

PART 1 – VISION

Introduction

The Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) for the Ouachita National Forest provides broad, strategic direction for managing the land and its resources. It does not make project-level decisions, nor does it contain commitments to implement specific projects. Those decisions are made after more detailed analyses and further public comment. Site-specific project decisions must be consistent with the Forest Plan. In some cases, the Forest Plan may be amended to allow projects to be implemented that would otherwise be inconsistent with the Plan.

This Forest Plan was prepared according to the requirements of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other laws and regulations. This Revised Forest Plan replaces the 1990 Amended Land and Resource Management Plan for the Ouachita National Forest.

The Forest Plan was developed to present the management alternative that, compared with other management alternatives, comes nearest to maximizing net public benefits, consistent with the resource integration management requirements of the 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 219.13 through 219.27 in effect prior to January 5, 2005. The accompanying Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) describes the analysis that was used to compare Forest Plan alternatives and to provide information for use in selecting the alternative to implemented as the 2005 Revised Forest Plan.

Organization of the Revised Forest Plan

This Forest Plan is presented in a format based on a relatively new model developed for national use. It consists of three interrelated parts:

Part 1, the Vision, describes the Ouachita National Forest's roles and contributions; desired conditions (36 CFR 219.11(b)) for the various landscapes within the Forest; and evaluation/monitoring indicators (36 CFR 219.11 (d)) that will be used to assess the progress made toward accomplishing the desired conditions. Part 1 includes:

- *Distinctive Roles and Contributions of the Forest.* The Vision begins with a description of the Forest, including its distinctive roles and contributions to the local area, states, region, and nation.
- *Desired Conditions.* Desired conditions describe how the Forest is expected to look and function in the future when management direction in the Forest Plan has been successfully implemented. Desired conditions are described using the ecological, economic, and social attributes that characterize or exemplify the outcomes of land management. The degree to which the Forest achieves the desired conditions will be monitored. Desired conditions are not commitments and may be achievable only over the long term.
- *Evaluation/Monitoring.* Descriptions of planned monitoring and evaluation are included after each statement of desired conditions.

Part 2, the Strategy, describes the objectives (36 CFR 219.11 (b)) that the U.S. Forest Service intends to implement in order to move the Forest toward the Vision described in Part 1; types of land use by Management Area (MA); and past and anticipated future management performance. It also includes a landownership adjustment and a monitoring strategy.

Part 3, the Design Criteria, includes the management standards (36 CFR 219.11 (c), 219.13 through 219.27). Standards are mandatory requirements that apply to site-specific activities. Design criteria are intended to assure that projects protect resources and are consistent with achieving the objectives and desired conditions for the Ouachita National Forest, as a whole, and the desired conditions and strategies for the MAs.

A Glossary of Commonly Used Terms and a Glossary of Commonly Used Abbreviations and Acronyms follow Part 3.

Purpose of the Revised Forest Plan

The Revised Forest Plan guides all natural resource management activities for the Ouachita National Forest. To accomplish this, the Revised Forest Plan:

- Establishes long-range goals (desired conditions) and short-range objectives (generally for the next 10 to 15 years)
- Specifies management prescriptions and associated standards and anticipates the rates or levels of management practices that will be applied
- Establishes monitoring and evaluation requirements that provide a basis for periodic determination and evaluation of the effects of implementing the Forest Plan

The Revised Forest Plan was developed in accordance with the provisions of the NFMA, its implementing regulations, and other pertinent guidance. Together, land allocations, management prescriptions, and design criteria represent a statement of long-term management direction. Projected outcomes, services, and rates of implementation are dependent on the annual budgeting process, among other variables.

The Revised Forest Plan sets the context for project development. Projects may be proposed to respond to public requests or as part of regular Forest Service programs. Projects address differences between current conditions and desired conditions.

When a project is proposed, the suitable use and use strategy descriptions (see Part 2, Strategy) are reviewed for compatibility with the proposed activities. If the project is an allowable use, appropriate and relevant standards (see Part 3, Design Criteria) are incorporated. The proposed action is then analyzed using various laws, regulations, and policy. If the project is inconsistent with plan direction, the project may be redesigned or rejected, or a forest plan amendment may be considered.

A forest plan is a component of a cycle of adaptation that provides a framework guiding future management decisions and actions. As such, a plan does not create or execute any ground-disturbing activity. A plan in and of itself does not grant, withhold, or modify any contract, permit, or other legal instrument; does not subject anyone to civil or

criminal liability; and creates no legal rights. A plan by itself is not an action-forcing document.

The cycle of adaptation is incorporated through monitoring and evaluation requirements that are found within the plan. Part 1 identifies outcome level performance measures for each desired condition. These are long-term measures of movement toward the respective desired condition. Part 2 identifies program strategies and associated performance indicators. Project-level adaptation, triggered by reviews of selected projects, is focused on the effectiveness of project design criteria (presented in Part 3). The annual monitoring and evaluation report evaluates all three levels of monitoring at the appropriate time cycle.

Forest Roles, Contributions, and Vision

Location

The Ouachita National Forest is located in western Arkansas and southeastern Oklahoma and includes nearly 1.8 million acres of federally managed land, shown on the vicinity map (Figure 1).

The Forest is located within Ashley, Garland, Hot Spring, Howard, Logan, Montgomery, Perry, Pike, Polk, Saline, Scott, Sebastian, and Yell Counties in Arkansas and LeFlore and McCurtain Counties in Oklahoma.

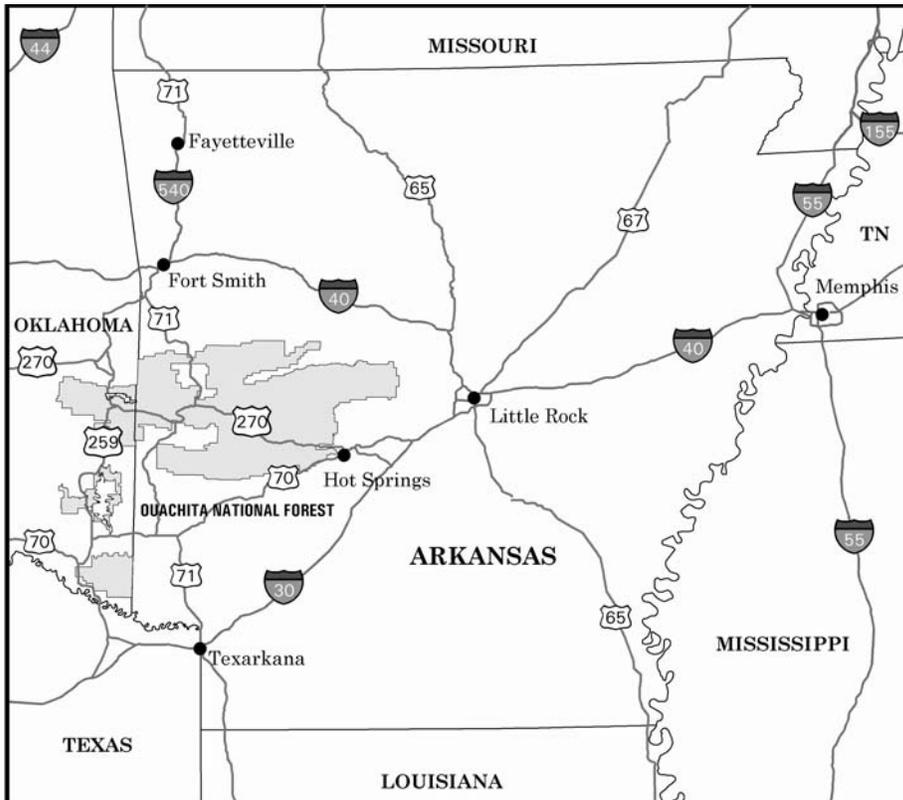


Figure 1. Ouachita National Forest Vicinity Map

Roles and Contributions

At the global and national scales, the Ouachita National Forest:

