

DESIRED CONDITION STATEMENT SUMMARY

Submitted by Clark Fork Working Group on 4/29/04

FIRE RISK

Forest-wide Goal 1c: Forest Health – Increase the amount of forests restored to or maintained in a healthy condition with reduced risk and damage from fires, insects and diseases, and invasive species.

Potential Desired Condition Topics for your GA:

- Fire Risk outside Wildland Urban Interface
- Fire Risk within Wildland Urban Interface

Desired Condition Statement	<p>1. Protect and restore wildland/urban interface areas using small stewardship logging and other appropriate tools, such as prescribed fire.</p> <p>2. Restore a more natural fire dynamic in the National Forest, inventoried roadless areas and wilderness areas under appropriate conditions using a fire management plan.</p> <p>3. The Clark Fork GA supports a range of vegetation structure, composition, and density minimizes risk of supporting catastrophic wildfires. The CFWG suggests prioritizing the major drainages in the GA as follows:</p> <p><u>High Priority:</u> Elk, Pilgrim, Trout, Blue, Bull & Swamp. <u>Moderate Priority:</u> Martin, Whitepine, Beaver, Little Beaver & Rock. <u>Low Priority:</u> Stevens, McKay & Vermilion.</p> <p>(Note: Still need to incorporate how roadless areas will affect these rankings.)</p>
Identify Priority Areas	<p>The Clark Fork GA is a priority for treatments to reduce fuels. The CFWG suggests prioritizing the major drainages in the GA as follows:</p> <p>High Priority: Elk, Pilgrim, Trout, Blue, Bull & Swamp.</p> <p>Moderate Priority: Martin, Whitepine, Beaver, Little Beaver & Rock.</p> <p>Low Priority: Stevens, McKay & Vermilion.</p> <p>(Note: Still need to research and incorporate how roadless areas will affect these rankings.)</p>
Describe why this is a priority	<p>High population density and fuel buildup with potential to work with private and other agency landowners.</p>

TIMBER PRODUCTION

Forest-wide Goal 2b: Sustainable Uses, Values, Products and Services – Improve the capability of the Forests to provide desired sustainable levels of uses, values, products and services.

Potential Desired Condition Topics for your GA:

- Timber offered for sale

Desired Condition Statement	<p>Have ecologically sustainable and economically viable timber harvest in the Clark Fork GA via the following proposals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selective timber harvest with emphasis on restoring historical structure and diversity (e.g., thinning). 2. Management of previously harvested/regenerated areas. 3. Use of carefully planned, well executed slash disposal and site clean-up techniques. 4. There should be no clearcutting in healthy stands.
Identify Priority Areas	<p>Every drainage in the CFGA has areas where selective timber harvest could take place. The CFWG has developed a list of several projects it would like to see:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Smeads/Rice – Commercial selective logging, to include thinning of the existing regenerated clearcuts. b. Blue/Fat Sale c. Soldier Gulch Sale d. Increase the number of small salvage sales (of overstocked stands, diseased stands or stands where fire should be reintroduced).
Describe why this is a priority	

WATERSHEDS AND AQUATIC SPECIES

Forest-wide Goal 1a: Watershed Conditions – Restore and protect watershed conditions to provide the water quality and quantity and soil productivity necessary to support ecological functions and intended beneficial uses.

Potential Desired Condition Topics for your GA:

- Watersheds Functioning-at-Risk Condition
- Watersheds Not Properly Functioning
- 303d listed streams
- Riparian areas Not Properly Functioning

