

PART 2 – STRATEGY

Forest Plan Strategies

Part 2 presents the strategic direction to be followed in order to move toward the desired conditions described in the Vision (Part 1). Strategic direction is included to address land allocations to management areas, landownership adjustment, and monitoring. This strategic direction includes:

- Assignment or “allocation” of nearly 1.8 million acres of National Forest System land to management areas, each of which is characterized by a unique set of desired conditions (which are described) and suitable land uses (summarized in the following segment)
- Summaries and descriptions of suitable uses by management area
- Proposed special area designations
- A “prospectus” describing past management performance history and anticipated management performance
- Program priorities and objectives
- A discussion of risks associated with fluctuations in the natural and institutional environment with the potential to affect projections included in the Forest Plan
- Landownership adjustment strategy
- Monitoring strategy

Although Part 2 describes the uses that may be appropriate in a given management area, all use of National Forest System lands is subject to the design criteria identified in Part 3 (Design Criteria) of this plan. The Design Criteria include legally required and other standards for designing acceptable projects to implement the Forest Plan.

Land Allocation Strategy (Management Areas)

The 1982 planning regulations guiding implementation of the National Forest Management Act call for lands and waters to be assigned to “management areas” (36 CFR 219.11). Management Areas (MAs) are areas within a national forest having common desired conditions, suitable uses, management objectives, and design criteria. Taken together, these attributes constitute the “prescription” for a management area. Where possible, MAs are shown on the Forest Plan map. This section describes the 17 MAs identified for the Forest. Acreages are approximate and are subject to change based on land adjustments (purchases, exchanges) and updated inventories. The 17 MAs represent all of the MAs used in the 1990 Amended Forest Plan; however, several areas have been combined to streamline management. For example, lands formerly included in MAs 10-13 and MA 18 have been included in other MAs because they are naturally dispersed throughout the Forest. The reference numbers for these MAs have been “reserved” so that the numbering system in place can be maintained for ease of implementation.

Management Area 1. Wilderness

Total Acres: approximately 70,220

Ia. Designated Wilderness

Total Acres: approximately 64,469

Six congressionally designated wilderness areas totaling approximately 64,469 acres are located within the Forest. These areas are unsuitable for timber production, withdrawn from mineral leasing, unsuitable for motorized travel, and unsuitable for livestock grazing.

The wilderness acts that established these areas are as follows:

- The Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975, Public Law 93-622: Caney Creek Wilderness, Arkansas (14,460 acres).
- Arkansas Wilderness Act of 1984, Public Law 98-508: Black Fork Mountain Wilderness (8,350 acres); Poteau Mountain Wilderness (11,299 acres), Dry Creek Wilderness (6,310 acres) and Flatside Wilderness (9,507 acres), all in Arkansas.
- Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation and Wilderness Area Act of 1988, Public Law 100-499: Black Fork Mountain Wilderness (4,789 acres) and Upper Kiamichi Wilderness (9,754 acres), both in Oklahoma.

Desired Condition

Naturally-occurring processes will predominate. People are temporary visitors who leave no permanent imprint. Opportunities will abound for primitive recreation featuring solitude, physical and mental challenges, freedom from the intrusion of unnatural sights, sounds and odors, and the chance to experience relatively unmodified ecosystems. Except for trails and designated primitive campsites, no facilities will be available. Manipulation of flora, fauna, or the surface of the land will occur only to the extent necessary to maintain trails and primitive campsites and to meet provisions of the wilderness acts, the Endangered Species Act, and other pertinent laws.

Ib. Poteau Mountain Management Area

Total Acres: approximately 3,958

Management Area 1b consists of land between the two separate units of the Poteau Mountain Wilderness. As part of the deliberations leading up to the Arkansas Wilderness Act of 1984, the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs determined that the area possessed a “very high wilderness potential” but “is also popular for off-road vehicle use...it should remain open to motorized use.” The committee requested that the Forest Service manage this area to “maintain its existing wild character, with no timber harvest, mineral leasing, or new road construction permitted.” Management Area 1b is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with controlled surface use, and unsuitable for livestock grazing.

Desired Condition

Essentially natural biophysical conditions will prevail with opportunities for solitude and low level of encounters with other users.

1c. Recommended Wilderness Additions

Total Acres: approximately 1,793

Management Area 1c consists of lands adjacent to Flatside Wilderness and the East Unit of Poteau Mountain in Arkansas and Upper Kiamichi Wilderness in Oklahoma that are recommended as additions to the National Wilderness System. Management Area 1c is unsuitable for timber production, withdrawn from mineral leasing, unsuitable for livestock grazing, and is managed for wilderness potential. If Congress adds these areas to the National Wilderness Preservation System, they will automatically become part of MA 1a.

Desired Condition

Essentially natural biophysical conditions will prevail with opportunities for solitude and low level of encounters with other users.

Management Area 2. Special Interest Areas

Total Acres: approximately 27,313

- 2a. Scenic Areas, approximately 2,700 acres
- 2b. Watchable Wildlife Areas, approximately 5,853 acres
- 2c. Botanical Areas: Rich Mountain, approx. 3,200 acres, and South Fourche, approximately 2,580 acres (the Cove Creek Lake Project Area, approximately 324 acres surrounded by the South Fourche Botanical Area, is specifically excluded from the botanical area)
- 2d. Rich Mountain Recreation Area, approximately 12,980 acres

Special Interest Areas consist of Scenic Areas, Watchable Wildlife Areas, two Botanical Areas, and one large, undeveloped recreation area (Rich Mountain). Most of Management Area 2 is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration with a controlled surface use stipulation, and unsuitable for livestock grazing. Approximately 3,700 acres of the 12,980-acre Rich Mountain Recreation Area are suitable for timber production; the remaining acres are unsuitable.

Timber harvesting (including forest regeneration cuts) may be conducted in the Watchable Wildlife Areas and the South Fourche Botanical Area as needed to thin existing pine plantations, restore native ecological systems (including future old growth), and maintain or restore sensitive plant habitats in these areas. There are four scenic areas (shown in the following tabulation), and three of these—Blowout Mountain, Dutch Creek, and Crystal Mountain—are designated to sustain characteristics of old growth shortleaf pine-hardwood forests.

Scenic Area – MA 2a.	Ranger District	Acres
Blowout Mountain	Oden	526
Dutch Creek Mountain	Cold Springs, Fourche	624
Crystal Mountain	Caddo, Womble	100
Irons Fork	Jessieville	1,450

Two designated Watchable Wildlife Areas are listed as part of Management Area 2: Red Slough (5,815 acres) on the Tiak Unit of the Oklahoma Ranger District and Richardson Bottoms (38 acres) on the Jessieville Unit of the Jessieville/Winona/Fourche Ranger District. Other Watchable Wildlife Areas, such as Buffalo Road Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem Restoration Area Auto Tour and Blue Moon Wildlife and Fisheries Demonstration Area in Management Area 22, are found throughout the Forest within other Management Areas. Rich Mountain Botanical Area and Rich Mountain Recreation Area are on the Mena Ranger District. The two congressionally designated botanical areas in Oklahoma—Beech Creek Botanical Area and Robert S. Kerr Memorial Arboretum, Nature Center, and Botanical Area—are addressed in MA 19 along with the other non-wilderness areas designated by the Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation Area and Wilderness Act.

Desired Condition

Visitors generally will find a natural landscape accessible by trails and/or nearby roads. In all areas except for the Watchable Wildlife Areas, Rich Mountain Botanical and Recreation Area, and South Fourche Botanical Area, forest vegetation generally will reflect old growth conditions or be moving toward such conditions.

- South Fourche Botanical Area will include a mix of areas with old growth characteristics; younger, open woodlands (formerly pine plantations); dry acidic glades and barrens; marshy areas; and high quality riparian ecosystems. One ecologically unique “core area” will be off limits to timber harvesting unless site-specific analysis shows harvesting is needed to control insect or disease outbreaks. Upland areas will be treated periodically with prescribed burns and may be thinned or regenerated to restore native vegetation or specific habitats.
- In the Rich Mountain Botanical Area and the scenic areas, the desired condition is a natural appearing landscape generally undisturbed except by natural events, dispersed recreation, and an occasional prescribed burn. Signs of vegetation management will be due to actions needed to address forest health concerns or sustain habitat for Proposed, Endangered, Threatened, or Sensitive species. Rich Mountain Recreation Area has a similar desired condition except that some vegetation manipulation for forest health may also be visible, particularly in the portions suitable for timber production (about one-fourth of the area, and concentrated at lower elevations).
- In the Watchable Wildlife Areas, visitors will be able to view a variety of wildlife and experience wetlands in various stages of ecological succession. Signs of active vegetation and water management may be apparent. Parking facilities, observer platforms, levees, water control structures, and other facilities will be encountered.

Management Area 3. Developed Recreation Areas

Total Acres: approximately 5,189

Management Area 3 consists of developed recreation sites. Development ranges from an essentially natural environment with few facilities to a high degree of site development with comfort and convenience facilities, including features such as paved roads, water systems, flush toilets, and boat-launching ramps. Included within this management unit are campgrounds, picnic areas, horse camps, interpretive and observation sites, information sites, float camps, shooting ranges, and swimming areas. Management Area 3 is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with no surface occupancy, and unsuitable for livestock grazing. Management Area 3 is unsuitable for OHV use.

Desired Condition

The landscape will generally be modified but still present a forest-type setting. Little to no evidence of non-recreation resource development will be noticed; however, vegetation management activities may include planting, pruning, cutting, herbicide application (e.g., for, poison ivy control), or hazard-tree removal. Facilities, such as roads, buildings, camping sites and tables, will be evident but compatible with the overall setting of the area. Various levels of human activity and sounds from vehicles and other motorized equipment will be evident. Depending upon the particular location, easy access for activities such as fishing and hiking, swimming, and group events will be available. Visitors will find a moderate level of user restrictions to ensure public health and safety and protection of resource values.

Management Area 4. Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks

Total Acres: approximately 2,115

Management Area 4 includes the following areas:

Name	Unit	Acres
Roaring Branch	Caddo	330
Gap Creek	Caddo	1,225
Lake Winona	Winona	280
Tiak RNA	Tiak	200
R.R. Reynolds	Crossett Experimental Forest	80

Roaring Branch and Lake Winona have dual status as Research Natural Areas (RNA) and National Natural Landmarks. Designated under 36 CFR 251.23, RNAs provide continued opportunity for studies of ecological succession and other research interests in a setting where disturbance by humans is very limited. Administration and protection are supplied by the National Forest, with scientific and educational uses coordinated through the Southern Research Station. An additional RNA, R. R. Reynolds Research

Natural Area on the Crossett Experimental Forest in Ashley County, Arkansas is established. Management Area 4 is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with no surface occupancy, generally unsuitable for OHVs, and unsuitable for livestock grazing.

Desired Condition

These areas will have a naturally appearing landscape. Natural processes will continue with little or no impact from humans. Some evidence of activities associated with scientific or research studies may be apparent from time to time. Habitat capability for species associated with mature forest conditions will prevail, while habitat capability for early seral stage associates will only be created by natural occurrences such as tree-fall from storm events.

Management Area 5. Experimental Forests

Total Acres: approximately 6,021

Management Area 5 consists of the Alum Creek Experimental Forest (EF) on the Winona Ranger District, and the Crossett Experimental Forest in Ashley County, Arkansas. These areas are administered in cooperation with the Southern Research Station. Experimental Forests are withdrawn from entry for locatable minerals. For leasable minerals, no surface occupancy is applied. Management Area 5 is unsuitable for timber production but suitable for livestock grazing.

Desired Condition

These areas provide actively managed settings for forest-related research in the Ouachita Mountains and West Gulf Coastal Plain. The landscapes in these areas will be similar to those that users will find in MA 14, Ouachita Mountains-Habitat Diversity Emphasis (in the case of Alum Creek EF), and MA 15, West Gulf Coastal Plain (in the case of Crossett EF). Although these experimental forests are unsuitable for timber production, some research projects could include vegetation management in the form of timber harvesting, wildlife management activities, and/or road construction, reconstruction, and maintenance. Additional evidence of activities for research studies may also be apparent. Habitat conditions in the Crossett Experimental Forest will support the perpetuation of the existing, small Red-cockaded Woodpecker population.

