

DRAFT NOVEMBER 13, 2014

TABLE COMPARING THE FOUR CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVES

At this stage, the Forest Service has identified the preliminary issues from the scoping comments. This effort enabled the agency to develop conceptual alternatives. Next, these conceptual alternatives will be refined and adjusted. The further refined alternatives will then be analyzed in the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) and shared with the public during a 90-day public comment period. Following that comment period, the Forest Service will conduct a content analysis of the comments and respond to those that are substantive. Changes could include correcting factual information, augmenting analyses and considering other potential needs to inform the Forest Supervisor's decision. There will be another opportunity for public involvement prior to a decision being made through the objection process.

The conceptual alternatives reflect a range of management actions that address issues raised during the public scoping period. Additional management actions described in the Alternative B may not be displayed in the conceptual alternatives because at this time, the Forest Service believes they are common across alternatives. As the alternatives are further refined, management actions will be differentiated by forest when appropriate. For example, differences between the east and west sides of the Sierra Nevada could be recognized and managed for their unique characteristics.

Terrestrial Ecosystems: Vegetation Treatments (Non-Fire)

Alternative A No Action	Alternative B: Proposed Action	Alternative C	Alternative D
Thinning Rx – light to moderate intensity due to existing limitations on intensity and location of treatments.	Thinning Rx – thinning more intense than Alternative A to improve tree resilience to stresses.	Thinning Rx – less intense than Alternative B, possibly less intense than Alternative A. Focused on treating smaller trees and retaining most medium and large trees unchanged to provide habitat.	Thinning Rx – slightly heavier thinning than Alternative B in some places; reach desired condition more quickly with fewer stand entries; may require more maintenance because of more open conditions, but maintenance would likely be less expensive than under Alternative B.
Focus on removing surface and ladder fuels and removing small and medium size trees that allow fires to burn into the treetops while meeting retention requirements and limits on the amount of change in vegetation condition per 2004 SNFPA.	Focus on removing surface and ladder fuels on the ground and removing small and medium sized trees that allow fires to burn into the treetops. Also treat areas to restore landscape heterogeneity.	Focus on removing surface and ladder fuels on the ground and removing small trees that allow fires to burn into the treetops.	Focus on removing surface and ladder fuels and treating areas similar to Alternative B, more thinning to improve the resilience of forests to stressors such as drought.
Primarily strategically placed area treatments balanced with species-specific land allocations.	Treatment locations follow strategy in GTR 220 and include strategic locations in the fire protection zones.	Treatments focus on defense zone.	Treatment locations follow strategy in GTR 220 and include strategic locations in the fire protection zones; additional locations prioritize ridge tops above high quality habitat to facilitate fire management.
Thinning treatment area is similar to Alternative B; possibly slightly less.	Thinning treatment area – largest area treated among alternatives; equal to Alternative D.	Thinning treatment area – thin areas focused on reducing risks to habitat and where needed to maintain or restore habitat.	Thinning treatment area – largest area treated among alternatives (same as Alternative B); may generate more money for restoration.
Treatments in spotted owl land allocations per 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA).	Treatments will incorporate some elements of interim recommendations for California Spotted Owl.	Treatments consistent with interim recommendations for California Spotted Owl.	Treatments may incorporate some elements of interim recommendations for California Spotted Owl.
Fisher conservation per 2004 SNFPA.	Fisher conservation follows GTR 220; incorporate some elements of Fisher Conservation Strategy.	Fisher conservation consistent with the findings and recommendations of Fisher Conservation Strategy.	Fisher conservation follows GTR 220; may incorporate some elements of Fisher Conservation Strategy.
Whitebark pine restoration limited	Whitebark pine management strategy	Whitebark pine management strategy	Whitebark pine management strategy

to small projects that are not guided by a whitebark pine management strategy.	with emphasis on treatment in recreation sites (ski areas, campgrounds), with greater acreage target than Alternative A.	emphasizes use of natural fire for restoration, and potential facilitated migration of suitable plants considering expected climate change.	similar to Alternative B, but greater acres treated.
Restoration of special habitats occurs opportunistically.	Targets restoration of special habitats (aspen, pumice flats, fens) to natural range of variability in ecosystem structure/function.	Restoration of special habitats under taken only in cases where direct human causes are known.	Restoration of special habitats similar to Alternative B, but greater acres treated.