<p>Desired Condition Statement</p>	<p>All watersheds in the CFGA should be properly functioning and healthy, providing high quality water flowing into the Cabinet Gorge and Noxon Reservoirs, and providing healthy habitat for aquatic species. This could be accomplished by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with the LCF watershed councils, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Green Mountain Conservation District, Avista Corporation and other appropriate entities to identify problem areas, and develop solutions to solve these problems. 2. Develop stream restoration projects that can be funded by Title II (RAC) funding. 3. Aggressively pursue USFS funding sources for watershed projects. 4. Provide assistance with NEPA and permitting for watershed projects. 5. Restoration projects should be monitored. 6. Provide healthy habitat for aquatic and riparian species (animals and plants). 7. Provide high quality habitat in lower Clark Fork tributaries to benefit native aquatic species. 8. Develop programs to minimize the spread and impact of invasive species (e.g., terrestrial aquatic weeds, whirling disease, etc.). via education, monitoring, signage, etc.).
<p>Identify Priority Areas</p>	<p>Proposed priority areas are: 1) Federal lands in drainages with 303(d) listed waterbodies in the CFGA including Elk Creek, Rock Creek, Whitepine Creek, Bull River, Trout Creek, Marten Creek, Pilgrim Creek, Vermilion River, Swamp Creek, Beaver Creek, Dry Creek (Bull River) and Noxon Reservoir. Private lands in the above listed drainages would also be a priority, especially if activities on federal lands have exacerbated problems on these private lands. Non 303(d) listed drainages that have problems should also be considered priority areas.</p>
<p>Describe why this is a priority</p>	<p>Various problems have been recently identified by the six existing LCF watershed councils (Elk, Rock, Whitepine, Bull, Trout & Pilgrim) located in the CFGA via comprehensive watershed assessments. The priority drainages are listed on the Montana 303(d) list as impaired waterbodies. Project EIS's have been prepared by the USFS in other drainages (e.g., Whitepine & Beaver) and problems have been identified. Also, all of the 303(d) listed streams contain a native species of concern (westslope cutthroat trout) and several contain bull trout.</p>

WILDLIFE

Forest-wide Goal 1b: Condition for Species – Provide ecological conditions to sustain viable populations of native and desired nonnative species and to achieve objectives for Management Indicator Species (MIS) and focal species.

Potential Desired Condition Topics for your GA:

- Terrestrial Plants and Wildlife
 - Old Growth Habitat
 - Down wood and cavity nesting habitat
 - Wildlife habitat in support of State wildlife agencies goals.
 - Threatened and Endangered Species
 - Sensitive Plants and Animals

Desired Condition Statement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide an array of quality habitats well distributed across the landscape to provide for the year-round needs of wildlife, including threatened and endangered species. This should include protecting and enhancing winter range for elk and deer. 2. Enhance big game wildlife habitat through various management techniques, such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prescribed burns in plots scattered in all drainages in the GA. b. Mechanically cut thick brush fields in old clear cut areas that were never replanted (1960's clearcuts such as the area on the south east side of Gem Peak). 3. Continue identifying and protecting sensitive plants and animals. 4. Leave old growth areas alone except on sites where calculated management activity can sustain or enhance old growth. 5. Conserve the best down woody debris necessary to provide good wildlife habitat. There is a need for quality snags (larch & white pine). 6. Some treatment may be necessary in replacement old growth stands.
Identify Priority Areas	
Describe why this is a priority	

VEGETATION

Forest-wide Goal 1c: Forest Health – Increase the amount of forests restored to or maintained in a healthy condition with reduced risk and damage from fires, insects and diseases, and invasive species.

Potential Desired Condition Topics for your GA:

- Weed Risk
- Insect and Disease
- Vegetation Condition and Trend

Desired Condition Statement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is overlap to our recommendations for the Timber Production and Fire Risk topics. 2. Riparian areas – develop healthy riparian zone vegetation. 3. Weeds – contain invasive non-native species to areas where they can be managed as well as possible. 4. Increase under-represented species such as whitebark pine, larch, aspen, cottonwood, birch, etc.). 5. Encourage growth of trees more resistant to disease. 6. Also, refer to Timber & Fire Risk sections for additional ways to manage/improve vegetation on the forest.
Identify Priority Areas	
Describe why this is a priority	

ACCESS AND RECREATION

Forest-wide Goal 2b: Sustainable Uses, Values, Products and Services – Improve the capability of the Forests to provide desired sustainable levels of uses, values, products and services.

