

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

Intermountain
Region

Uinta
National
Forest

May 2003



Record of Decision

Final Environmental Impact Statement

for the

2003 Land and Resource Management Plan

Uinta National Forest



Record of Decision for the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Revised Plan)

Uinta National Forest

Located In:

Juab, Sanpete, Tooele, Utah, and Wasatch Counties
in the State of Utah

Responsible Agency:

USDA - Forest Service, Uinta National Forest

Responsible Official:

Jack G. Troyer, Intermountain Regional Forester

Recommending Official:

Peter W. Karp, Uinta NF Forest Supervisor

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Preface

In Government jargon, what you are reading is called a Record of Decision or a “ROD.” It describes my decision to approve the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Revised Plan) for the Uinta National Forest (NF) and why I made this choice. I felt a good way to describe my decision in this ROD would be a letter to the people I work for – each and every American across this land. These are your National Forests and I thank you for your interest in them.

Specifically, this ROD has two purposes. First, it is a legal document detailing a formal decision from a government agency. Second, and equally important, it explains the “why” of that decision. It is my sincere desire that I speak clearly through this document. In those places where legal requirements make for difficult reading, I apologize.

My decision strikes a balance between competing demands expressed by many people. It addresses Americans’ needs and desires for this National Forest. Although this decision is mine, it has not been made alone. Nearly 1,000 comments were received during the development of the Revised Plan. These comments helped guide Uinta NF staff members as they developed the Revised Plan. This ROD and the supporting documents will shape the management of the Uinta NF for the next 10 to 15 years.

This revision process has been arduous, lengthy, and at times contentious. I want to sincerely thank all the people who participated in the process, especially those who became involved in the numerous collaborative efforts seeking solution.

I want to make it clear that the Forest Service understands its special role in managing the National Forests. Through their representatives in Congress, Americans have told the Forest Service that the 191 million acres of their National Forests and Grasslands are to be managed with a multiple-use philosophy.

In recent years, many communities that are near the National Forests have been undergoing a transformation. Economic conditions have required many businesses, including lumber mills, farms and ranches to become larger and more efficient. As this has occurred, more and more people are leaving rural communities. Yet, much of the local social fabric is rooted in small local operations with close ties to the National Forests. Many urban dwellers also look to the National Forests as places where they can reconnect with the natural environment.

The 1984 Forest Plan for the Uinta NF reflected the desires that the public had nearly 19 years ago, when a major focus was on what the land could produce. These desires have changed, and they will continue to change. Today’s focus is centered more on the condition of the land as a basis for providing multiple goods and services.

Much history remains to be written about the National Forests. These lands can help maintain a quality of life, both for the people who live and work on them and for those interested in spending time visiting these American treasures. People come to the National Forests not only to seek solitude, but also to teach their children how to hike, camp, hunt and fish – to appreciate

nature. The potential for outdoor recreation to help sustain local economies is great, as is the potential to continue the tradition of providing our children and future generations with special places to develop an appreciation for the natural resources of our country.

Recognizing that conditions on the National Forests do not remain static, that public desires change, and that new information is constantly being developed, the Revised Plan embraces an adaptive management approach. This means that as conditions change, so will the management plan. That is why there will be Forest Plan amendments that will, if you wish, involve you. Through both scientific research and talking to the people who use the Forests, I intend to keep the Revised Plan current in respect to the needs of people as well as nature's processes.

As I emphasized earlier, the National Forests are managed under a multiple-use concept. It is the job of the Forest Service to find a place on the National Forests for uses such as timber harvest, livestock grazing, outdoor recreation, and mineral development, as well as habitat for terrestrial and aquatic species and lands for healthy, diverse vegetation and proper watershed function. That is not to say that each use can or should occur on every acre. The goal must be to blend the different uses in a way that is sustainable and best meets the needs of the American people.

“Sustainable” means satisfying present needs without compromising the needs of future generations. To maintain the goal of sustainability, the Revised Plan establishes goals and objectives that will provide for diverse conditions on the Forest. In some areas, processes such as fire, that are important in maintaining the overall health of the lands, will be reintroduced. In other areas, restoration and resource development will occur to provide for public use and contribute to the area's economic health.

As a final nod toward legality, I need to add that throughout the development of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the Revised Plan, I have asked for a plan that is scientifically credible, sustainable, and legally sufficient but not burdened with excessive process requirements that do not contribute to good decisions. I believe the Revised Plan meets those criteria.

Thank you again for your interest in management of the Uinta NF.

JACK G. TROYER
Regional Forester
Intermountain Region, USDA – Forest Service

Forest Setting

The Uinta NF was established in 1897, and is the oldest National Forest in the State of Utah. It includes a variety of landscapes varying from the high western desert of the Vernon Unit, to the high mountain peaks of Mount Nebo (elevation 11,877 feet) and Mount Timpanogos (elevation 11,750 feet). The Forest contains three existing wilderness areas totaling approximately 58,000 acres: Lone Peak, Mount Timpanogos, and Mount Nebo. Lone Peak Wilderness is shared with the Wasatch-Cache NF to the north. The Uinta NF is a major supplier of recreational opportunities in Utah due to its close proximity to the major urban center; it ranks sixth of all National Forests in recreation use and demand. There has been a high level of human activity across the Forest including development of trans-basin water diversion facilities and their operation, winter sports recreation facilities and activities, road and trail development and use, timber harvest and other vegetation treatment activities, livestock grazing, and wildlife habitat improvement projects.

My Decision

I selected Alternative H as the Revised Plan for the Uinta NF. By selecting Alternative H, I am approving a Revised Plan that describes in detail forest-wide and area-specific desired future conditions, goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, management prescriptions, and monitoring and evaluation direction.

The Revised Plan manages forest resources to attain a set of desired future conditions by emphasizing maintenance of watershed conditions, species viability, terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and properly functioning ecosystems. It also provides for adaptive management and monitoring to resolve uncertainties in the management of Forest resources. This adaptive management strategy offers an avenue to describe and evaluate the consequences of changing conditions and knowledge. Monitoring and additional analysis are used to shape future management actions within the framework of the Revised Plan. Some key elements of my decision are:

Recreation

The Revised Plan strongly emphasizes maintaining and improving recreation opportunities, access, and environmentally sensitive and sustainable uses, including commodity production.

Emphasis has been placed on the management of existing recreation facilities. Management of dispersed recreation will be focused in heavily utilized corridors in order to accommodate use and minimize impacts to the resources.

A balance of motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities, including heli-skiing, is provided. Motorized vehicle use (except over-the-snow) is limited to designated routes. The game retrieval policy is modified to be consistent with other Utah National Forests and public lands, prohibiting off-road/trail vehicle use to retrieve legally taken game. Over-the-snow vehicle use is restricted to designated trails in deer and elk winter range. To protect and conserve Canada lynx habitat, no net increase in designated over-the-snow routes or play areas is allowed within identified Lynx Analysis Units.

Roadless/Wilderness/Special Areas

Approximately 554,850 acres of the Forest are inventoried as roadless. Several additions to the Lone Peak, Mount Timpanogos, and Mount Nebo Wilderness Areas are recommended, totaling 9,890 acres. Pending Congressional action, existing uses will be allowed to continue, provided that the wilderness characteristics of these areas are not negatively impacted.

Four eligible wild and scenic river segments are managed to maintain their eligibility for the National Wild and Scenic River System until a suitability analysis is conducted.

Viability/Biodiversity

Emphasis is also placed on ensuring species viability, terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and watershed conditions. Standards and guidelines are to maintain or enhance biodiversity and species viability.

Key conservation measures from approved conservation strategies and recovery plans, including Canada lynx, Townsend's big-eared bat, greater sage grouse (draft), Bonneville and Colorado River cutthroat trout, and clay phacelia are incorporated.

Two vacant sheep allotments on the slopes of Mount Timpanogos (Mill Canyon Peak and Mahogany Mountain) are classified as not suitable for grazing due to recreation conflicts and the potential for disease transmission to the resident herd of bighorn sheep.

Air/Watershed/Water Quality

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are incorporated by reference and standards are included for maintenance of soil and water quality. Activities on critical municipal watersheds are restricted. Water quality and watershed protection are recognized as highly important. The Strawberry Project lands are classified as not suitable for livestock grazing in part due to water quality concerns in Strawberry Reservoir and its tributaries.

Vegetation Management

The Revised Plan increases emphasis on the use of prescribed fire, wildland fire use, and mechanical treatments that move ecosystems toward a more natural fire regime. Timber harvest activities will be implemented primarily to address forest health concerns such as insect and disease infestations and hazardous fuels.

Vegetation treatments that may be utilized will include activities such as timber harvest, prescribed fire, wildland fire use, and mechanical treatment. These activities will be designed to treat hazardous fuels, improve the vigor of all vegetation types, and accomplish recreation, wildlife, range, watershed, and timber goals.

Decision Authority

I have been delegated the authority to make this decision by the Secretary of Agriculture and Chief of the Forest Service (36 CFR 219.10 (c)).

Why Alternative H?

The most important consideration in my decision to select Alternative H for implementation as the Revised Plan was maintaining recreation opportunities and an appropriate level of commodity use, while ensuring that ecosystem health is maintained or improved. I know that selecting Alternative H is not going to completely satisfy every group or individual. However, I have concluded that Alternative H is a reasoned choice that strikes a balance between a relatively high level of recreation use, a relatively high level of ecological health, and commodity use while providing new opportunities for economic growth and greater diversification of local economies. It provides for healthy diverse vegetation sufficient to maintain viable populations of desired native and non-native species. In my judgment, Alternative H is consistent with all laws, regulations, and policy governing National Forest planning and management.