Management Area 6. Rare Upland Communities

Total Acres: approximately 48,030

Management Area 6 consists of Rare Upland Communities, including upland (non-riparian; non-bottomland) areas supporting one or more natural communities that are relatively rare or uncommon in the Ouachita Mountains or West Gulf Coastal Plain. These communities are managed to perpetuate or restore their ecological integrity, including high-quality habitat for certain sensitive species. These patchy systems range from a few acres to a few hundred acres. A prescribed fire program that mimics the natural fire regime is an important management tool for restoring and maintaining most of these communities and providing for patch connectivity among the interspersed

communities. The natural communities included are: Ouachita Mesic Hardwood Forest; Ouachita Montane Oak Forest; Ouachita Dry Oak Woodland; Ouachita Novaculite Glade and Woodland; Central Interior Acidic Cliff and Talus; Central Interior Highlands Dry Acidic Glade and Barrens; and West Gulf Coastal Plain Calcareous Prairie. Riparian, lowland, and seep communities are included in MA 9, Water and Riparian Communities. Management Area 6 is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with no surface occupancy, and suitable for livestock grazing.

Desired Condition Forest-wide desired conditions by structural class and community are presented in the Vision (Part 1) for these communities:

Ouachita Mesic Hardwood Forest (approx. 27,712 acres)
Ouachita Montane Oak Forest (approx. 7,836 acres)
Ouachita Dry Oak Woodland (approx. 3,574 acres)
Ouachita Novaculite Glade and Woodland (approx. 1,315 acres)
Central Interior Acidic Cliff and Talus (approx. 4,418 acres) and
Central Interior Highlands Dry Acidic Glade and Barrens (approx. 2,912 acres)
West Gulf Coastal Plain Calcareous Prairie (approx. 263 acres)

Management Area 7. Ouachita Seed Orchard

Total Acres: approximately 636

Management Area 7 consists of an established seed orchard managed for the production of improved seed from shortleaf pine, loblolly pine, and certain hardwoods. MA 7 is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with no surface occupancy, and unsuitable for livestock grazing. The Ouachita Seed Orchard is unsuitable for OHV use.

Desired Condition

The landscape within this area has been modified from a natural setting to a seed orchard setting and will continue to be maintained as a seed orchard for desired conditions. This seed orchard is an important federal source of improved shortleaf pine seed. Well-spaced seedtrees with a maintained, grassy forest floor will dominate the setting. Resource management for other purposes and public use occurs only if conducted in a manner compatible with the management objectives for the Seed Orchard; consult with the regional geneticist prior to approving such activities.

Management Area 8. Administrative Sites/Special Uses

Total Acres: approximately 551

Management Area 8 consists of district ranger offices, district work centers, district residences, Forest Service communication facilities and sites for communication facilities under special use permit, and the administrative site within the seed orchard. Management Area 8 is unsuitable for timber production and available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with no surface occupancy. Special Use sites are suitable for

livestock grazing. A list of the approved communication sites and those pending approval as of September 2005, is included in Appendix A. Roads, rights-of-way, utility easements, and other linear features are not included as a part of Management Area 8 but are interspersed within other management areas.

Desired Condition

Visitors will encounter a variety of well-maintained facilities, including roads, buildings, parking areas and other facilities, typically in a forest setting with a high level of site reinforcement and regularly occurring maintenance.

Management Area 9. Water and Riparian Communities

Total Acres: approximately 278,284

Management Area 9 consists of Water and Riparian Communities, including streams, rivers, lakes and ponds, and Streamside Management Areas necessary to protect water quality and associated beneficial uses found within the Ouachita Mountains, Arkansas River Valley, and West Gulf Coastal Plain. Management Area 9 direction applies to streams, riparian areas, ponds, and lakes, except where even more stringent management requirements are in place, notably in Wilderness (MA 1). Included are flowing and non-flowing aquatic habitats; wetlands; woodland seeps and springs; portions of floodplains; variable distances (but at least 100 feet) from both edges of all perennial streams and from the shores of bodies of water equal to or greater than one-half acre; variable distances (but at least 30 feet) from both edges of other streams with defined stream channels and ponds less than one-half acre in size; and certain lands surrounding public water supplies, lakes, and streams. Management Area 9 is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with no surface occupancy, and is suitable for livestock grazing.

The riparian-associated vegetation community types that occur in this MA include Ouachita Mountain Forested Seep; Ouachita Riparian; South-Central Interior Large Floodplain; and West Gulf Coastal Plain Small Stream/River Forest.

Desired Condition

Riparian areas, lakes, and ponds have a relatively natural appearance. Permanent roads are minimized but may occur at designated crossings and designated access points. Water quality is good to excellent. Protection for public water sources will be provided. Aquatic ecosystems function properly and support aquatic biota commensurate with the associated ecoregion. Vegetation consists of native species. Suitable lakes and ponds sustain a diversity of sport fishing experiences. Developed recreation sites containing intensively managed lakes and ponds provide improved visitor access and sport fish populations provide sustained yield. Lakes and ponds managed for primitive use and fishing have limited access but support balanced sport fish populations. Movement of fish and other aquatic organisms in otherwise free-flowing perennial streams and other streams is not obstructed by road crossings, culverts, or other human-caused obstructions.

Management Area 14. Ouachita Mountains-Habitat Diversity Emphasis

Total Acres: approximately 740,583

Management Area 14 consists of extensive blocks of upland (non-riparian) forest located throughout the Ouachita Mountains. The primary community types, each of which also occurs in other MAs, are Ouachita Pine-Oak Forest; Ouachita Pine-Oak Woodland; and Ouachita Dry-Mesic Oak Forest. The Ouachita Mountains-Habitat Diversity Emphasis MA includes all National Forest System lands in the Ouachita Mountains not assigned to special areas. These lands are available for varied intensities of ecosystem management and roaded-natural recreational opportunities. Management Area 14 includes areas suitable and unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with standard stipulations, and suitable for livestock grazing.

Desired Condition

This Management Area is a mosaic of shortleaf pine-hardwood (including pine-dominated, hardwood-dominated, and evenly mixed forests and woodlands). Forest-wide desired conditions by structural class and community are presented in Part 1 for these communities. Within this MA, grass-forb and seedling-sapling conditions are well represented, particularly in the portions suitable for timber management, where they make up at least 6 percent of the landscape. These “early successional” conditions exist primarily under partial canopies of overstory pines and/or hardwood trees. Mid-successional and mature forests and woodlands are even more widespread, making up at least 70 percent of the landscape.

Adequate amounts of all forest conditions needed to sustain viable populations of many of the plant and animal species native to the Forest are available. The habitat needs of other native species with specialized habitat needs are met in other appropriate MAs. Deer and turkey habitat capability remain near 2004 levels; habitat capability for prairie warbler and northern bobwhite, among other indicator species, are higher than 2004 levels.

Visitors and managers have access to a moderately extensive transportation system. Visitors find non-motorized recreation opportunities available on a seasonal and shifting basis, depending on road closures and the scheduling of resource management activities. The main road system is well maintained, but visitors may see timber harvest equipment and encounter logging traffic. A portion of the road system is available for low clearance vehicle travel. Some portions are designated and available for OHV use. The remainder of the road system is closed seasonally or long-term.

Recently cut areas with logging slash, stumps, and some areas of disturbed soil are evident on a short-term and continuing basis, as are signs of prescribed burning and roadwork. Where such active management activities take place, appropriate scenery management techniques are practiced.

Management Area 15. West Gulf Coastal Plain-Habitat Diversity Emphasis

Total Acres: approximately 13,066

Management Area 15 consists of lands in the West Gulf Coastal Plain of southeastern Oklahoma that are available for varied intensities of timber, wildlife, fisheries, range management and roaded-natural recreational opportunities. The primary community type represented here is West Gulf Coastal Plain Pine-Hardwood Forest. Additional Forest lands in the West Gulf Coastal Plains of southern Arkansas are included in MA 5 (Experimental Forests), and other portions of the southeastern Oklahoma Coastal Plain lands are included in MA 2 (Special Interest Areas), MA 3 (Developed Recreation Areas), MA 4 (Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks), MA 6 (Rare Upland Communities), MA 8 (Special Uses/Administrative Sites), and MA 9 (Water and Riparian Communities). Management Area 15 is suitable for timber production (with a few exceptions), available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with standard stipulations, and suitable for livestock grazing.

Desired Condition

This Management Area provides a mix of habitat conditions in coastal plain loblolly pine communities for a variety of species. More specific desired conditions are presented in Forest-wide desired conditions in Part 1 for this community (pine-oak forest).

Management Area 16. Lands Surrounding Lake Ouachita and Broken Bow Lake

Total Acres: approximately 87,153

Management Area 16 includes National Forest lands surrounding Lake Ouachita in Arkansas and Broken Bow Lake in Oklahoma. All management activities within this area are designed to address wildlife and recreation objectives and the protection of resource values for each lake. The overriding objective is to sustain the unique combination of recreational, aesthetic, wildlife, and water quality values represented here. Portions of this MA are suitable for some timber management activities; others such as steep slopes are unsuitable. Management Area 16 is available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with controlled surface use stipulations, and suitable for livestock grazing.

Desired Condition

A variety of dispersed recreational opportunities are available. Visitors encounter varied forest conditions, from fairly open, "park-like" stands of native pines and hardwoods with a forest floor rich in grasses and forbs to stands having a nearly continuous high canopy and sparse ground layer. Abrupt changes in vegetation are few, limited mainly to small openings in the forest and places where Forest land abuts private land, roads, or developed areas on other public land. Mature forest predominates, but some younger forests may be observed as well. Evidence of prescribed fire is apparent at times. A pattern of mixed hardwood and pine contributes to the visual attractiveness of the area. An adequate variety of sizes and forest conditions are present to support populations of

many animal species native to the uplands of the Lake Ouachita and Broken Bow Lake areas.

Visitors on the lake or shoreline view the surrounding National Forest lands as predominantly naturally appearing, with resource management activities not usually evident. Lands surrounding the lakes may be accessed by trails and by a variety of roads, but there is little or no addition of road miles to the transportation system.

Management Area 17. Semi-Primitive Areas

Total Acres: approximately 136,091

Management Area 17 consists of areas that (a) meet the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) criteria for motorized and non-motorized semi-primitive recreation settings and (b) are not included in other MAs. (Wilderness areas (MA 1), the Poteau Mountain Area (MA 1b), portions of some special interest areas (MA 2), and National Forest lands around Broken Bow Lake and Lake Ouachita (MA 16), for example, also offer either semi-primitive motorized or non-motorized recreation opportunities or both. Emphasis in this MA is to provide motorized and non-motorized semi-primitive recreation experiences. Management is dictated by recreational and wildlife objectives that provide for a semi-primitive experience and a range of wildlife habitats. Management Area 17 is available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with standard stipulations, and is suitable for livestock grazing. For areas identified in the following tabulation, timber harvesting and road construction are deferred for the planning period except for actions needed to address threats to forest health, including thinning of any existing pine plantations and control of southern pine or Ips beetle outbreaks.

Area Name	Approximate Acres
Black Fork Mountain	406
Blue Mountain	11,678
Brush Heap	8,353
Cedar Mountain	3,428
Flood Mountain	4,915
Fourche Mountain	2,403
Irons Fork Mountain	8,303
Leader Mountain	9,185
Little Missouri Area	1,226
Statehouse Mountain	3,612

In the remainder of MA 17, including most walk-in turkey areas, more active forest management may be implemented.

Desired Condition

Visitors view a predominately naturally appearing landscape with some evidence of vegetation manipulation in the form of small openings, individual tree cutting, prescribed

fire, and some stands managed as more open, shortleaf pine-bluestem grass or oak woodland communities. Dispersed recreation experiences, including hunting and hiking, are available with fewer disturbances from motorized traffic than the general forest area. A moderate level of solitude is present in most areas.