- sustains the largest expanse of native shortleaf pine ecosystems under one ownership and also harbors outstanding oak-dominated and mixed mesic forest and woodland systems
- provides opportunities for scenic driving on National Forest Scenic Byways, Scenic Highways, and a wealth of scenic unpaved roads
- provides high-quality recreation settings for the 192 miles of the Ouachita National Recreation Trail that are within the boundaries of the Forest, the Winding Stair National Recreation Area, and two designated Wild and Scenic Rivers
- together with the Ozark National Forest, is part of a recreation draw zone (a 75-mile straight-line radius from the borders of the two national forests) in which more than 5 million people live
- includes six designated wildernesses covering approximately 65,000 acres
- is one of the few sources for electronic grade, high-quality quartz in North America and a major world producer, and the leading U.S. producer of quartz crystal, for aesthetic and jewelry uses
- is thought to have the largest concentration of prehistoric mines (novaculite mines) in North America
- is home to a wealth of native biodiversity (plants, animals, natural communities), including at least five salamander species, seven fish species, 13 crayfish species, and 15 plant species that are endemic to the Ouachita Mountains; the Forest also provides the only breeding and foraging habitat for the largest population of the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) in the Ouachita Mountains and foraging and potential breeding habitat for the only other population of RCW
- conserves one archeological site and 90 buildings/structures on the National Register of Historic Places and over 1,400 sites eligible to be included on the National Register

On regional and local scales, the Ouachita National Forest:

- contains diverse habitats important to maintaining populations of many native plant, fish, and animal species
- conserves an important 16.5-mile segment of the Glover River, the last free-flowing river in Oklahoma, and almost two miles of the Mountain Fork River (which, like the Glover River segment, is designated as Critical Habitat for the threatened leopard darter)

- is an important source of high-quality wood products, especially shortleaf pine sawtimber, for local and regional economies
- is one of the few large areas in Arkansas or Oklahoma where access for hunting is free and opportunities to hunt wild turkey, white-tailed deer, gray squirrel, and black bear are good to excellent
- provides high-quality recreation settings for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding on more than 600 miles of trail; motorized use on hundreds of miles of roads and about 100 miles of trails; and fishing in hundreds of miles of clear streams and dozens of lakes and ponds
- is the primary place of origin for much of the surface water that supplies communities in the Ouachita Mountains and is an important source of water for central Arkansas (via Lake Winona); lands of the Ouachita National Forest surround the source of potable water (Broken Bow Lake) for a large area in southeastern Oklahoma

Vision

The Ouachita National Forest is a model of sustainable ecosystem management, featuring healthy ecosystems that provide a balanced and sustainable flow of goods and services for a growing, diverse population. Forest watersheds provide many benefits, including flood protection and quality drinking water for downstream communities, as well as protection of wildland-urban interface areas from wildfire. They offer a haven for many native plants and animals and provide unique and irreplaceable habitat for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. The National Forest provides much needed open space and a wide variety of recreation opportunities. It also serves as an outdoor classroom, a “living laboratory,” for learning about our natural and cultural heritage and the importance of conservation.

Employees’ Vision for the Ouachita National Forest

- A Forest that is healthy, beautiful, and useful with the full complement of native plants and animals, high-quality lakes and streams, and intact, productive soils;
- Forest Service employees and citizens working together to develop ecologically sustainable and socially acceptable land management programs; and
- A highly competent and diverse workforce, proud of the Forest Service and the work we do, openly communicating in a spirit of trust with each other and with the public we serve.

Desired Condition of the Ouachita National Forest

Terrestrial, Riparian, and Aquatic Ecosystems

The desired condition for terrestrial ecosystems is a mix of closed-canopy forest, intermittent-canopy woodlands, and open prairie and glade conditions. Forest and/or woodland systems may be dominated by pine, oak, or pine and oak species together. Non-forested systems are primarily dominated by grasses, forbs, and shrubs. Fire, thinning, and other vegetation management practices are used to help sustain the balance of structural and compositional diversity needed to support healthy populations of native plants and animals while maintaining the productivity of the land.

The desired condition for riparian and aquatic-associated terrestrial communities (within designated Streamside Management Areas) is high water quality, undiminished soil productivity, stable streambanks, and high-quality habitat for riparian-dependent and aquatic species. Properly functioning systems support healthy populations of native and desired non-native species.

Species composition for all native plant communities falls within the natural range of variation described in 2003 by NatureServe (a non-profit conservation organization that provides the scientific information and tools needed to help guide effective conservation action) for the Ouachita Mountain and West Gulf Coast Plain communities that occur within the Forest. Where native species have been displaced by non-native or off-site species, systems will be restored over time to native species composition. The mix of ecological conditions, including a range of structural conditions in the major community types, will be adequate to support viable populations of all native plant and animal species.

The 17 ecological systems (plus 3 subsystems) recognized within the Forest are:

Terrestrial Communities

Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Oak Forest and Woodland, comprised of:

Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Oak Forest

Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Oak Woodland

Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem (Red-cockaded Woodpecker Habitat)

West Gulf Coastal Plain Pine-Hardwood Forest

Ouachita Dry-Mesic Oak Forest

Ouachita Mesic Hardwood Forest

Ouachita Montane Oak Forest

Ouachita Dry Oak Woodland

Ouachita Novaculite Glade and Woodland

Central Interior Highlands Dry Acidic Glade and Barrens

Central Interior Acidic Cliff and Talus

Calcareous Prairie

Riparian and Aquatic Communities

Ouachita Mountain Forested Seep

Ouachita Riparian

West Gulf Coastal Plain Small Stream and River Forest

South-Central Interior Large Floodplain

West Gulf Coastal Plain Wet Hardwood Flatwoods (Red Slough)

Ouachita Rivers and Streams

Ouachita Ponds, Lakes, and Waterholes

Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Oak Forest and Woodland

This system represents forests and woodlands of the Ouachita Mountains and Ozark Plateaus of Arkansas, adjacent Oklahoma, and southern Missouri where shortleaf pine is an important or dominant component. Although examples of this system occur throughout this region, there is local variation in the extent to which they were present historically. Pine was virtually ubiquitous in the historical forests of the Ouachitas. In nearly all Ouachita occurrences, shortleaf pine occurs with a variable mixture of hardwood species. The exact composition of the hardwoods is much more closely related to aspect and topographic factors than is the pine component. In some examples of this system, the aggregate importance of hardwoods may be greater than pine, especially on subxeric and mesic sites. This ecological system comprises approximately 70 percent of the Forest. Three subsystems, each with its own desired conditions in terms of structure and fire regime, are recognized:

- Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Oak Forest
- Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Oak Woodland
- Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem (Red-cockaded Woodpecker Habitat)

Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Oak Forest

This subsystem represents the closed-canopy, somewhat fire-dependent, more densely forested component of pine-oak dominated systems on the Forest. The defining characteristic of this subsystem is canopy closure in excess of 70 percent. This habitat supports 25 animal and 4 plant species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The pine-oak forest subsystem should constitute 40-65 percent of all pine-oak dominated systems on the Forest. Currently, the pine-oak forest subsystem constitutes approximately 71 percent of all known pine-oak dominated systems and approximately 50 percent of the Forest. The desired condition for vertical structure is 6-14 percent in grass/forb or seedling/sapling/shrub condition and 60-90 percent in the mature forest condition, with an average canopy closure of greater than 70 percent (Basal Area 60 or greater). Old growth pine-oak forests will develop naturally in a range of patch sizes within research natural areas (MA 4), riparian areas (MA 9), wilderness (MA 1), portions of semi-primitive areas (MA 17), and other parts of the Forest outside the "lands suitable for timber production" in MAs 14, 15, and 16 (see other pine-oak subsystems for descriptions of fire maintained old growth). At least 50 percent of the spatial extent of the pine-oak forest is treated with prescribed fire every 5-7 years with an occasional growing season fire. Figure 2 represents the current condition and range of desired vertical structure and fire regime conditions for the pine-oak forest community.

