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# 'Record of Decision for the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Shasta-Trinity National Forests



# RECORD OF DECISION

Final Environmental Impact Statement  
Land and Resource Management Plan

Shasta-Trinity National Forests  
USDA, Forest Service

Humboldt, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama and Trinity Counties, California

This document presents the decision regarding the selection of a land and resource management plan for the national forest land within the Shasta-Trinity National Forests. It summarizes the reasons for choosing Alternative PRF (Preferred) as the basis for the Forest Plan which will be followed for the next 10 to 15 years. Estimates of the long-term environmental and economic consequences contained in the Environmental Impact Statement were considered in this decision.

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# Table of Contents

<b>I. THE DECISION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
A. The Forest Plan .....	1
B. Governing Regulations.....	2
C. Summary of the Key Provisions of the Forest Plan .....	2
D. The Extent and Duration of this Plan .....	10
<b>II. ALTERNATIVES AND ISSUES CONSIDERED .....</b>	<b>11</b>
A. Scoping Process (Identifying Public Issues)/Public Participation.....	11
B. Alternatives Considered .....	11
<b>III. REASONS FOR THE DECISION .....</b>	<b>15</b>
A. Response to Public Issues/Comments .....	15
B. Changes in Management Direction .....	19
C. Economic Efficiency of Alternatives .....	19
D. The Contribution of Each Alternative to the Production of Goods and Services .....	19
E. Social Effects of Each Alternative .....	19
F. Environmental Effects of the Alternatives.....	20
G. The Environmentally Preferable Alternative .....	21
H. Compatibility with the Goals and Plans of Other Public Agencies.....	21
I. Reasons for Selecting the Alternative PRF .....	21
J. Findings Required by Other Laws .....	22
<b>IV. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, AND MITIGATION .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>V. PLANNING RECORDS AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>24</b>
A. Planning Records.....	24
B. The Amendment and Revision Process .....	25
C. Administrative Review Process .....	25
<b>VI. SIGNATURE AND DATE .....</b>	<b>25</b>

# RECORD OF DECISION

## USDA, FOREST SERVICE

### FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SHASTA-TRINITY NATIONAL FORESTS LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Humboldt, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama and Trinity Counties, California

#### INTRODUCTION

This document presents my decision regarding the selection of a land and resource management plan for National Forest System land within the Shasta-Trinity National Forests. It summarizes my reasons for choosing the Preferred Alternative as the basis for the Forest Plan which will be followed for the next 10 to 15 years.

#### I. THE DECISION

My decision is to select Alternative PRF (Preferred Alternative) as the plan for managing the 2,121,547 acres of the Shasta-Trinity National Forests. Alternative PRF is a modification of the Preferred Alternative shown in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Proposed Forest Plan issued September 29, 1993. The Preferred Alternative was modified to incorporate the direction from the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (NW ROD, also known as the President's Plan, or ROD SEIS) issued April 13, 1994 by Mike Espy, Secretary, U S Department of Agriculture and Bruce Babbitt, Secretary, U S Department of Interior, as well as changes in response to public comment to the September 1993 DEIS.

#### A. The Forest Plan

The Shasta-Trinity National Forests' Plan establishes the framework for multiple-use management through an ecosystem approach. The Plan provides for an integration of resource values including old-growth forest habitat, high quality water and fisheries, riparian habitat, forage, wood products outputs, recreation, minerals, visual quality, wild and scenic rivers, and wilderness for the benefit of the American people.

The Shasta-Trinity National Forests are unique National Forests in California. These Forests are within the range of the northern spotted owl, and the direction of the NW ROD is incorporated. Here, timber production is significantly reduced from levels of the previous decade with a greater emphasis in favor of retention and management for late-successional forests and riparian areas. These allocations, with their associated standards and guidelines from the NW ROD, will benefit wildlife species like the northern spotted owl and fisheries species like the coho salmon.

The Forests contain the largest portion of the Hayfork Adaptive Management Area (AMA) established by the NW ROD. The purpose of this area is to encourage the development and testing of technical and social approaches to achieving desired ecological, economic, and other social objectives. The AMA emphasizes development, testing, and application of forest management practices. This includes partial cutting, prescribed burning, and low-impact approaches to forest harvest, which provide for a broad range of forest values, including commercial timber production and late-successional and high quality riparian habitat.

## **B. Governing Regulations**

The FEIS and Forest Plan were developed according to the implementing regulations of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 219 (36 CFR 219) published in 47 FR 43026 on September 30, 1982. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508) were also followed. In addition, the Forest Plan preparation was guided by the Regional Guide for the Pacific Southwest Region, dated August 1984, as amended by the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (NW ROD), as well as many other laws and regulations.

## **C. Summary of the Key Provisions of the Forest Plan**

The Plan represents, to the extent we understand it, a balanced, ecosystem management-based program that decreases availability of some market resources, maintains or enhances amenity values, and minimizes or avoids adverse environmental impacts. Some additional changes were made to the proposed Forest Plan to incorporate direction required by the NW ROD. The major provisions of this Forest Plan are summarized below. Provisions incorporated from the NW ROD are identified apart from provisions established by this Forest Plan.

### **Old-growth Forests / Biological Diversity:**

The Forest Plan contributes to a diversity of plants and animals.

Late seral stage vegetation will be enhanced on about 75 percent of the Forest landbase because such vegetation is emphasized within Late-Successional Reserves, Riparian Reserves, designated Wilderness Areas, and Administratively Withdrawn allocations. Under the direction contained in the NW ROD, scheduled timber harvest is not permitted in these areas. This will result in the amount of old-growth forest increasing by approximately 65 percent over present levels in 5 decades. About 805,000 acres of the Forests' landbase is allocated to Late-Successional Reserves and Riparian Reserves. The primary emphasis of these reserves is protection and enhancement of late seral stage (old-growth forest) and riparian/aquatic habitat.

Additionally, within land allocations where timber harvest is planned, a minimum of 15 percent of the Forests will be retained to provide further connectivity and dispersal. Snags will be retained within regeneration harvest units at levels sufficient to support species of cavity nesting birds. An adequate supply of down logs and coarse woody debris are maintained to meet the needs of wildlife species and ecological functions.

Additionally, the Forest Plan provides for diversity of age classes across the forest by requiring retention of at least 5 percent of each seral stage.

The Forest Plan provides for reducing the risk to Port-Orford-Cedar (POC) from infection by *Phytophthora lateralis*. The Port-Orford-Cedar Root Disease has been found in areas outside of the Shasta-Trinity National Forests. POC occasionally occurs on the Forest, and is not a major component of vegetation on the Forest. It occurs, predominately, within reserved and withdrawn land allocations and non-suitable lands within the Matrix. The Plan further allows development of appropriate site-specific mitigation measures during project planning.

### **Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species (TES):**

The NW ROD established the following provisions for TES species:

Protection buffers will be provided for the rare and locally endemic species [see Shasta-Trinity Forest Plan at 4-41, 4-63 and Appendix R].

Protection for Threatened and Endangered and Sensitive species is provided for outside of withdrawn and reserved areas by Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.

Northern spotted owl viability is provided for by the system of Late-Successional Reserves, Riparian Reserves and retention standards within the Matrix and AMA. Also, northern spotted owl nesting sites mapped prior to January 1994 will be protected by a 100 acre area around the nesting site.

Portions of the Trinity National Forest fall within marbled murrelet zone 2, 30-45 miles in from the coast. As a result, if behavior indicating occupation is documented during surveys, then all contiguous existing and recruitment habitat within a 0.5 mile radius will be protected.