Alternative H was developed in response to the public's desire for a wide range of recreation opportunities for visitors of all abilities. A balance of motorized and non-motorized opportunities is provided, including heliskiing. Motorized uses are maintained on approximately 80 percent of the Forest. Over-the-snow opportunities are maintained on approximately 74 percent of the Forest. The non-motorized trail system is increased. Management of dispersed recreation in heavily used corridors will emphasize management to accommodate use while protecting resources.

A reasonable level of commodity uses is also provided. Grazing opportunities are maintained on all currently active allotments. Timber harvest activities may be allowed to address forest health issues while also contributing to local economies. Opportunities for the development of mineral resources are maintained in the high and moderate potential areas of the Forest in support of the National Energy Policy.

Local government and members of the public expressed strong opinions about the management of roadless areas and wilderness recommendations, from opposition to any wilderness recommendations to desires for very large recommendations. The alternatives analyzed in the FEIS reflect the full range of opinions expressed. Alternative H recommends additions to Lone Peak, Mount Timpanogos, and Mount Nebo Wilderness Areas to improve wilderness manageability. Road construction activities are restricted in 78 percent of Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs).

Watersheds important to communities along the Wasatch Front and across the Forest are protected through direction ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of watershed health and water quality. Alternative H assures that the Forest continues to provide high quality waters. Alternative H places an emphasis on the maintenance and improvement of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitats. Flexibility is also provided to proactively utilize prescribed fire, wildland fire use, and mechanical treatment to reduce hazardous fuels and move ecosystems toward a more

natural fire regime. Standards ensure healthy, diverse vegetation and habitat conditions for viable populations of native and desired non-native species.

Alternative H addresses all of the needs for change identified in the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (NOI) which formally initiated the revision process.

Government and Public Involvement

Tribal Trust Responsibilities

The Goshute people inhabited the regions around Rush Valley, Skull Valley, and adjacent areas, including lands within the present boundaries of the Vernon Unit in Tooele County. The Goshutes consider the Vernon Unit to be part of their ancestral homeland. The Tribe has also indicated that their interest in the Wasatch Front extends from the south end of the Nebo Unit north to Point of the Mountain on the Utah/Salt Lake County line. The Uintah and Ouray Ute Reservation is located within the Uinta Basin. A portion of this Reservation directly adjoins the Forest. The traditional territory of the Northern Ute Indians includes the entire Forest.

Forest Supervisor Pete Karp has personally visited and consulted with the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation – Skull Valley Band and with the Northern Ute Tribal Business Committee regarding the Revised Plan.

How was the public involved in developing this Plan?

The Uinta NF first notified the public that the revision of the Forest Plan was beginning with the publication of a brochure titled “Forest Plan Revision Introduction” in June 1999. In August 1999, the Land and Resource Management Plan Revision Newsletter #1 briefly explained the revision process and summarized the needs for change identified for the Forest Plan revision.

The NOI to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Revised Forest Plan was published in the Federal Register on September 30, 1999. The NOI and the Preliminary Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) initiated scoping. The Preliminary AMS summarized the current biological, physical, and social and economic conditions affecting the Forest, and identified areas where current management direction in the Forest Plan might need to be changed.

After release of the NOI and Preliminary AMS, over 300 comments were received from members of the public, government agencies, and various other organizations. More than 80 people attended four public meetings held in October and November 1999. These meetings presented an overview of the forest planning process and outlined our proposed programmatic action, as contained in the Preliminary AMS

More than 60 people attended two public workshops held in March and April 2000. The purpose of these workshops was to verify that the issues had been identified, verify that those issues were addressed in at least one of the three draft alternatives, and develop additional alternatives if needed. Based on input obtained through these efforts, three additional alternatives were developed and included in the DEIS for detailed analysis.

Throughout the process of developing and analyzing alternatives, numerous informational documents were mailed to the people on the Forest Plan revision mailing list, posted on the Uinta NF's website, and made available at all Forest offices.

The Draft Forest Plan and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) were released in early May of 2001. The comment period was extended three times and ended October 1, 2001.

Following the release, more than 85 people attended five open houses designed to allow the public to ask questions relative to the alternatives developed, the proposed alternatives, and how management differed among them. Approximately 500 individual letters and form letters, representing approximately 1,350 commenters, were received in response to the Draft documents. Alternatives G and H, were developed in response to comments received (See Appendix A Public Involvement Process in the FEIS for more detailed information.)

Planning Issues

ISSUE 1—RECREATION/RECREATION ACCESS

Concerns center on preferences relative to motorized versus non-motorized uses. Many expressed a desire to maintain a wide range of recreational opportunities and access for all, particularly for the elderly and disabled. Others were concerned that increased motorized use would lead to degradation of Forest resources and reduced opportunities for solitude. Many expressed a desire for the continuation of heli-skiing opportunities, while others recommended that this use be prohibited.

Increasing numbers of recreation users, inappropriate and/or illegal activities by some users, a growing range of recreation activities, and increasing use of the backcountry have resulted in greater impacts to the environment, overuse of some recreational facilities, and an increase in user conflicts. The challenge facing the Uinta NF is to protect environmental values while providing quality recreation experiences.

ISSUE 2—ROADLESS/WILDERNESS

Some people favor the backcountry, non-motorized experience provided by wilderness designation, and are concerned that the integrity of ecosystems will be disrupted by development and motorized vehicle use. Others oppose wilderness recommendations in favor of motorized recreation, timber, mining, grazing, and other commodity uses for IRAs.

ISSUE 3—AIR/WATERSHED/WATER QUALITY

The majority of streams and reservoirs on the Uinta NF provide water for domestic and agricultural uses, cold-water fisheries, recreation, livestock, and wildlife. Maintaining the quality of these waters is becoming increasingly important as the demand for water increases.

Because of a rapidly growing local, urban population, potential impacts to air, watershed, and water quality are of critical importance. Some members of the public believe increased use and access to the backcountry are a potential threat to water quality. Others believe there is a compelling need for the Forest to protect all streams, wetlands, and riparian areas. The challenge facing the Uinta NF is to maintain or improve air and water quality while managing for an appropriate balance of forest uses.

ISSUE 4—VIABILITY/BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity is the variety and abundance of life and its processes, including all living organisms, the genetic differences among them, and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur. Biodiversity also refers to the composition, structures, and functions of species and habitats and their interactions. Since development of the 1984 Uinta NF Forest Plan, the Forest Service has embraced an ecosystem-based approach to resource management. Recent policies and precedents have provided new guidance for maintaining biodiversity.

At the same time, a growing public demands management that accommodates use of the Forest. The concern is maintaining a diverse, healthy, productive, and sustainable ecosystem while allowing land use activities. The operating philosophy needs to be based on environmental sensitivity, social responsibility, economic feasibility, and scientific principles.

ISSUE 5—SOCIAL/ECONOMIC

A large segment of the public is apprehensive about social and economic impacts and future use of the Uinta NF. Some members of the public want to maintain or expand traditional uses. Others believe that decreasing or discontinuing commodity uses would be the best use of the Forest.

ISSUE 6—MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Some members of the public are concerned the Uinta NF is not monitoring the correct resources to determine if current management is adequately protecting or improving forest resources. In addition, some people believe the Forest is not monitoring at a level necessary for the data to be credible. Others expressed concern that the Forest would be unable to increase either the monitoring quantity or frequency given the Forest's difficulty in accomplishing current monitoring requirements. All issues related to monitoring have been addressed through development of the required monitoring plan.

ISSUE 7—LANDS: PROPERTY BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT

Points of access to the Uinta NF are being lost as a result of private land development and urban growth adjacent to the Forest. Additionally, as adjacent and interior private lands are developed, the lack of an identifiable Forest boundary is resulting in trespass problems.

Alternative Development

Alternatives considered in the DEIS were developed from the following sources:

- A comprehensive review of the 1984 Forest Plan;
 - Summarization of the current biological, physical, and social and economic conditions;
 - Identification of changed conditions and new information, including new public issues and attitudes affecting the appropriateness of the existing management situation;
 - Identification of areas or items where management direction needed to be established or changed; and
 - The national development of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (RACR).
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Alternatives Not Considered in Detail

The public suggested management options during public involvement activities. The following alternatives were considered during the development of alternatives but were eliminated from detailed consideration.

- Alternative N: No Action Alternative that matches the level of goods and services projected in the 1984 Forest Plan.
 - Alternative R: Restoration alternative to restore ecosystems to properly functioning condition.
 - Alternative W: Recommend the entire Forest for wilderness designation.
 - Alternative Z: No grazing and no timber harvest Forest-wide.
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Alternatives Considered in Detail

ALTERNATIVE A—NO ACTION (CURRENT PLAN DIRECTION)

Alternative A is an updated No Action Alternative, continuing the management allocations, activities, and management direction found in the 1984 Forest Plan for the next 10 to 15 years. Updates to the existing Forest Plan direction would include new technology, new definitions, changes in land ownership and the management situation, new management area prescriptions, and refined standards and guidelines. Direction in Conservation Strategies and Agreements would continue to be followed, but standards and guidelines from these documents would not be directly incorporated into the Forest Plan. The Forest would be managed to provide a sustainable

flow of resources for human use, to protect important watersheds, to develop or sustain viable populations of native and desirable non-native flora and fauna, and to provide wildlife habitat and opportunities for recreation use. This alternative does not change the management areas or management intent from the 1984 Forest Plan.

ALTERNATIVE B—ONE OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES IN THE DEIS

This alternative strongly emphasizes maintenance of watershed conditions, species viability, terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and roadless area conservation. Additions to existing wilderness areas are recommended where they would improve the manageability and not cause serious conflict with other uses. One new wilderness area is recommended. Social and economic values and uses are maintained to the extent compatible with these emphases. Issues associated with dispersed recreation management are addressed by focusing some developments where facilities currently exist and where current demand and use trends indicate a need for more intensive management. Opportunities for commodity production (timber harvest, domestic livestock grazing, and mineral development) are maintained where consistent with the emphasis for this alternative. Two grazing allotments in the Mount Timpanogos area and the Strawberry Project lands are closed to grazing.