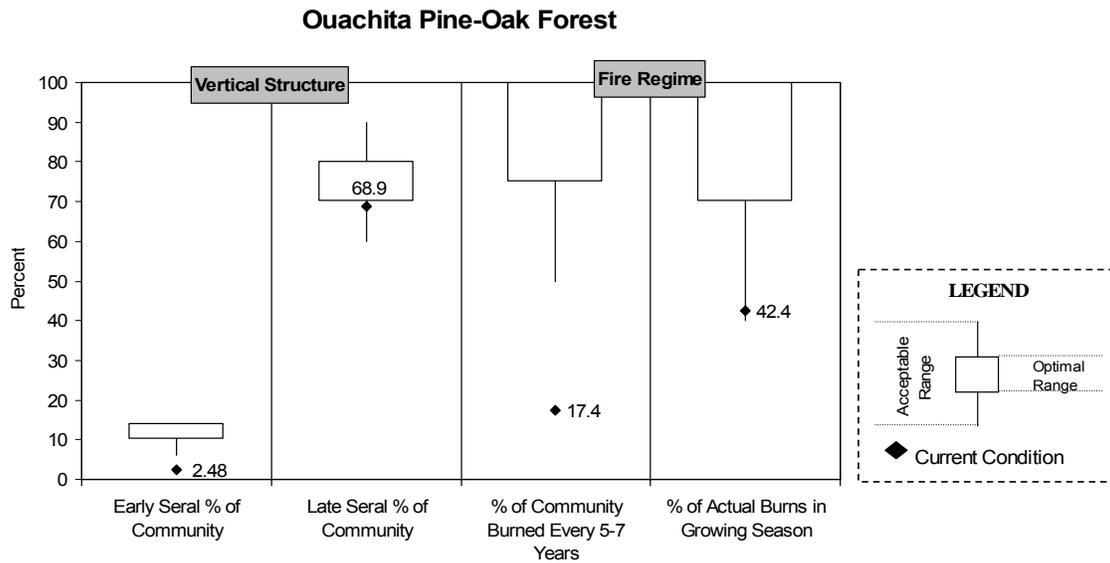


Figure 2. Current Condition and Range of Desired Vertical Structure and Fire Regime Conditions for the Ouachita Pine-Oak Forest Community

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report acres of vegetation management treatments, including thinning for restoration to woodland condition, regeneration harvests, and acres burned in cool season and in growing season. At five-year intervals, evaluate appropriate vertical structure/age classes, canopy closure, and fire regime and progress toward achievement of the desired condition of 40-65 percent of pine-oak dominated systems in pine-oak forest versus woodland condition.

Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Oak Woodland

This subsystem represents the more open canopy, fire-dependent, less densely forested component of pine-oak dominated systems on the Forest. The defining characteristics of this subsystem are canopy closure of less than 60 percent, abundant herbaceous groundcover, and a mix of pine and oak among the dominant canopy trees. This habitat supports 8 animal species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The pine-oak woodland subsystem should constitute 20-45 percent of all pine-oak dominated systems on the Forest. This less densely forested subsystem currently constitutes approximately 23 percent of the shortleaf pine-oak dominated communities and 16 percent of the Forest. The desired condition for vertical structure is 6-14 percent in grass/forb and seedling/sapling/shrub and 60-90 percent in the mature woodland condition. Small, medium, and large patches of old growth pine-oak woodlands will develop on at least 79,000 acres (MA 21), well distributed across the Forest. Prescribed fire is applied to at least 50 percent of this community every 3-5 years, with an occasional growing season fire. Figure 3 represents the current condition and range of desired vertical structure and fire regime conditions.

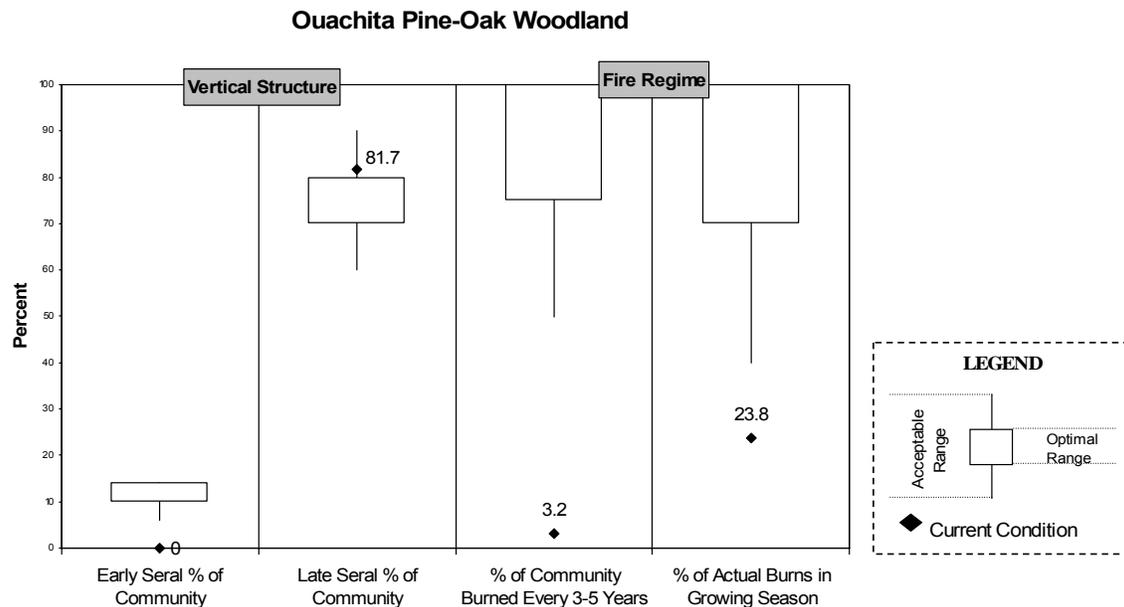


Figure 3. Current Condition and Range of Desired Vertical Structure and Fire Regime Conditions for the Ouachita Pine-Oak Woodland Community

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report acres treated, including thinning for restoration to woodland condition, regeneration harvests, and acres burned in cool season and in growing season. At five-year intervals, evaluate appropriate vertical structure/age classes, canopy closure, and fire regime and compare current condition to the desired condition of 20-45 percent of pine-oak dominated systems in pine-oak woodland versus forest condition.

Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem (includes Red-cockaded Woodpecker Habitat)

This subsystem represents the most open-canopy, fire-dependent component of pine-oak systems on the Forest. The defining characteristics of this subsystem are canopy closure of 40-60 percent, sparse to absent midstory, abundant herbaceous groundcover, and a minimal oak component among the dominant canopy trees. This habitat supports 11 animal species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The pine-bluestem subsystem should constitute 7-20 percent of all known pine-oak dominated systems on the Forest. This subsystem currently constitutes approximately five percent of the shortleaf pine-oak dominated communities and four percent of the Forest. The desired condition for vertical structure is 3-8.3 percent in grass/forb and seedling/sapling/shrub and 60-90 percent in the mature woodland condition with canopy closure of 40-60 percent. Small to medium sized patches of old growth pine-bluestem woodland will develop within at least 24,000 acres of MA 22. Prescribed fire is applied to at least 50 percent of this community every 3-5 years with an occasional growing season fire. Figure 4 represents the current condition and range of desired vertical structure and fire regime conditions.

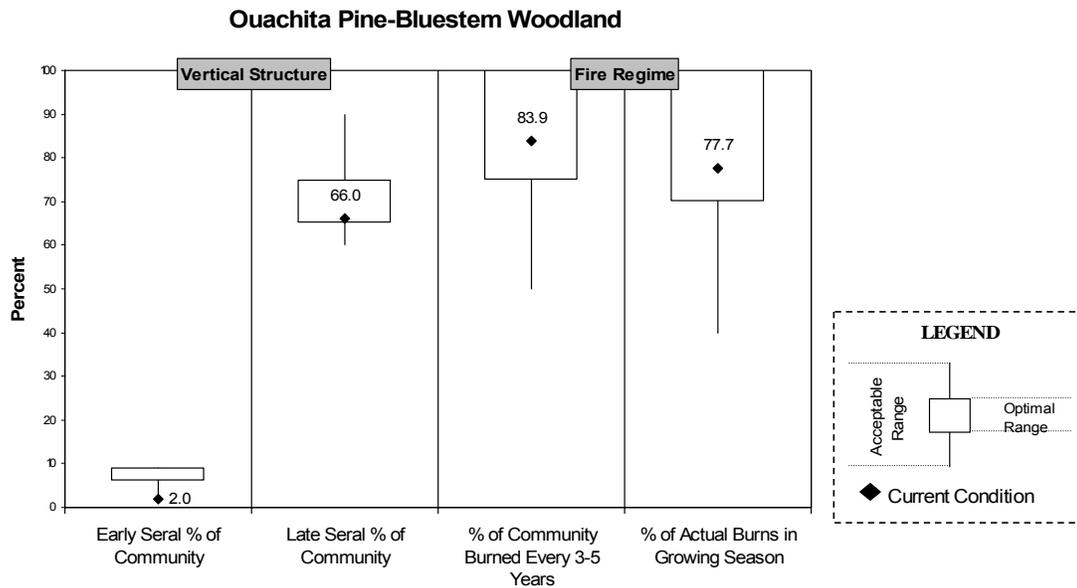


Figure 4. Current Condition and Range of Desired Vertical Structure and Fire Regime Conditions for the Ouachita Pine-Bluestem Woodland Community

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report acres treated, including thinning for restoration to woodland condition, regeneration harvests, and acres burned in cool season and in growing season. At five-year intervals, progress toward the desired conditions of appropriate vertical structure/age classes, canopy closure, and fire regime will be evaluated.