The Shasta-Trinity Forest Plan provides for viability of goshawks through land allocations and standards and guidelines for late successional dependent species.

Additionally, the Shasta-Trinity Plan provides for TES species not addressed by the NW ROD as follows:

It is estimated that 25 pairs of bald eagles (25 percent of the breeding pairs in California) nest on the Forests. This Plan will maintain and/or enhance the habitat necessary to provide for 32 pair of bald eagles by managing and protecting potential bald eagle sites, surveying populations and habitat annually to determine status and trend, and implementing plans for all known and newly discovered nesting and roosting sites in coordination with the Bald Eagle Recovery Plan.

This Plan will maintain and/or enhance the habitat necessary to provide for 9 pair of peregrine falcons. Site specific territory management direction will be developed and implemented for all known and future sites necessary for population viability. This direction will be coordinated with the Peregrine Falcon Recovery Plan.

### **Sensitive Plants:**

Fourteen species, or approximately 0.7 percent of the native flora of the Forests are endemic to the Shasta-Trinity National Forests, and are on the Region 5 sensitive species list. The majority of these endemics are restricted to serpentine soils.

Management and protection of sensitive plants is accomplished through identification and inventory of suitable habitat, surveys of project areas for potentially affected populations, protection of habitat, and population monitoring. It may also include manipulation of habitat to increase or stabilize populations.

#### Facilities:

The rate of road construction will be significantly reduced from past levels. New construction will average about 3 miles per year during the first decade, which is down from about 22 miles per year from historic levels.

#### Fire and Fuels:

This Plan recognizes the important role fire plays in the forest ecosystem. A program of prevention, detection, suppression, and fuels management will provide for public safety and for meeting resource objectives.

Increased emphasis is placed on management of fuels produced naturally or as a result of land management activities. Initially, about 30,000 acres of fuels will be treated annually emphasizing mechanical treatments in concert with prescribed fire. It is expected that treatment acres will increase to 90,000 acres per year by the end of the second decade. This amounts to an increase of 400 percent above past levels.

Utilization of wood fiber material (biomass) is becoming more common as a source of energy production. Utilization of biomass will be consistent with the objectives of ecosystem management, recognizing the important role of natural fire.

Fire suppression will include a combination of confinement, containment, and control strategies in order to meet resource and safety objectives while minimizing costs. In designated wilderness areas and other land allocations, both planned and unplanned ignitions will be managed as a prescribed fire where a fire plan is in place and fire effects support wilderness/other landscape objectives.

#### Aquatic Conservation Strategy:

The Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) is incorporated from the NW ROD for the entire Shasta-Trinity National Forests, and was developed to restore and maintain the ecological health of watersheds and aquatic ecosystems. This provision addresses several related issues including, fisheries, water quality, and riparian protection.

The components of the ACS include

- Riparian Reserves - lands along streams, lakes and wetlands and unstable and potentially unstable areas,
- Key watersheds - a system of large refugia comprising watersheds that are crucial to at-risk fish species and stocks and provide high water quality,
- Watershed analysis - procedures for conducting analysis that evaluates geomorphic and ecologic processes operating in specific watersheds,

- Watershed restoration - a comprehensive, long-term program of watershed restoration to restore watershed health and aquatic ecosystems, including the habitats supporting fish and other aquatic and riparian-dependent organisms

There are an estimated 274,308 acres of Riparian Reserves within the Matrix and AMA on the Forests. Primary objectives on these lands are to maintain and enhance riparian structures and functions of streams, confer benefits to riparian-dependent and associated species other than fish, enhance habitat conservation for organisms that are dependent on the transition zone between upslope and riparian areas, improve travel and dispersal corridors for terrestrial animals and plants, and provide for connectivity of Late-Successional Reserves. Activities emphasized in Riparian Reserves include

- fisheries habitat management,
- wildlife habitat management,
- streamside and wetlands management,
- soils and water improvement,
- semi-primitive non-motorized recreation

No timber harvest is scheduled<sup>1</sup> from Riparian Reserves

There are 473,755 acres of Key Watersheds all located on the Trinity National Forest. No Key Watersheds are on the Shasta National Forest. Key Watersheds overlay Forest Plan Land Allocations and Management Prescriptions. The intent of Key Watersheds is to serve as a refugia critical for maintaining and recovering habitat for at-risk stocks of anadromous salmonids and resident fish species.

Watershed analysis is a systematic procedure to characterize the processes and interactions occurring within a watershed. The information is used to guide management prescription and monitoring programs, set and refine Riparian Reserve boundaries, and identify restoration opportunities. Watershed analysis is

- required in Key Watersheds prior to resource management,
- required in roadless areas prior to resource management,
- recommended in all other watersheds,
- required to change Riparian Reserve widths and/or their associated standards and guidelines in all watersheds

Watershed restoration is a part of a program to aid recovery of fish habitat, riparian habitat, and water quality where opportunities have been identified through the watershed analysis process. Watershed restoration focuses on the following important components:

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<sup>1</sup> A quantity of timber that is planned or scheduled for sale and harvest by time period from the area of suitable land covered by the Forest Plan. Suitable forest land is land that is capable of being managed for timber production on a regulated basis.

- control and prevention of road related runoff and sediment production,
- restoration of the condition of riparian vegetation,
- restoration of in-stream habitat complexity, and
- other restoration opportunities such as meadow and wetland restoration, mine reclamation, and vegetation treatments to support aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem goals

**Lands :**

Approximately 700,000 acres of other land within the Forests' administrative boundary are owned by private individuals or non-federal entities. The priority for the land ownership adjustment program is to acquire land that enhances management efficiency and reduces costs. Examples include lands that are inholdings within designated wilderness areas, lands within RNAs, wild & scenic rivers, special management areas and National Recreation Trails. Also included are undeveloped private lands needed to fulfill management goals and objectives of the recreation resource program, and lands which will promote special resource management goals, prevent incompatible land use and contribute to the consolidation of land ownership.

Disposal of National Forest System land will be considered where there is clear evidence that the land is needed and suited for community expansion and disposal will not be in conflict with higher public or environmental purposes.

**Minerals:**

The Forest Plan contains direction for responding to mining proposals in a manner that facilitates development while minimizing adverse impacts to the surface resources.

**Range:**

Range management emphasis is on improving ecological conditions in riparian areas while providing forage. Grazing will decrease from 10,000 animal months (AMs) per year to 8,300 AMs per year.

**Timber:**

The Plan provides that 530,000 acres of suitable forest land is available for scheduled timber harvest, about 285,000 acres of which are allocated to the Commercial Wood Products Emphasis. The maximum average annual allowable sale quantity (**ASQ**) in the Plan is 82 MMBF. The average annual harvest over the past decade has been 200 MMBF.

The ASQ in the Final Plan is 22 MMBF more than the Preferred Alternative in the Draft Plan. This increase results from changing from a minimum rotation age as proposed in the Draft President's Plan to a 110 year rotation (minimum 70 year rotation) age. This adjustment was made due to changes made between the Draft and Final EIS and NW ROD.

The ASQ results from a combination of even-aged and uneven-aged systems consistent with the desired future condition of the landscape. The Plan includes 3,500 acres annually of reforestation, and 5,300 acres annually of timber stand improvement including precommercial thinning, release and weeding.

Selection of site-specific silvicultural prescriptions at the project level will be based on analysis of current condition, requirements and regulation, and desired future conditions. Clearcutting is not scheduled, but will be considered under restricted conditions, where appropriate, for meeting land management objectives.

