for change may arise from several sources such as a change in conditions or demands in the area covered by the Forest Plan, a change in Resource Planning Act policies, goals or objectives; or the results of the monitoring and evaluation process. The process used regarding amendment is described at 36 CFR 219.10(f). The process used regarding revision is described at 36 CFR 219.10(g).

Right to Administrative Review

This decision is subject to appeal in accordance with the provisions of 36 CFR 217. The notice of appeal must be in writing and meet the requirements of 36 CFR 217. Two copies must be submitted to the following address:

USDA-Forest Service
National Forest System /Appeals
Attention: Joyce Kelly / 3NW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

My recommendation to include an additional 171.3 miles into the National Wild and Scenic River System is not appealable as it will receive further review and possible modification by the Chief of the Forest Service, Secretary of Agriculture and the President of the United States. The United States Congress has reserved the authority to make final decisions on designation of rivers.

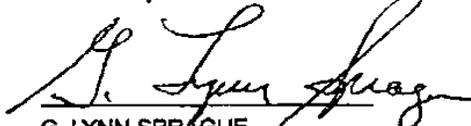
Appeals must be filed within 90 days from the date this decision is published in the legal notice section of the Sacramento Bee, Sacramento, California.

An appeal of my decision does not halt Forest Plan implementation. Requests to stay the approval of a Forest Plan shall not be granted (36 CFR 217.10b).

No decisions on site-specific projects are made in this document, although a few projects are identified. Those projects identified in various parts of the Forest Plan or Final EIS are only included in order to clarify discussions, illustrate a point, or to show that Forest Plan goals and objectives can be achieved. Final decisions on site-specific projects will be made during Forest Plan implementation after appropriate analysis and documentation meeting NEPA requirements.

I encourage anyone concerned about the Forest Plan or Final EIS to contact the Forest Supervisor at 1312 Fairlane Road, Yreka, California 96097 or at (916) 842-6131 before submitting an appeal. It may be possible to resolve your concern in a less formal way.

To resolve your concern in a less formal way.


G. LYNN SPRAGUE
Regional Forester

JUL - 5 1995

Date