Potential Desired Condition Topics for your GA:

- Dispersed Recreation Sites
- Developed Recreation Facilities and Dispersed Sites
- Special Forest Products (huckleberries, firewood, mushrooms, etc.)

Desired Condition Statement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enlarge existing recreational and access areas as needed. Don't build new facilities. 2. The Cabinet District should do an inventory of potential access and recreation sites to assist in future planning. 3. The Cabinet District should work cooperatively with Avista Corporation, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and all other potential partners, in development and maintenance of access and recreational sites. 4. The CFWG would like to see a sustained crop of huckleberries and mushrooms in the future, and would like to see the FS should maintain the status quo concerning the existing permitting system. 5. The CFWG would like to see the FS should maintain the status quo concerning the existing permitting system for rock picking, grazing, firewood gathering and that these regulations should be enforced. 6. The CFWG proposes that the following gated roads should be opened for various special activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Open FS #2278 (Lost Girl) and #2289 (Snake Creek Pass) for berry picking and firewood gathering in August and September. b. Spur roads on Fatman for firewood gathering. c. FS #2735 and 215 - Grays Gulch year around for various uses. This drainage has homes in the area and if the road was opened all year around it would provide an exit if there is a fire. d. FS #2257/2222 – Sex Peak loop road from April through October, then opened for snowmobiling during winter months. e. Elk Lake (Vermilion) open to ATV use and Cabinet Ridge Riders would agree to maintain the trail and area around Elk Lake. f. Canyon Creek (Vermilion) left open to ATV travel. g. Open FS #2744 (West Fork Pilgrim) for seasonal firewood gathering. h. Open FS #2220 (Swamp Creek power line road) for seasonal firewood gathering. i. Temporarily open all logging units for firewood gathering after the logging project is completed. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">(Note: There was concern expressed by some parties that all proposed road openings be carefully analyzed for potential adverse impacts, e.g., impacts on elk summer range, etc.).</p>
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Identify Priority Areas or Opportunities	See item 6 above.
Describe why this is a priority	

Forest-wide Goal 4: Access – Ensure access to National Forest System lands through the maintenance and improvement of roads and trails, while managing within the capability of ecosystems.

Potential Desired Condition Topics for your GA:

- Road Access - year-round restricted, seasonally open and year-round restricted
- Road Maintenance
- Roads and Trails – winter recreation
- Roads and Trails – summer motorized recreation
- Roads and Trails – summer non-motorized recreation
- Trailhead facilities

Desired Condition Statement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to all trails, including formerly listed trails be maintained. Access means, if a road goes to the trail, that road be maintained. No roads should be closed to trail heads. These roads and trails should be maintained in the proper manner as to promote proper vegetation, watershed quality and safety for recreation, especially stock use and hiking. 2. The Cabinet District should assist in the development of new cross-country ski trails in the District. 3. The Cabinet District should investigate problem areas on trails and develop solutions to address these problems (e.g., horse traffic impacts on St. Paul Lake trail). 4. Upper trails to Snowshoe Lake and Little Ibex Lake should be maintained as manways, so that access is somewhat limited. A maintenance plan for the trail to Dad Peak should be developed. 5. The Cabinet District should investigate developing partnerships for trail maintenance, e.g., the Adopt-A-Trail program. The District should investigate the use of volunteer help from local schools, especially given reports that use of volunteer groups for trail clearing is common practice in the Lolo and Lewis & Clark National Forests, and in the Bob Marshall Wilderness.
Identify Priority Areas	
Describe why this is a priority	

IRAS AND PROPOSED WILDERNESS AREAS

Forest-wide Goal 2a: Wild Lands (Wilderness, Wilderness Study, Recommended Wilderness, and Wild Rivers) – Maintain and improve the capability of wild lands to provide for primitive recreation and a wide array of ecological values.