Green tree retention (GTR) will be the primary method of regeneration harvest used under the Plan. GTR is defined as the practice of retaining live, growing trees on a site during timber regeneration harvests as a future source of trees and snags for wildlife.

### **Recreation:**

Developed recreation opportunities will be adequate to meet projected demand over the next 5 decades. Recreation use is estimated to increase by 50 percent from current levels in the next 5 decades. Existing facility capacity will be rehabilitated at a rate of 8,750 people-at-one-time per decade and new sites will be constructed to meet projected demand.

The Plan permits Off-Highway-Vehicle (OHV) use as follows: 586,609 acres closed, 1,259,688 acres restricted, and 275,250 acres open to OHV use.

An area on Mt. Shasta is being considered for development of downhill skiing under a separate site specific environmental impact statement. This Record of Decision does not consider or make a decision concerning alternatives for development of a downhill skiing facility.

### **Soils:**

Maintenance of long-term soil productivity is given a high priority in the Plan. Minimizing reduction in long-term productivity from erosion, nutrient loss, displacement, and compaction are emphasized. Provisions are made for rehabilitation and improvement measures where needed.

### **Special Management Areas:**

In addition to the Shasta Mud Flow Research Natural Area (RNA) previously established, this Plan allocates 23,260 acres of National Forest System lands in eight areas to Management Prescription X as RNAs.

Nineteen Special Interest Areas (SIAs) totaling 6,981 acres are allocated and will be established.

Management direction for Mt. Shasta includes Wilderness, National Natural Historic Landmark (NNHL), Recreation Area (under the Secretary of Agriculture's 1926 Land Order), and eligibility for registration as a National Historic Property. The Forest Plan recognizes Mt. Shasta as a special management area in recognition of its unique values.

### **Wild and Scenic Rivers:**

An additional 152.7 miles of rivers were considered for eligibility to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system. This Plan recommends the inclusion of 79.7 of those miles in six river segments to the National Wild and Scenic River System. The rivers include (1) Beegum - 2.5 miles, (2) Canyon Creek - 17.5 miles, (3) Hayfork Creek - 11.5, (4) North Fork Trinity River - 11.7, (5) South Fork Trinity River - 24.8 miles, and (6) Virgin Creek - 11.7 miles.

I am also recommending that the 106.4 miles within the Trinity River system already designated by the Secretary of Interior be designated by Congress for clarity of administration and consistency in protection.

### **Wilderness:**

There are five Wildernesses totaling 498,776 acres on the Shasta-Trinity National Forests. More specific management plans and schedules will be prepared for these areas.

The 1984 California Wilderness Act identified the Mt. Eddy Area, 7,720 acres, as the only Further Planning Area on the Forests. While the Plan does not recommend wilderness designation for this area, it does not preclude wilderness consideration during the next planning period and wilderness attributes are retained on about 90 percent of the Mt. Eddy area through allocations to Semi-Primitive Recreation and Research Natural Area. This designation of the Mt. Eddy Area addresses the demand for non-wilderness backcountry recreation and allows management practices that will enhance wildlife habitat and aquatic ecosystems that can not be done within wilderness.

The 1984 California Wilderness Act released for multiple-use resource management 29 roadless areas on the Forests totalling about 306,000 acres. The Forest Plan allocates about 81 percent of these acres to Management Prescriptions that retain their undeveloped character.

### **Wildlife (also see Biological Diversity and TES):**

Opportunities to protect and enhance wildlife habitat are recognized in the Plan.

Compared to historic levels, this Plan will result in less early seral stage habitat (dominated by early stages of vegetation climax development, such as young forests, shrubs, and grasses). Only 22 percent of the Forest is allocated to Management Prescriptions VI and VIII which permit a level of habitat manipulation needed to manage for that wildlife assemblage.

The acreage of hardwoods remain moderately constant at 189,600 acres. The hardwood wildlife assemblage is less impacted than the previous decade due to a significant reduction in the level of timber harvest. Hardwoods are managed to meet desired future conditions.

The Plan provides for a sustainable level of snags and dead-down logs and woody material for wildlife species. Standards and guidelines for retention of snags and down logs provide for sustained levels, while GTR silvicultural treatments provide a source for recruitment.

## II.

The NW ROD standards and guidelines as incorporated provide for improvement of riparian and aquatic wildlife assemblages through allocation of wide reserves along streams, lakes and wetlands with management requirements that emphasize those resources

### Visual Quality:

The Plan continues to manage the most highly used recreation areas of the Forests for scenic quality

The Shasta and Trinity Units of the National Recreation Area (NRA) will continue to be managed to retain scenic values. Development activities such as timber harvest, road building and recreational development are not scheduled or must be accomplished in a manner to retain the scenic values

Riparian areas along water features such as lakes and streams retain a near natural appearance, being reserved from many developmental activities

The foreground and middle ground of candidate state scenic highways will continue to be managed for scenic quality, including, U S Highway 97, State Highway 3, State Highway 89, State Highway 299, and portions of State Highway 36 and Interstate 5. Designated wildernesses, Wild and Scenic portions of designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, and special areas (RNAs, SIAs and significant cultural resources) will be managed to maintain a near natural appearance

Since developmental management activities are scheduled on a very limited portion of the Forests, the Visual Quality Index (VQI), a measure of visual quality, will increase with implementation of this Forest Plan

### Heritage Resources:

The Plan provides for protection of heritage/cultural sites from potentially damaging activities through direction in Management Prescription XI, Heritage Resources. The Forest standards and guidelines provide mechanisms to ensure that heritage/cultural resources are identified and assessed as to their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The Plan Standards and Guidelines also ensure Native American access and use of sacred sites and provide for collection and/or use of traditional resources

### Economic:

The major features of this Plan emphasize amenity values. Economic uses of the Forests are declining. The economic factors are discussed below

Present net value (PNV) is a measure of relative economic scale and efficiency. The PNV of the Forest Plan is reduced substantially from the recent past. Reduced timber harvest and associated revenue is the primary reason for the decrease

A portion of the Forests' receipts (i.e., 25 percent of the total receipt) is paid to the State of California for distribution to counties for use on roads and schools. Forest receipts are directly related to the level of management activities. Historically, the Forests' timber

management program generated the largest portion of shared receipts. With the listing of the northern spotted owl as threatened in 1990 and subsequent reductions in timber harvest levels from the Forests, those receipts are significantly reduced from the past. The level of receipt to counties is predicted to be about 29 percent below the recent past.

Management activities have the potential to affect employment patterns within the Forests' area of primary economic impact. Employment levels are expected to drop by 1 percent as compared to the current situation.

The projected annual Forest Service budget needed to fully implement the Plan (measured in constant 1989 dollars) is 41.8 million dollars. The FY 1989 budget was 40 million dollars. Goals and objectives of the Plan may not be achievable in the projected time frame if budgets differ significantly from plan implementation costs. However, while budgets may influence outputs, they will not affect land allocations and standards and guidelines. Budgets only affect the pace of implementation of the Forest Plan.

### **Social:**

With timber outputs at about 1/3 of the previous decades, social groups linked economically to the Forests' outputs will benefit significantly less than they did at historic levels of timber outputs. There are expected to be changes to population and land use from the mix of resource outputs associated with the Plan. Direct, indirect and induced employment, dependent on timber outputs from the National Forest, will be reduced from historic levels.

The expectations of persons in favor of preservation values are likely supported by the amount of National Forest reserved from development (e.g., about 75 percent of the Forests' land base is reserved from scheduled timber harvest).