Management Area 19. Winding Stair Mountain Recreation National Area and Associated Non-Wilderness Designations

Total Acres: approximately 79,897

Management Area 19 contains lands designated by the Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation and Wilderness Area Act of 1988, Public Law 100–499, except for the two wilderness areas, which are included with other Forest wilderness in MA 1, Wilderness. A variety of outstanding recreational opportunities exists in MA 19. Lands within this area are both suitable and unsuitable for timber production; however, suitable acres are only managed in support of recreational and wildlife objectives that are compatible with the National Recreation Area and other special designations. Management Area 19 is available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with controlled surface use stipulations and suitable for livestock grazing. Designations in the Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation and Wilderness Act included in MA 19 are listed in the following tabulation:

Area Name*	Acres
19a. Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation Area	25,890
19c. Robert S. Kerr Memorial Arboretum, Nature Center, and Botanical Area	8,256
19e. Beech Creek Botanical Area	380
19f. Beech Creek National Scenic Area	6,200
19g. Indian Nations National Scenic and Wildlife Area	29,171

*19b and 19d (Rich Mountain Recreation and Botanical Areas in Arkansas) from the 1990 Amended Forest Plan were moved into MA 2.

Designations in the Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation and Wilderness Act included in MA 1 (Wilderness) are the Oklahoma portion of Black Fork Mountain Wilderness and Upper Kiamichi Wilderness, which is entirely in Oklahoma. Rich Mountain Recreation Area and Rich Mountain Botanical Area, both in Arkansas and formerly part of MA 19, are now part of MA 2, Special Interest Areas. MA 19 is subdivided into several distinct areas to address the designated areas named and numbered above. The wilderness areas in the Act are now included in MA 1. Other letter designations used in the Act and in the 1990 Amended Forest Plan are continued in this Revised Forest Plan.

Desired Condition

Along the Talimena Scenic Drive, visitors view predominately hardwood vegetation that is naturally appearing, and in the remaining area, a mixed forest condition. Some vegetation management in the form of small openings, individual tree cutting, and prescribed fire is evident. Resource management treatments viewed from scenic points within the area meet high scenic integrity objectives. Paved roads and state highways provide primary

access to developed recreation facilities and State parks. Additional access is provided by unpaved roads and trails.

Management Area 20. Wild and Scenic River Corridors and Eligible Wild and Scenic River Corridors

Total Acres: approximately 26,571

Management Area 20 consists of the corridors of the congressionally designated Cossatot and Little Missouri Wild and Scenic Rivers and approximately ½-mile wide corridors for the Ouachita, forks of the Saline (eastern), Caddo, Glover, and Mountain Fork Rivers. The 16.5-mile segment of the Glover River within the Forest is recommended as an addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System with a classification as “scenic.” The remaining rivers are eligible for consideration as components of the National System, but suitability studies are deferred to the respective States due to the very limited extent of National Forest (or other federal) lands within the corridors of these rivers. Management activities and practices will protect the inherent qualities of the rivers that have not been congressionally designated, including their “outstandingly remarkable features.” River-related recreational opportunities that are compatible with the outstandingly remarkable features of these rivers and their corridors will be offered. The lands within this MA are unsuitable for timber production. Designated rivers are congressionally withdrawn from mineral activity, and rivers under consideration for designation will have a No Surface Occupancy stipulation applied. Management Area 20 is suitable for livestock grazing subject to management area design criteria. Management Area 20 has been subdivided into three distinct areas: 20a. Designated Wild River Segments; 20b. Scenic River Segments; and 20c. Recreational River Segments. See Management Area 20 design criteria (Part 3 of this Plan) for tables listing specific segments.

Desired Condition

A variety of dispersed and developed recreational opportunities are available. Visitors encounter natural landscapes featuring exceptionally scenic, free-flowing mountain rivers. Little evidence of human-caused disturbance are visible, except in the form of a few system roads, prescribed fire, control activities to address pest outbreaks, trails, and river access facilities. Much of the vegetation in the corridor has old-growth characteristics. Signs of natural disturbances may be evident.

Management Area 21. Old Growth Restoration (Pine-Grass Emphasis)

Total Acres: approximately 70,379

Management Area 21 includes 35 separate old growth restoration units, ranging in size from 600 acres to nearly 6,000 acres. The emphasis in this MA is the restoration and perpetuation of pine-grass old growth forests, woodlands and other old growth conditions associated with frequent fire. Inclusions of existing hardwood stands will also

be managed for old growth characteristics. Maintenance or restoration of other kinds of old growth forests (including other hardwood-dominated forests), woodlands, and glades will be accomplished in other management areas. See additional discussion of old growth in Appendix D.

Restoration of pine-grass old growth forests and woodlands fills a missing component (an ecological gap) among existing communities of the Ouachita Mountains, created largely by decades of fire suppression and large-scale logging in the 1920s and 1930s. Pine-grass old growth systems will provide habitat for a wide range of wildlife, including both late seral stage species and some open area associates. Portions of this area (replacement stands) are suitable for timber production under long rotations. MA 21 is available for oil and gas exploration and leasing; however, no surface occupancy is allowed in the core area and controlled surface use stipulations apply in the remainder of this management area. MA 21 is suitable for livestock grazing subject to management area design criteria.

Desired Condition

The restoration of pine-grass old growth forests and woodlands is emphasized within MA 21, with the perpetuation of old growth conditions assured by core areas connected to replacement stands that are managed under long rotation (160 years). Regeneration of young trees occurs in some replacement stands on an infrequent basis. Pine stands are generally not densely stocked (total basal area 50-80 square feet) and include many trees over 100 years old. Many trees are large (>20" dbh) and have a "flat topped" appearance. Old growth pine-grass forests and woodlands are fire-maintained communities characterized by relatively open conditions and a grassy understory. MA 21 may include pine in almost pure stands, pine mixed with oak and sometimes hickory, or even patches of relatively pure stands of post oak and blackjack oak. These forests and woodlands are characterized by open stands of old, large, and often widely spaced pines and oaks, occurring in patches and clumps. The forest floor supports a rich mix of grasses, forbs, wildflowers, and low shrubs.

Redheart disease, downed woody debris, and snags are common. Visitors encounter evidence of frequent, specific disturbance, particularly fire, in a naturally appearing landscape. While usually associated with management, disturbances are consistent with, and reflect, natural processes. Evidence of vegetation management is visible following thinning operations or infrequent reproduction cutting primarily in replacement stands. Access is from low-standard roads, many of which are closed seasonally or year-round. Fire scars and snags are visible in most areas, but the increased viewing depth, diversity of vegetation, abundance of wildflowers, and age and character of the trees contribute to scenic quality.

Pine-grass old growth provides habitat for a wide range of wildlife. Deer and other early-seral stage species are favored by the abundant grassy understory, while woodpeckers and other species associated with mature forests are supported by the mature-tree component. Species requiring cavities and snags (e.g., raptors, bluebirds, woodpeckers) are favored over those highly dependent on hard mast (e.g., squirrels) or dense brush (e.g., gray fox).

Disturbance Regime—These forests are maintained by frequent, moderately intense ground fires, some of which occur in the summer and fall (July-November). Fire return intervals range from one to more than four years, but occur on an irregular basis, at varying times, seasons, and intensities. Fires are frequent and hot enough to suppress the woody understory and occasionally kill individual overstory trees or small groups of trees.

Core Areas—At least ten percent of the suitable acres of each old growth restoration unit is designated as a “core area.” The core area ages and is not subject to artificial regeneration. Initially, thinnings and midstory treatment may be necessary to establish pine-grass conditions. Fire is an important component to maintain such conditions.

Replacement Stands—The remainder of the pine stands within each old growth restoration unit are managed as replacement stands in order to perpetuate old growth conditions and maximize the effective area in old growth at any one time. Replacement stands range in age from very young to approximately 160 years. These replacement stands with extremely old trees are available to take the place of core areas that, for whatever reason, can no longer function as old growth. Replacement stands may be regenerated as necessary using irregular seedtree or irregular shelterwood reproduction cutting methods. These methods differ from traditional seedtree or shelterwood cutting in that some of the seedtrees are retained indefinitely. The result will be two-aged stands of trees. Replacement stands are suitable for timber production; in the course of managing for old growth objectives, significant yields of high-quality wood may be produced and sold from these areas. In some cases, desired stocking may be maintained by burning alone.

Regeneration—The periodic use of prescribed fire under open canopies may promote natural regeneration at irregular intervals, resulting in “banked” advanced reproduction in many core and replacement stands. Therefore, regeneration in some replacement stands may be accomplished simply by thinning to a seedtree or shelterwood residual basal area (BA), and excluding fire for a few years to ensure the survival of seedlings. With periodic burning, some regeneration will be of coppice origin.

Hardwood Stands—Hardwood stands and inclusions are unsuitable for timber production and are managed to restore upland hardwood and oak-pine old growth. Fire is not excluded from these areas, although burns generally are less intense and less frequent.

Management Area 22. Renewal of the Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem Grass Ecosystem and Red-cockaded Woodpecker Habitat

Total Acres: approximately 188,002

Management Area 22, an area for the renewal of the Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem Grass Ecosystem and Red-cockaded Woodpecker habitat, is located on National Forest land on the Poteau/Cold Springs, Mena, and Oklahoma Ranger Districts. These lands consist primarily of extensive blocks of Ouachita Pine-Oak Forest, Ouachita Pine-Oak Woodlands, and intermingled stands of Ouachita Dry-Mesic Oak Forest. In addition to

providing extensive areas in which restoration of pine-bluestem ecosystems is featured, MA 22 incorporates two Habitat Management Areas (HMAs; one in Arkansas, one in Oklahoma) for the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW).

Management Area 22 is available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with controlled surface use stipulations on the entire management area except for the Blue Moon Wildlife and Fisheries Demonstration Area, where no surface occupancy stipulations apply. MA 22 is suitable for livestock grazing subject to MA design criteria. Acres in this Management Area are both suitable and unsuitable for timber production. Active RCW stands, recruitment stands, and recruitment clusters are all unsuitable for timber production. As required by the 1995 Red-cockaded Woodpecker EIS, HMAs (MA 22a) have been designated. HMA acres are shown by Ranger District in the following tabulation:

District	Total
Cold Springs	6,581
Mena	11,147
Poteau	66,584
Tiak	50,945
Total	135,257

The remaining part of MA 22 (entirely in Arkansas) is the Extended Area, or MA 22b. The Extended Area provides for renewal of the shortleaf pine-bluestem grass ecosystem and future expansion habitat for RCWs.

Desired Condition

The dominant natural plant community of this area is shortleaf pine trees with bluestem grasses and a variety of other herbaceous plants flourishing on the forest floor. Restoration of landscape patterns and functions—with special emphasis on renewing the historic role of fire and increasing the abundance of older pine and hardwood stands with grassy understories—are key features of this MA. Hardwood trees are more common in stream corridors and on some north-facing slopes in the area; they are also important components of all pine stands in the MA. Hardwood dominated areas will be less numerous in this MA than in others across the Forest, but will still comprise at least 20 percent of the area.

The Ouachita Mountains Red-cockaded Woodpecker Habitat Management Area (HMA) in Arkansas is designed to support a future population of at least 250 RCW breeding groups, as defined by the USFWS Recovery plan for a Secondary Core Population. This HMA has sufficient habitat capacity to provide for 400 active clusters; the smaller Oklahoma HMA has sufficient habitat capacity to provide for 50 active clusters. Active management of these HMAs should yield an approximate 5 percent annual population increase.

