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## **Examples: descriptions of desired conditions for national forests in Sierra and Cascades regions.**

### **Fire and Fuels**

Fire occurs in its characteristic pattern and resumes its ecological role. Frequent fire maintains lower, manageable levels of flammable materials in most areas, especially in the surface and understory layers. There is a vegetation mosaic of age classes, tree sizes, and species composition, and a low risk for uncharacteristic large, catastrophic fires. The objects of interest are protected; sustainable environmental, social, and economic benefits (such as those associated with tourism) are maintained; and the carbon sequestered in large trees is stabilized. Fire susceptibility and severity, and fire hazards to adjacent human communities and surrounding forest types, are low. The need to maintain fuel conditions that support fires characteristic of complex ecosystems is emphasized and allows for a natural range of fire effects in the Monument.

### **Blue Oak and Live Oak Forests**

Blue oak conditions are maintained at their current condition: a fire regime of low intensity fires, with flame lengths less than three feet; natural vegetation types; and a highly variable and complex landscape pattern. Blue oak dominates, with grass and occasional shrubs as the understory. There are occasional or periodic flushes of regeneration to replace mortality in older trees. (GSM)

### **Hydrological Resources**

Aquatic, riparian, and meadow ecosystems are protected and restored and provide for the viability of species associated with these ecosystems. Hydrological resources, including rivers, streams, meadows, seasonally or perennially wet areas, and their associated riparian vegetation, are able to adjust and recover from natural and human-caused events.

### **Human Uses**

The forest provides wide and varied public use of resources and opportunities while protecting sensitive resources and the objects of interest. Recreation use throughout the year is promoted. Visitors find a rich and varied range of sustainable recreational, educational, and social opportunities enhanced by the surrounding ecosystems. Consistent and easy-to-read signs and informational materials are provided. Interpretation and conservation education reflect scientifically supported scholarship and research data, conveying clear messages about natural and cultural resources and multiple use. Partnerships are established, providing people with a connection to place and promoting a sense of stewardship. The forest provides a wide variety of visually appealing landscapes, such as oak woodland, chaparral, a variety of mixed conifer forest, and giant sequoia groves, for the public to enjoy within the places they prefer to visit.

### **Wildlife and Plant Habitat**

Lands in the Monument continue to provide a diverse range of habitats that support viable populations of associated vertebrate species, with special emphasis on riparian areas, montane meadows, and late successional forest. Proper hydrologic and ecological functioning conditions in riparian areas and meadows are restored and maintained. Old forest habitat is in suitable quality, quantity, and distribution to support viable populations of late successional dependent species, including Pacific fishers, American martens, California spotted owls, northern goshawks, and great gray owls. The configuration of habitat in the Monument provides connectivity and heterogeneity.

Ecological conditions contribute to the recovery of federally threatened and endangered species such as the California condor and Springville clarkia, and help avoid federal listing of Forest Service sensitive species.

### **Transportation System**

Roads are safe and fully-maintained to minimize adverse resource effects, while providing public and administrative access to National Forest System lands and facilities within the Monument. The road system is properly sized to provide needed access to the objects of interest for their proper care, protection, and management, as well as visitor enjoyment of the Monument. Roads that are no longer needed have been decommissioned to restore natural drainage and vegetation or converted to other uses.

### **Adaptive Management**

Thresholds that trigger changed management are established and detailed management alternatives are developed for various predicted ecosystem response trajectories. The adaptive management cycle is transparently implemented and accessible to the public. Regular reports on monitoring and responsive management proposals are made available to stakeholders by dates certain. A structure for collaboration is established that defines how public involvement will be facilitated, how information will be shared, and how conflicts will be resolved. Risk and uncertainty are clearly articulated and addressed, with vulnerability assessments informing the management decisions.

### **Riparian Conservation Areas**

Watersheds, the complex of rivers, streams, lakes, meadows, bogs, fens, wetlands, vernal pools, and springs that comprise their networks, and the ecosystems they support function based on a suite of naturally occurring characteristics, features, processes, and dynamics. This assemblage maintains the physical and biological integrity of these nested systems, including water quality, stream channel stability, critical aquatic habitat, and biotic community structure. The integrity of these systems is the basis for their ability to respond and adjust to disturbances without long-term adverse changes. Desired conditions are those which maintain watershed integrity and promote resilience, at a range of spatial and temporal scales.

### **Partnerships**

The Forest Service and partner organizations capitalize on mutual interests and goals to achieve desired outcomes. Community members, interested stakeholders, regulatory agencies, and leaders from local jurisdictions are well-informed of ecosystem processes and management challenges, and work cooperatively to resolve issues. These partners gather and share information allowing for more accurate and responsive decision-making.

### **Invasive Species Management**

Invasive species do not adversely affect native species, human health, ecosystem processes, or other NFS resources. Aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems are self-sustaining and resistant to the establishment of invasive species. Invasive species management prioritizes prevention and early detection and rapid response actions.

### **Climate Change**

Ecologic and socioeconomic systems are resilient and have the capacity to adapt to climate change. Forests remain as a major focus for storing carbon in fire-resistant stands dominated by large trees.