## **D. The Extent and Duration of this Plan**

As provided in 36 CFR 219.10 (g), this decision will remain in effect until the Plan is revised, which is scheduled to be in 10 years but no longer than 15 years. In the FEIS, a 50-year planning period is used so that effects of alternative choices can be projected beyond the first decade. Short-term opportunities, problems, or conflicts may arise in managing the Forests that were not anticipated in the Plan. When this occurs, the Plan can be adjusted through rescheduling, amending, or revising.

As a management strategy for the Shasta-Trinity National Forests, this plan and FEIS are programmatic. The emphasis in the Plan is not on site-specific decisions. Rather, it provides overall systematic guidance and establishes management direction to govern future actions.

In order to fully implement the Plan (including activities as scheduled, goods and services, mitigation, and monitoring), the Plan projects a need for a 4.5 percent increase in funding over the 1989 base year, or a total of 41.8 million per year in the first decade. Actual annual budgets affect the rate of implementation of the Plan and directly affect the outputs produced in any given period. The schedule of implementation is not expected to adversely affect the environmental objectives.

## **II. ALTERNATIVES AND ISSUES CONSIDERED**

### **A. Scoping Process (Identifying Public Issues)/Public Participation**

The scoping process to determine the issues for the Proposed Forest Land and Resource Management Plan was initially conducted for the Shasta-Trinity National Forests during 1979. Public meetings were held in the communities of Burney, Mt. Shasta, Redding, and Weaverville. Public issues and management concerns as a result of these meetings helped define the scope of the EIS (40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.25). Issues were further defined from public comments received on the Draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plans released during 1986 and 1990.

In October of 1993, the current **DEIS** and proposed Forest Plan were issued. Over 400 responses were received. Based on public response, the number of issues to be addressed in the FEIS was increased by one. The new issue concerns downhill skiing and the mix of uses permitted on Mt. Shasta. Some groups feel that the Plan should allow for some recreational development, while other groups believe that no development should take place on Mt. Shasta.

In Section III of this Record of Decision, the public issues and comments on the Draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plan are discussed. The Plan and EIS were revised as a result of public comments and to incorporate provisions of the NW ROD.

### **B. Alternatives Considered**

In response to planning issues, concerns, legislation, and regulations, a range of alternatives was developed and analyzed in the DEIS. Each alternative reflected a different resource management emphasis resulting in different levels of outputs and services. Forest standards and guidelines were developed to assure careful management of all resources. More information on this process can be found in Chapter II of the FEIS.

The public review of the DEIS and Draft Forest Plan helped focus on the major issues. As a result the Forest modified the Preferred Alternative (PRF) in response to public comment and incorporated the provisions of the NW ROD. The FEIS alternatives addressed the major issues and are within the scope of alternatives discussed in the Draft.

Public review and comment also helped identify changes or additions to Forest-wide standards and guidelines and Management Area direction in the Forest Plan. The Forest Plan has been revised in response to these public comments.

More detailed information about the alternative formulation process and the alternatives themselves can be found in the EIS, Chapter II.

#### **Alternatives Considered and Eliminated from Detailed Study**

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires that agencies rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives and briefly discuss the reasons for eliminating those not developed in detail.

Five alternatives were eliminated from detailed study for one or more reasons including, failure to adequately address the public issues, and outputs and effects were similar to one selected for detailed study (i.e., duplicate and redundant alternatives).

Descriptions of the five alternatives eliminated from detailed study are summarized in the FEIS, 11-14 through 11-19

## Alternatives Considered in Detail

### Preferred Alternative (PRF)

The Preferred Alternative (PRF) in the Draft was modified in the Final to reflect the provisions of the NW ROD and public comment. The modification did not significantly change the proposed Plan. Land allocations have the effect of emphasizing later seral stage vegetation and deemphasizing early seral stages. Over 1,400,000 acres of forested lands will be allowed to cycle with minimal disturbance while recognizing the natural role of fire. Over 500,000 acres are allocated to Late-Successional Reserves with primary emphasis on protection and enhancement of late seral stage forest ecosystems and their fauna and flora including the northern spotted owl.

A priority of this Plan is to return landscape patterns to a structure and composition recognizing the natural role of wildfire, through a combination of prescribed burning and biomass/thinning treatments. Ecosystem management fuel treatments are predicted to be about 30,000 acres per year in decade one increasing to about 90,000 per year during the planning period.

Increased protection of riparian resources is emphasized. Protection zones or Riparian Reserves range from an average 100 to 300 feet on both sides of streams. Timber management activities and other ground-disturbing activities are restricted in these areas.

The allowable sale quantity will be about 1/3 of historic levels or 82 MMBF per year from suitable lands. While the silvicultural practice of clearcutting is permitted, under restricted conditions, it is not planned. This alternative also

- emphasizes visual quality because only a small portion of the land base is within allocations that permit development or disturbance,
- recommends an additional 79.7 miles of study rivers for designation to the National Wild and Scenic River System,
- maintains the existing Wilderness system of 498,776 acres in the National Wilderness Preservation System,
- maintains 81 percent of the acres of the 29 released roadless areas undeveloped and the Mt. Eddy Further Planning Area remains mostly semi-primitive non-motorized and semi-primitive motorized,
- allocates eight areas totalling 23,260 acres to Research Natural Areas (RNAs) and nineteen areas totalling 6,981 acres to Special Interest Areas (SIAs);
- operates developed recreation sites at the standard service level by the end of decade one,
- maintains trails at the standard service level by the end of decade one,
- decreases grazing of domestic livestock from past levels and adds Range Standards and Guidelines to strengthen protection of areas sensitive to livestock grazing.

## Current Alternative (CUR)

The No Action Alternative is unchanged from the DEIS. This alternative continues current direction, policies, and practices as of 1993. The Forests' budget will remain below 1989 levels. About 70 percent of the Forests will remain in a fairly natural condition. On the remaining 30 percent of the Forests, forest management activities will be evident.

This alternative emphasizes protection of late-successional habitat and riparian systems but the level of protection is less than in the PRF Alternative. The 50-11-40 rule applies.

The primary differences from PRF are narrower riparian zones and commodity output scheduled from intermittent and ephemeral streams. The role of fire in the ecosystem has a lower emphasis than under PRF. Activity fuels will be treated at a rate of 7,080 acres per year during the first decade.

The allowable sale quantity is 105.8 MMBF per year from suitable lands. The practice of clearcutting is expected to occur on about 3,160 acres per year, almost 33 percent of the acres treated annually. This alternative also

- maintains the current level of Wild and Scenic Rivers at 106.4 miles;
- maintains the existing wilderness system,
- maintains 72 percent of the 29 released roadless area acres as undeveloped and Mt Eddy Further Planning Area is managed primarily for semi-primitive motorized recreation,
- allocates eight additional areas to RNAs and nine areas as SIAs,
- operates most developed recreation sites at less than the standard service level by the end of decade one,
- maintains 20 percent of the trails at the standard service level and 80 percent at less than the standard service level for the first decade.

## Resource Planning Act (RPA)

The goal of the RPA alternative is to portray the 1990 RPA program for the Shasta-Trinity National Forests. This alternative will provide products and services at levels expected to help satisfy current and future demands stated in the 1990 RPA. Forests budget will be about 20 percent above current levels under this alternative.

About 70 percent of the Forests will remain in a fairly natural condition. On the remaining 30 percent of the Forests, forest management activities will be evident.