Visitors will see a large portion of the area featuring a fairly open canopy varying from approximately 60 square feet to 80 square feet of basal area per acre of older pine and

hardwood trees. To develop and sustain older stands, regeneration cycles are a minimum of 120 years. Regeneration areas also retain a portion of the overstory indefinitely to reduce potential impacts from canopy fragmentation and to retain visual quality. In the future, those pine-dominated areas that would be committed to regeneration, i.e., the 0-10 year age class, will make up no more than 8.3 percent of the area. This MA has at least 66 percent of the acreage in trees older than 40 years, including 40 percent of the acreage in trees older than 70 years, and approximately 17 percent of the acreage in trees older than 100 years.

Fire is used to maintain a healthy functioning ecosystem. The forest floor in the burned areas contains a high number of herbaceous plant species, reptiles, small mammals, and breeding birds. Harvesting activities are planned to provide large blocks of older trees. Ecotonal differences are minimized by limiting age differences between stands. Visitors may encounter disturbances to the forest in this area from prescribed fire and timber harvest activities. The disturbances are seasonal and short-term.

Suitable Land Uses

National Forest System lands are suitable for a variety of uses (36 CFR 219), including outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, timber harvest, wildlife habitat, wilderness, energy resource development, mining activities, watershed restoration, and cultural and heritage interpretation, among others. Rather than determine the suitability of all lands for all uses, the Forest Plan is based on the assumption that all lands are potentially suitable for a variety of activities except when specific activities or areas are determined not to be compatible with one another or capable of supporting such use.

A plan must identify National Forest System lands as not suited (“unsuitable”) for a certain use under the following circumstances:

1. If law, regulation, or Executive Order prohibits that use.
2. If agency resource management directives prohibit the use.
3. If the use would result in substantial and permanent impairment of the productivity of the land or renewable resources.
4. If the use is incompatible with the desired conditions established for all or part of the plan area.

Table 2.1 indicates whether the following uses are suitable (S), unsuitable (U), or both suitable and unsuitable (S+U) within each MA:

- Timber Production
- Public Use of Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)
- Livestock Grazing
- Road Construction, Power lines, Linear Rights-of-Way (ROW)

Additional detail concerning each of these suitable uses follows Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Suitability by Management Area

Management Area	Timber Production	Public Use of OHVs ¹	Livestock Grazing	Road Construction, Power lines, Linear ROW
1. Wilderness & Poteau Mtn.	U	U (S, Designated Routes in Poteau Mtn)	U	U
2. Special Interest Areas	S + U (parts of 2c are suitable)	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions	S, Restricted
3. Developed Recreation Areas	U	U	U	S, Minimum Necessary
4. Research Natural Areas & National Natural Landmarks	U	U	U ¹	U
5. Experimental Forests	U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
6. Rare Upland Communities	U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
7. Ouachita Seed Orchard	U	U	U	S, Minimum Necessary
8. Administrative Sites/ Special Uses	U	S, Designated Routes	S + U, FW Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
9. Water/Riparian Communities	U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions MA Restrictions	S, Restricted
14. Ouachita Mountains, Habitat Diversity Emphasis	S + U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
15. W. Gulf Coastal Plain, Habitat Diversity Emphasis	S + U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
16. Lands Surrounding Lake Ouachita & Broken Bow Lake	S + U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions MA Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
17. Semi-Primitive Areas	S + U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
19. Winding Stair Mountain NRA (and associated non-Wilderness designations)	S + U (parts of 19a, f, and g are suitable)	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions MA Restrictions	S, Restricted
20. Wild and Scenic River Corridors	U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions MA Restrictions	S, Restricted
21. Old Growth Restoration	S + U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions MA Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
22. Renewal of the Shortleaf Pine/ Bluestem Grass Ecosystem and RCW Habitat	S + U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions MA Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary (Not allowed in RCW clusters)

S = Suitable, U = Unsuitable, S + U = both Suitable and Unsuitable

¹ See Public Use of Off-Highway Vehicles section for clarification on the timeframe for when trails and roads will be designated for OHV use.

Suitability for Timber Production

The 1982 planning regulations (36 CFR 219) direct Responsible Officials to “identify lands which are not suited for timber production.” The regulations define timber production as “the purposeful growing, tending, harvesting, and regeneration of regulated crops of trees to be cut into logs, bolts, or other round sections for industrial or consumer use. The term timber production does not include production of fuel wood” (36 CFR 219.3). Calculation of the acres of land “suitable” for timber production is used as the basis for setting the maximum quantity of timber that may be sold from the Forest. This quantity is usually expressed on an annual basis as the “average annual allowable sale quantity (ASQ).”

Table 2.2 summarizes acres suitable for timber production. After all unsuitable categories have been subtracted; approximately 1,016,228 acres are classified as suitable for timber production. The lands that are considered unsuitable for timber production total 732,590 acres. Lands considered unsuitable for timber production include those not managed for timber production because (a) the land has been withdrawn by Congress, the Secretary, or the Chief; (b) the land is not producing or capable of producing crops of industrial wood; (c) technology is not available to prevent irreversible damage to soils, productivity, or watershed conditions; (d) there is no reasonable assurance that lands can be adequately restocked within 5 years after final harvest, based on existing technology and knowledge, as reflected in current research and experience; (e) there is at present, a lack of adequate information to responses to timber management activities; or (f) timber management is inconsistent with or not cost efficient in meeting the management requirements and multiple-use objectives specified in the Forest Plan.

Nine of the 17 Management Areas are unsuitable in their entirety for timber production:

- MA 1. Wilderness and Poteau Mountain
- MA 3. Developed Recreation Areas
- MA 4. Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks
- MA 5. Experimental Forests
- MA 6. Rare Upland Communities
- MA 7. Ouachita Seed Orchard
- MA 8. Administrative Sites/Special Uses
- MA 9. Water and Riparian Communities
- MA 20. Wild and Scenic River Corridors

The eight remaining management areas contain a mix of lands both suitable and unsuitable for timber production.

Table 2.2 Classification of Ouachita National Forest Lands Relative to their Suitability for Producing Timber across All Management Areas

Classification	Acres
Nonforest – Water	4,916
Nonforest – Roads	15,001
Nonforest – Administrative Sites	780
Nonforest – Developed Recreation	2,139
Nonforest from Continuous Inventory of Stand Conditions Database	8,447
Total Nonforest	31,283
Total Forested	1,748,818
Withdrawn – Wilderness	64,469
Lands Withdrawn and Recommended for Wilderness	1,793
Withdrawn – Scenic Areas	4,195
Withdrawn – Research Natural Areas	2,035
Withdrawn – Poteau Mountain Management Area	3,958
Withdrawn – Botanical Areas	11,456
Lands Withdrawn for Fourche Mountain Botanical Area	1,673
Withdrawn – Wild/Scenic Rivers	14,639
Total Withdrawn	104,218
Not Capable	5,479
Tentatively Suitable	1,639,121
Land not Appropriate for Timber Production	622,893
Total Suitable Forested Land	1,016,228
Unsuitable Forested Land	732,590

It is important to recognize that, even if lands are classified as unsuitable for timber production, timber may be cut and harvested for other purposes. Dead or dying trees in developed recreation areas or along roads or trails, for example, often need to be removed (salvaged) for safety reasons. Trees may need to be cut and harvested to control insect outbreaks, to provide essential habitat for federally listed species and other wildlife, to maintain scenic overlooks, and for many other purposes. Timber removed from lands unsuitable for timber production is not included when calculating timber volumes chargeable to the allowable sale quantity, which is 27 million cubic feet, nor is volume harvested by salvage. Table 2.3 indicates which management areas are suitable for timber salvage.

Table 2.3 Salvage Suitability by Management Area

Management Area		Salvage Suitability
1	Wilderness	No
2	Special Interest Areas	Yes
3	Developed Recreation Areas	Yes
4	Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks	No
5	Experimental Forests	Yes
6	Rare Upland Communities	Yes
7	Ouachita Seed Orchard	Yes
8	Administrative Sites/Special Uses	Yes
9	Water and Riparian Communities	Yes*
14	Ouachita Mountains, Habitat Diversity Emphasis	Yes
15	West Gulf Coastal Plain, Habitat Diversity Emphasis	Yes
16	Lands surrounding Lake Ouachita and Broken Bow Lake	Yes
17	Semi-Primitive Areas	Yes
19	Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation Area (and Associated Non-Wilderness Designations)	Yes – 19a, 19g No – 19c, 19e, 19f
20	Wild and Scenic River Corridors	No – 20a Yes – 20b, 20c
21	Old Growth Restoration	No – core Yes – replacement stands
22	Renewal of the Shortleaf Pine/Bluestem Grass Ecosystem and Red-cockaded Woodpecker Habitat	Yes

* See Table 3.10

Public Use of Off-Highway Vehicles

The management direction for public use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) presented in Table 2.1 represents an important change from the direction in the 1990 Amended Forest Plan. The latter implied that cross-country OHV use was suitable in the Forest except where specifically posted otherwise (e.g., wilderness areas, the forest floor of the Broken Bow unit, the “wild” portion of the Little Missouri Wild and Scenic River). Within four years, the Ouachita National Forest intends to designate a system of roads and trails for public use of motorized vehicles, including OHVs and, at the same time, limit motorized vehicles to those designated roads and trails (i.e., no cross-country travel). Until that system of designated routes is established, public use of motorized vehicles may continue on routes and in areas where such use is not prohibited. Routes closed to vehicle use by a gate, berm, or other obvious means and areas posted closed to cross-country travel by motorized vehicle (e.g., wildernesses, walk-in turkey hunting areas during certain seasons, portions of wild and scenic river corridors) will remain unavailable for public use of OHVs. Additional area closures may be necessary in the period between the release of the Revised Forest Plan and the designation of suitable routes.

Livestock Grazing

The 1982 planning regulations (36 CFR 219.20) direct Responsible Officials to identify “the suitability and potential capability of National Forest System lands for producing forage for grazing animals.” As shown in Table 2.1, it has been determined that grazing is not a suitable use in the following MAs:

- MA 1. Wilderness and Poteau Mountain
- MA 3. Developed Recreation Areas
- MA 4. Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks
- MA 7. Ouachita Seed Orchard
- MA 8. Administrative Sites (suitable in Special Use areas)

In other MAs, grazing is permitted, subject to the design criteria in Part 3.

Road Construction, Power Lines, and Other Linear Rights-of-Way

Road construction, power lines, and other rights-of-way that would create linear openings in the Forest are unsuitable (prohibited) in:

- MA 1. Wilderness and Poteau Mountain
- MA 4. Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks
- MA 22. Within active Red-cockaded Woodpecker clusters

In other MAs, these linear features are allowed but must be installed in a manner that is consistent with the management objectives of the area. Linear features are not prohibited but are restricted in:

- MA 2. Special Interest Areas
- MA 9. Water and Riparian Communities
- MA 19. Winding Stair Mountain NRA
- MA 20. Wild and Scenic River Corridors

The Forest designates two multi-facility corridors to maximize co-location of future uses:

- Between Norman and Danville, AR along Arkansas State Highway 27
- Between Broken Bow and Heavener, OK along Oklahoma State Highway 259

Protection of water resources is of particular importance due to the potential for soil disturbance and production of sediment from the creation of linear rights-of-way. Where road location is necessary, roads and stream crossings should be designed to minimize impacts and to protect the natural and beneficial values of the area. See Part 3 for design criteria and specific restrictions.

Minerals-Related Uses

The General Mining Law of 1872 applies to all mineral deposits in National Forest System lands reserved from the public domain. Where public domain lands have been formally withdrawn, no authority exists to explore for, or develop, locatable minerals on those lands. Minerals, such as metallic minerals, that would be locatable minerals on public domain lands are hardrock leasable minerals on acquired lands. Leasing act minerals such as oil, gas, coal, and other leasing act minerals, and mineral materials, including, but not limited to sand gravel and building stone, are regulated by other laws and regulations.

Forest Service policy regarding minerals management includes ensuring “the integration of mineral resource programs and activities with the planning and management of renewable resources through the land and resource management planning process, recognizing that mineral development may occur concurrently or sequentially with other resource uses” (http://www.fs.fed.us/geology/minerals_policy.html). Consistent with federal law, including the U.S. Mining Laws Act of 1872, and the Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970, forest plans *do not* make decisions to withdraw National Forest System lands from mineral exploration or development.