ALTERNATIVE C

Management Prescription 2.6 Undeveloped is the primary focus in this alternative. The result is the application of strict protection measures to 71 percent of the Forest. Where roadless and wilderness areas do not exist, watershed maintenance and improvement, and terrestrial and aquatic habitat management are emphasized. Dispersed recreation corridors are identified to focus recreation management where facilities currently exist, and where current demand and use trends indicate a need for more intensive management. Two grazing allotments in the Mount Timpanogos area and the Strawberry Project lands are closed to grazing.

ALTERNATIVE D—ONE OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES IN THE DEIS

This alternative is basically the same as Alternative B, except it contains no recommendations for additional wilderness designation. Grazing is allowed on the Strawberry Project lands but only if vegetation and watershed resources have reached desired conditions as specified in the 1990 Record of Decision for the Strawberry Valley Management Area (Strawberry Project lands). Two vacant sheep allotments on the Pleasant Grove Ranger District would also be considered suitable for grazing.

ALTERNATIVE E

This alternative recommends all IRAs and additional areas identified by the public for wilderness designation. All other areas of the Forest would be managed to emphasize watershed maintenance and improvement, and terrestrial and aquatic habitat management. Dispersed recreation corridors are identified to focus recreation management where facilities currently exist, and where current demand and use trends indicate a need for more intensive management; however, corridors are narrower than under other alternatives. Two grazing allotments in the Mount Timpanogos area and the Strawberry Project lands are closed to grazing.

ALTERNATIVE F

Alternative F is an updated No Action Alternative developed to address the implications of RACR. The management allocations, activities, and management direction found in the 1984 Forest Plan would continue for the next 10 to 15 years. This alternative would incorporate management direction restricting road construction and reconstruction in IRAs. Updates to the existing Forest Plan direction would include new technology, new definitions, changes in land ownership and the management situation, new management area prescriptions, and refined standards and guidelines. The Forest would be managed to supply a sustainable flow of resources for human use, protect important watersheds, provide viable populations of native and desirable non-native flora and fauna, provide wildlife habitat, and present opportunities for recreation use. This alternative does not change the management areas or management intent from the 1984 Forest Plan, except for the application of protections for roadless areas in accordance with the RACR.

ALTERNATIVE G

This alternative was developed in response to comments on the DEIS requesting consideration of an alternative that incorporated the wilderness recommendation submitted by Save Our Canyons. Management Prescription 1.5, Recommended Wilderness, is applied to a larger portion of IRAs than under Alternative C. Management prescription 2.6 Undeveloped is applied to the majority of the remaining inventoried and publicly identified roadless areas. Conserving roadless characteristics within roadless areas along with protection measures identified for designated and recommended wilderness areas, has resulted in the application of strict protection to 71 percent of the Forest. Where roadless and wilderness areas do not exist, watershed maintenance and improvement, and terrestrial and aquatic habitat management are emphasized. Dispersed recreation corridors are identified to focus recreation management where facilities currently exist, and where current demand and use trends indicate a need for more intensive management. Two grazing allotments in the Mount Timpanogos area and the Strawberry Project lands are closed to grazing.

ALTERNATIVE H—SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

This alternative strongly emphasizes maintaining recreation opportunities, access, and environmentally sensitive and sustainable uses, including commodity production. Emphasis is also placed on protecting species viability, terrestrial and aquatic habitats, watershed conditions, and special areas. Additions to existing wilderness areas are recommended where they would improve wilderness area manageability and not cause serious conflict with other uses.

Social and economic values and uses are maintained to the extent compatible with these emphases. Issues associated with dispersed recreation management are addressed by focusing some developments where facilities currently exist and where current demand and use trends indicate a need for more intensive management. A wide variety of recreation opportunities is provided, with a balance of motorized and non-motorized opportunities. Access is provided for a variety of publics, including the elderly, physically challenged, and the very young. Opportunities for commodity production (timber harvest, domestic livestock grazing, and mineral development) are maintained where consistent with the emphasis for this alternative. Two vacant grazing allotments in the Mount Timpanogos area and the Strawberry Project Lands are closed to grazing.

Introduction

The analysis of alternatives and public comment received on the DEIS and Draft Revised Plan documented in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Revised Forest Plan for the Uinta National Forest* serves as the foundation for my decision for the Revised Plan for the Uinta NF. My decision incorporates by reference the analysis of effects and management direction disclosed in the FEIS and Revised Plan and the planning record in its entirety.

My decision applies only to National Forest System lands in the Uinta NF. It does not apply to any other Federal, State, or private lands, although the effects of my decision on those lands are considered.

Forest Plan Decisions

A Forest Plan establishes the framework for future decision-making by outlining a broad, general program for achieving the goals and objectives of the Forest. A Forest Plan does not make a commitment to the selection of any specific project, nor does it dictate day-to-day administrative activities needed to carry on internal operations. The Revised Plan is implemented through the design, execution, and monitoring of site-specific activities. I am making the following decisions in the Revised Plan:

- Goals and objectives that lead to ecological sustainability, contribute to economic and social sustainability, and provide for multiple uses.
- Forest-wide requirements (standards and guidelines) that apply to future management activities.
- Management direction through the use of management prescription area designation.
- Wilderness recommendations or other non-wilderness allocations or for Inventoried Roadless Areas.
- Designation of suitable timberland and establishment of the allowable timber sale quantity for the planning period and identification of suitability and capability of lands for producing forage.
- Monitoring and evaluation requirements.

FOREST-WIDE MULTIPLE-USE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (36 CFR 219.11(b))

Goals are concise statements that describe a desired condition to be achieved sometime in the future. They are normally expressed in broad, general terms and may not have a specific date for accomplishment.

Objectives are clear and quantifiable statements of planned results to be achieved within a stated time period. An objective must be achievable, measurable, and have a stated time period for completion.

The Revised Plan outlines a set of multiple-use goals and objectives for the Forest, which includes a description of the desired future condition of the Uinta NF as well as a quantified list of the goods and services that we expect to produce or provide during the planning period. Goals and objectives are described in Chapter 2 of the Revised Plan.

FOREST-WIDE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (36 CFR 219.13 TO 219.27)

Standards are used to promote the achievement of the goals and objectives and to assure compliance with laws, regulations, Executive Orders, or agency policy. Standards are binding limitations on management activities that are within the authority of the Forest Service. A standard can also be expressed as a constraint on management activities or practices. The Revised Plan contains both Forest-wide and Management Prescription Area standards in Chapter 3.

Guidelines are used in the same way as standards but tend to be operationally flexible to respond to variations, such as changing site conditions or changed management circumstances. Guidelines are a preferred or advisable course of action, and they are expected to be carried out, unless site-specific analysis identifies a better approach. The Revised Plan contains both Forest-wide and Management Prescription Area guidelines in Chapter 3.

MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTION AREA DIRECTION (36 CFR 219.11(C))

Management prescriptions, an integrated set of management practices, have been applied to specific areas of land to attain goals and objectives on the Uinta NF. Management prescriptions in the Revised Plan identify the emphasis and focus of management activities in a specific area; however, *emphasis*, as used in this context, is defined as a focus or a highlight and does not necessarily mean exclusive use. The specific direction stated in a management prescription determines what uses are allowed and to what extent the uses are permitted. Table 1 lists the Management Prescription applied, which are established and described in detail in Chapter 4 with of the Revised Plan.

EVALUATION OF INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREAS (36 CFR 219.17) AND OTHER SPECIAL AREA DESIGNATIONS

The Revised Plan recommends approximately 9,890 acres for Wilderness designation in the Nephi, Mount Timpanogos, and Twin Peaks roadless areas. These lands are proposed additions to the Lone Peak, Mount Timpanogos, and Mount Nebo Wilderness Areas. These areas will be managed for non-impairment in accordance with the guidance for Management Prescription 1.5, described in Chapters 3 and 4 of the Revised Plan. Current uses will be allowed to continue, as long as they do not negatively affect wilderness characteristics. The effects of this decision are more fully described in the Wilderness section of Chapter 3 in the FEIS.

Other special areas are identified for management in non-impairment status to protect their undeveloped values, but are not recommended for wilderness designation. Approximately 19,590 acres in the Twin Peaks and South Fork Provo River roadless areas will be managed under Management Prescription 2.6, Undeveloped. No road construction or reconstruction will be allowed in these areas. No new motorized trail will be constructed and no vegetation

management activities requiring the use of motorized equipment on the ground will be allowed. The prescription is described in the Revised Plan, Chapter 4 and the roadless areas are described in the FEIS, Chapter 3, Roadless, and in FEIS Appendix C.

Table 1: Management Prescription Areas in the Revised Plan

Prescription Category	Prescription Name (Number)		Acres
Wilderness	1.4	Wilderness	58,400
	1.5	Recommended Wilderness	9,890
Special Management Areas	2.1	Wild and Scenic Rivers – Wild	610
	2.2	Wild and Scenic Rivers – Scenic	2,510
	2.3	Wild and Scenic Rivers – Recreational	1,140
	2.4	Research Natural Areas	270
	2.5	Scenic Byways	11,220
	2.6	Undeveloped	19,590
Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Hydrologic Resources	3.1	Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Hydrologic	106,680
	3.2	Watershed Emphasis	86,990
	3.3	Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitat	166,260
Recreation	4.4	Dispersed Recreation	87,940
	4.5	Developed Recreation	2,330
Forested Ecosystems	5.1	Forested Ecosystems – Limited Dev.	148,540
	5.2	Forested Ecosystems – Vegetation Mgt.	74,840
Non-Forested Ecosystems	6.1	Non-forested Ecosystems	119,470
Wildland Urban Interface	7.0	Wildland Urban Interface	106,030
Long-Term Use or Occupancy	8.1	Mineral Development	90
	8.2	Utility Corridor/Communication Sites	4,580
	8.3	Administrative Sites	90
	8.4	Recreation Residences	210

Other special designations addressed in the plan include managing the Jumpoff Research Natural Area (RNA) under Management Prescription 2.4. This area will be managed to allow natural processes to occur. The RNA is described in the FEIS, Chapter 3, Natural Research Area, and the prescription is described in the Revised Plan, Chapter 4.