Potential Desired Condition Topics for your GA:

- Reduce impacts of use on sites or areas.
- Establish natural fire regimes in all of these areas.
- Reduce acres of areas infested with noxious weeds.

Desired Condition Statement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There should be no new roads closed to snowmobiling. 2. Maintain the existing policy on snowmobile access to the Bloom Peak bowls, i.e., the area should remain a roadless area, but snowmobile use in the ridgeline corridor, as shown on the current Travel Plan, should continue. 3. Establish natural fire regimes in all wilderness areas. 4. Reduce acres of areas infested with noxious weeds. 5. Snowmobile riding in the open area described as roughly between the ridge east of Taylor Saddle and south to Bloom Peak) is acceptable, and that the riding area should be accurately shown on the travel plan. 6. A wildlife study should be conducted to determine if any threatened or endangered species utilize the Bloom Peak riding area. 7. Roads and areas where snowmobiles are not permitted should be clearly shown on the travel map. 8. Errors on the Kootenai Forest map and travel map should be corrected (e.g., shading overlaps on Travel map - Eight Mile Peak/Jew Peak/Black peak trail in Trout Creek area). 9. Signage errors throughout the District should be corrected. 10. USFS should review the reference paper on climatic trends by Dan Fagre, USGS ecologist working in Glacier National Park, relative to information provided on page 10 (2nd to last paragraph from the bottom) of the <i>Analysis of the Management Situation for the Revision of the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle Forest Plans, March 2003</i> report.
Identify Priority Areas	
Describe why this is a priority	

OTHER FOREST-WIDE GOALS/OBJECTIVES

Forest-wide Goal 2b: Sustainable Uses, Values, Products and Services – Improve the capability of the Forests to provide desired sustainable levels of uses, values, products and services.

Potential Desired Condition Topics for your GA:

- Grazing
- Personal Use Minerals (personal use, common rock material and recreational use)
- Mineral Withdrawals
- Abandoned Mines
- Historic Properties – identify, evaluate and nominate
- Historic Properties – protect and preserve
- Scenery Management
- Research Natural Areas

Desired Condition Statement	Protect and preserve the remaining lookout structures on the forest. Actively advance the contemporary use of these "historic properties" as assets that can support agency missions while contributing to the economic well-being of the local communities.
Identify Priority Areas	Seven Point, Berry Mtn., Gem Pk., Sex Pk., Star Pk., Minton Pk., and Bull River Guard Station on the Cabinet District.
Describe why this is a priority	<p>Lookout structures, even those built in the 1960s, are historic - most of them are no longer used for their intended purpose, however, in past periods of extreme fire danger we have sent "lookouts" to each of the lookouts on the Cabinet District and also Cougar Peak on the Lolo NF. Lookouts are an important part of the heritage of the USFS and were also critical to WWII efforts. The public appreciates being able to visit and stay in lookouts; the rental program is very popular.</p> <p>Lookout rental and maintenance programs are an excellent way to promote community and public involvement through partnerships, volunteers, community groups, and alternative schools. The forest needs to explore options to keep the program viable: raise the rent to reflect rising maintenance costs; trade labor for staying at the lookout; create opportunities for education and training through school programs, Youth Conservation Corps, Passport in Time; seek community assistance (donations of materials), and funds available through grants.</p>

Forest-wide Goal 3: Community Development and Public Involvement – Provide assistance to rural communities and private landowners. Promote better management of National Forest System lands by providing opportunities for public involvement.

Potential Desired Condition Topics for your GA:

- Community Assistance
- Information, Interpretation and Education
- Partnerships, Volunteers and Community Groups

Desired Condition Statement	
Identify Priority Areas	
Describe why this is a priority	

Addendum A

Recommendations Submitted by Access Subgroup #1 (Cabinet Ridge Riders and Others)

Roads and Access:

The Cabinet Ranger District has 46% Wilderness and Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs). We feel McKay Creek would be better suited as wilderness.