The Forest Plan includes recommendations for making or removing withdrawals, based on an evaluation of the compatibility of mineral development with the objectives of individual MAs. The Withdrawal Review for the Forest is in Appendix B.

Minerals Actions in Management Areas:

Unless statutorily withdrawn, federal hardrock leasable minerals are available for lease in all MAs.

Quartz mining operations take place under contracts issued by the Forest Service. Quartz crystal excavations can occur in all MAs with the exceptions of:

- MA 1. Wilderness
- MA 3. Developed Recreation Areas
- MA 4. Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks
- MA 9. Water and Riparian Communities

Oil and Gas Lease access is most restrictive in No Surface Occupancy stipulated MAs:

- MA 3. Developed Recreation Areas
- MA 4. Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks
- MA 5. Experimental Forests
- MA 6. Rare Upland Communities
- MA 21. Old Growth Restoration – Core

Mining claim locations under the General Mining Law of 1872 may not take place in designated Wildernesses (MA 1), designated Wild and Scenic Rivers (MA 20), or lands formally withdrawn from mineral entry. Withdrawn lands are found in various MAs.

Mineral collecting for personal use may be allowed where such use is compatible with MA desired conditions, specifically:

- Surface exposures of quartz crystal may be removed by hand or by using small trowels, provided the removal is for personal use, not commercial use. Groups, organizations, and agencies may be allowed to remove mineral specimens for educational and scientific purposes after review and approval by the Responsible Official.
- Mineral material for panning must be taken only from the bed of the stream, not streambanks, and can only be dug with the edge of the pan and a small trowel to loosen gravels. No hazards can be created and all pan excavations must be filled. Any mineral retrieved is only for personal use and cannot be sold. Groups of people who wish to pan within a stream on the Forest must obtain permission from the appropriate District Ranger. (Note: Economic gold deposits are not noted in the Ouachita Mountains. Panning activities in Ouachita National Forest streams are primarily to hone skills.)

The Regional Forester consents (for acquired lands) or has no objection (for Public Domain lands) to lease lands available for oil and gas leasing subject to standard lease terms or subject to additional constraints (stipulations such as No Surface Occupancy and Controlled Surface Use) as required for a specific management area. This consent/no objection decision is valid until the Forest Service provides the Bureau of Land Management written notification that consent is withdrawn or amended. Table 2.4 displays gas leasing stipulations, whether lands are available or closed for oil and gas exploration, and leasing according to the consent decision. The table also shows acres of lands subject to the stipulations.

Table 2.4 Oil and Gas Leasing Consent Decisions

Management Area	Oil and Gas Exploration and Leasing	Oil and Gas Leasing Stipulation	Acres
1a. Designated Wilderness	Closed	Closed	64,469
1b. Poteau Mountain	Available	CSU	3,958
1c. Recommended Wilderness	May Be Available	Closed or CSU*	1,793
2. Special Interest Areas	Available	CSU	27,313
3. Developed Recreation Areas	Available	NSO	5,189
4. RNAs/Nat. Natural Landmarks	Available	NSO	2,115
5. Experimental Forests	Available	NSO	6,021
6. Rare Upland Communities	Available	NSO	48,030
7. Ouachita Seed Orchard	Available	CSU	636
8. Admin Sites/Special Uses	Available	CSU	551
9. Water/Riparian Communities	Available	CSU	278,284
14. Ouachita Mountains Habitat Diversity	Available	Standard Stipulation	740,583
15. W. Gulf Coastal Plain Habitat Diversity	Available	Standard Stipulation	13,066
16. Lands Surrounding Lake Ouachita and Broken Bow Lake	Available	CSU	87,153
17. Semi-Primitive Areas	Available	Standard Stipulation	136,091
19. Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation Area non-Wilderness	Available	CSU	79,897
20. Wild River Corridors**	Closed	Closed	1,245
20. Wild & Scenic River Corridors**	Available	CSU	25,326
21. Old Growth Restoration – core	Available	NSO	5,520
21. Old Growth Restoration – non-core	Available	CSU	64,859
22. Shortleaf Pine/ Bluestem Grass Ecosystem /RCW	Available	CSU***	188,002
No Leasing	67,507 acres, 4%		
NSO: No Surface occupancy Stipulation	66,875 acres, 4%		
CSU: Controlled Surface Use Stipulation*	755,979 acres, 43%		
Standard Stipulations****	889,740 acres, 49%		

* Until Congress acts to designate as wilderness, these recommended areas will have Controlled Surface Use Stipulations; however, if they are designated, they will be Closed. For purposes of this table, these areas are counted in the Closed category.

**Rivers, not designated, but under consideration for designation, will have a No Surface Occupancy stipulation applied.

***Except for Blue Moon Wildlife and Fisheries Demonstration Area, which is No Surface Occupancy

**** The Standard Stipulation is as follows:

The lessee/permittee/lessee must comply with all the rules and regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture set forth at Title 36, Chapter II, of the Code of Federal Regulations governing the use and management of the National Forest System (NFS) when not inconsistent with the rights granted by the Secretary of the Interior in the license/prospecting permit/lease. The Secretary of Agriculture's rules and regulations must be complied with for (1) all use and occupancy of the NFS prior to approval of a permit/operation plan by the Secretary of the Interior, (2) uses of all existing improvements, such as Forest development roads, within and outside the area licensed, permitted or leased by the Secretary of the Interior, and (3) use and occupancy of the NFS not authorized by a permit/operating plan approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

Authorities for minerals permitting:

- The Forest Supervisor has delegated authority to District Rangers for decisions concerning locatable and saleable hardrock minerals cases and geophysical exploration requests. In leasable cases, the District Ranger is responsible for evaluating the suitability (availability) of Forest lands for exploration and mining, which are then presented as recommendations by the Forest Supervisor to the Regional Forester.
- The Regional Forester is the authorized Forest Service officer responsible for making the final decision to consent or deny permission to the USDI, Bureau of Land Management for issuance of permits and leases.
- The USDI, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is the federal agency responsible for issuing and administering leasable mineral permits and leases once Forest Service consent is granted.

Military Use of the Forest

Use of National Forest System lands for military training activities is within the statutory authority of the Act of June 4, 1897. By a Master Agreement dated September 30, 1988, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Defense agree that prior to requesting use of the Forest, the Department of Defense will determine if lands they administer are available and suitable.

In the last 30 years, there has been only sporadic use of the Forest for military readiness activities such as survival exercises using unfamiliar or rugged terrain and radio signal relay training. Special use permits may be issued to National Guard units and agreements may be made with Army Reserve units for low impact military readiness activities. The requesting military unit is required to complete an environmental review following NEPA procedures. In addition to being approved only after appropriate NEPA review, the special use permits contain terms and conditions that specify the scope of the activity, precautions, and prohibitions. The Forest Service requires that the requesting unit be aware of and respect private ownerships that are intermingled with Forest ownership. The permit holder is responsible for all costs associated with rehabilitation, repair, or replacement of damaged Forest resources.

When requests for military use of the Forest for readiness activities are received, they will be evaluated. Restrictions on type of use and periods of use would be based on a case-by-case analysis. Past experience with military readiness activities on the Forest is that they have been fairly non-intrusive, leaving no noticeable environmental impacts on Forest resources. Residents of communities near the Forest have expressed concern over military use of helicopters, and for this reason, the landing of any military aircraft on National Forest System lands for training must be coordinated with the Forest prior to the event. It is not possible to prohibit military use of air space over the Forest. Military pyrotechnic use is not permitted on National Forest System lands because of the potential for damaging fire.

Due to other concerns and a need to protect resource values, some areas of the Forest are not available for all military uses. See Table 2.5 for types of military use that may be requested for consideration in specific MAs.

Table 2.5 Suitable Military Uses by Management Area

Management Area	Category of Use			
	Foot Traffic ¹	Light Vehicles ²	Heavy Vehicles and Site Disturbance ³	Ground Based Air Operations ⁴
1 Wilderness				
1a. Designated Wilderness	No	No	No	No
1b. Poteau Mountain	Yes	No	No	No
1c. Recommended Wilderness	No	No	No	No
2 Special Interest Areas				
2a. Scenic Areas	Yes	No	No	No
2b. Watchable Wildlife Areas	No	No	No	No
2c. Rich Mountain Botanical Area	No	No	No	No
2d. Rich Mountain Recreation Area	No	No	No	No
3 Developed Recreation Areas	No	No	No	No
4 Research Natural Areas/National Natural Landmarks	Yes	No	No	No
5 Experimental Forests	No	No	No	No
6 Rare Upland Communities	No	No	No	No
7 Ouachita Seed Orchard	No	No	No	No
8 Special Uses/Administrative Sites	No	No	No	No
9 Water and Riparian Communities	No	No	No	No
14 Ouachita Mountains-Habitat Diversity Emphasis	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
15 West Gulf Coastal Plain-Habitat Diversity Emphasis	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
16 Lands Surrounding Lake Ouachita and Broken Bow Lake	Yes	No	No	No
17 Semi-Primitive Areas	Yes	No	No	No
19 Winding Stair Mountain NRA and Associated Non-Wilderness Designations				
19a. Winding Stair Mountain NRA	Yes	No	No	No
19c. Robert S. Kerr Memorial	No	No	No	No
19e. Beech Creek Botanical Area	No	No	No	No
19f. Beech Creek National Scenic Area	Yes	No	No	No
19g. Indian Nations National Scenic and Wildlife Area	Yes	No	No	No
20 Wild and Scenic River Corridors				
20a. Recreation River Segments	Yes	No	No	No
20b. Wild River Segments	No	No	No	No
20c. Scenic River Segments	Yes	No	No	No
21 Old Growth Restoration	Yes	No	No	No
22 Renewal of the Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem Grass Ecosystem and Red-cockaded Woodpecker Habitat	Yes ⁵	No	No	No

¹ Only foot traffic will be allowed. The number of persons permitted at one time and duration of stay will be based on the type of use and season, among other things. This could include low impact overnight camping.

² Passenger vehicles, bus traffic, light transport trucks (5 tons or less), and vans will be allowed. Radio training exercises will be permitted along access road rights-of-way. Normally, radio-training exercises include the operation of a manned radio relay station 24 hrs/day for a 30-day period. Portable toilets will be allowed. The level of military activity could have a moderate impact on the landscape.

³ This category includes heavy equipment with a gross weight above 5 tons and could involve troop carriers, heavy transport trucks, track vehicles, and support equipment. Generally, military exercises involve more than 50 troops at a time. They will be permitted to camp on the forest for extended periods, usually for two or more weeks at a time. Installation of temporary camps and related facilities needed to support the troops will be allowed. This also includes construction of temporary fortifications.

⁴ Aviation landing facilities for military training activities are not allowed in any area of the Forest. Existing heliports and other existing openings will not be considered for use in support of military training maneuvers.

⁵ Outside of active RCW clusters.

Public Uses Regulated by Other Agencies

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) manages Arkansas' fish and wildlife populations for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife and Conservation (ODWC) does the same for Oklahoma.

Hunting is not permitted in developed recreation areas or other posted sites. Otherwise, hunting is permitted throughout the Ouachita National Forest during hunting seasons designated by the AGFC and the ODWC. All state hunting and fishing regulations, fees, and seasons apply on National Forest land.

Angling is allowed in most areas of the National Forest during fishing seasons designated by the AGFC and the ODWC. Some locations have special regulations in order to protect/enhance aquatic species that depend on high-quality habitat. Swimming areas are closed to fishing.

Proposed Special Area Designations

Analyses were conducted during plan revision and during a previous significant plan amendment to determine if any additional special area designations should be recommended. As a result of those analyses and associated public involvement, one addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System is recommended and three additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System are recommended.