West Gulf Coastal Plain Pine-Hardwood Forest

This West Gulf Coastal Plain ecological system consists of forests and woodlands dominated (within the Arkansas and Oklahoma portions of the Coastal Plain) by shortleaf pine and loblolly pine in combination with many dry to dry-mesic hardwood species. In this region of southern Arkansas, northwestern Louisiana, and parts of eastern Oklahoma and Texas, this type was historically present on nearly all uplands except on the most edaphically limited sites (droughty sands, calcareous clays, and shallow soil barrens/rock outcrops). Such sites are underlain by loamy to fine-textured soils of variable depths. These are upland sites with moderate fertility and moisture retention.

Desired Condition: The desired condition for vertical structure is 6-14 percent in grass/forb and seedling/sapling/shrub and 60-90 percent in the mature, fire-maintained forest condition with canopy closure of 70 percent or greater. Old growth conditions will develop and go through regeneration cycles naturally on most of the acres in the West Gulf Coastal Plain pine-hardwood forest community, which are represented by small and medium patches. Prescribed fire is applied to at least 50 percent of this community every 3-5 years with an occasional growing season fire. Figure 5 represents the current condition and range of desired vertical structure and fire regime conditions.

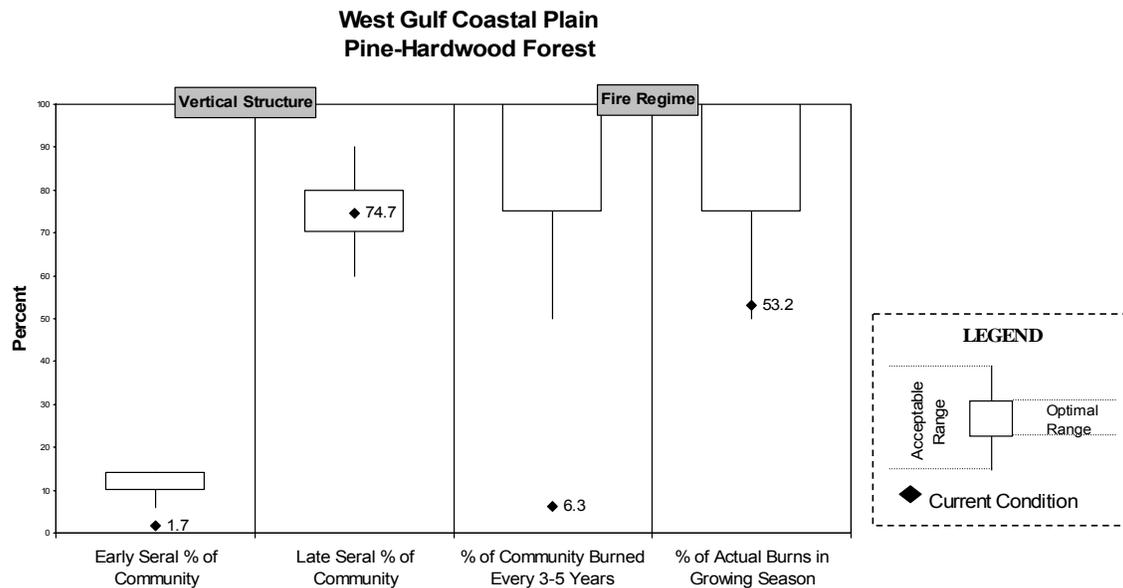


Figure 5. Current Condition and Range of Desired Vertical Structure and Fire Regime Conditions for the WGCP Pine-Hardwood Forest Community

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report acres treated, including regeneration harvests, and acres burned in cool season and in growing season. At five-year intervals, progress toward the desired conditions of appropriate vertical structure/age classes, canopy closure, and fire regime will be evaluated.

Ouachita Dry-Mesic Oak Forest

This system is found throughout the Ozark and Ouachita Highlands. It occurs on dry-mesic to mesic sites and gentle to moderately steep slopes. Soils are moderately drained to well-drained and more fertile than those associated with drier, more open oak woodlands. A closed canopy of oak-hickory species typifies this system. Maples may occur on more mesic sites. Wind, drought, lightning, and occasional fires influence this system. This habitat supports 20 animal and four plant species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition for vertical structure is 4-10 percent in grass/forb and seedling/sapling/shrub and 60-90 percent in the mature forest condition. Old growth conditions will develop and go through regeneration cycles naturally on most of the acres in the dry-mesic oak forest community, which is represented by the complete range of patch sizes. To mimic natural fire regimes, many of these communities will receive prescribed burns. Prescribed fire is applied to at least 50 percent of this community every 5-7 years with an occasional growing season fire. Figure 6 represents the current condition and range of desired vertical structure and fire regime conditions.

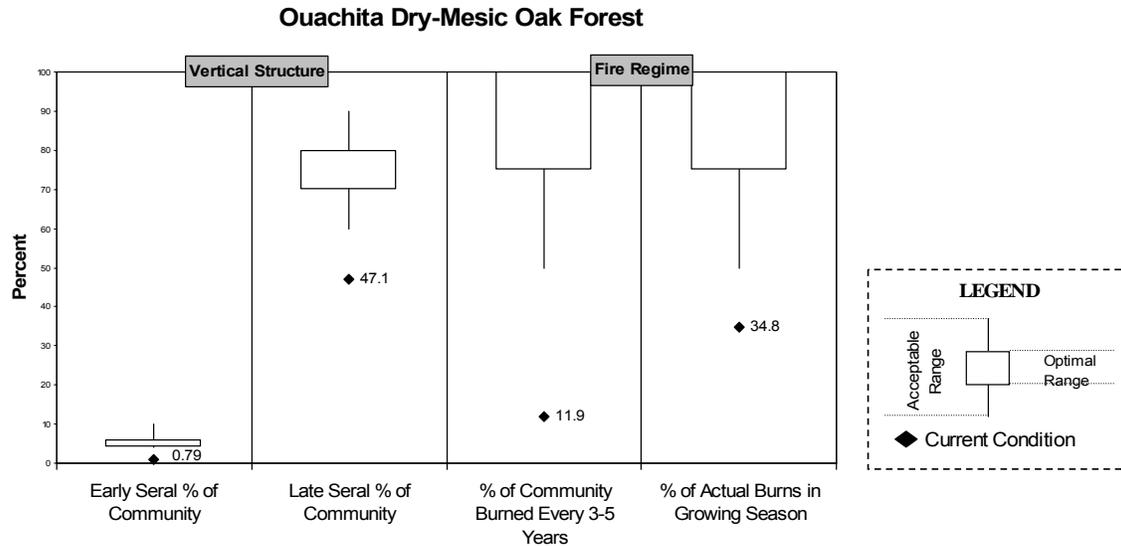


Figure 6. Current Condition and Range of Desired Vertical Structure and Fire Regime Conditions for the Ouachita Dry-Mesic Oak Forest Community

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report acres treated, including thinning for forest health, regeneration harvests, and acres burned (cool season and growing season). At five-year intervals, progress toward the desired conditions of appropriate vertical structure/age classes, canopy closure, and fire regime will be evaluated.

Ouachita Mesic Hardwood Forest

This system is found on toeslopes and valley bottoms within the region, as well as on north slopes. Northern red oak increases in abundance compared to dry-mesic habitats. American beech, sugar maple, chinquapin oak, American basswood, and redbud may be locally common. These habitats are usually small, isolated, and/or disjunct. They are maintained primarily through naturally occurring circumstances, such as elevation, moisture regime, soil productivity, slope, and aspect. This habitat supports 29 animal and 12 plant species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition for vertical structure is 0.5-5 percent in grass/forb and seedling/sapling/shrub and 80-98 percent in the mature forest condition with mostly closed canopy and infrequent fire. Old growth conditions will develop and go through regeneration cycles naturally on most of the acres in mesic hardwood forests, which are represented by small to medium patches on the Forest.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report maintenance or restoration treatments. Every fifth year, evaluate vertical structure/age classes, canopy closure, and fire frequency and progress toward restoration of the desired condition.

Ouachita Montane Oak Forest

This system represents hardwood forests on relatively shallow soils at the highest elevations of the Ouachita Mountains. Vegetation consists of forests dominated by oaks. Canopy trees are often stunted due to the effects of ice and wind, in combination with fog, shallow soils over rock, occasional fire, and periodic severe drought. Some stands form almost impenetrable thickets. This habitat supports two animal species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition is a stunted, oak-dominated system maintained by naturally occurring processes and occasional prescribed fire. Old growth will develop and go through regeneration cycles naturally on most of the acres in the Ouachita montane oak forest, which is represented by small and medium patches.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report any maintenance or restoration treatments.