Late-successional forest ecosystems and riparian habitats and their associated species will be emphasized similar to CUR. The 50-11-40 rule applies. Riparian zones are narrower than PRF and the commodity outputs are scheduled from intermittent and ephemeral streams.

Timber outputs will not meet historic levels or RPA targets due to policies established to protect the northern spotted owl. The allowable sale quantity will be 112.4 MMBF per

year from suitable lands. The silvicultural practice of clearcutting is the primary regeneration system used on lands primarily managed for timber. This alternative also:

emphasizes visual quality at a slightly lower level than any of the other alternatives;

retains the existing 498,776 acres of wilderness;

maintains 71 percent of the 29 released roadless areas acres as undeveloped;

maintains the current level of wild and scenic rivers at 106.4 miles:

- allocates an additional 13,400 acres in 5 areas to RNAs and 6 areas as SIAs;

operates developed recreation sites and trails at the standard service level by the end of the second decade;

increases grazing of domestic livestock by 17 percent over current levels.

### **Citizens for Better Forestry (CBF)**

This alternative was developed in conjunction with the Citizens for Better Forestry, a regional coalition of environmental groups and individuals. The goal of this alternative is a balance between resource use and resource restoration. This alternative emphasizes late-successional and riparian ecosystems, wild and scenic rivers, and wilderness.

About 80 percent of the Forests remain in a fairly natural condition under this alternative, including the existing wilderness system, 13 RNAs, 15 SIAs, 10 wild and scenic rivers, HCAs and wide corridors for old-growth forest dependent species. This alternative dedicates the largest area to late-successional management and Threatened and Endangered Species, over 600,000 acres. The Forests' budget will be less than 1989 levels under this alternative. This alternative provides for the second highest level of riparian protection after PRF. Connectivity of late-successional ecosystems is maintained through a system of wide riparian corridors and the 50-11-40 rule.

The allowable sale quantity will be 65.3 **MMBF** per year from suitable lands. The silvicultural practice of clearcutting is not permitted under this alternative. This alternative also:

maintains a high degree of visual quality:

- supplements the 106.4 miles of existing wild and scenic rivers by an additional recommended 116.6 miles;

maintains the existing wilderness system and Mt. Eddy Further Planning Area is recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness System;

keeps 15 of the 29 released roadless areas as roadless;

allocates 13 areas totalling 26,970 acres to **RNAs** and 15 areas totalling over 3,812 acres **as** SIAs;

- operates 50 percent of developed recreation sites at the standard service level, and trails will be maintained at the standard service level by the end of decade one;
- decreases grazing of domestic livestock from current levels.

### **III. REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

This section describes the basis for my selection of the PRF Alternative. The factors I considered were derived from the issues, concerns and opportunities identified through the initial planning process, as well as from public comments on previous Drafts and the **1993** Draft EIS and Proposed Plan (Appendix K, FEIS).

No single factor determined my decision. Rather, using professional judgment and experience, many factors were considered and weighed in balance in making the decision. Based on consideration of all factors, including monetary and nonmonetary costs and benefits, land capability, protection of the basic resources, public desires, and input from other agencies, organizations, and experienced Forest officers, the Plan sets a course that results in the greatest overall long-term benefit to the public, blending national, state and local objectives.

In the following sections, A through H, I discuss in detail the factors influencing my decision. Section I summarizes the reasons for my decision to select Alternative PRF as the basis for the Forest Plan and to approve the Forest Plan.

#### **A. Response to Public Issues/Comments**

This Record of Decision reflects the many helpful comments received from agencies, organizations, and the public on the Draft Forest Plan and DEIS. Approximately 1,400 comments from 390 individuals and organizations were received. Discussed below are more specific responses to major public issues raised and further rationale for my decision. Summaries of the comments on the Draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plan and responses to those comments appear in Appendix K of the Final EIS. The following summary addresses some of the major concerns raised by the public and provides brief responses to each.

**1. Concern:** The Draft **EIS** and Proposed Forest Plan did not clearly display the effects of the President's Plan. The range of alternatives in the Draft EIS for the Forest Plan was inadequate because the Addendum to the Draft EIS only modifies Alternative PRF to incorporate standards and guidelines from the DEIS, President's Plan.

**Response:** How the Draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plan would be affected by the Draft President's Plan was disclosed by the following methods:

The Draft President's Plan was referenced in the DEIS and was made available to the public. The Draft President's Plan was described in the Draft SEIS, which described the relationship to the Proposed Forest Plan.

The DEIS included an Addendum that described the relationship to the Draft President's Plan.

The relationship between the Forest Plan and the President's Plan was described at public meetings and briefings held on both the Draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plan and the President's Plan.

The NW ROD for the Final President's Plan was signed on April 13, 1994. Changes made between the Draft and Final President's Plan were described in the SEIS and the NW ROD. The changes made between Draft and Final versions of the President's Plan were relatively minor and did not warrant issuance of another supplemental EIS on the President's Plan.

The relationship of the President's Plan to the Draft and Final Forest Plan was explained further in the SEIS and NW ROD. The SEIS supplemented the DEIS for the Draft Forest Plan (NW ROD, page 12) and provided direction for completion of the Final Forest Plan (NW ROD, Attachment A, page A-2). That direction has been fully incorporated in the Final Forest Plan.

**As** to the concern that only Alternative PRF was modified, any of the alternatives evaluated in the FEIS, in order to be implemented, would have had to be made consistent with the direction in the NW ROD, or would have had to be coordinated through the Regional Interagency Executive Committee and the Regional Ecosystem Office (NW ROD, p 58). Nonetheless, NEPA requires agencies to evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives, even if the alternatives are not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency (40 C.F.R. 1502.14). Had all of the alternatives been made consistent with the NW ROD, there was a concern that a reasonable range of alternatives and their environmental consequences would not have been displayed.

**2. Concern:** Whether sufficient old-growth forest is being retained. The concern here is whether enough acres are proposed for designation as Late-Successional Reserve and other allocations that benefit late seral stage vegetation. Some groups and individuals felt that more areas should be designated to provide old-growth forests. Others felt that more area should emphasize timber harvest.

**Response:** The Forest Plan incorporates the provisions of the NW ROD for late-successional/old-growth forest ecosystem dependent species. Over 530,000 acres of the Shasta-Trinity National Forests, 25 percent of the landbase, is allocated to Late-Successional Reserves. A total of over 70 percent of the landbase is assigned to allocations that allow the forest to cycle naturally. Examples include designated wilderness areas and wild and scenic rivers. About 30 percent of the Matrix and AMA landbase is assigned to Riparian Reserves. Riparian Reserves are wide corridors along streams, lakes and wetlands that provide protection for riparian resources and serve as travel corridors for wildlife to provide connectivity. On lands suitable for timber harvest, 15 percent of all regeneration units will retain live trees over multiple rotations. A minimum of 15 percent of the landbase within fifth order watersheds will be in mature to late seral stage vegetation.

**3. Concern:** With a lower emphasis on vegetation management activities and further recognition of the natural role of fire in the ecosystem, how will the forest be managed to reduce the losses to catastrophic wildfire?

**Response:** The need for additional treatment of fuels through a combination of thinnings, biomass treatments and prescribed fire was recognized in the Final Plan. The expected acres of fuel treatment were increased in the Final to 30,000 acres per year in the first decade increasing to 90,000 acres per year by the fifth decade.

**4. Concern:** How will the Forests' 29 released roadless areas and Mt. Eddy Further Planning Areas be managed? Some people want more area to be maintained in a primitive to semi-primitive condition, while others want more area available for development.