National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

Currently, the Cossatot and Little Missouri Rivers are the only designated Wild and Scenic Rivers within the Ouachita National Forest. The eligibility and suitability of the Glover River in southeastern Oklahoma was studied as part of a significant amendment to the 1990 Forest Plan completed in 2002. The Glover River's "outstandingly remarkable" values are described in Appendix B of the Environmental Impact Statement for that amendment, and a recommendation that 16.5 miles of the Glover River in McCurtain County, Oklahoma, be added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System with a designation of "scenic" was part of the Record of Decision. A review of other eligible rivers during plan revision revealed none suited for recommendation as a National Wild and Scenic River, because these rivers are bordered by too little National Forest System land. Final suitability studies are deferred to the respective states.

Designating the Glover River as a Wild and Scenic River would help meet Forest-wide desired conditions for aquatic and riparian ecosystems, Threatened and Endangered species habitat, watershed health, and public use and enjoyment (including conservation of areas having a scenic integrity). Pending congressional action, an approximately ½-mile wide corridor of the roughly 16.5-mile segment of the Glover River within the Ouachita National Forest will be managed as part of MA 20c.

National Wilderness Preservation System

The eligibility and suitability of certain areas within the Ouachita National Forest for possible future wilderness designation were studied during the revision of the Forest Plan. Lands adjacent to Flatside Wilderness (620 acres) and the East Unit of Poteau Mountain (77 acres) in Arkansas and Upper Kiamichi Wilderness (1,096 acres) in Oklahoma are recommended for addition to the National Wilderness System, primarily because adding these lands to the National Wilderness Preservation System would establish more logical and manageable boundaries for these areas. Completing these additions would also be consistent with Forest Plan desired conditions for public use and enjoyment of national forest lands, including conservation of opportunities for semi-primitive recreation settings.

The proposed Flatside Wilderness and Poteau Mountain additions in Arkansas, and Upper Kiamichi Wilderness addition in Oklahoma are contiguous to existing wilderness boundaries, would increase visibility and ease of identification of wilderness versus non-wilderness areas, would create more manageable overall boundaries for administrative purposes, and would add areas of scenic value to each wilderness. The recommended wilderness additions total 1,793 acres. If Congress adds these areas to the National Wilderness Preservation System, they will become part of MA 1a.

These recommendations are preliminary administrative recommendations that will receive further review and possible modification by the Chief of the Forest Service, the Secretary of Agriculture, and/or the President of the United States. Congress has reserved the authority to make final decisions on wilderness designation; therefore, wilderness recommendations in the Revised Forest Plan are not appealable under the agency's administrative appeal procedures.

Prospectus

This prospectus describes recent trends and future expectations regarding the levels of experiences, goods and services, or conditions that are supplied by the Forest. Past performance is generally a good indicator of what can be expected in the near future. It is important to note that the projections in this prospectus are not precise quantities to be achieved, but rather indicators of trends and possible changes in the future.

Strategic program emphasis is described through specific objectives that the Forest will focus on under current budget expectations (see Program Priorities and Objectives). Annual monitoring and periodic evaluation of trends in performance indicators determine if there is a need to shift program emphasis and implementation in order to more effectively move toward the desired conditions. Responsible Officials (Forest Supervisor and District Rangers) will plan and implement projects that contribute to achieving desired conditions described in Part 1 while meeting the design criteria discussed in Part 3. Information in this prospectus will be updated on a regular basis to reflect changes in management emphases or budget fluctuations. The final section describes examples of performance risks that could cause a need for change in management emphasis.

Budget History

The Ouachita National Forest experienced significant changes in National Forest System (NFS) budgets between Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 and FY 2004. Funding levels increased in FY 2001 to cover increased costs stemming from powerful ice storms in December 2000 but declined in FY 2002 due to fire borrowing (transfer of funds to fight major wildfires nationwide). The borrowing issue did not significantly affect FY 2003 or 2004 funding. Total NFS funds in FY 2003 totaled \$11.4 million, approximately \$6.2 million less than FY 2002 (FY 2002 still included a portion of the ice storm funding received in FY 2001).

FY 2003 receipts totaled \$10,627,217, which is representative of a near normal program year.

Performance History

Table 2.6 displays some of the management accomplishments completed on the Forest during FY 1998 through FY 2004. An annual monitoring report is compiled for the Forest that reflects almost all program accomplishments. A five-year summary of activities would normally be sufficient to establish trends; however, seven years of accomplishments are reported here because the ice storms of December 2000 resulted in atypical outcomes in 2001 and 2002. FY 1999 was also anomalous in terms of acres thinned.

Table 2.6 Resource Management Accomplishments

Objective or Activity	Unit of Measure	Year						
		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Trail construction	Miles	133.8	30.9	37	10	6	6	6
Trail maintenance	Miles	135.0	186.6	120	620	280	293	288
Heritage resource survey	Acres	22,175	9,842	10,264	14,381	30,239	6,490	22,930
Waterhole development	Structures	115	150	153	128	12	107	142
Midstory reduction	Acres	2,160	3,193	4,467	4,174	4,450	3,014	353
Prescribed fire	Acres	118,806	106,110	99,931	52,342	80,285	128,319	134,386
Lime, fertilize and/or stock lakes/ponds	Acres	222	227	408	567	647	670	828.5

Objective or Activity	Unit of Measure	Year						
		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Livestock	Number	806	1,361	1,116	1,082	1,179	903	715
Animal unit months	Number	10,045	9,258	5,367	5,317	8,334	5,081	5,595
Active range allotments	Number	23	23	21	20	20	17	16
Basin Area Stream Survey	Acres	5,930	0	0	48,237	0	0	0
Watershed improvement & maintenance	Acres	34	35	45	30	35	56	73
Minerals administration	Cases	521	250	128	191	191	577	860
Timber offered	Million cubic feet	19.6	20.57	17.21	15.04	5.88	13.11	17.77
Timber sold	Million cubic feet	25.99	13.02	20.65	19.05	3.42	11.09	14.17
Acres sold by harvest method:								
Clearcut	Acres	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Seedtree/shelterwood	Acres	2,509	1,850	1,838	937	460	2,068	2,702
Thinning	Acres	23,684	1,075	16,706	5,984	5,873	12,073	8,933
Uneven-aged management	Acres	7,674	5,677	2,857	1,157	1,334	2,760	3,289
Timber harvested	Million cubic feet	19.4	25.75	22.18	15.56	16.05	12.24	11.40
Reforestation	Acres	9,757	13,930	12,980	6,403	6,307	7,840	7,011
Land line location or maintenance	Miles	52	51	106.75	16	39.5	77	80
Rights-of-way	Cases	3	150	1	2	2	1	1
Arterial/collector roads reconstructed	Miles	15	13	10	11	33	4	14
Local roads constructed	Miles	16	7	19	6	5	5	5

Program Priorities and Objectives

Restoring and maintaining healthy and productive ecosystems, providing high-quality recreation opportunities, protecting air quality, and providing clean water, appealing scenery, forest products, and economic opportunities to communities that rely upon this Forest are the highest priorities under the Revised Forest Plan. The following sections list program priorities and objectives for achieving the desired conditions set forth in Part 1 and Part 2.

Many variables that influence the degree to which objectives are achieved cannot be fully assessed when a plan is revised or amended. Legal mandates, congressional intent as expressed in annual budgets, natural disturbance events, and other issues or factors over which the Forest Supervisor has little or no control all influence performance. The actual mix and level of activities to be conducted will be determined each year, utilizing every opportunity to move toward the desired conditions and to contribute to the Forest Service's national strategic goals (<http://www.fs.fed.us/plan>). Appendix C presents a summary of proposed and probable activities. The following sections contain a discussion of these and other risks associated with implementation of this Forest Plan.

Forest Health/Terrestrial, Riparian, and Aquatic Communities/Wildlife and Fish Habitat (including Proposed, Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species Habitat)

Priorities

- Take steps to improve forest health by reducing the likelihood of insect infestations, disease outbreaks, and establishment of non-native, invasive species on National Forest System lands.
- Use an integrated pest management approach to prevent or reduce damage to forest resources from pest organisms, including non-native, invasive species.
- Maintain or restore community diversity—and a significant component of species diversity—by utilizing prescribed burning in appropriate portions of MA 6 (Rare Upland Communities) and by utilizing prescribed burning, regeneration harvests, intermediate stand treatments (thinning), and midstory reduction in MAs 14, 15, 21, and 22. Of these, MAs 6, 21, and 22 will have priority for prescribed burning.
- Address fine-scale species diversity needs during project-level planning by consulting (and adding to) States' natural heritage and the Forest species of viability concern databases and applying the best available science to ensure that management actions either maintain or enhance the long-term viability of these species.
- Restore the shortleaf pine-bluestem grass ecosystem within landscapes of 10,000 to 150,000 acres.
- Maintain the full range of natural systems found within the Ouachita National Forest, giving special attention to the conservation of rare systems or communities and the restoration of a component of “old growth” in all forest and woodland system types. Conserve rare upland communities and rare riparian/aquatic communities within the Rare Upland Communities and Water

and Riparian Communities Management Areas. Use active management to restore fire-maintained old growth forests and woodlands (principally in MAs 21 and 22, but also in MA 17) and primarily custodial management to allow natural restoration of old growth conditions in wildernesses (MA 1), special interest areas (MA 2), research natural areas (MA 4), riparian areas (MA 9), portions of semi-primitive areas (MA 17), and other parts of the national forest outside the “lands suitable for timber production” in MAs 14, 15, and 16. Maintain or restore the full range of patch sizes commensurate with natural occurrences of community (system) types. (See Appendix D for the initial inventory of possible old growth and a summary of projected future old growth conditions by management area and ecological system.)

- Continue to make use of the Fire Learning Network and other successful protocols to enhance monitoring the efficacy of the prescribed burning program.

Objectives

- OBJ01. Increase prescribed fire to an average of 180,000 acres per year by 2011 to help achieve and maintain desired community conditions.
Performance Indicator: acres treated with prescribed fire per year.
- OBJ02. Move 5,000 acres into fire regime condition class I annually.
Performance Indicator: number of acres moved into fire regime condition class I annually.
- OBJ03. Treat at least 300 acres per year for non-native, invasive species.
Performance Indicator: acres treated.
- OBJ04. Maintain or improve the population status of all species that are federally listed or proposed for listing when evaluated at 5-year intervals.
Performance Indicators: trends in monitored populations; accomplishment of recovery plan tasks.
- OBJ05. For wildlife purposes, strive to achieve a total open road density of 1.0 mile per square mile or less for all MAs except MAs 1 and 4 (where the desired density is zero open roads per square mile) and MAs 2, 16, 17, 19, and 21 (where the desired density is 0.75 mile of open road per square mile or less during critical periods for wildlife, i.e., March to August). **Performance Indicators:** roads analyses completed, projects that achieve this objective, and miles of road decommissioned.
- OBJ06. Establish 5,500 acres per year in grass/forb condition within the pine-oak forest subsystem while maintaining 60-90 percent in mature to late seral condition. **Performance Indicators:** acres of regeneration harvest under irregular shelterwood or irregular seedtree system per year; acres of mature pine-oak forest.