Ouachita Dry Oak Woodland

This system occurs in the Ozark and Ouachita Highlands and far western portions of the Interior Low Plateau along gentle to steep slopes and over bluff escarpments with southerly to westerly aspects. Parent material can range from calcareous to acidic with very shallow, well-drained to excessively well-drained soils, sometimes with a fragipan that causes "xero-hydric" moisture conditions. This system was historically woodland in structure, composition, and process but now includes areas of more closed canopy forests due to fire suppression. Oak species dominate this system with an understory of herbaceous and shrub species. Drought stress and associated fire are the major dynamics influencing and maintaining this system. This habitat supports 16 animal and three plant species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition for vertical structure is 4-10 percent in grass/forb seral stage and 60-90 percent in the mature woodland condition, as defined by abundant herbaceous groundcover and canopy closures ranging from 40-80 percent. Old growth conditions will develop and go through regeneration cycles naturally on most of the acres in the dry oak woodland community, which is represented by small to medium patches. To mimic natural fire regimes, many of these communities will receive prescribed burns. At least 50 percent of the dry oak woodland community is treated with prescribed fire every 5-7 years, with an occasional growing season fire included. Figure 7 represents the current condition and range of desired conditions for vertical structure and fire regime.

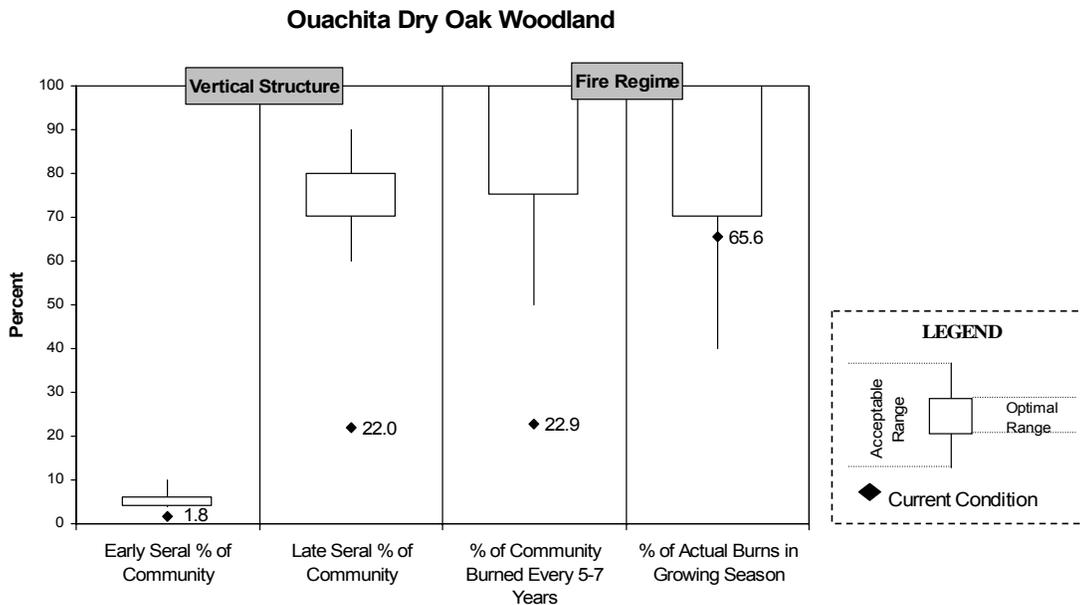


Figure 7. Current Condition and Range of Desired Vertical Structure and Fire Regime Conditions for the Ouachita Dry Oak Woodland Community

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report maintenance and restoration treatments. At five-year intervals, progress toward the desired conditions of appropriate vertical structure/age classes, canopy closure, and fire regime will be evaluated.

Ouachita Novaculite Glade and Woodland

This system represents a mosaic of glades and woodlands found on novaculite outcrops in the central Ouachita Mountains of western Arkansas. Novaculite is a weakly metamorphosed rock of sedimentary origin that is primarily composed of microcrystalline quartz and chalcedony. Examples of this system generally occupy ridgetops at 1,400-2,100 feet elevation. This community appears as a mosaic of small woodlands scattered on ridges and upper slopes with outcrops and patches of talus scattered throughout. Some woodland or forest patches may appear as almost linear strips interspersed with grassy openings. Wooded patches have a variable, often patchy, structure with some areas of dense canopy interspersed with more open canopies and open grassy patches. In general, the grassy openings occur on shallow soils with exposed bedrock, while the woodlands occur on somewhat deeper soils. In all cases, these are fairly extreme growing conditions due to droughty, rocky soils. The structure of this system is maintained primarily through a combination of periodic fire and severe drought. This habitat supports three animal and three plant species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition is an open glade structure maintained by prescribed fire. The fire regime should reflect that at least 50 percent of the novaculite glade and woodland community is treated with prescribed fire every 3-5 years with an occasional growing season burn included. Old growth conditions will develop and go through regeneration cycles naturally, supplemented by prescribed fire, in all the acres of this community, which occurs in small patches. Figure 8 represents the current condition and range of desired conditions for fire regime.

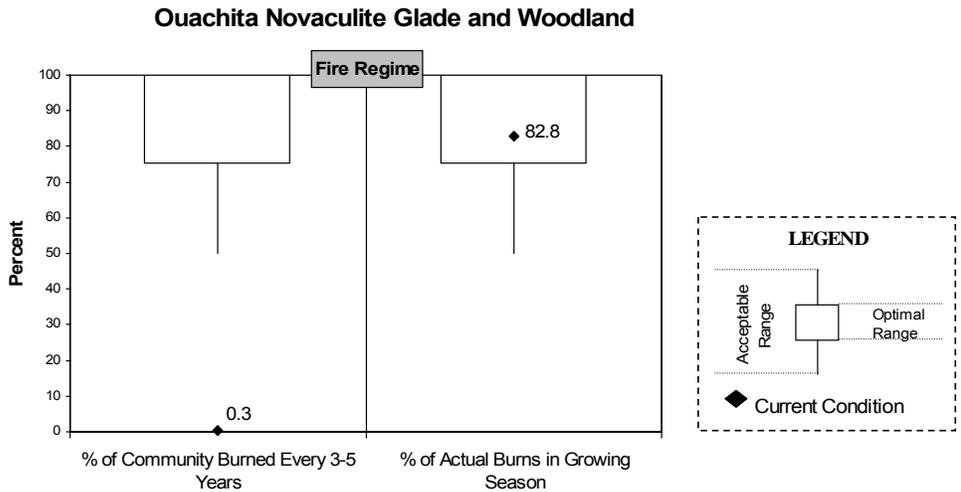


Figure 8. Current Condition and Range of Desired Fire Regime Conditions for the Ouachita Novaculite Glade and Woodland Community

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report maintenance and restoration treatments. At five-year intervals, evaluate progress toward achieving the desired fire regime.

Central Interior Highlands Dry Acidic Glade and Barrens

This system is found in the Interior Highlands of the Ozark, Ouachita, and Interior Low Plateau regions. It occurs along moderate to steep slopes or valley walls of rivers along most aspects. Parent material includes chert, igneous and/or sandstone bedrock with well-drained to excessively well-drained, shallow soils interspersed with rock and boulders. These soils are typically dry during the summer and autumn, becoming saturated during the spring and winter. Grasses dominate this system, with stunted oak species and shrub species occurring on variable depth soils. This system is influenced by drought and infrequent to occasional fires. This habitat supports five animal and eight plant species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition is an open glade structure maintained by periodic fire. The fire regime should reflect that 50-85 percent of the dry acidic glades and barrens system and a 100-meter buffer are burned every 5-10 years, including an occasional growing season fire. Old growth conditions will develop and go through regeneration cycles naturally, supplemented by prescribed fire, in all the acres of this community, which occurs in small patches. Figure 9 represents the current condition and range of desired conditions for fire regime.