Response: Eighty-one percent of acres within the 29 released roadless areas are allocated to Management Prescriptions that maintain their unroaded primitive character. These areas would retain most wilderness attributes while providing for a backcountry recreation demand outside of designated wilderness. The remaining area is available for scheduled outputs, subject to project level decisions made in site specific environmental analyses. Seventy percent of the Mt. Eddy Further Planning Area is allocated to semi-primitive non-motorized and semi-primitive motorized recreation. This is consistent with current and projected recreation use trends. About 10 percent of the area is allocated to RNA. Approximately 15 percent of the area is allocated to Roaded Recreation, Management Prescription III. Under the Roaded Recreation allocation, vegetation management and other development supports recreation objectives, visual quality and favors wildlife habitats.

**5. Concern:** Some groups and individuals felt that segments of Study Rivers not being recommended for inclusion to the Wild and Scenic River system should be recommended for inclusion.

Response: The Plan recommends designation of an additional 79.7 miles of rivers. In response to comments to the Draft EIS and proposed Forest Plan, a **17.5** mile segment of Canyon Creek on the Trinity National Forest has been added to the PRF Alternative and Forest Plan. The Plan does not change recommendations for the upper and lower McCloud River, the Sacramento River and Squaw Valley Creek. The McCloud and the Squaw Valley Creek rivers will be managed under the McCloud Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP). If, after a period of good faith effort at implementation, the CRMP fails to protect the values which render the river suitable for designation then the Forest Service will consider recommendation to the National Wild and Scenic River System. The Sacramento River, below Box Canyon, flows through scattered public lands, with very little acreage on National Forest land. The upper portion of the Sacramento River does not meet eligibility criteria.

**6. Concern:** The issues associated with Mt. Shasta are complicated, ranging from concerns over development of downhill skiing to the protection of Native American traditional cultural values. The public is highly polarized over how the area should be managed.

Response: Mt. Shasta is primarily allocated to wilderness, roadless, or other management prescriptions that protect the visual and cultural values of the area. The Plan permits the consideration of downhill skiing and the expansion of existing facilities within appropriate land allocations, but that decision will be made in a separate NEPA document. Recently, 19,000 acres of the Mt. Shasta Management Area, #3 in the Forest Plan, was found by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places to be eligible for listing, emphasizing cultural values and consultation with associated Native American groups.

**7. Concern:** Many people felt that the proposed Forest Plan did not provide enough protection to sensitive resources from livestock grazing.

Response: The Forest has included additional range standards and guidelines as compared with the Draft EIS and proposed Forest Plan that provide enhanced protection and safeguards to potentially sensitive resources such as riparian areas and sensitive plants.

**8. Concern:** Timber management is related to, and affected by, most other issues on the Forests. Comments on the Draft ranged from the level of timber harvest and ASQ silvicultural methods (e.g., clearcutting), use of herbicides, reforestation, below cost sales, and Forest Service budget.

**Response:** Timber production was one of the original purposes for establishing the National Forests. The level of timber outputs in the Plan is directly related to the amount of the suitable landbase where yields are scheduled, and the constraints upon that landbase. The allowable sale quantity (ASQ) in the Plan is 82 MMBF per year, which is significantly reduced from average levels of the 1980s.

Approximately 530,000 acres of the Forests' landbase, about 25 percent, is scheduled to produce some level of timber outputs. About 13 percent of the Forests is allocated to a commercial wood products emphasis. The bulk of the Forests, about 75 percent, permits no scheduled timber harvest. Timber yields from the suitable landbase are moderated from past levels due to management constraints that benefit other resources.

Clearcutting is a permitted silvicultural practice, under restricted conditions, but is not scheduled. Clearcutting is expected to be used rarely, only when essential to meet land management objectives consistent with standards and guidelines.

The use of herbicides, often associated by the public with clearcutting, is only allowed where consistent with standards and guidelines, and only when essential to achieve ecosystem management objectives. Herbicide use is a project level decision not made in this Plan.

The minimum rotation length in the Draft Plan was removed in response to changes made by the NW ROD (see B below). The Final Plan allows rotations to vary. Rotations apply only on lands scheduled for timber harvest. Many factors are considered when establishing rotation age, including biological, economical, managerial, etc. Culmination of mean annual increment (CMAI) is only to establish minimum legal rotations as required by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA). Rotation ages scheduled in this plan are always longer than the minimum requirement due to other ecosystem management objectives.

In the past, below-cost sales have not frequently occurred. Current planning approaches under ecosystem management may generate higher costs attributable to intangible or difficult-to-quantify values that are equally important components of the ecosystem. These factors will be considered when evaluating the below-cost question in the future.

Forest Service budget effects on Plan outputs are discussed in Appendix H of the Forest Plan. The ASQ represents the maximum average volume the Forests are allowed to produce. The actual volume may be limited by budget levels.

**9. Concern:** The Plan will affect jobs, local economies, social and economic stability, and lifestyles.

**Response:** In regards to socioeconomic impacts, the relative difference between alternatives in the EIS is minimal. The listing of the northern spotted owl as threatened and implementation of the NW ROD have resulted in significant changes from historic conditions due to the reduction in harvest volume. The changes are expected to have impacts on unemployment rates, 25 percent receipts to counties, and lifestyles of persons dependent on commodity outputs from the Forests. Conversely, people closely associated with amenity values of the Forests may be more favorably affected

The Forest Plan incorporates the Adaptive Management Area (AMA) strategy from the NW ROD. The largest portion of the Hayfork AMA is located on the Trinity National Forest. One

of the objectives of the AMA is to provide a stable timber supply (refer to Shasta-Trinity Forest Plan 4-69).

## **B. Changes in Management Direction**

Changes have been made in the Final EIS and Forest Plan as a result of changes made between the Draft SEIS and Final SEIS for Late-Successional and Old-growth Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and NW ROD. The major changes affecting the Forest Plan are the removal of the minimum rotation length and the establishment of wider minimum corridors along seasonal riparian areas.

Areas recommended for designation as RNAs in the Draft Plan are allocated to Management Prescription X, Special Areas, in the Plan.

Changes have also been made to the Shasta-Trinity Final EIS and Forest Plan based on public comment including:

- additional range standards and guidelines for management of domestic livestock grazing, see Forest Plan 4-22 and 4-23;
- increased emphasis on treatment of forest fuels, see FEIS 11-36, 11-37, and 11-42;
- 17.5 miles of Canyon Creek on the Trinity National Forest that is recommended for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System.

## **C. Economic Efficiency of Alternatives**

The RPA Alternative has the highest present net value (PNV) because it produces more timber, followed by alternatives CUR, PRF, and CBF. However, the absolute difference between alternatives is minor as compared with levels of the previous decade.

The PNV in Alternative PRF is approximately 3 percent below RPA. This minor reduction in PNV was judged less important in terms of net public benefit than benefits that can not be valued in monetary terms associated with the Preferred Alternative.

## **D. The Contribution of Each Alternative to the Production of Goods and Services**

The Preferred Alternative provides a high level of protection for all resources while providing opportunities for recreation, wildlife, forage, timber, and fuelwood needed for the local economy. While some alternatives provide higher commodity outputs, they also have greater impacts on visual quality and dispersed recreation and present the greatest risk to values associated with roadless areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, wildlife, and Special Areas. The recreation opportunities, minerals, range, wildlife, and timber outputs will benefit the entire State of California.