Four river segments have been identified as eligible for designation in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System (FEIS, Chapter 3, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Appendix D, Wild and Scenic Rivers) and will be managed to protect their free-flowing character and outstandingly remarkable values until suitability analyses are conducted (Revised Plan, Chapter 4, Management Prescriptions 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3):

- The upper mile of the South Fork of American Fork River
- The upper 1.1 miles of the North Fork of Provo River
- 2.6 miles of Little Provo Deer Creek including and directly downstream of Cascade Springs

- The entire 7.8 miles of Fifth Water Creek

The Mount Nebo Scenic Byway will be managed under Management Prescription 2.5, Scenic Byways. Management of this area is designed to protect and maintain the corridor's outstanding recreational, educational, and scenic qualities. Vegetation management is limited to activities or treatments that maintain or enhance these qualities or provide for public safety. The management prescription is described in the Revised Plan, Chapter 4. The effects of this designation are disclosed in the Recreation section of Chapter 3 of the FEIS.

SUITABILITY DETERMINATIONS (36 CFR 219.14, 219.16 AND 219.20)

The Revised Plan identifies suitable timberlands (Revised Plan, Appendix E, Timber Suitability Map), which occur within the 74,840 acres allocated to Management Prescription 5.2. Of the total acres allocated to Management Prescription 5.2, 39,315 acres are suited. Another 132,710 acres across the forest allow timber harvest activities, which may produce commercial products incidental to other management objectives but is not counted as part of the suitable timberlands. The calculated Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) is 965 MBF (annual average harvest over ten years), which is harvested only from suitable timberlands. This is approximately half the ASQ that was identified in the 1984 Forest Plan. However, the estimated total sale program quantity (TSPQ) of 2,095 MBF (annual average harvest) is the amount of timber that is projected to come from all lands with prescriptions that allow timber harvest, which is equivalent to harvest levels under the 1984 Forest Plan.

Lands suitable for livestock grazing are described in the FEIS, Chapter 3, Grazing, and Appendix B, Capable and Suitable Rangelands. Lands suitable for sheep and cattle grazing are displayed on the Suitable Rangeland (Sheep) and Suitable Rangelands (Cattle) Maps in Appendix K in the FEIS. The vacant Mill Canyon Peak and Mahogany Mountain sheep allotments have been determined not suited due to recreation conflicts and the potential for the transmission of disease from domestic sheep to the resident bighorn sheep herd on Mount Timpanogos. Additionally, the Strawberry Project lands have been determined not suited to facilitate resource recovery from past over-grazing and alleviate concerns regarding water quality, fisheries, and recreation conflicts.

My decision adds direction to the components of the 1996 Rangeland Health Amendment (USDA Forest Service, March 1996), which has been incorporated into the Revised Plan. More restrictive limitations on forage utilization standards and guidelines have been applied to identified greater sage grouse habitat and riparian habitat conservation areas (Revised Plan, Chapter 3, Graze-3 and Graze-4 and Appendix E, Maps).

MONITORING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT (36 CFR 219.11(D))

Forest Plan monitoring and evaluation provide an assessment of the implementation of Revised Plan standards and guidelines, and how effective plan direction is at achieving desired conditions, goals, and objectives. The Monitoring and Evaluation Report is a tool to keep the public informed on progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of the Revised Plan.

This Revised Plan uses adaptive management to ensure that the management of the Forest responds to changing conditions and new information. Adaptive management allows managers

to respond to changing conditions without having to amend the Revised Plan. The monitoring program was designed to accommodate several budget levels. Monitoring items are prioritized into three levels: high, medium, and low priority. If the Revised Plan is fully funded, all three levels will be accomplished. If budgets fall short, high priority monitoring will be conducted, but the other levels may not be fully accomplished. This monitoring plan is detailed in Chapter 6 of the Revised Plan.

Rationale for My Decision

My decision to select Alternative H for implementation is based on three principal factors.

- 1. Consistency with national policy and direction.** Forest plan decisions must be consistent with the extensive body of law, regulation and policy established at the national level.
- 2. The relationship of my decision to planning issues identified during the planning process.** Organizations, local governments, and the general public all submitted comments that required me to take a hard look at the planning issues and how they were addressed by each alternative. In a number of cases, public and agency comments helped me identify a reasonable range of alternatives and necessary management direction.
- 3. Compatibility with other agencies and Indian Tribes goals** was another important factor that drove my decision making process. Comments received from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, other State agencies, and local governments were considered in making my selection.

How each of these factors was considered in my decision is detailed below:

Consistency with National Policy

In making my decision, I evaluated each of the alternatives considered for compliance with National policy and direction. In all cases except for the No Action Alternative, the alternatives are consistent with National policy and direction.

FOREST AND RANGELAND RENEWABLE RESOURCES PLANNING ACT (RPA)

The 1982 National Forest Management Act (NFMA) regulations at 36 CFR 219.12(f)(6) require at least one alternative be developed that responds to and incorporates the Resources Planning Act (RPA) Program's tentative resource objectives for each National Forest/Grassland as displayed in Regional Guides.

The Forest Service Strategic Plan (2000), in lieu of an RPA Program, was completed in accordance with the Government Performance Results Act and the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

While Forest plans should be consistent with the broad guidance provided in the Strategic Plan and should consider the information provided by the RPA Assessment along with other available

and relevant science, neither the Strategic Plan nor the Assessment contain recommended outputs that must be incorporated in specific Forest plans.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE RESULTS ACT - FOREST SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Government Performance Results Act requires federal agencies to prepare periodic strategic and annual performance plans, focusing on outcomes and results. The first Strategic Plan issued by the Forest Service in 1997 replaced the Agency's former strategic plan created under the RPA. This plan was updated in 2000. The goals and objectives in the Revised Plan are consistent with the Forest Service Strategic Plan (2000).

Ecosystem Health: The Revised Plan addresses ecosystem health in a variety of ways. First, there is an emphasis on standards and guidelines designed to maintain or improve watershed conditions, water quality, and wildlife habitat and viability. Best Management Practices are incorporated for the maintenance of soil and water quality. Standards for livestock grazing utilization and ground cover have been brought forward from the 1993 Rangeland Ecosystem Amendment and refined to maintain or improve the condition of rangeland and riparian resources. Wildland fire will be used to restore ecosystem processes and patterns. Management emphasis will be placed on maintaining linkage habitat for wildlife.

Multiple Benefits to People: The Revised Plan maintains and preserves the wide variety of recreation opportunities currently available on the Uinta NF. The current level of commodity output may be reduced slightly, but this is not expected to have significant negative effects on local economies.

Scientific and Technical Assistance: The Revised Plan is based on adaptive management, using monitoring and evaluation to enhance our understanding of the resources. Monitoring and evaluation provide an avenue for incorporating new information and obtaining technical assistance on management problems.

Effective Public Service: The Revised Plan was developed in response to comments from the public regarding management of the Uinta NF. The Revised Plan provides for human uses of the environment as well as preserving much of the inherent "wildness" and undeveloped nature of some areas on the Forest. The Revised Plan emphasizes cooperation and coordination with other interested parties in management of the natural resources on the Forest.

HEALTHY FORESTS INITIATIVE/NATIONAL FIRE PLAN

On December 11, 2002, the President announced a series of new administrative steps, referred to as the Healthy Forest Initiative (HFI), to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires and improve the health of our nation's forests.

These actions will reduce unnecessary red tape and needless delays that have too often delayed efforts to reduce the threat of devastating wildfires and insect infestations that damage both public and private lands. The new procedures will ensure that needed environmental reviews and public review processes are conducted in the most efficient and effective way possible.

The National Fire Plan (NFP) is a long-term investment that will help protect communities and natural resources, and most importantly, the lives of firefighters and the public. The NFP is a key

component of the HFI. It is based on cooperation and communication among federal agencies, states, local governments, Tribes and interested publics. Federal wildland fire management agencies worked closely with the partners to prepare a 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy, completed in August 2001.

The Revised Plan is consistent with the objectives of the HFI and the NFP by emphasizing hazardous fuel reduction in areas at risk of uncharacteristic wildland fires. Wildland urban interface areas are identified where concentrations of private development are located adjacent to the Forest. Efforts in these areas will be focused on working with communities to reduce hazardous fuels and the risk of catastrophic wildfires that threaten human health and safety and private developments. The Revised Plan provides direction for restoration of more historic vegetation characteristics and emphasizes the use of prescribed fire and wildland fire use to reintroduce fire as a natural ecosystem process.

NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY (EXECUTIVE ORDER. 13212)

In May 2001, Executive Order 13212 was signed to expedite the processing of energy-related projects. The National Energy Plan was developed to implement the Executive Order. Based on this Plan, the Forest Service adopted an Energy Implementation Plan. The Revised Plan does not make any oil and gas leasing decisions. The leasing availability decision for high and moderate potential areas of the Forest, addressed in the Western Uinta Oil and Gas Leasing EIS, is incorporated in the Revised Plan. Hydroelectric projects on the Forest are very small and nationally insignificant. The Forest reviewed the Western Corridors Study (1992) in this process. The Revised Plan contains direction identifying energy corridors on the Forest (Revised Plan, Chapter 3, 8.2 Utility Corridors/Communication Sites). I have determined that the Revised Plan is in compliance with Executive Order 13212.