We suggest the following should remain as is under current status: Galena; Catarac; Allen Peak; Barren Creek; Cabinet Face East and West; Maple Peak; Lower Trout Creek; Devils Gap; Rock Creek; Government Mountain; and Scotchman Peak. The area around Spar Lake and Little Spar Lake for winter recreation and over the snow vehicles. Also the area by private property, which is suitable for timber harvest.

All the IRAs must be managed as general forest areas unless previously congressionally withdrawn. Management must, of course, be dependent on the physical and biological attributes and constraints and in accordance with the various laws that established and govern national forest management. Since IRAs are not wilderness, motorized vehicle management should be no different from that of other general forest areas under this plan. Since IRAs are not wilderness, there is no reason for them to be withdrawn from the regulated annual timber harvest. Rather they must all be considered as within the general forest.

Roads and trails as well as cross country skiing and snowmobile travel should only be closed to use on a case-by-case basis, and then only closed to the use that may cause significant adverse impacts to: wildlife solitude & calving; physical damage (surface erosion or rutting); human/horse/machine interaction and/or disturbance.

There should be no obliteration of roads or more closures in the plan. This will occur as grizzly's are introduced again to Kootenai National Forest.

ATV use is far from heavy, and most of that use occurs on system and non-system roads. OHV management strategy issued in December 2000 provides director for OHV management.

There should be more access for ATVs in the Cabinet Ranger District.

The option for more designated groomed trails for snowmobiling.

There should be more handicapped accessible areas.

Timber Production

The Organic Act of 1897 states that the national forests were to be maintained for the express purpose of favorable conditions for water flows, and to ensure a continuous supply of timber.

The organic act also requires that our society, economy, and culture be sustained and made more viable through management of the national forests.

Society, economy and culture will not be sustained nor made more viable under the plan.

Prescribed burning of our forest stands should be used only where timber harvest would be inappropriate. Prescribed burning will not, however, promote or improve on this requirement of the Organic Act.

No acts or laws subsequent to the Organic Act can be used to curtail timber harvest far below the natural and sustained growth of timber volumes, as is currently the case.

Timber harvest must be used to thin stands to reduce fire hazard and improve forest health. Harvest must also be used to provide openings for wildlife, to aid in forest fire control and suppression, and to provide forest age class distribution from grass-forb through shrub, saplings, and on to mature stands.

Prescribed burns should be used to manage wildlife habitat and organic fuel build up in areas inaccessible to regular timber harvest such as Saddle Mountain.

Roads we would like to see opened:

2735 and 215 Grays Gulch year around for various uses. This drainage has homes in the area and if the road was opened all year around it would provide an exit if there is a fire.

2257/2222 Road to Sex Peak loop road from April through October then opened for snowmobiling during winter months.

Elk Lake open to ATV and Cabinet Ridge Riders would agree to maintain trail to Elk Lake.

Canyon Creek left open to ATV travel.

Other Issues

Would like to see school volunteer program to clear trails which would provide community services as well as teaching the youth in the area learn about the forests and help at the same time. Would also provide relief to forest service personnel to do other work. Would like to discuss why difference classification or schools and costs.

Addendum B**Recommendations Submitted by Access Subgroup #2**

Wilderness designation:

1. Scotchman Peaks WSA : all 55,000 acres in MT down to within 200 yards of private property.
2. Trout Creek Roadless Area : all of it except the specific area around Bloom Peak that the CFGA excluded for winter snowmobile use.
3. McKay Creek: the entire 15,378 Ac.
4. Galena : 19,300 ac.
5. Cataract: 25,440 ac.
6. Allen Peak : 29,587 ac.
7. Chippewa : 2,300 ac.

Existing Roadless areas:

The remaining roadless areas to remain roadless and motorless.