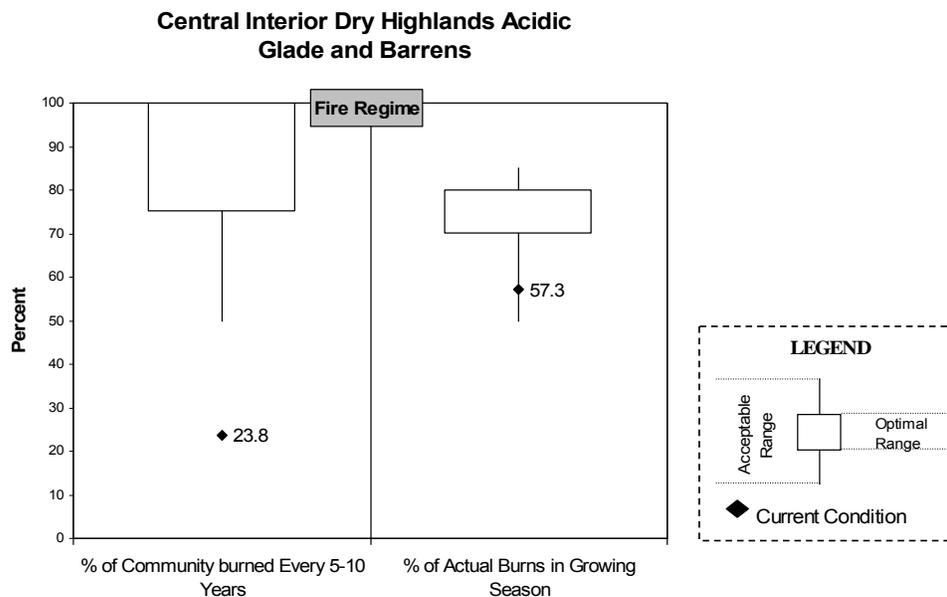


Figure 9. Current Condition and Range of Desired Fire Regime Conditions for the Central Interior Dry Highlands Acidic Glade and Barrens Community

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report maintenance and restoration treatments. At five-year intervals, evaluate progress toward achieving the desired fire regime.

Central Interior Acidic Cliff and Talus

This system is found primarily in the Interior Highlands. Sandstone outcrops and talus ranging from moist to dry typify this system. It is typically sparsely vegetated; however, on moister sites with more soil development, several fern species and sedges (*Carex* spp.) may become established. Wind, fire, and water erosion are the major natural forces that influence this system. This habitat supports six animal species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition is an open, rocky, herbaceous-dominated system with sparse woody vegetation occasionally influenced by natural or prescribed fires.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report any maintenance and restoration treatments. At five-year intervals, report on condition of monitored sites.

Calcareous Prairie

This system includes natural grassland vegetation and associated wooded vegetation in a relatively small natural region of the Upper West Gulf Coastal Plain of Arkansas. Although other calcareous prairies are found west of the Mississippi River, this system represents some of the largest known and highest quality of remaining examples. Plant communities in this system occur over relatively deep soils with circumneutral surface soil pH, which is unusual given the predominance of acidic, generally forested soils in the region. In most cases, individual prairie openings are small and isolated from one another, but were formerly more extensive prior to European settlement forming a mosaic of grassland and woodlands under frequent fire regimes. The flora has much in common with other Mississippi Embayment Prairie systems as well as the classic midwestern prairies. This habitat supports five animal and three plant species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition is an open, fire-maintained grassland with sparse to absent woody vegetation. The fire regime should reflect that 50 percent of the calcareous prairie system and a 100-meter buffer are burned every 3-5 years with an occasional growing season fire included. Fire in surrounding/adjacent habitats helps prevent woody encroachment and allows for distribution and dispersal of obligate species.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report maintenance and restoration treatments. At five-year intervals, evaluate progress toward achieving the desired fire regime.

Riparian and Aquatic Ecosystems

Monitoring and Evaluation (for all riparian and aquatic ecosystems): Annually report lake, pond, stream, and river surveys; amphibian surveys; water chemistry data; and habitat enhancement activities such as liming, fertilizing, and adding fish structures. Basin Area Stream Surveys will be conducted periodically (typically on a five-year cycle). When a forested seep or community associated with streams, rivers, or lakes occurs within an area affected by a management project that is reviewed as part of an Implementation Monitoring Review (IMR), compliance with all applicable standards will be reviewed. At five-year intervals, evaluate the desired condition status of this habitat.

Ouachita Mountain Forested Seep

Forested seeps occur in the Ouachita Mountains of Arkansas and Oklahoma. Examples may be found along the lower slopes of smaller valleys where rock fractures allow water to seep out of the mountainsides and into the riparian zones of larger creeks, sometimes extending upslope along small ephemeral drains. The soil remains saturated to very moist throughout the year. The vegetation is typically forested but is highly variable in canopy composition. Red maple, black tupelo, sweetgum, and white oak are common and typical; American beech and/or umbrella magnolia may be present. Canopy coverage may be moderately dense to quite open. The subcanopy is often well-developed and characteristically includes American holly, umbrella magnolia, and ironwood. This habitat supports eight animal and four plant species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition for this system is a largely undisturbed, mature community with a protective buffer 100 feet from the seep boundaries. Old growth seep communities develop and regenerate naturally in relatively small patches.

Ouachita Riparian

This system is found along streams and small rivers within the Ozark and Ouachita regions. In contrast to larger floodplain systems, this system has little to no floodplain development and often contains cobble bars and steep banks. Ozark-Ouachita Riparian communities are typically higher gradient than larger floodplains and experience periodic, strong flooding. These communities are often characterized by a cobble bar with forest directly adjacent and little or no marsh development. Canopy cover can vary within examples of this system, but typical trees include sweetgum, sycamore, river birch, maple species, and oak species. The richness of the herbaceous layer varies from species-rich to species-poor. Likewise, the shrub layer can vary considerably, and small seeps can often be found within this system, especially at the headwaters and terraces of streams. These areas are typically dominated by wetland-obligate species of sedges, ferns, and other herbaceous species. Flooding and scouring strongly influence this system and prevent the floodplain development found on larger rivers. This habitat supports 24 animal and 11 plant species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition for this system is a largely undisturbed, mature or old growth community with intact hydrologic functions and processes within a minimum protective buffer of 100 feet on each side of perennial streams and 30 feet on each side of defined channels. Water quality is good to very good and riparian vegetation remains intact during and after vegetation management activities, such as harvesting, prescribed burning, road or fireline construction, and pesticide application.

West Gulf Coastal Plain Small Stream and River Forest

This is a predominately forested system of the West Gulf Coastal Plain associated with small rivers and creeks. In contrast to West Gulf Coastal Plain Large River Floodplain Forest, examples of this system have fewer major geomorphic floodplain features. Those features that are present tend to be smaller and more closely intermixed with one another, resulting in less obvious vegetation divisions. Bottomland hardwood tree species are typically important and diagnostic, although mesic hardwood species are also present in areas with less inundation, such as upper terraces and possibly second bottoms. Flooding occurs at least once annually, but the water table is usually well below the soil surface throughout most of the growing season. Areas impacted by beaver impoundments are also included in this system. This habitat supports 15 animal species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition for this system is a largely undisturbed, mature or old growth, closed-canopy forest shaped by intact hydrologic functions and processes within a minimum protective buffer of 100 feet on each side of perennial streams and 30 feet on each side of defined channels.

South-Central Interior Large Floodplain

Examples of this system occur along large rivers where topography and alluvial processes have resulted in a well-developed floodplain. A single occurrence may extend from river's edge across the outermost extent of the floodplain or to where it meets a wet meadow or upland system. Many examples of this system contain well-drained levees, terraces, and stabilized bars, and some include herbaceous sloughs and shrub wetlands resulting, in part, from beaver activity. A variety of soil types may be found within the floodplain, from very well-drained sandy substrates to very dense clays. It is this variety of substrates in combination with different flooding regimes that creates the mix of vegetation. Most areas are inundated at some point each spring; microtopography determines how long the various habitats are inundated. Although vegetation is quite variable in this broadly defined system, silver maple, sycamore, sweetgum, and oak species are common. Understory species are mixed, but include shrubs and sedges. This system likely floods at least once annually and can be altered by occasional severe floods. Impoundments and conversion to agriculture can also impact this system. This habitat supports 13 animal species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition for this system is a largely undisturbed, mature or old growth, closed-canopy forest shaped by intact hydrologic functions and processes within an appropriate Streamside Management Area.

West Gulf Coastal Plain Wet Hardwood Flatwoods (Red Slough)

This system historically represented predominately wet hardwood flatwoods of the West Gulf Coastal Plain; however, in its current condition, it represents a man-made wetland environment. Examples may be somewhat more common in the inland portions of the region but are also found in the outer coastal plain as well. Soils are fine-textured and hardpans may be present in the subsurface. The limited permeability of these soils contributes to perched water tables during fairly substantial portions of the year (when precipitation is greatest and evapotranspiration is lowest). Saturation occurs not from overbank flooding but whenever precipitation events occur. The local landscape is often

a complex of ridges and swales, usually occurring in close proximity. There is vegetation variability related to soil texture and moisture and disturbance history. This system has undergone major transformations since European settlement of the region. This habitat supports 16 animal species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition over much of the area is an intact marsh ecosystem with some reestablishment of a bottomland hardwood forest. Recreation opportunities, particularly Watchable Wildlife, abound, and native biodiversity potential is maximized.