Terrestrial Ecosystems: Vegetation Treatments (Fire)

Alternative A No Action	Alternative B: Proposed Action	Alternative C	Alternative D
Rx fire – plan direction assumes frequent use of underburning, but is rarely implemented due to risk and limited capacity.	Rx fire – use strategic placement to facilitate potential wildfire management (ridge tops, access routes); likely slightly greater than the Alternative A because risk is more reduced by non-fire treatments; some Rx fire may be used in previously untreated areas dependent on risk.	Rx fire – underburn likely slightly more than Alternative A but use strategic placement as in Alternative B.	Rx fire – more underburning than Alternative B, likely greatest amount due to more money available; use strategic placement.
Wildfire managed to meet resource objectives – Manage only lightning-caused fires to reduce fuel loads or provide other resource benefits if described in a National Forest Fire Management Plan (FMP).	Wildfire managed to meet resource objectives – limited in protection zones; somewhat limited in restoration zone and highly encouraged in the maintenance zone; manage any ignitions allowable by Forest Service policy.	Wildfire managed to meet resource objectives – limited in defense zone and somewhat limited in restoration zone and highly encouraged in the maintenance zone; manage any ignitions allowable by Forest Service policy.	Wildfire managed to meet resource objectives – limited in protection zones; somewhat limited in restoration zone and highly encouraged in the maintenance zone; manage any ignitions allowable by Forest Service policy.
Fire Management Zones – Fire management zones per 2004 SNFPA (defense and threat zones).	Fire Management Zones – four zone approach: wildfire protection, general protection, restoration and maintenance	Fire Management Zones – same as A; use three zone approach: defense, restoration and maintenance.	Fire Management Zones – use four zone approach the same as in Alternative B.

Terrestrial Ecosystems: Post-Fire Management and Complex Early Seral

Alternative A No Action	Alternative B: Proposed Action	Alternative C	Alternative D
Active post-fire treatments may be considered after providing for other post-fire restoration needs.	Active post-fire treatments may be considered after providing for other post-fire restoration needs.	Post-fire restoration needs will be first guided by the fisher conservation strategy and spotted owl interim recommendations (e.g. restoring corridors through reforestation) and key characteristics of ecological integrity for complex early seral habitats. Active post-fire treatments may be considered after providing for other post-fire restoration needs.	Active post-fire treatments may be considered after providing for other post-fire restoration needs. These activities would also be focused on strategic areas to facilitate wildfire management, and on high quality sites to move these sites to mature conditions as quickly as possible.

Additional Species-Specific Habitat Management

Alternative A No Action	Alternative B: Proposed Action	Alternative C	Alternative D
Manage for species as directed in the 2004 SNFPA.	Balance trade-offs to accept some short term effects to habitats to allow proactive management to reduce risk to at-risk species habitats, including movement corridors, but not as much as in Alternative D.	Balance tradeoffs to reduce short term effects to habitat. Limit proactive management to actions recommended in the fisher conservation strategy and actions consistent with the spotted owl interim recommendations.	Balance tradeoffs similar to Alternative B but reducing risk on more acres.
Continue to implement Inyo National Forest Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policy. Actively treat pinyon-juniper encroachment within sagebrush to benefit sage-grouse.	Formalize Inyo National Forest Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policy and additional management direction consistent with the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Sage-Grouse Amendment. Acres of treatments for removal of encroaching pinyon-juniper within sage-grouse habitat greater than Alternative A	Formalize Inyo National Forest Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policy and additional management direction consistent with the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Sage-Grouse Amendment. Acres of treatments for removal of encroaching pinyon-juniper within sage-grouse habitat greater than Alternative B.	Formalize Inyo National Forest Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policy and additional management direction consistent with the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Sage-Grouse Amendment. Acres of treatments for removal of encroaching pinyon-juniper within sage-grouse habitat greater than Alternative B and treatments are targeted to maximize pinyon-juniper output (fuelwood, Christmas tree sales).