- OBJ07. Increase cumulative total area being restored to shortleaf pine-bluestem grass or shortleaf pine-oak woodland conditions to 350,000 acres by 2021. **Performance Indicator:** acreage of landscapes in which active management (e.g., thinning, burning) to restore a significant pine-bluestem or pine-oak woodland component are underway.
- OBJ08. Establish and maintain the following mix of seral stages in pine-bluestem woodland: 3-9% early, 15-30% mid, and 60-90% late seral. **Performance Indicator:** percentages of pine-bluestem in early and late seral stages.
- OBJ09. Apply management actions to restore ecosystem health in at least 5,000 acres per year of oak forests and woodlands affected by oak decline and other hardwood diseases, insect problems, and drought. **Performance Indicators:** acres of oak forest and woodland burned; acres thinned or regenerated.
- OBJ10. Reduce susceptibility to southern pine or Ips beetle outbreaks on at least 25,000 acres per year. **Performance Indicators:** acres treated and acres at risk.
- OBJ11. Apply management practices to begin replacing off-site loblolly pine plantations with shortleaf pine and native hardwoods where such plantations were installed outside the natural range of loblolly pine (i.e., most of the Ouachita Mountains); treat at least 500 acres per year. **Performance Indicator:** acres of loblolly pine plantation treated and acres of off-site loblolly pine remaining.
- OBJ12. Refine the Forest-wide inventory of rare natural systems (upland systems named in MA 6, plus Ouachita Mountains Forested Seep) by ensuring that such systems are identified during forest vegetation surveys and by other means, which may include remote sensing, GIS analyses, and special surveys. Add newly located upland rare systems or communities to MA 6 and newly located seeps or other rare wet or riparian systems to MA 9. Report revised inventory figures in annual monitoring reports, beginning in the FY 2010 report. **Performance Indicator:** acres of each rare natural system added and, if appropriate, subtracted from the inventory.
- OBJ13. Refine the Forest-wide inventory of possible old growth by verifying or modifying the existing inventory, as needed. The initial inventory is summarized in the Old Growth Strategy section (also see Standard VM002). **Performance Indicator:** acres of each type of possible old growth added and, if appropriate, subtracted from the inventory.

The maintenance and improvement of habitat for management indicator species (MIS) are encompassed by other objectives, design criteria (listed in Part 3), and MA allocations. Table 2.7, which includes all MIS for this revised Forest Plan, lists the related objectives and other direction for each individual MIS.

Table 2.7 Related Objectives and Other Direction for Each Individual MIS

Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat Objectives (OBJ) and Other MIS-Related Direction
Northern bobwhite	<i>Colinus virginianus</i>	OBJ01, OBJ02, OBJ03, OBJ05, OBJ06, OBJ07, OBJ10, OBJ11
White-tailed deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	OBJ01, OBJ02, OBJ03, OBJ05, OBJ06, OBJ07, OBJ08, OBJ10, OBJ11
Eastern wild turkey	<i>Meleagris gallapavo</i>	OBJ01, OBJ02, OBJ03, OBJ05, OBJ06, OBJ07, OBJ08, OBJ10, OBJ11
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	<i>Picoides borealis</i>	OBJ01, OBJ02, OBJ03, OBJ04, OBJ05, OBJ06, OBJ07, OBJ09, OBJ10, MA 22 allocation and direction
Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>	OBJ06, OBJ07, OBJ08, OBJ10, OBJ11, OBJ12, design criterion WF004, WF005,
Scarlet tanager	<i>Piranga olivacea</i>	OBJ01, OBJ03, OBJ05, OBJ08, OBJ10, OBJ11, OBJ12
Prairie warbler	<i>Dendroica discolor</i>	OBJ01, OBJ02, OBJ03, OBJ05, OBJ06, OBJ07, OBJ08, OBJ10, OBJ11, OBJ12, MA 21 and 22
Ponds, Lakes & Waterholes		
Bluegill	<i>Lepomis macrochirus</i>	Desired condition for Ponds, Lakes & Waterholes
Redear sunfish	<i>Lepomis microlophus</i>	
Largemouth bass	<i>Micropterus salmoides</i>	
Arkansas River Valley Streams		
Yellow bullhead	<i>Ameiurus natalis</i>	Desired condition for conservation of productive soils and beneficial uses of water, and MA 9 allocation and direction within the Arkansas River Valley streams
Central stoneroller	<i>Campostoma anomalum</i>	
Redfin darter	<i>Etheostoma whipplei</i>	
Green sunfish	<i>Lepomis cyanellus</i>	
Longear sunfish	<i>Lepomis megalotis</i>	
Gulf Coastal Plain Ecoregion Streams		
Pirate perch	<i>Aphredoderus sayanus</i>	Desired condition for conservation of productive soils and beneficial uses of water, and MA 9 allocation and direction within the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecoregion streams
Central stoneroller	<i>Campostoma anomalum</i>	
Creek chubsucker	<i>Erimyzon oblongus</i>	
Green sunfish	<i>Lepomis cyanellus</i>	
Longear sunfish	<i>Lepomis megalotis</i>	
Ouachita Mountain Ecoregion Streams		
Central stoneroller	<i>Campostoma anomalum</i>	Desired condition for conservation of productive soils and beneficial uses of water, and MA 9 allocation and direction within the Ouachita Mountain Ecoregion streams
Johnny darter (Glover & Mtn. Fork Rivers only)	<i>Etheostoma nigrum</i>	
Orangebelly darter	<i>Etheostoma radiosum</i>	
Redfin darter	<i>Etheostoma whipplei</i>	
Northern studfish	<i>Fundulus catenatus</i>	
Northern hog sucker	<i>Hypentilium nigricans</i>	
Green sunfish	<i>Lepomis cyanellus</i>	
Longear sunfish	<i>Lepomis megalotis</i>	
Striped shiner	<i>Luxilus chrysocephalus</i>	
Smallmouth bass	<i>Micropterus dolomieu</i>	
Channel darter (Glover & Mtn. Fork Rivers only)	<i>Percina copelandi</i>	

Soil, Water, and Air

Priorities

- Maintain or enhance designated beneficial uses of water.
- Protect source waters and other potable water sources.
- Include erosion and sediment control measures in all ground disturbing project plans.
- Maintain or improve long term soil productivity.
- Identify roads and trails that should be reconstructed or decommissioned to reduce sediment and improve watershed condition.
- Meet Federal and State goals concerning air and water quality (e.g., National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/state water quality goals).
- Protect watershed functions by implementing standards that meet or exceed state best management practice guidelines.
- Monitor compliance with Forest Plan design criteria intended to protect soil, air, and water quality.
- Minimize air pollution impacts to the Air Quality Related Values (AQRV) of the Class I Area, Caney Creek Wilderness, through a cooperative working relationship with agencies managing air quality.

Objectives

Also, see Transportation System objectives.

- OBJ14. Maintain or improve watershed health. **Performance Indicators:** Basin Area Stream Survey results (conducted approximately every five years); number of impaired waterbodies that are on or downstream of the Forest; soil quality monitoring results; percent of treatment units meeting soil quality standards.
- OBJ15. Conduct watershed improvement actions on at least 40 acres per year. **Performance Indicator:** acres treated.
- OBJ16. Protect and improve the Air Quality Related Values of the Class I Area. **Performance Indicators:** number of AQRV monitoring sites, number of PSD permits reviewed, and number of regional air quality planning committees participated in.

Lands

Priorities

- Continue to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers toward mutually beneficial interchanges of federal public land adjacent to Lake Ouachita, Lake Nimrod, and Broken Bow Lake.
- Using land exchanges and purchases, reduce the complexity of landownership patterns to reduce administrative costs and management challenges (See Landownership Adjustment Strategy).

Objectives

- OBJ17. Maintain landlines on a 10-year cycle. **Performance Indicator:** miles of boundary line maintained per decade.

Minerals

Priorities

- Administer the federal mineral resource program to meet demands for energy and non-energy minerals consistent with MAs, multiple use objectives, and in accordance with agency policies and existing laws.
- For non-energy mineral resources and mineral material authorizations, emphasize authorizations of minerals needed for environmental protection, public infrastructure, flood protection, erosion control, and watershed restoration.
- On National Forest System tracts where mineral rights are outstanding or reserved, the exercise of private mineral rights to explore and develop mineral resources will be respected.
- Where reserved or outstanding mineral rights are involved, the mineral owner is encouraged to implement all surface-disturbing activities outside riparian areas.
- Manage geologic resources to protect public safety and facilities.
- Locate and design facilities and management activities to avoid, minimize, or mitigate negative effects on geologic resources with identified values (scientific, scenic, paleontological, ecological, recreational, drinking water, etc.).

Objectives

- OBJ18. Process applications for federal mineral leases, licenses, and permits within 120 days. **Performance Indicator:** percent of applications processed within 120 days.
- OBJ19. Process operations proposed under outstanding and reserved mineral rights within 60 days and 90 days, respectively. **Performance Indicator:** percent of operations processed within specified timelines.

Heritage Stewardship and Tribal and Native American Interests

Priorities

- Inventory and evaluate historic and prehistoric cultural resources for their eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Based on evaluation, provide protection for those eligible sites; incorporate suitable sites into interpretative programs for the public.
- Develop agreements with tribal governments and State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) to facilitate consultation and conserve heritage resources.

Objectives

- OBJ20. Complete a forest overview of heritage resources by 2007 incorporating the results of 20+ years of Section 106 and Section 110 work and documentation. **Performance Indicator:** date forest overview completed.
- OBJ21. Drawing upon the heritage resources overview, complete a Heritage Resources Management Plan by 2010. **Performance Indicator:** date Heritage Resources Management Plan completed.
- OBJ22. Revise the Programmatic Agreement with SHPOs and THPOs by 2011. **Performance Indicator:** date revision completed.

Public Use and Enjoyment

Provide Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

Priorities

- Supply a spectrum of recreational facilities and opportunities that are responsive to user demands.
- Provide abundant and diverse opportunities for enjoying scenery, streams, lakes and rivers, heritage sites, geological features, and wildlife.
- Sustain the availability of the least common segments of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum—Primitive, Semi-Primitive Non-motorized, and Semi-Primitive Motorized.
- Improve the cost effectiveness of operating recreational facilities by using one or more of the following techniques where feasible: decommissioning underused sites, concessionaire agreements, entering into management partnerships, and other measures.
- Maintain a network of hiking, biking, equestrian, and multiple-use trails in good condition, relying upon partnerships to the greatest extent possible.

- Construct new trails only when partnerships are in place to support trail maintenance long-term.
- Designate and sign a system of designated routes suitable for recreational travel by motorized vehicles, including off-highway vehicles.
- Maintain or enhance the visual character of the Forest by using the Scenery Management System to achieve scenic integrity objectives.
- Provide for an optimal, sustained yield of sport fish populations through structural and nonstructural habitat improvements.
- Provide for an optimal, sustained yield of game animals by perpetuating a mix of early, mid, and late successional forest and woodland conditions.

Objectives

- OBJ23. Conduct maintenance on at least 300 miles of trails (non-motorized use) per year. **Performance Indicator:** miles of trail maintained to standard annually.
- OBJ24. Maintain all recreation facilities to standard. **Performance Indicator:** facilities maintained to standard annually.
- OBJ25. Improve accessibility within at least one recreation site per year. **Performance Indicator:** sites improved for accessibility annually.
- OBJ26. Designate and sign a system of roads and trails suitable for public access by motor vehicle, including off-highway vehicles, no later than October 2009; at the same time, initiate the process to prohibit cross country travel by motorized vehicles except for emergency purposes and specific authorized uses. **Performance Indicators:** Date system of designated routes established; percentage of designated routes appropriately signed.
- OBJ27. Maintain recreational fishing opportunities of stocked lakes and ponds. **Performance Indicators:** percentage of game fish of harvestable size; electrofishing catch per unit (time) effort; suitable ratios of bass to sunfish from shoreline seining reproduction checks.
- OBJ28. Improve or maintain all designated scenic overlooks at least once per decade. **Performance Indicators:** number improved or maintained per year; percent maintained or improved per decade.

Wilderness

- OBJ29. Conduct inventories to determine the presence and extent of non-native invasive species in wildernesses by 2010; based on results of these inventories, develop and implement appropriate monitoring and treatment programs. **Performance Indicators:** inventories completed; monitoring plans completed; acres treated for invasive species control.
- OBJ30. Update all Wilderness Management Plans, including monitoring components, wilderness education, and restoration needs, by 2008. **Performance Indicator:** Wilderness Management Plans updated.

Facility Operation and Maintenance

Priorities

- Identify buildings and other structures on National Forest System land that are essential to meeting management objectives, and maintain them to standard.
- Upgrade the energy efficiency and accessibility of administrative buildings and other facilities open to the public.
- Identify and dispose of non-essential facilities.
- Eliminate leased facilities.