Ouachita Rivers and Streams

Rivers and streams consist of all the flowing-water systems on the Forest. These systems provide critical habitats for fish, mussels, invertebrates, reptiles, and amphibians. The larger streams and rivers on the Forest are important sport fishing resources. Many stream systems are impacted by fragmentation of aquatic habitats by road crossings and dams that hinder or block upstream movements of aquatic organisms. Some bird and mammal species also depend on rivers and streams for foraging habitat. This habitat supports 52 animal and 5 plant species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired conditions for Ouachita rivers and streams are good to excellent water quality, site productivity, channel stability, intact riparian vegetation, sustainability of the sport fisheries, and connectivity of habitats for riparian-dependent species. Aquatic ecosystems function properly and support aquatic biota commensurate with the associated ecoregion. Permanent roads within the SMAs will be minimized but may occur at designated crossings and designated access points. Movement of fish and other aquatic organisms in otherwise free-flowing perennial streams and other streams are not obstructed by road crossings, culverts, or other human-caused obstructions. These desired conditions are achieved through designation of Streamside Management Areas (SMAs) and the implementation of the management standards associated with them.

Ouachita Ponds, Lakes, and Waterholes

Ponds, lakes, and waterholes consist of all lentic (still, impounded, or otherwise non-flowing) aquatic systems on the forest. These systems provide a water source for a wide range of plants and animals. In addition, these waterbodies provide critical reproductive habitat for amphibians and critical foraging habitat for bald eagles. Most of the lakes and ponds over one-half acre are managed for sustainable sport fishing. Enhancement of sport fisheries through stocking, habitat enhancement, and fertilization/aquatic weed control is practiced by the Forest in cooperation with the appropriate state fish and wildlife agencies. This habitat supports eight animal species of viability concern.

Desired Condition: The desired condition for unstocked ponds and waterholes is habitat suitable for amphibians and other wildlife and a source of water for upland wildlife species. The desired conditions for fishable waters are high-quality angling opportunities and good to excellent water quality, site productivity, associated vegetation, and habitat for associated riparian and aquatic dependent species.

Watershed Function

In addition to providing habitat for many aquatic and riparian-dependent species, the streams and rivers that originate on and/or flow through the Ouachita National Forest provide water for many cultural uses, including recreational activities and municipal, commercial, and agricultural uses downstream from the Forest. Watershed health is vital to sustaining these uses.

Desired Condition: Watersheds are healthy, dynamic, and resilient, and are capable of responding to natural and human caused disturbances while maintaining the integrity of their biological and physical processes and maintaining the connectivity of habitats for aquatic organisms. Watersheds, streams, groundwater recharge areas, springs, wetlands, and aquifers produce high quality water. Soil productivity, riparian dependent resources, and other uses are sustained.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report acres of soil and water improvement. Every fifth year, watershed condition will be evaluated to determine if the progress in improving condition ratings has been made.

Wildlife and Fish Habitat

Desired Condition: Habitat conditions sustain healthy populations of native and desired non-native wildlife and fish species. Wildlife habitat functions are sustained or improved, including primary feeding areas, breeding areas, and migration corridors. Reintroduction of extirpated species is given serious consideration when proposals originate from or have strong support from the appropriate state and federal fish and wildlife agencies. Fishable waters support high-quality angling opportunities. Vegetation conditions reflect the desired conditions described for each system in the previous section. Habitat conditions are stable or improving over time as indicated by the status of management indicator species. Movement of fish and other aquatic organisms are not obstructed by road crossings, culverts, or other human-caused obstructions.

Monitoring and Evaluation: See the monitoring elements under each of the Terrestrial, Riparian, and Aquatic Communities.

Proposed, Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive (PETS) Species Habitat

Desired Condition: Habitats for federally listed species (and those proposed for listing) are conserved or restored, and listed species are recovered. Habitats for sensitive species and other species of concern are sufficient to prevent downward trends in populations or habitat capability and to prevent federal listing. Flow regimes and habitat connectivity in streams that provide habitat for Proposed, Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive aquatic and riparian-dependent species are sufficient to allow the affected species to complete all phases of their life cycles. Vegetation conditions reflect the desired conditions identified for each system in the previous section.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report findings of all monitoring and research efforts involving PETS species. At five-year intervals, evaluate trends.

Geologic Resources

Desired Condition: Unique geological resources and values on the Forest are sustained. Threats from geologic hazards to human life, natural resources, or financial investment are minimized.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Geologic resources and hazards will be identified, reported, and monitored for value and risk, respectively.

Landownership Pattern

Land Administration

Desired Condition: Public lands are easily accessible. Land adjustment administration contributes to the reduction of the complexity of landownership patterns and consolidates the National Forest System land base; reduces administrative problems and costs; enhances public access and use; and supports resource management objectives, including the protection and improvement of habitat condition and linkage. Clear title to National Forest System land is retained. Occupancy trespass is eliminated, and National Forest boundaries are clearly posted.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report acres of land adjustment miles surveyed to establish clear boundaries, and the number of occupancy trespasses resolved. Every fifth year, an evaluation of progress in reducing the amount of interface with private lands and the number of occupancy trespasses will be conducted. A landownership strategy is included Part 2 of the Revised Forest Plan. A map of current ownership and desirable areas for exchange will be maintained and periodically updated as a non-binding planning tool.

Heritage Resources

Heritage Stewardship

Desired Condition: Significant heritage resource sites are identified, preserved, or enhanced. Connections are made with the American people on the importance of public land heritage stewardship through public involvement programs. The past, present, and future of heritage resources' role in ecosystem management, including socio-cultural values in an environmental context, are recognized.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report sites managed to standard (sites inventoried, evaluated, protected, promoted, preserved, restored, rehabilitated, monitored, or enhanced). Include the number of site management plans developed, conflicting site-specific land use activities identified and resolved, Section 110 targets achieved, the number of public involvement programs/projects initiated, agreements with research entities, and report and database updates. Every fifth year, progress in increasing the number of heritage resources protected and managed to standard will be evaluated.

Tribal and Native American Interests

Desired Condition: The Forest is maintained in a condition that allows Native American tribes and individuals to retain traditional connections to the land and to foster both traditional and contemporary cultural uses of the Forest. The Forest has active agreements and protocols to facilitate consultation (all resources) and government-to-government relationships.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report the number and types of agreements and protocols executed and the number of consultations. Every fifth year, feedback and satisfaction will be evaluated as indicators of progress toward the desired condition.

Public Use and Enjoyment

Abundant opportunities exist for the public to use and enjoy the Ouachita National Forest. Areas or facilities include developed recreation sites, semi-primitive and wilderness areas, and trails. Activities include boating, hunting, fishing, rock hounding, and sightseeing. Desired conditions for recreation participation, conservation education and stewardship, landscape management, and law enforcement are presented here. For wilderness, special interest areas, developed recreation areas, major lakes, semi-primitive areas, the Winding Stair National Recreation Area, and wild and scenic rivers, desired conditions are included in the individual Management Areas in Part 2 of the Revised Forest Plan.

Recreation Participation

Desired Condition: Recreation participation, activities, and services contribute to visitors' physical and mental well-being and represent a variety of skill levels, needs, and desires. Quality fish and wildlife habitat and a variety of access opportunities are available to the public. Facilities and infrastructure are high quality, well maintained, safe, accessible, and consistent with visitors' expectations. Primitive recreation opportunities are maintained on at least 70,000 acres, semi-primitive recreation opportunities on at least 136,000 acres, and roaded-natural recreation opportunities on much of the remainder of the National Forest. Existing "rural" recreation opportunities in developed recreation areas are maintained.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report the number of recreation sites maintained to standard and occupancy/use rates. A facility condition index and maintenance backlog will be maintained. Every fifth year, the forest will evaluate trends in annual indicators and visitor satisfaction surveys to determine if the Forest has provided quality recreational experiences that result in increased visitor satisfaction.