## **E. Social Effects of Each Alternative**

Timber harvest levels are significantly decreased in all alternatives as compared to the previous decade. There are relative differences between alternatives, but because of the low level of output common to all alternatives, the social effects are similar.

Groups linked economically to the Forests' timber outputs benefit significantly less under all alternatives compared with the previous decade.

Expectations of people in favor of preservation values are supported by all alternatives as compared with the previous decade. The relative ranking of alternatives is: CBF, PRF, CUR, and RPA.

The Plan is expected to have no disproportionate effect on any ethnic, gender, or religion-based group. In providing work and recreational and educational experiences for the community, the Shasta-Trinity National Forests follows a policy of non-discrimination and will promote active participation by all segments of the public. The Forests follow affirmative action principles in all direct hiring and contracting activities.

## **F. Environmental Effects of the Alternatives**

This section summarizes effects that are expected to occur under each alternative. The magnitude, timing, and location of key environmental effects will differ only slightly under each alternative. These factors were considered in choosing Alternative PRF as the Forest Plan.

All alternatives significantly enhance old-growth forest ecosystems compared to the levels of protection provided by prior management plans. PRF emphasizes vegetation management to enhance and protect late-successional forests. PRF provides dispersal habitat through a network of riparian reserves, green tree retention in harvest units, dispersal of cutting units, and 15 percent retention rules, while the other alternatives rely primarily on the 50-11-40 Rule.

All alternatives protect riparian areas with wide Riparian Management Zones (RMZs) or Riparian Reserves (RRs). PRF provides the greatest protection to riparian areas, water quality, and aquatic habitat of all the alternatives due to greater protection of intermittent and ephemeral streams.

Under Alternative PRF, the natural role of fire is considered more than other alternatives. About 30,000 acres of activity fuels will be treated annually through a combination of thinnings, biomass treatments and prescribed fire in decade one. The long-term benefits include less damage to soil productivity, water quality and wildlife habitat through reduction in the risks to catastrophic losses to wildfires.

In all alternatives visual quality will improve over the next 5 decades. This improvement results primarily from the reduction in suitable acres available for timber harvest and the reduced intensity of management on those acres available. The relative ranking of alternatives for visual quality is CBF, PRF, CUR, and RPA.

Under alternatives CBF and PRF, additional areas are withdrawn from development. Both alternatives protect the wilderness character of most of the released roadless areas. Alternative CBF recommends the designation of the Mt. Eddy Further Planning Area to the National Wilderness Preservation System, while PRF allocates most of the area to backcountry recreation in Management Prescriptions I, II, and X. Both CBF and PRF recommend additional Study River miles to the National Wild and Scenic River System. PRF does not recommend the McCloud River segments, Squaw Valley Creek, and the Sacramento River to Wild and Scenic River designation. PRF manages the McCloud River and Squaw Valley Creek for wild and scenic river values through the McCloud River CRMP in cooperation with private land holders. All alternatives recommend or allocate additional areas to RNAs and SIAs. CBF allocates slightly more acres to RNAs than PRF and PRF recommends more acres to SIAs than any other alternative.

## G. The Environmentally Preferable Alternative

I judge the CBF and PRF alternatives to be the environmentally preferred alternative(s). Both alternatives emphasize protection of water, air and visual quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and maintain the undeveloped condition of wilderness and roadless areas. Nonmarket resources receive high priority in both alternatives. While the ASQ is larger under PRF, more acres are allocated to timber management/commercial wood products emphasis under CBF. Both alternatives restrict clearcutting. CBF does not permit clearcutting, while PRF permits but does not schedule clearcutting. CBF does not permit the use of herbicides while PRF permits herbicides only where essential to meet management objectives. Wide riparian management zones are common to both alternatives. PRF has wider zones along intermittent and ephemeral streams. CBF allocates less acres to riparian management than PRF, but more miles of wild and scenic river. CBF recommends Mt. Eddy Further Planning Area for wilderness, while PRF allocates most of the area to prescriptions that will protect the wilderness character of the area.

## H. Compatibility with the Goals and Plans of Other Public Agencies

The goals and plans of other government agencies were considered throughout the planning process. The FEIS and Plan reflect this consideration along with the comments received from public agencies during the public review period. We assessed the compatibility with other agency goals and plans. Coordination and public participation is documented in EIS pages IV-77 & 78, A-1 through A-5, and Appendix K, and meets the requirements of 36 CFR 219.6 and 219.7.

Federal agencies commenting on the Draft included the Department of Interior (Office of Environmental Affairs), Environmental Protection Agency (Region IX), Pacific Southwest Region, and the Department of Energy. State agencies include the California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Forestry, and the Resources Agency of California. Local governments and agencies and elected officials, including U.S. Congressman Wally Herger, also provided comment on the DEIS and Draft Forest Plan.

Public input to the Plan provided much worthwhile information. Dialogue and collaboration with other Federal agencies, States, local governments, Tribal governments and interested publics will continue during Plan implementation. Ongoing involvement by interested parties is critical to successful implementation. The Forest will continue to involve the public as more site-specific planning is undertaken.

## I. Reasons for Selecting the Alternative PRF

I have reviewed the environmental consequences of the Plan and the alternatives to the Plan which are disclosed in the Final EIS. In making my decision, I gave particular attention to public comments on the Draft EIS summarized in Appendix K of the Final EIS. I have also reviewed the public issues and management concerns identified during the scoping process for this Plan (Appendix A, FEIS).

I have selected Alternative PRF because it provides the best mix of resource management activities considered appropriate for existing conditions or those that are predicted to be needed during this 10 to 15 year planning period. It allows harvesting on lands suitable for timber management while protecting the basic soil and water resources and maintaining or enhancing amenity values. It provides for a moderate increase in recreation opportunities

including additional campgrounds and trail construction. Vegetation diversity is enhanced, which also benefits a wide spectrum of wildlife. It protects riparian areas, restores disturbed watersheds, and maintains water quality and soil productivity. It provides for the attainment of strategies from, and is consistent with, the NW ROD.

Alternative PRF best meets needs of people as identified by the entire public involvement process including responses to the Draft Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, resource needs as identified by resource professionals, and National Forest management mandates as identified in the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, the National Forest Management Act of 1976, and their accompanying regulations.

Alternative PRF strikes a balance between the CBF Alternative and the most economically efficient alternatives. It is one of the identified environmentally preferred alternatives. Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines and Management Prescriptions will ensure that the natural environment is protected.

I believe that Alternative PRF will have the greatest long-term public benefit when compared to other alternatives. I have selected Alternative PRF to be the Plan for management of the Shasta-Trinity National Forests.

## **J. Findings Required by Other Laws**

### **National Forest Management Act**

The Plan is consistent with the Pacific Southwest Regional Guide as amended by the NW ROD. Direction from the NW ROD for management of habitat for late-successional and old-growth forest related species was incorporated directly. The Plan is consistent with Pacific Southwest Regional Guide direction, pages 3-1 through 3-11, for the eight standards and guidelines required by 36 CFR 219.9. These standards and guidelines, found in Chapter 4 of the Plan, address harvest cutting methods, size of openings, dispersal and size variation of openings, definition of openings, management intensity for vegetation treatments, utilization standards for wood fiber, transportation and utility corridors, and air quality.