Objectives

- OBJ31. Eliminate three leased facilities by 2015. **Performance Indicator:** leases eliminated by 2015.
- OBJ32. Eliminate 30 percent of other non-essential administrative facilities by 2015. **Performance Indicator:** non-essential facilities remaining as a percentage of the FY 2005 baseline (to be determined).
- OBJ33. Upgrade all identified public facilities to Architectural Barriers Act standards by 2015. **Performance Indicator:** percentage of identified public facilities that are accessible.
- OBJ34. Complete energy efficiency upgrades on all administrative buildings and complete identified work on 10 percent of administrative buildings needing upgrades by 2015. **Performance Indicator:** percentage of administrative buildings needing work with energy efficiency upgrades completed by 2015.
- OBJ35. Inspect all buildings compliance with health and safety standards and address all identified health and safety issues. **Performance Indicator:** percentage of inspected buildings that met health and safety standards.

Transportation System

Priorities

- Develop and operate the minimum road system, including all bridges and culverts, maintained to the minimum standard needed to meet requirements of proposed actions, protect the environment, and provide for reasonable and safe access.
- When conducting roads analyses, place special emphasis on reducing the impacts of roads in Streamside Management Areas (by proposing road closures, road reconstruction, or other means).
- Manage the forest transportation system, including the open road density, to minimize wildlife habitat disturbance during the critical reproductive period (March–August), optimize road maintenance, reduce road-related barriers to aquatic organism passage, and reduce conflicts with non-motorized recreational activities.
- Develop and operate a system of OHV routes that satisfies some public demands for motorized recreation and protects environmental quality; maintain routes to agency guidelines, when the latter are published.

Objectives

- OBJ36. Complete a transportation plan for the Ouachita National Forest by late 2007 that (among other things) addresses the backlog of maintenance and reconstruction needs. **Performance Indicator:** transportation plan completion date.
- OBJ37. By 2015, identify all system roads that should be obliterated. **Performance Indicator:** miles of system roads decommissioned.
- OBJ38. Obliterate 25 percent of roads identified under the previous objective by 2015 (many such needs to obliterate roads will be identified well before 2015). **Performance Indicator:** miles of road obliterated by 2015.
- OBJ39. Reduce miles of road under Forest Service maintenance. **Performance Indicator:** miles of system roads eliminated from road maintenance inventory per year.
- OBJ40. Improve aquatic organism passage on an average of no less than six stream crossings per year (where there are road-related barriers to passage). **Performance Indicator:** number of stream crossings where aquatic organism passage is improved.

Commodity and Commercial Uses (Timber, Minerals, Energy)

Priorities

- Contribute to the economic base of local communities by providing a sustained yield of high-quality wood products at a level consistent with sound economic principles, local market demands, and desired ecological conditions.
- Develop local economy marketing opportunities to improve utilization of hardwood products.
- Administer minerals program to:
 - (a) Encourage and facilitate the orderly exploration, development, and production of mineral and energy resources in order to promote self-sufficiency in those mineral and energy resources necessary for economic growth and national defense.
 - (b) Ensure that exploration, development, and production of mineral and energy resources are conducted in an environmentally sound manner and that these activities are integrated with the planning and management of other National Forest resources.
 - (c) Ensure that lands disturbed by mineral and energy activities are reclaimed for other productive uses.

Objectives

- OBJ41. Sell an average of at least 200,000 hundred cubic feet (ccf) of timber per year. **Performance Indicator:** Volume of timber sold per year and a running annual average.

Fuels

Priorities

- Reduce fuel loads of National Forest System lands that have the greatest potential for catastrophic wildland fire.
- Lands in and around “Firewise Communities” and other “Communities at Risk” are the highest priority for mechanical treatment including commercial and non-commercial thinning and/or midstory removal followed by prescribed fire (usually done within two years of mechanical work).
- Suppress wildfires at minimum cost, ensuring firefighter and public safety as the first priority. Protect property and natural and cultural resources based on the relative values to be protected.

Objectives

- OBJ42. Treat the highest priority areas at a rate of 500 to 1,000 acres per year. Most of these areas (i.e., adjacent NF lands) should be restored to condition class 1 by FY 2011. **Performance Indicator:** acres burned per year.
- OBJ43. Complete 50,000 to 100,000 acres per year of hazardous fuel reduction in the other moderate to high priority areas. **Performance Indicators:** acres burned per year and percent forest in fire regime condition class I and II.

Performance Risks

The Forest operates in a dynamic environment, characterized by uncertainties in both internal and external operating conditions, due to fluctuations in the natural environment and the institutional environment. If events unfold in a manner that was not anticipated when this prospectus was prepared, attainment of the objectives shown above will be affected.

Risks Related to the Natural Environment

Tornadoes; ice storms; insect or disease outbreaks; lightning ignited fires; other natural disturbances; and arson fires are likely to occur, and some of these events could significantly alter current conditions. The Forest has been affected by several major disturbance events in the last 10 years. Predicting where and when future major natural disturbance events or arson fires are likely to occur is not possible, but it is likely that such events will affect the extent, location, and timing of management activities.

Risks Related to the Institutional Environment

Annual budgets could differ from projections. The trends in accomplishment of objectives shown above are dependent on the Forest receiving an operating budget similar to the last three years. Fluctuations in the budget, either upward or downward, would lead to changes in the direction and/or magnitude of projected accomplishments. In addition, changes in the mix of funds among program areas also have the potential to affect the rate and/or magnitude of performance.

National or regional strategic initiatives may emerge in response to broad-scale issues. As noted previously, this Forest Plan is linked to the agency's national strategic plan, which is updated every three to five years. Historically, both Congress and the Executive Branch have also instituted program initiatives outside of the forest planning process that affect much or all of the National Forest System (e.g., roadless rule, the National Fire Plan, and the National Energy Policy). Such changes in national direction have the potential to add to, override, or otherwise adjust the performance objectives for the Ouachita National Forest.

Landownership Adjustment Strategy

The primary objective of land adjustment is to achieve the optimum land National Forest System ownership pattern that provides for resource use and protection to meet public needs. Adjustments can also be used to settle claims equitably and properly.

The landownership adjustment strategy is used for guidance in considering and undertaking future adjustment proposals and should not be construed or interpreted to require a private land owner to convey any land to the Forest Service. Land adjustments are completely voluntary transactions for both the Forest Service and private land owners and are completed only after an evaluation determines the action is in the public interest. Only lands offered by a willing seller, exchange proponent, or donor will be considered. Individual land exchange case evaluation includes public involvement procedures as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality applicable regulations, and National Forest land exchange policy and regulations. Forest Service policy for landownership adjustment is found in the Forest Service Manual 5400.

A map of National Forest System lands available for exchange is maintained in the Forest Supervisor's office, with copies in District Offices. The types of lands that will be considered suitable for acquisition through purchase, exchange, or donation are as follows (not listed in any order of priority):

1. Lands and associated riparian ecosystems on water frontage such as lakes and major streams.
2. Critical habitat lands needed for the protection of federally listed endangered or threatened fish, wildlife, or plant species.
3. Lands needed for the protection of significant historical or cultural resources when these resources are threatened or when management may be enhanced by public ownership.
4. Lands that enhance recreation opportunities, public access, and protection of aesthetic values.
5. Lands needed to protect and manage administrative and congressionally designated areas.
6. Lands needed to enhance or protect watershed improvements that affect National Forest riparian area management.
7. Environmentally sensitive lands such as wetlands and old growth.
8. Buffer areas needed to protect lands acquired for specific purposes listed.
9. Key tracts of an ecosystem that promote more effective management of that ecosystem and meet specific needs for vegetation and watershed management, research, public recreation, or other defined management objectives. (Generally, lands that will support consolidation objectives.)
10. Lands needed to protect resource values by eliminating or reducing fire risks, soil erosion, and occupancy trespass.
11. Lands needed to reduce administration and utilization expenses of both the Forest Service and the public.
12. Consolidation of split estates.
13. Other lands desirable for inclusion in the National Forest System.

The types of lands considered suitable to be conveyed from Forest Service ownership by exchanging away, or granting through the Small Tracts Act, Title Claims, or other law, are as follows (not listed in any order of priority):

1. Lands inside or adjacent to communities or intensively developed private lands, which are determined by the Forest Service to be chiefly valuable for non-National Forest System purposes.
2. Parcels that will serve a greater public need in state, county, city, or other federal agency ownership.
3. Inaccessible parcels isolated from other National Forest System lands. Parcels surrounded by or intermingled with private lands that are judged by the Forest Service to be suitable for exchange.
4. Parcels within major blocks of private land, the use of which is substantially for non-National Forest System purposes.
5. Parcels having boundaries, or portions of boundaries, which cannot be efficiently managed (examples: projecting necks or long, narrow strips of land, etc.).
6. A site-specific analysis will be conducted, and must clearly show that any proposed conveyance meets the laws and regulations governing such conveyance, and that it is in the public interest.

Monitoring Strategy

The 1982 NFMA planning regulations (36 CFR 219) specify that “[plan] implementation shall be evaluated on a sample basis to determine how well objectives have been met and how closely management standards and guidelines have been applied. Based upon this evaluation, the interdisciplinary team shall recommend to the Forest Supervisor such changes in management direction, revisions, or amendments to the forest plan as are deemed necessary.”

Specific Forest Plan monitoring and evaluation measures accompany many Plan components in Parts 1 and 2. Monitoring of *desired conditions*, including actions, outcomes, or resources to be measured and the frequency of measurement and reporting, are included in Part 1 of the Plan. Performance indicators to be monitored against Forest Plan *objectives*, including the frequency of measurement and reporting, are presented in Part 2. A compilation of these and other monitoring activities is available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/ouachita/planning/index.shtml>.

Some monitoring results will have a very high degree of precision and reliability. For example, annual changes in the numbers of federally listed Red-cockaded Woodpeckers should be accurate to within ± 5 percent. Monitoring results for less readily countable species whose populations are likely to fluctuate considerably from year to year, including fish, mussels, amphibians, and most plants, will be less precise but should still provide useful data on trends. Most of the performance measures tied to *objectives* (Part 2 of the Plan) are derived from corporate databases (e.g., those that track timber sales, prescribed burning, and other vegetation management activities) that have a high level of precision and reliability. Initially, the precision and reliability of some of the monitoring data concerning the ecological systems named in Part 1 of the Plan will not be optimal, due to the transition from a long-standing vegetation inventory protocol (Continuous

Inventory of Stand Conditions, or CISC) to a new one (FS Veg) that incorporates these newly-recognized systems.

Monitoring adherence to the design criteria in Part 3 entails activities as diverse as contract compliance inspections (e.g. timber sale inspections), implementation monitoring reviews of selected projects (conducted by interdisciplinary teams), individual specialist reviews of project compliance with particular sets of standards (e.g., soil productivity standards, trail protection standards), health and safety inspections (of buildings, bridges, etc), and interdisciplinary reviews of selected environmental assessments (EAs). Implementation of some standards will be monitored by two or more of these means. The primary means of reporting and evaluating compliance with design criteria will be the results of implementation monitoring reviews and individual specialist reviews. Both types of reviews are expected to have moderate to high degrees of precision and high degrees of reliability.

The Revised Forest Plan does not specify particular protocols for each element of the monitoring program. Such protocols are well established for most monitoring elements; however, protocols are subject to change as new findings emerge, new technologies become available, and/or partnerships with other agencies and organizations produce improved methods or procedures for monitoring. Each specialist responsible for one or more monitoring elements maintains and, as needed, appropriately adjusts the monitoring protocol(s). Monitoring task sheets that summarize current protocols are maintained on the website cited previously.

An annual evaluation report that summarizes monitoring results and findings will be prepared and made available to the public. The emphasis of this report will be on those results of monitoring that indicate how well objectives have been met, how well standards have been followed, what expenditures have been made to implement the Forest Plan, and what changes to the Plan may be needed. This report will not present information every year about each monitoring activity in the Forest Plan because some monitoring activities are not conducted every year and others may not yield results that deserve to be reported upon annually.