Conservation Education and Stewardship

Desired Condition: People connect to the land and to each other, aided by high-quality public information, interpretive services, and environmental education programs/activities, with nonprofit partners often in a lead or cooperating role. Proactive efforts reach both traditional and nontraditional users and lead to a greater citizen understanding, appreciation, advocacy, and participation in forest stewardship and ecosystem conservation. Particular emphasis is placed on an ecosystem-based approach to management that takes into account the roles of the Forest as a contributor to local quality of life, including opportunities for sustainable economic development through recreation, tourism, and carefully designed timber harvests; as a producer of

clean water; as a provider of habitat vitally important to many native species; and as a source of wildlife, wilderness, and abundant recreation opportunities.

Through public involvement programs associated with project-level and plan-level activities, connections are made with the American people on the importance of public land heritage stewardship. The role that heritage resources play in ecosystem management, including the role of socio-cultural values within an environmental context, is highlighted.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually document the number of nongovernmental organizations, groups, and volunteers involved in stewardship activities. Annually, document the number of conservation education products/presentations and the estimated number of people reached.

Landscape Management

Desired Condition: The biological, physical, and cultural features of landscapes that provide for a "sense of place" as defined in the Landscape Character descriptions are intact. Landscapes possess a vegetation pattern and species mix that is natural in appearance. Built elements and landscape alterations complement the lines, forms, colors, and textures found in the landscape. Fifty percent of projects undertaken on the Ouachita National Forest within High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) areas will attain a high SIO, 65 percent of projects undertaken in Moderate SIO areas will attain Moderate SIO rating, and 100 percent of projects located in Low SIO areas will attain that rating. Refer to the FEIS, Chapter 3, Scenery Management System for a more detailed description of the Scenery Management System and Scenic Integrity Objectives.

Monitoring and Evaluation: During implementation monitoring reviews, determine if the project under review adequately considered SIOs. Report annually the number and type of management projects conducted in areas having a high SIO. Report whether a landscape architect was consulted in each case where project implementation was likely to affect scenic integrity, and if applicable, to what degree SIOs were maintained/achieved.

Law Enforcement

Desired Condition: A safe environment for the public and agency employees is provided on National Forest System land; natural resources and other property under the agency's jurisdiction are protected.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report on the number of accidents, citations, and acres and type of impact of each illegal activity. Every fifth year, evaluate trends in unlawful or criminal behaviors.

Facility Operation and Maintenance

Facility Administration

Desired Condition: Facilities and infrastructure are high-quality, well maintained, safe, accessible, and consistent with visitor expectations and the Built Environment Image Guide principles. Facility maintenance meets established national standards. Structures are well integrated into the landscape and advance environmentally sensitive technology.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report the number of facilities maintained to standard. Every fifth year, trends in the facility condition index and maintenance backlog will be evaluated to determine progress toward the desired condition. Every fifth year, review the Forest Facility Master Plan for facility condition and future facility and administrative site needs.

Transportation System

Desired Condition: The transportation system of roads and trails is safe, affordable, and environmentally sound, responds to public needs, and is efficient to manage. The system provides public access for recreation, special uses, and fire protection activities and supports Forest management objectives. The system is well maintained commensurate with levels of use and available funding. The system is connected to state, county, or local public roads and trails. Unnecessary roads and trails are removed and the landscape restored. Rights-of-way to access National Forest System lands satisfy public needs and facilitate planned resource activities. Over the planning period, the number of inventoried unclassified roads and trails is reduced, and the development and proliferation of new unclassified roads is minimized.

An environmentally sustainable, integrated system of backcountry and rural non-motorized trails is maintained. The system can accommodate a range of experiences in high-quality settings for a diverse visitor population; conflicts among users are minimized; and opportunities for partnerships are provided. The availability of day use "loop hikes" is improved.

Recreation opportunities for OHV (Off-Highway Vehicle) enthusiasts will be available within an integrated system of designated roads and trails. Designated OHV routes provide a high-quality OHV experience. Conflicts between OHV enthusiasts and other recreational uses, with private lands and homeowners adjacent to National Forest land, and with resource issues are addressed and resolved in a timely manner. Resolutions are consistent with area objectives and management direction.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report the number of miles of road and trails maintained and operated to meet the objective maintenance level and class; report the miles of unclassified roads removed or classified into the system. Every fifth year, evaluate trends in miles of road and trail facilities and trends in number of accidents per year. Report annually the total miles of roads and trails available for use by off-highway vehicles. Every fifth year, evaluate visitor satisfaction surveys, including the number of conflicts identified by field staff or reported by the public and the resolution of the complaints to determine if progress is being made toward the desired condition.

Commodity, Commercial, and Special Uses

Minerals and Energy Development

Desired Condition: Minerals and energy developments meet legal mandates to facilitate production of mineral and energy resources on the Forest in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts to surface and groundwater resources.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report the number of operating plans administered to standard, including the number and type of mitigation standards implemented.

Livestock Grazing

Desired Condition: Livestock grazing opportunities are maintained consistent with other resource values in designated livestock grazing areas (allotments).

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report the number of acres in allotments managed to standard. Every fifth year, an evaluation of rangeland conditions and trends will determine progress toward the desired condition.

Lands and Special Uses (Non-recreation)

Desired Condition: Facilities are centrally located or concentrated on existing sites or designated corridors, minimizing the number of acres encumbered by special use authorizations. Special uses serve public needs, provide public benefits, and conform to resource management and protection objectives. All uses are authorized and are in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the authorization.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report the number of permits administered to standard, including number of permits with resource conflicts resolved versus unresolved. Every fifth year, evaluate whether suitable areas are being used efficiently (minimizing acres encumbered), in harmony with other uses and resources, and environmentally sustainable.

Fire (Community Protection and Safety)

Wildland fires, whether lightning-caused or human-caused, can pose a threat to communities and developments adjacent to the Ouachita National Forest. "At-risk communities" are those with the most potentially significant threats to human life or property from a wildland fire event. The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) is that area of Federal land immediately adjacent to the at-risk communities and typically extends one-quarter to one-half mile either side of National Forest System lands. In the WUI, specific vegetation management is often needed to reduce the risk of destructive wildland fires. Management of this area is usually focused on changing fuel loading and fuel profiles to a more "natural" condition, one less likely affected by catastrophic fire. There are 21 communities adjacent to the Ouachita National Forest in the WUI environment.

Desired Condition: The goals within the WUI are to reduce the risk of loss of human life, enhance protection of homes and improvements, and provide an area where firefighters can safely conduct tactical operations to stop the spread of a wildland fire. In WUI areas, vegetation management to restore, maintain, or enhance fire-adapted ecosystems to an approximate "reference condition" will be vigorously undertaken. For these types of ecosystems (Fire Regime 1), stands will be treated by reducing the number of overstory trees per acre (to approximately 50 to 70 square feet basal area) and removing woody midstory and understory vegetation. A "park-like" or "woodland" condition is the goal in both pine and oak types and is the most common condition where fuel mitigation projects are likely to be initiated. Local jurisdictional authorities, citizen groups, and the Forest Service will act together to mitigate hazardous fuel conditions in areas surrounding at-risk communities and developments. Practices such as the creation of "defensible space" around structures will be encouraged through fire prevention programs such as "Firewise."

Monitoring and Evaluation: Annually report the condition class changes and the number of acres of hazardous fuel reduction in the WUI, including those implemented through cooperative agreements. In addition, the number of communities or facilities protected by treatment will be documented. Every fifth year, evaluate progress toward the desired condition through an analysis of the status of high hazard and high-risk areas.

Management Areas (MAs)

Part 2 of the Revised Forest Plan contains the desired conditions and Part 3 contains the design criteria for the following management areas:

- 1 Wilderness
- 2 Special Interest Areas
- 3 Developed Recreation Areas
- 4 Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks
- 5 Experimental Forests
- 6 Rare Upland Communities
- 7 Ouachita Seed Orchard
- 8 Administrative Sites/Special Uses
- 9 Water and Riparian Communities
- 14 Ouachita Mountains, Habitat Diversity Emphasis
- 15 West Gulf Coastal Plain, Habitat Diversity Emphasis
- 16 Lands surrounding Lake Ouachita and Broken Bow Lake
- 17 Semi-Primitive Areas
- 19 Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation Area (and Associated Non-Wilderness Designations)
- 20 Wild and Scenic River Corridors
- 21 Old Growth Restoration
- 22 Renewal of the Shortleaf Pine/Bluestem Grass Ecosystem and Red-cockaded Woodpecker Habitat

Management Areas 10-13, 18, and 23 used in the 1990 Amended Forest Plan are retained in a reserve status and are not actively used under the 2005 Revised Plan.