ROADLESS AREA CONSERVATION RULE (RACR)

Management direction for IRAs was analyzed on a national scale through the Roadless Areas Conservation EIS, initiated by the Forest Service in the fall of 1999. In November 2000, the Forest Service issued the FEIS for the RACR in which the preferred alternative prohibited timber harvest and road building in IRAs.

On January 12, 2001, the RACR was published in the *Federal Register* (36 CFR 294). The RACR prohibited road construction and reconstruction and the cutting, sale, and removal of timber, with certain exceptions for the IRAs identified in the FEIS. However, timber could be harvested for stewardship purposes. The RACR had an effective date of March 13, 2001. This effective date was later delayed until May 12, 2002.

Later, several groups and states sued the Forest Service. The Idaho District Court agreed with their claims and on May 10, 2001, the RACR was enjoined, thus never became effective. Several environmental groups appealed this decision to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. On December 12, 2002, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, in a split decision, reversed the injunction imposed by the lower Court. The Plaintiffs have requested that the entire Ninth Circuit panel of judges review the ruling; this request is pending. The District Court's injunction is still in place until the Ninth Circuit issues a mandate to the lower court to lift the injunction.

On July 10, 2001, the Secretary of Agriculture published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking in the ***Federal Register*** requesting comments from the public on key issues that have been raised regarding the protection of IRAs. It listed 5 principles to consider when addressing the long-term protection and management of IRAs:

1. Informed decision-making,
2. Working together,
3. Protecting forests,
4. Protecting communities, homes, and property, and
5. Protecting access to property.

In December 2001, Interim Direction was provided in the Forest Service Manual (FSM 1925.04a, id_1920-2001-1) to guide various activities affected by the RACR, including Forest planning. This direction reserved authority for certain decisions (roading and timber harvest) within roadless areas to the Chief of the Forest Service “until a forest-scale roads analysis is completed and incorporated into the forest plan” and “until a revision of a forest plan or adoption of a plan amendment that has considered the protection and management of IRAs.”

The Revised Plan applies this direction. An individual evaluation was conducted for each IRA (Draft Inventory of Unroaded and Undeveloped Lands on the Uinta National Forest (USDA-FS, April 1999)). The Forest looked at the attributes of each IRA to determine how the areas should be managed.

The Revised Plan manages 118,420 acres (21 percent) of IRAs as semi-primitive non-motorized, which prohibits new classified road construction and temporary road construction activities. An additional 315,960 acres (57 percent) is managed as semi-primitive motorized, which prohibits the construction of new classified roads, but would allow the construction of temporary roads. Classified and temporary road construction may occur within the remaining 120,440 acres of IRAs (22 percent).

I have determined that the Revised Plan is in compliance with current Forest Service policy on IRA management. Since this direction is subject to change, the Uinta NF will follow the most current direction for management of IRAs. If the RACR does become effective it will supercede this plan, but only in those areas inside the boundaries of the 1999 Roadless Area Inventory. Those areas in the Revised Plan that are identified as “available for treatment” could not be treated unless they meet the exceptions in the RACR.

TRANSPORTATION RULE AND POLICY

On January 12, 2001, the Chief of the Forest Service signed the *Administration of the Forest Development Transportation System; Prohibitions; Use of Motor Vehicles Off Forest Service Roads* (Transportation Rule), and the *Forest Service Transportation, Final Administrative Policy* (Transportation Policy). The Transportation Rule and Policy provide guidance for transportation analysis – they do not dictate or adopt land management decisions.

The Transportation Rule requires the Forest Service to identify a minimum road system, determining which roads are needed (classified) and which roads are unneeded (unclassified).

Decisions are to be accomplished through area/project planning and documented through the NEPA process, including full public participation.

Beginning on January 12, 2002, the Transportation Policy requires a roads analysis (watershed or project-area scale) be prepared before most road management decisions are made to inform those decisions to construct or reconstruct roads. This roads analysis is not a formal decision-making process. Road management decisions are made through the NEPA process with full public participation and involvement.

The Roads Analysis for the Uinta NF was completed in November 2002. The information in that report has informed my decision.

How the Revised Forest Plan addresses the planning issues

One of the major reasons I have selected Alternative H is because it responds positively and thoroughly to the identified planning issues. The following is my evaluation of the Selected Alternative's response to each of the planning issues.

ISSUE 1 – RECREATION/RECREATION ACCESS

Public recommendations for the management of recreation and recreation access were many and diverse. Some of those who commented advocated the elimination of most motorized recreation on the Forest; others recommended that existing motorized recreation opportunities be expanded in order to accommodate the rapid growth of these leisure activities.

The Revised Plan offers a wide range of recreation opportunities and a balance of motorized and non-motorized opportunities. The Revised Plan maintains existing uses, provides for the protection of important undeveloped areas, and addresses important resource concerns that have resulted from past use.

Many of those who commented believed that reductions in motorized opportunities unfairly impact the elderly, physically challenged, and young by denying them access to the more remote areas of the Forest. The Revised Plan maintains most of the opportunities currently available, providing visitors of all abilities access to a range of forest experiences from developed sites to semi-primitive areas. Motorized uses are provided on approximately 716,000 acres or 80 percent of the Forest. Although the number of motorized acres is slightly reduced from the 1984 Forest Plan, the total miles of classified roads are unchanged, while the miles of motorized trails are projected to increase slightly (approximately 1 percent) to about 330 miles.

The Revised Plan removes one opportunity, the game retrieval policy. Because motorized recreation will be restricted to designated roads and trails throughout the year (except over-the-snow vehicles), Forest users will no longer be able to use motorized OHVs to retrieve legally taken game. Although I acknowledge that this change may make retrieval of game more difficult for some, the Forest has experienced a high number of user-created trails and subsequent resource damage as a result of this policy in the past. Elimination of this policy is consistent with policies in place on neighboring federal and state lands throughout Utah.

Considerable controversy was generated over concern that the preferred alternatives in the DEIS proposed the Tibble Fork area as non-motorized. The Revised Plan responds to these concerns. The area west of the Great Western Trail is designated semi-primitive non-motorized, while the area east of it (including the Great Western Trail) is classified as semi-primitive motorized. These allocations result in 15 miles of motorized trail and 20 miles of non-motorized trail.

Opportunities for over-the-snow vehicles are maintained on approximately 660,230 acres, or approximately 74 percent of the Forest. Over-the-snow use is allowed off road and trail across much of the Forest. However these vehicles are limited to designated roads and trails within deer and elk winter range in order to avoid disturbance to these species. Additionally, to address habitat concerns for the Canada lynx, no increase in designated over-the-snow routes or play areas will be allowed within the two established Lynx Analysis Units on the Forest.

The Revised Plan emphasizes non-motorized opportunities on approximately 181,340 acres, or 20 percent of the Forest, an increase of approximately 8 percent. The non-motorized trail system will increase to 320 miles, an increase of approximately 16 percent. The results of the recent National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey (2002) showed that hiking or walking was the most common activity reported by Forest visitors. The Revised Plan ensures that the Forest will maintain adequate opportunities for this type of recreation.

Some members of the public recommended that opportunities for heli-skiing be maintained, while others recommended they be eliminated. The Revised Plan will continue to provide opportunities for heli-skiing in areas with motorized and semi-primitive non-motorized ROS classifications.

A high level of dispersed recreation use occurring along some roads is resulting in unacceptable impacts to adjacent resources. The Revised Plan identifies dispersed recreation corridors along the roads experiencing the highest levels of use. Management in these corridors will focus on hardening sites and providing toilet facilities where necessary in order to better manage use and minimize impacts on the resources.

Management of developed recreation will focus on maintaining or improving existing facilities and encouraging use during non-peak periods in order to increase the utilization of these sites and accommodate more users. This approach is consistent with the levels of funding that are expected during the planning period.

ISSUE 2 – ROADLESS/WILDERNESS

The issue of IRA management and wilderness recommendations also stirred expressions of strong, often widely divergent opinions. Some members of the public believe that all IRAs, and in some cases the entire Forest, would best be protected by recommending them for wilderness designation. Others members of the public oppose any additional wilderness recommendations or restrictions on activities allowed in IRAs, some even requesting that existing wilderness designations be rescinded. Because Congress designates wilderness areas, it is outside the authority of the Forest Service to rescind existing designations. Many expressed opinions falling somewhere between the two positions described above.

Appendix C of the FEIS provides a detailed description of each of the 35 IRAs along with a capability, availability, and need assessment, and an evaluation of each area's roadless characteristics. This information was used in making wilderness recommendations and determining which areas should be managed to remain in a more natural, undisturbed condition.

Recommended Wilderness

The Revised Plan recommends approximately 9,890 acres from the Nephi, Mount Timpanogos, and Twin Peaks Roadless Areas for wilderness designation as additions to Lone Peak, Mount Timpanogos, and Mount Nebo Wilderness Areas. These additions will improve wilderness manageability by providing boundaries that are more easily recognized on the ground. Although this recommendation is less than some would prefer, it responds to requests from local governments and members of the public to maintain the existing variety of uses important to local economies, lifestyles, and culture.

The areas recommended for wilderness designation will be managed for non-impairment until Congress makes a decision on these recommendations. The additions to the Mount Nebo Wilderness Area will be managed as semi-primitive non-motorized. The additions to the Lone Peak and Mount Timpanogos Wilderness Areas will be managed as semi-primitive motorized. Existing uses in all recommended areas may continue, as long as they do not adversely impact wilderness characteristics. Many people believe all motorized uses should be prohibited to effectively protect these areas. Because the existing uses have not adversely impacted the wilderness characteristics of these areas to date, I believe that the Revised Plan provides adequate protection.