Riparian Habitats and Watershed Management

Alternative A No Action	Alternative B: Proposed Action	Alternative C	Alternative D
Priority watersheds as currently designated.	Priority watersheds as currently designated; identify and improve condition class in two new priority watersheds for the Sequoia; possibly new priority watersheds for the Inyo and Sierra to increase the pace and scale of watershed restoration.	Priority watersheds as currently designated; identify and improve condition class in two new priority watersheds for the Sequoia; possibly identify and improve condition class in new priority watersheds for Inyo and Sierra to increase pace and scale of watershed restoration.	Improve condition class in currently designated priority watersheds; identify and improve condition class in two new priority watersheds for the Sequoia; possibly identify and improve condition class in new priority watersheds for Inyo and Sierra to increase pace and scale of watershed restoration.

Tribal Relations and Uses

Alternative A No Action	Alternative B: Proposed Action	Alternative C	Alternative D
Continued implementation of 2004 SNFPA Section VIII E Native American Relations.	Continued implementation of 2004 SNFPA Section VIII E Native American Relations.	Continued implementation of 2004 SNFPA Section VIII E Native American Relations.	Continued implementation of 2004 SNFPA Section VIII E Native American Relations
	Desired Conditions and Strategies from Alternative B.	Desired Conditions and Strategies from Alternative B.	Desired Conditions and Strategies from Alternative B.

Recreation

Alternative A No Action	Alternative B: Proposed Action	Alternative C	Alternative D
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) – use current.	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) – minor edits to resolve GIS conflicts; ROS class may change with wilderness recommendation	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) – minor edits to resolve GIS conflicts; ROS class may change with wilderness recommendation.	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) – minor edits to resolve GIS conflicts; ROS class may change with wilderness recommendation.
Recreation activities reflect current opportunities.	Recreation activities reflect a sustainable balance of opportunities as described in the 2012 Planning Rule.	More emphasis on dispersed recreation opportunities; management approach reflects sustainable recreation concepts in the 2012 Planning Rule.	Emphasize new opportunities that generate revenue to increase infrastructure and public services (primarily developed recreation); management approach reflects sustainable recreation concepts in the 2012 Planning Rule.
Use private and public partnerships to improve recreation opportunities and maintain recreation infrastructure.	Shift resources based on partnership capacity assessment to increase use of private and public partnerships to improve recreation opportunities and maintain recreation infrastructure.	Shift resources based on partnership capacity assessment to increase private and public partnerships to improve dispersed recreation opportunities (e.g. trails and trailheads) and maintain recreation infrastructure.	Shift resources based on partnership capacity assessment to increase use of private and public partnerships to improve developed recreation opportunities and maintain recreation infrastructure.

Forest Products (Primarily Sequoia and Sierra National Forests)

Alternative A No Action	Alternative B: Proposed Action	Alternative C	Alternative D
Pace and scale of ecological restoration does not always result in timber harvest levels adequate to maintain local and regional industry infrastructure.	Increased pace and scale of ecological restoration results in timber harvest levels adequate to maintain local and regional industry infrastructure.	Increased pace and scale of ecological restoration likely results in timber harvest levels minimally adequate to maintain local and regional industry infrastructure.	Increased pace and scale of ecological restoration results in timber harvest levels likely adequate to maintain or increase local and regional industry infrastructure.

Designated Areas

Alternative A No Action	Alternative B: Proposed Action	Alternative C	Alternative D
Wilderness –as currently designated and recommended.	Wilderness –may recommend new wilderness.	Wilderness – recommend new wilderness.	Wilderness –may recommend new wilderness.
Wild and Scenic Rivers – as currently recommended and designated.	Wild and Scenic Rivers – additional rivers may be found eligible.	Wild and Scenic Rivers – additional rivers may be found eligible.	Wild and Scenic Rivers – additional rivers may be found eligible.
Pacific Crest Trail – Current management does not include designated management area corridor or plan components (note – no change to Regional order prohibiting bicycles).	Pacific Crest Trail – Management area corridor designated and plan components included; corridor width may vary by alternative (note – no change to Regional order prohibiting bicycles).	Pacific Crest Trail – Management area corridor designated and plan components included; corridor width may vary by alternative (note - no change to Regional order prohibiting bicycles).	Pacific Crest Trail – Management area corridor designated and plan components included; corridor width may vary by alternative (note – no change to Regional order prohibiting bicycles).
Other specially designated areas as currently designated (research natural areas, special interest areas, the National Trail System).	Likely no new specially designated areas other than wilderness.	Likely no new specially designated areas other than wilderness	Likely no new specially designated areas.