The Plan implements the requirements of 36 CFR 219.14 through 219.28. The provisions of the Plan which comply with those requirements are addressed in Chapter 4 of the Plan. Some of the key provisions of the Plan are: lands not suited for timber are identified in the Plan in accordance with 36 CFR 219.14 (a), (c); the determination of the allowable sale quantity of 82 MMBF for the plan period in accordance with 36 CFR 219.16; the Mt. Eddy Further Planning Area was evaluated and not recommended for potential wilderness designation in accordance with 36 CFR 219.17; management of habitat for fish and wildlife will be done to maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species in accordance with 36 CFR 219.19; and a diversity of plant and animal communities and tree species are provided for by the Forest Plan standards and guidelines, Chapter 4 of the Plan.

As documented in EIS pages IV-77 & 78, A-1 through A-5, and Appendix K, the coordination and public participation requirements of 36 CFR 219.6 and 219.7 have been met.

### **National Environmental Policy Act**

As required by the National Forest Management Act implementing regulations, the FEIS and Forest Plan were developed using National Environmental Policy Act procedures.

These procedures will also be used in reaching decisions on projects developed to implement Plan direction. National Environmental Policy Act procedures are designed to provide decision makers with a detailed accounting of the likely environmental effects of a proposed action prior to its adoption, and to inform the public of and allow comment on such effects.

### **Endangered Species Act**

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on direction incorporated from the NW ROD for management of habitat for late-successional and old-growth forest related species was concluded with the issuance of a biological opinion provided under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act dated February 10, 1994. A second programmatic level biological opinion on implementation of these and other provisions of the Shasta-Trinity National Forests Plan was issued in April, 1995. The USFWS determined in its biological opinion that adoption of the Shasta-Trinity Forest Plan is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of any designated critical habitat for those listed species.

Consultation or conferencing as appropriate will also be conducted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on projects that may affect species listed or proposed for listing. Consultation or conferencing as appropriate with National Marine Fisheries Service will be initiated on the Forest Plan as anadromous fish species are proposed for listing or listed. At this time, both coho salmon and steelhead are being reviewed for possible listing.

### **Clean Air Act**

The three air basins within the Forests are in compliance with national ambient air quality standards. The Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness is a designated Class I Air Quality Area. The State of California does not have an approved air quality implementation plan, so a conformity determination can not be made at this time. The Forest coordinated with local air pollution control districts during the development of the Plan. The Plan includes goals and air quality standards and guidelines such that the overall level of activities contemplated under this programmatic plan are not anticipated to degrade air quality.

### **National Historic Preservation Act**

In accordance with a memorandum of understanding with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Forest Plans are not undertakings under the National Historic Preservation Act, so consultation pursuant to Section 106 of the Act is not required at the Plan level (see FSM 2361.24). Consultation on project undertakings that implement Plan direction will be conducted as required by the Act. The Plan includes goals and standards and guidelines for heritage resources and supports a program for the identification, evaluation, and protection of heritage resources in accordance with Section 110 of the Act.

### **Clean Water Act**

The Forest Plan is programmatic and does not authorize dredge and fill activities. Permits are obtained as required for project level activities that implement Plan direction. The Plan includes soil and water goals and standards and guidelines developed in compliance with the Clean Water Act (Plan Chapter 4 and Appendix E). Implementation of the Forest Plan is expected to contribute to protecting or restoring the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the waters of the United States in accordance with the Act.

#### **IV. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, AND MITIGATION**

The Plan will not be implemented sooner than 30 days after the Notice of Availability of the Plan, FEIS, and Record of Decision appear in the Federal Register.

As soon as practicable after approval of the Plan, the Forest Supervisor shall ensure that, subject to valid existing rights, all outstanding and future permits, contracts, cooperative agreements and other instruments for occupancy and use of affected lands are consistent with the Plan. The time needed to bring all activities into compliance with the Plan will vary depending on the type of project. The Forest Supervisor will also assure that (1) Forest proposed annual programs and projects, objectives, and budget requests are consistent with the Forest Plan; and (2) implementation is in compliance with the Regional Guide and applicable regulations at 36 CFR 219.10(e).

Implementation will be guided by Forest Goals and Objectives, Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines, Land allocations and their associated Standards and Guidelines, and Management Area Direction, all found in Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan. For example, there are standards and guidelines for riparian reserves, green tree retention, owl activity centers, late-successional reserves, matrix, monitoring, and survey and manage requirements. These management requirements were developed through an interdisciplinary effort and contain measures necessary to mitigate or eliminate any long-term adverse effects. To the best of my knowledge, all practical means of avoiding or minimizing environmental harm have been adopted.

The purpose of the monitoring program is to evaluate whether the Forest Plan goals and objectives are being met, to determine **how** closely management requirements are being followed, and to assist in assessing achievement of the environmental standards. The results of monitoring and evaluation will be used to measure the progress of Forest Plan implementation. These results will also help determine when Forest Plan amendments or revisions are needed.

Activities associated with Forest Plan implementation may be adjusted as a result of research efforts that produce new information and technologies. Research and monitoring associated with air quality, prescribed fire, riparian trend studies, wildlife habitat studies, and other data could result in a Forest Plan amendment of allocations **and/or** Standards and Guidelines.

Forest Plan standards and guidelines provide for mitigation of potential adverse environmental effects of implementing the Plan. Further site-specific mitigation will be developed where appropriate at the project level.

#### **V. PLANNING RECORDS AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW**

##### **A. Planning Records**

Planning records contain detailed information and document decisions used in developing the Plan and FEIS as required in 36 CFR 219.12. All of the documentation detailing the Forest planning process is available for inspection during regular business hours at:

Forest Supervisor's Office  
Shasta-Trinity National Forests  
2400 Washington Ave.  
Redding, California 96001

These records are incorporated by reference into the FEIS and Forest Plan.

**B. The Amendment and Revision Process**

The National Forest Management Act requires revision of the Forest Plan at least every 10-15 years. The Plan may be changed sooner by amendment or revision when needed. The need for change may arise from several sources. The process used regarding amendment or revision is described at 36 CFR 219.10 (9 and (g).

**C. Administrative Review Process**

This decision is subject to appeal in accordance with the provisions of 36 CFR 217. The notice of appeal must be in writing and meet the requirements of 36 CFR 217.9. Two copies must be submitted to:

USDA-Forest Service  
National Forest System / Appeals  
Attention: Joyce Kelly / 3NW  
P.O. Box 96090  
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

My recommendation for designation of 79.7 miles of Wild and Scenic River is not appealable as it will receive further review and possible modification by the Chief of the Forest Service, Secretary of Agriculture, and the President of the United States. The United States Congress has reserved the authority to make final decisions on designation of rivers.

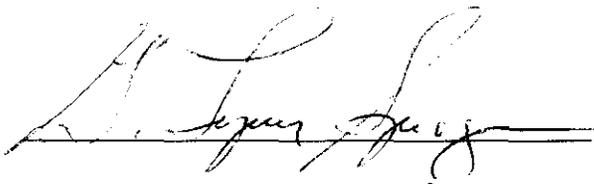
Appeals must be filed within 90 days from the date this decision is published in the legal notice section of the Sacramento Bee, Sacramento, California.

An appeal of my decision does not halt Forest Plan implementation. Requests to stay the approval of a Forest Plan shall not be granted, 36 CFR 217.10 (b).

No decisions on site-specific projects are made in this document, although a number of projects are identified. Those projects identified in various parts of the Plan or Final EIS are only included in order to clarify discussions, illustrate a point, or to show that Forest Plan goals and objectives can be achieved.

Final decisions on site-specific projects will be made during Forest Plan implementation after appropriate analysis and documentation meeting NEPA requirements.

**VI. SIGNATURE AND DATE**



**G. LYNN SPRAGUE  
Regional Forester**

**APR 28 1995**

**Date**