This Revised Plan will allow greater flexibility to use a wider range of management tools to achieve the objectives of the National Fire Plan and the Healthy Forests Initiative than would be available with larger wilderness designations. The Revised Plan will allow more areas to be treated for hazardous fuels across the Forest. Moreover, wilderness designations limit the tools available when wildfires ignite. Fires are far more likely to escape initial attack when they occur within wilderness areas because of the limitations on access and the tools that may be used to fight them. The cost to fight wildfire increases dramatically when initial attack efforts are unsuccessful. The Revised Plan reduces the risks to public health, safety, and private property, and reduces costs associated with uncontrolled wildfire both within the urban interface and across the Forest.

Inventoried Roadless Area Management

I recognize that many who responded to the DEIS expressed a strong desire to protect the Cascade Mountain/Provo Peak area. The Revised Plan will manage 19,590 acres from Twin Peaks and South Fork Provo River Roadless Areas under Management Prescription 2.6, Undeveloped. No new classified or temporary road construction or motorized trail construction will be allowed in these areas and most on-the-ground motorized uses will be prohibited to protect the undeveloped character of these roadless areas. Exceptions will be allowed for limited administrative purposes and emergencies to protect human life.

The Revised Plan balances resource management needs and recreation opportunities with protection considerations. The remaining IRAs on the Forest are managed under a variety of

management prescriptions and ROS classifications based on the evaluation of IRAs displayed in Appendix C of the FEIS.

A semi-primitive non-motorized ROS classification is applied to 118,420 acres or 21 percent of the IRAs on the Uinta NF. No new classified road construction or temporary road construction will be allowed in these areas. No on-the-ground motorized activities will be allowed except for limited administrative purposes or for the protection of human life. Roadless qualities within these areas will be protected while existing non-motorized uses continue.

A semi-primitive motorized ROS classification is applied to 315,960 acres or 57 percent of the IRAs on the Forest. No new classified road construction will be allowed in these areas, although temporary road construction may be permitted. The roadless characteristics of these areas will be protected in the long-term, while permitting short-term impacts to facilitate management activities such as those designed to reduce hazardous fuels, treat insect and disease infestations, improve wildlife habitat, etc. Classified and temporary road construction may be allowed within the remaining 22 percent of IRAs (120,440 acres).

I have determined that 12,750 acres or 2 percent of IRAs are most appropriately managed under Management Prescription 5.2, Forested Ecosystems – Vegetation Management. Although management direction for these areas includes timber objectives, high yields are not a priority. These areas will be managed to maintain the health and productivity of the forested vegetation and allow other compatible uses.

ISSUE 3 – AIR/WATERSHED/WATER QUALITY

The Revised Plan continues to strengthen direction for the protection of watersheds and water quality provided by the 1984 Forest Plan. Generally, the Utah Division of Water Quality rates waters on the Uinta NF as “high quality waters”. Only three lakes and two streams are listed as impaired and one stream is proposed for listing on the State’s 303(d) list (FEIS, Chapter 3, Watershed and Water Quality). In all cases, forest management activities were not the cause of impairment. Many communities on the urban Wasatch Front and across the Forest depend on water yield from Forest watersheds. In order to assure that the Forest continues to be a source of high quality water, the Revised Plan further strengthens direction to ensure that water quality meets state and federal clean water standards.

The Revised Plan allocates most critical municipal watersheds on the Forest to Management Prescription 3.2, Watershed Emphasis with a semi-primitive non-motorized ROS classification. Motorized recreation, grazing, and timber harvest activities are prohibited in these areas.

The Plan incorporates direction for the maintenance and enhancement of watershed health and water quality. Best Management Practices are incorporated by reference to maintain soil productivity and water quality. Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas are identified along streams throughout the Forest. Grazing standards and guidelines specify allowable levels of vegetation utilization and ground cover to ensure long-term soil productivity and riparian health. The closure of two vacant grazing allotments in the Mount Timpanogos area and closure of the Strawberry Project lands to grazing will afford additional watershed and water quality protection.

Dispersed recreation activities have had adverse impacts on riparian health. The Revised Plan focuses management efforts on corridors currently experiencing high levels of use. These high use areas are frequently close to streams. Direction is provided to improve sites and provide toilet facilities where needed to prevent or mitigate adverse effects to adjacent resources.

Goals in the Revised Plan provide that forest management activities will not impede attainment of State clean air standards. The Forest will comply with all existing clean air laws. No violations of clean air standards are anticipated as a result of management activities implemented under the guidance of the Revised Plan.

ISSUE 4 – VIABILITY/BIODIVERSITY

Differences between the effects of the alternatives on species viability and biological diversity are relatively small. Compliance with the Endangered Species Act occurs under all alternatives. The Revised Plan incorporates conservation measures from approved conservation strategies and recovery plans as standards and guidelines. The analysis of effects to Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive (TES) species and other terrestrial species found that there was a low risk to population viability from management activities for all species considered.

The Revised Plan provides flexibility to utilize prescribed fire, wildland fire use, and mechanical treatment methods to reduce hazardous fuels and move ecosystems toward a more natural fire regime.

Little habitat loss or fragmentation would occur and the Uinta NF would be maintained as an important biological resource.

The Revised Plan places an emphasis on improving and/or maintaining aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitats. Standards and guidelines are provided to maintain or enhance species viability and biodiversity. Forty percent of the Forest will be managed under Management Prescriptions 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 which direct that management will emphasize preserving, maintaining, or restoring quality aquatic, terrestrial, and/or hydrologic conditions.

The Revised Plan addresses concerns about disease transmission from domestic livestock to bighorn sheep on the Pleasant Grove Ranger District. Two currently vacant grazing allotments in the area of Mount Timpanogos are determined to be unsuitable and will be closed to grazing. This closure will alleviate recreation conflicts and improve habitat conditions for bighorn sheep by greatly reducing the potential for transmission of nonendemic bacteria and viruses, which can predispose bighorn sheep to pneumonia and mortality.

The Strawberry Project lands are also designated as unsuitable for grazing by the Revised Plan. This area has been severely impacted by past over-grazing. Grazing has been discontinued in this area since 1990. This decision will allow the Strawberry Project lands to continue recovery and alleviate concerns regarding water quality, fisheries, and recreation conflicts.

Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas are identified along streams throughout the Forest. Management activities in these areas will be implemented so as to protect the structure, function, and composition of these critical ecosystems. Grazing standards and guidelines specify allowable levels of vegetation utilization and ground cover in upland and riparian areas to ensure long-term soil productivity and rangeland health.

ISSUE 5 – SOCIAL/ECONOMIC

Local governments and many members of the public recommended the maintenance of commodity and non-commodity uses and Forest access. The Revised Plan continues to allow for the extraction of renewable and nonrenewable resources while insuring the maintenance of productive, resilient, and resistant habitats. Grazing and timber harvest activities continue to contribute to local economies and lifestyles. Access is maintained to most areas of the Forest with high or moderate potential for oil and gas exploration and development, in support of the National Energy Policy.

Opportunities important to both visitors and local residents are maintained, such as a wide variety of non-motorized and motorized recreation opportunities, including heli-skiing. Forest access is considered a critical element of local lifestyles and sense of place. Access is generally maintained, while areas important to many Forest users for the primitive, undeveloped environments and solitude they provide are protected. People of all ages and abilities will have access to a variety of forest experiences, from developed campgrounds to semi-primitive areas.

Furthermore, additions to existing wilderness areas protect these valuable resources for current and future generations. Many commented on the importance of the Cascade Mountain and Provo Peak area. Protection is provided to this portion of the Forest through application of Management Prescription 2.6, Undeveloped. This area will continue to provide Forest visitors with the opportunity to experience a more primitive, pristine environment.

ISSUE 6 – MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring requirements in the Revised Plan meet or exceed all NFMA requirements. The Revised Plan delineates eighteen watershed-based management areas along with descriptions of the desired future condition for each. These detailed desired future conditions will better facilitate the design of management activities and the measurement of the effectiveness of management efforts during the planning period.

ISSUE 7 – LANDS: PROPERTY BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT

The Revised Plan lists criteria for identification of lands for acquisition and disposal/conveyance. Priority is placed on maintaining or improving public access and recreation opportunities, aquatic and terrestrial habitats, cultural or historic resources, and more efficient management.

Compatibility with Goals of other Governments and Tribes (36 CFR 219.7(c))

I considered comments received from public agencies, Indian Tribes, and elected officials in my decision making process. Based upon these comments, I have made a comparison between my selected alternative, and the goals and concerns expressed by the following:

Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation – Skull Valley Band and Northern Ute Indian Tribes

In briefings with the Tribes throughout the planning process, they have indicated that the Revised Plan is compatible with their goals and objectives.

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) provided input in the form of population and habitat data for species such as greater sage grouse, Bonneville and Colorado River cutthroat trout, Townsend's big-eared bat, etc. Deer and elk winter range data was also provided by UDWR.

Local County Governments

Review of the land management plans of the counties revealed no conflicts with the exception of Juab County. The 1999 Juab County General Plan contains a mission statement to limit the designation of wilderness areas. The County Commissioners have further indicated that they oppose any reductions in the historical levels of public access and use.

Consultation with other agencies indicates that the Revised Plan is compatible with the goals and objectives of other government entities.

Findings Related to Other Laws and Authorities

How does the Revised Forest Plan meet other laws and authorities?

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

Consideration of Long-Term and Short-Term Effects

This Revised Plan will govern management of the Uinta NF for the next 10 to 15 years. The FEIS evaluates effects on the significant issues and other resources for this period and the next 50 years. Under the Revised Plan, the desired future conditions for vegetative communities move towards the proper functioning condition. To achieve these desired future conditions during the life of this Plan would require a dramatic increase in vegetation treatments such as mechanical disturbance or prescribed fire. Reaching proper functioning condition is not achievable in the next 10 to 15 years within our current staffing, budgets, and planning requirements. Nor would the level of disturbance necessary to achieve properly functioning condition be desirable from an environmental effects standpoint. All resources such as fisheries, wildlife, and soils are dependent upon healthy and sustainable vegetative communities. Wide-scale disturbance throughout the Forest to move rapidly toward properly functioning condition would have significant negative effects on those other resources in the short-term. Over the long-term, these same resources would benefit from more sustainable and productive ecosystems.

Land management actions permitted by the Revised Plan balance these short-term effects and current program abilities with the long-term need for sustainability of vegetative communities of the Forest. The objectives in the Revised Plan reflect a smaller, more achievable number of acres treated. These treatments will be focused in key areas and ecosystems. For example:

- Restore and regenerate the aspen communities on the Forest, particularly where these areas are succeeding to conifers,
- Reduce fuels near several communities that could be at risk from escaped wildland fire,
- Improve greater sage grouse habitat in specific areas,
- Improve habitat and manage uses to support recovery efforts for Bonneville and Colorado River cutthroat trout, and
- Implement management activities in the two established Lynx Analysis Units to maintain or improve Canada lynx habitat.

Human uses of the natural resources on the Uinta NF are also a major consideration in this Revised Plan. The Forest's current recreation opportunities are preserved. In general the

motorized road and trail network will be retained. Some areas managed as non-motorized have been designated as such to preserve their attributes for the long-term.

In a comprehensive review and evaluation of roadless characteristics of the 35 IRAs on the Forest, I have determined that active management is an appropriate use of some of these areas. This will contribute to the long-term goal of moving towards desired future condition in the vegetative communities on the Forest. The long and short-term effects are detailed further in the FEIS, Appendices, and planning documents on file.

What are the adverse effects that cannot be avoided?

Preparation of the Revised Plan is a programmatic action and as such does not authorize any site-specific activity. Effects on the environment that might result from project level implementation of any of the alternatives analyzed in the FEIS could include some unavoidable adverse environmental effects. Projected effects are discussed as irreversible and irretrievable effects in Chapter 3 of the FEIS.

Environmentally Preferred Alternative(s)

Regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) require agencies to specify the alternative(s) considered to be environmentally preferable (40 CFR 1505.2(b)).

Alternatives E and H are the environmentally preferred alternatives. Over the short-term, Alternative E would cause the least damage due to the substantial reduction in timber harvest and small reduction in livestock grazing. Over the long-term, Alternative H will restore ecosystem processes and reduce risk for catastrophic disturbances and therefore will result in least damage to the biological and physical environment.

- Alternative H provides a balance between maintaining ecosystem processes while addressing the need for a more balanced distribution of age classes and seral stages. Vegetation treatments move areas closer to the historic range of variability, increasing sustainability and benefiting wildlife species.
- While Alternative E would reduce timber harvest and motorized recreation, the lack of vegetation management would result in a less balanced distribution of age classes. Forested vegetation would be lacking in mature components over the long-term.
- Management prescriptions applied under Alternative E would result in the least impact to riparian areas and aquatic habitats.
- Alternative E provides the most protection from human uses for IRAs. Alternative H provides protection for IRAs while providing for a variety of management choices, both now and into the future.
- Alternatives E and H incorporate standards and guidelines to minimize undesirable effects of activities and uses on the environment.

NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT

Planning Regulations

When the Uinta NF plan revision effort began in September of 1999 with the issuance of the NOI, the agency's 1982 planning regulations were in effect. On November 9, 2000, new planning rules were adopted. However, the 2000 planning rules allowed a revision to be completed under the old rules if: 1) the revision had begun before the new rule was issued, and 2) the notice that the draft environmental document was available had been published in the Federal Register before May 9, 2001. The Uinta NF revision effort met both criteria and therefore proceeded under the 1982 planning regulations.

Net Public Benefit and Present Net Value

The NFMA requires identification of the alternative that maximizes the Present Net Value (PNV) and how the selected alternative compares to this (36 CFR 219.12.j.2). According to the economic analysis displayed in the FEIS, Alternative A maximizes economic PNV and Alternative E maximizes financial PNV. Alternative A predicts a higher level of timber harvest, resulting in the highest PNV. The economic PNV (public benefits minus costs) varies by only 3.7 percent between alternatives. The net value ranges from a low of \$1,888 million for Alternative G to a high of \$1,959 million for Alternative A. Alternative H has an economic PNV of \$1,934 million. The financial PNV (Forest Service revenues minus costs) also does not vary much between alternatives. All alternatives have a negative financial PNV meaning that the cost of managing the forest resources exceeds returns to the treasury. Alternative E has the highest financial PNV (\$-260 million) and Alternative A has the lowest (\$-331 million). Alternative H has a financial PNV of \$-320 million.

Many of the benefits associated with the selected alternative are not captured in fees or revenues. For this reason, the alternative that maximizes PNV is not necessarily the alternative that has the highest net public benefit. While Alternatives A and E maximize PNV, I have determined that Alternative H has the highest net public benefit because it best balances multiple uses of the Forest and fulfills the mission of the Forest Service.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EXECUTIVE ORDER 12898)

As required by Executive Order, all federal actions will consider potentially disproportionate effects on minority or low-income communities. Potential impacts or changes to low-income or minority communities within the study area due to the proposed action must be considered. Where possible, measures should be taken to avoid negative impacts to these communities or mitigate the adverse effects. Analysis of the effects of the selected Alternative H is displayed in the Social Economic section of Chapter 3 in the FEIS. The Revised Plan is in compliance with Executive Order 12898.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (ESA)

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires "... that all Federal departments and agencies shall seek to conserve endangered and threatened [and proposed] species" of fish, wildlife, and plants. There are eleven species listed as endangered or threatened and one candidate species that may inhabit the Uinta NF.

A biological assessment (BA) was prepared and submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on November 7, 2002. The BA states that the Revised Plan may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the Canada lynx, bald eagle, western yellow-billed cuckoo, and Ute ladies'-tresses, and will have no effect on the Deseret milkvetch, clay phacelia, Utah valvata snail, June sucker, bonytail, Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, or razorback sucker.

The USFWS has determined that they concur with the findings for all species except June sucker, Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, bonytail, and razorback sucker. Through review of the BA and consultation with the USFWS, the Uinta NF has agreed with their determination of "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" for these species.

Additionally, the USFWS biological opinion states that should Canada lynx become known on the Forest, consultation will be re-entered. (FEIS, Chapters 3; Appendix E; and Appendix F). I have determined that the Revised Plan is in compliance with the ESA.

MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT/EXECUTIVE ORDER 13186

The Revised Plan is a programmatic action and as such does not authorize any site-specific activity. It includes direction to improve understory diversity in sagebrush stands and to improve overall riparian conditions (Revised Plan, Chapter 3, Vegetation Management). The Plan does not authorize any activities, which would cause a decline in habitat for migratory bird species. Potential impacts to habitat from proposed vegetation treatments will be analyzed at the site-specific project level. I have determined that management and monitoring activities are in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Executive Order 13186.

CLEAN AIR ACT

The Revised Plan is a programmatic action and as such does not authorize any site-specific activity. Some prescribed burning may occur during implementation of this Revised Plan. According to analysis disclosed in the FEIS, all alternatives are expected to meet air quality standards. Compliance with plan direction, mitigation measures, and smoke management plans will result in no adverse long-term effects (FEIS, Chapter 3, Air Quality). Potential impacts will be analyzed at the project level and will comply with regulations of the State of Utah.

This Revised Plan protects air quality through compliance with the rules, regulations, and permit procedures of the Utah Department of Air Quality. Forest-wide direction included in Chapter 3 of the Plan will ensure that air quality complies with the Clean Air Act and other State requirements. I have determined that the Revised Plan will comply with the provisions of the Clean Air Act.

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT

The Revised Plan is a programmatic action and does not authorize any site-specific activity. Projects undertaken in response to the direction in this Revised Plan will fully comply with the laws and regulations that ensure protection of heritage resources. The Revised Plan contains direction addressing the inventory, evaluation, and protection of heritage resources (Revised Plan, Chapter 2, Goals and Objectives; FEIS, Chapter 3, Heritage Resources).

Several other laws apply to preservation of heritage resources on federal land. Since the Revised Plan does not authorize ground-disturbing activities, consultation with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office under the National Historic Preservation Act is not required. The Confederated Tribes of the Goshute and the Uintah and Ouray Ute Indian Reservations were consulted during the development of this Revised Plan. The Tribes identified no issues relative to heritage resources.

It is my determination that the Revised Plan complies with the National Historical Preservation Act and other statutes that pertain to the protection of heritage resources.

CLEAN WATER ACT

The objective of the Clean Water Act is to “...restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation’s waters.” One of the Act’s goals is to “...provide for the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife” and provide for “...recreation in and on the water” (33 U.S.C. 466 et seq., Title I, Section 101). Based on the analysis disclosed in the FEIS, the Revised Plan satisfies the Clean Water Act.

The Revised Plan contains Forest-wide direction to ensure that the management activities maintain or improve watershed conditions (Revised Plan, Chapter 3, Management Activities). Best Management Practices are incorporated by reference. Additional specific direction pertaining to water quality and aquatic biota is detailed in Management Prescriptions 3.1, Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Hydrologic Resources; and 3.2 Watershed Emphasis. These prescriptions are applied to watershed areas across the Forest. Additionally, Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas are identified. Standards and guidelines direct that activities in these areas be restricted and/or designed to maintain or improve riparian area conditions and functioning. Cumulatively, this direction will ensure our continued compliance with the Clean Water Act (FEIS, Chapter 3, Watershed and Water Quality).

ENERGY REQUIREMENT AND CONSERVATION POTENTIAL

The Revised Plan is a programmatic action and does not authorize any site-specific activity. Because the scope of the proposed action is limited both in terms of geographic area and extent of activities, the Revised Plan will have little or no effect on current local energy use and offers no opportunity for energy conservation.

INVASIVE SPECIES (EXECUTIVE ORDER 13112)

The Revised Plan is a programmatic action and does not authorize any site-specific activity. Executive Order 13112 on Invasive Species directs that federal agencies not authorize any activities which would increase the spread of invasive species. The Revised Plan includes direction designed to limit the spread of invasive species (Revised Plan, Chapter 3, Management Activities). Additionally, the Revised Plan contains objectives for the detection and prevention of noxious weed infestations (Revised Plan, Chapter 2, O-2-8 and O-2-9). Therefore, I have determined the Revised Plan is in compliance with Executive Order 13112.

PRIME FARMLAND, RANGELAND AND FOREST LAND

The Revised Plan complies with the Secretary of Agriculture’s Memorandum #1827, which requires conservation of prime farmland, rangeland, and forestland. This Revised Plan manages

the Forest with sensitivity towards adjacent private and public land uses. It includes guidance to cooperate with adjacent and surrounding landowners when conducting management activities on the Forest to minimize impacts on their management.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY, EFFECTS ON MINORITIES, WOMEN

The FEIS describes the impacts to social and economic factors in Chapter 3, Social Economic. This Revised Plan will not have a disproportionate impact on any minority or low-income communities (FEIS, Chapter 3: Social Economic, Racial Diversity and Environmental Justice). I have determined that the Revised Plan will not differently affect the civil rights of any citizens, including women and minorities.

WETLANDS AND FLOODPLAINS

The Revised Plan contains direction for improvements in riparian areas and ensures compliance with State and Federal water quality standards. The Revised Plan establishes two management prescriptions, Prescription 3.1, Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Hydrologic Resources; and 3.2, Watershed Emphasis, that are specifically designed to improve conditions in watersheds and riparian areas (Revised Plan, Chapter 3, Management Prescriptions, and Management Activities—Physical Environment; Chapter 4, Management Prescriptions; FEIS, Chapter 3, Watershed and Water Quality).

OTHER POLICIES

The existing body of national direction for managing National Forests remains in effect. Standards and guidelines included in the Revised Plan provide direction specific to the Uinta NF. A summary of national program and regional policy and goals can be found in Appendix A of the Revised Plan.

Implementation

How and when will the Revised Forest Plan be implemented?

Implementation of this ROD may occur 30 calendar days after the Notice of Availability of the Record of Decision and FEIS is published in the *Federal Register* (36 CFR 219.10 (c)(1)). Implementation of the Revised Plan will be accomplished and tracked through the objectives detailed in Chapter 2 of the Revised Plan. These objectives will be used to help design the Forest's annual program of work. It will also be used to formulate long-term budget requests.

Decisions on site-specific projects are not made in the Revised Plan. Those decisions will be made after site-specific analysis and appropriate documentation in compliance with NEPA.

Transition to the Revised Forest Plan

The NFMA requires that "...permits, contracts, and other instruments for use and occupancy" of National Forest System lands be "consistent" with the Forest Plan (16 U.S.C. 1604(i)). In the context of a Revised Plan, NFMA specifically conditions this requirement in three ways:

1. These documents must be revised only "when necessary;"
2. These documents must be revised as "soon as practicable;"
3. Any revisions are "subject to valid existing rights."

Permits, contracts, and other authorizations that are determined by the Responsible Official to be consistent with this decision, or which are adjusted to be consistent, may proceed.

Most timber harvest decisions are implemented through a three-year contract. While a timber sale contract is a valid existing right, the terms of the contract allow modification. Therefore, modification of a timber contract under its terms would not violate the "valid existing right" provision. Nevertheless, I have decided not to modify any existing timber sale contracts solely due to the Revised Plan. It was assumed that these contracts would be executed according to their terms and these effects were disclosed in the FEIS. Finally, existing timber contracts will, in most cases, have been completed within three years. The decision is left to the Forest Supervisor to determine whether to modify decisions authorizing timber sales not currently under contract.

Other use and occupancy agreements are substantially longer than timber contracts. For example, grazing permits are generally issued for a 10-year term. These permits can be cancelled in whole or in part or otherwise modified, at any time during the term to conform to changes required by law, regulation, Executive Order, allotment management plans, and subsequent Forest Plan amendment or revision. Changes in grazing permits may be made to

achieve objectives identified in Forest Plans or other decisions. Modifications to grazing permits can be made by a letter, issuance of a new Term Grazing Permit, or use of a standard modification form. In the standard modification form, the authorizing officer may include as terms and conditions of the grazing permit those applicable standards and guidelines contained in the Forest Plan or in decisions that specify appropriate management requirements. Allotment Management Plans and Annual Operating Instructions are incorporated as part of the Term Grazing Permit.

It is my intention to bring Term Grazing Permits into compliance with the Revised Plan in a two-step process:

1. Upon approval of the Revised Plan, all grazing permits will be modified either with a Standard Modification form or in the Annual Operating Instructions, as appropriate, to include applicable direction. This includes, but may not be limited to, Standards and Guidelines for forage utilization and water and riparian resources.
2. When Allotment Management Plan NEPA documentation is completed per the Rescission Act (Public Law 104-19, section 504; July 27, 1995) schedule, all other applicable Revised Plan direction will be incorporated into the Term Grazing Permit and/or Allotment Management Plan, which is a part of the permit.

I find that applying the Revised Plan's standards and guidelines through this process will meet the "as soon as practicable" NFMA provision.

Other classes of "use and occupancy" agreements will be reviewed to determine whether or when the Forest Supervisor should exercise discretion to bring them into compliance with the Revised Plan. Recent project decisions that have not yet been implemented will be reviewed and adjusted by the decision maker, if necessary, to meet the direction found in the Revised Plan.

The decision maker has the discretion, on a case-by-case basis, to modify pre-existing authorizations to bring them into compliance with the Revised Plan standards and guidelines. I find that the statutory criteria of "as soon as practicable" and excepting "valid existing rights" useful in exercising that discretion.

Administrative Appeals of My Decision

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to the provisions of 36 CFR 217.3. A written notice of appeal must be filed with the Chief of the Forest Service within 90 days of the date that legal notice of this decision appears in the Salt Lake Tribune newspaper. Appeals must be sent to:

Regular Mail:

Chief of the Forest Service, Washington
Office
14th and Independence, SW
201 14th Street
Washington, DC 20250

FedEx:

USDA Forest Service
Attn: EMC
201 14th Street SW
3rd Floor Central
Washington DC 20024

A copy of the appeal must simultaneously be sent to the deciding officer:

Regional Forester of the Intermountain Region
USDA - Forest Service
324 25th Street
Ogden, UT 84401

Any notice of appeal must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217.9 and include at a minimum:

- A statement that the document is a Notice of Appeal filed pursuant to 36 CFR Part 217.
- The name, address, and telephone number of the appellant.
- Identification of the decision to which the objection is being made.
- Identification of the document in which the decision is contained, by title and subject, date of the decision, and name and title of the Deciding Officer.
- Identification of the specific portion of the decision to which objection is made.
- The reasons for appeal, including issues of fact, law, regulation, or policy and, if applicable, specifically how the decision violates law, regulation, or policy.
- Identification of the specific change(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks.

Contacts

Where can I obtain more information on this Forest Plan?

More information on the FEIS and the Revised Plan can be obtained by contacting one of the following people:

Peter Karp
Uinta NF Supervisor
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(801) 377-5780

Reese Pope
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88 West 100 North
Provo, Utah 84601
(801) 343-5103

Marlene DePietro
Forest Plan Revision Team Leader
88 West 100 North
Provo, Utah 84601
(801) 342-5161

Conclusion

For the past several years, Uinta NF personnel have worked with members of the public and other agency personnel to produce this Plan. I am pleased to make my decision based upon solid relationships that have evolved through coordination and cooperation to ensure sustainable conditions for the ecological and human environments on the Uinta NF.

The Revised Plan evolved from alternatives formed from the best available science and the work of a dedicated interdisciplinary team of Forest Service employees. However, science does not always provide definitive answers to complex resource management issues nor can any one field of science provide all the answers. Yet science can offer insight into the effects of management decisions and actions. In other words, good science can "clear the fog" and let us see which choice best helps us reach our goals.

The science supporting this plan was both biological and social. It is important to remember that discussions about the Forest are also discussions about people. While science can help explain the importance of fire, insects, and disease to the Forest, it can also help us understand the ties between Forest resources and the people who are connected to the Forest.

The challenge that remains before all of us is to work together to implement the Revised Plan. I fully understand that this particular goal can be difficult to achieve. But at the same time, I am confident that cooperation will unite us, because I believe that the concern we all have for the Forest is our common bond – that these lands remain productive and splendid – not only for the current generation, but for future generations as well.



JACK G. TROYER
Regional Forester, Intermountain Region

07 APR 2003

Date

Acronyms

AMS – Analysis of the Management Situation
BA – biological assessment
BMP – Best Management Practices
CFR – Code of Federal Regulations
DEIS – Draft Environmental Impact Statement
ESA – Endangered Species Act
FEIS – Final Environmental Impact Statement
HFI – Healthy Forest Initiative
IRA – inventoried roadless areas
NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act
NF – National Forest
NFMA – National Forest Management Act
NFP – National Fire Plan
NOI – Notice of Intent (to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement)
OHV – Off Highway Vehicles
PNV – Present Net Value
RACR – Roadless Area Conservation Rule
Revised Plan – Revised Land and Resource Management Plan
RNA – Research Natural Area
ROD – Record of Decision
ROS – Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
RPA – Resources Planning Act
TES – a Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species
USC – United States Code
USFWS – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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