



RECREATION NICHE

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

NICHE SUMMARY

A Forest's recreational program niche is reflective of its "defining or unique characteristics and abilities". For the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, this niche spans 2.3 million acres from the central Blue and Wallowa Mountains in northeast Oregon across the Snake River into the Seven Devils Mountains in western Idaho. These diverse landscapes distinguish the Forest's 3 main areas, Hells Canyon, the Wallowa Mountains, and the Blue Mountains. Visitors and local residents return to the Forest each year to enjoy a unique blend of: outstanding rugged scenery, backcountry and wilderness exploration; a variety of wild and scenic rivers and mountain lakes; and Native American and pioneer history.

NICHE STATEMENT

"Eye-Catching Extremes"

Striking scenery! From the bottom of Hells Canyon, North America's deepest river gorge, through the pastoral Blue Mountains, to the top of the Eagle Cap Wilderness, the largest Wilderness in Oregon, visitors have the freedom to explore these crown jewels of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

Out the front door and into the backcountry! Big game hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking, snow sports, and horseback riding beckon. This remote, rugged area has nearly 2,900 miles of trail, five scenic byways, and four wilderness areas.

High Desert Oasis! Ten Wild and Scenic rivers, high and low elevation lakes, the Snake River, river running, Class IV & V rapids, and fishing all draw visitors to the Forest.

Available history! Settlement patterns, from Native American homelands to mining to the Oregon Trail to agriculture and timber, make for premiere interpretation & education opportunities.

SETTINGS, SPECIAL PLACES AND VALUES

The Forest provides the scenic backdrop that enhances the quality of life for local communities. Thousands of years of Native American habitation and multiple generations of pioneers contribute to the rich history of this place they call home. It also hosts those looking for a week-end getaway from the hustle and bustle of urban centers.

Hells Canyon – Characterized by deep canyons, rushing rivers, and benches, this setting is noted for its ability to accommodate contrasts, both solitude and camaraderie, or physical challenge and easy access. Spectacular vistas in the Hells Canyon NRA boast spectacular views and entice users into the backcountry and wilderness area.

Wallowa Mountains – Home of the Eagle Cap Wilderness, this setting is classically pristine with high alpine areas and powerful landscapes. Several Wild and Scenic rivers and high elevation lakes serve as destinations.

Blue Mountains – Localized high-density recreation and more roaded opportunities occur in this accessible area of plateaus, dissected canyons, and benches. This area encourages a sense of freedom and exploration on designated routes.

ACTIVITIES/OPPORTUNITIES/EXPERIENCES

A well managed recreation program balances user expectations, while protecting the very resources they enjoy. High quality service will be the norm for those seeking information about the Forest, and interpretation of the historic and natural resources.

Hells Canyon - River rafting, jet boats, viewing scenery & wildlife, horseback riding/packing, hiking, interpretation & education of cultural resources, and fishing.

Wallowa Mountains - Hiking/backpacking, horseback riding/packing, viewing wildlife and scenery, fishing, snowmobiling, and hunting.

Blue Mountains- Family camping, hunting, hiking, fishing, winter sports/snowmobiling, gathering forest products (firewood, mushrooms), Interpretation & Education, driving for pleasure and OHV use on designated routes.

PRIMARY VISITORS

Local visitors: 30 minutes to 1 hour from Forest, up to 60 miles away, typically day-users.

Week-enders: 1- 3 hours from Forest, 60-200 miles away, typically 1-3 day visit.

Destination: 3-8 hours from Forest, 200+ miles away, typically 3-7 day visit.

National/International: Hells Canyon and Eagle Cap Wilderness destinations, scenic byway users, hotel use.

Niche 'Bridge'

SETTING DESCRIPTIONS		W-W BRIDGE for DEVELOPED RECREATION PROGRAM (For the next decade - Apply to Recreation Site Facility Master Plan, Step 3, Worksheet 3)						
(key words that describe the setting as it relates to developed rec in bold)		<u>Hells Canyon</u>		<u>Wallowa Mtns.</u>		<u>Blue Mtns.</u>		
FOREST-WIDE Trail and road access, viewing scenery, discovery, hunting, and fishing and winter sports.		Scenic corridors/backcountry. 2 distinct areas: Higher developed sites along the Snake River and the Hells Canyon Byway. Primitive sites providing opportunities for extended stay and specialized access to the backcountry and wilderness.		Wilderness/backcountry Primitive sites providing opportunities for extended stay and access to backcountry lakes and peaks.		Developed/Roaded access More developed rec accommodating roaded/trail activities and overnight developed camping and day use activities		
SETTING EMPHASIS Which setting(s) best support developed recreation		<u>Moderate</u>		<u>Low</u>		<u>High</u>		
SITE FUNCTION/THEME How sites are designed/managed to best meet the niche		River corridors, Scenic Byways, viewpoints, and access into upland areas/wilderness and cultural sites.		Backcountry roads and trails transitioning into Wilderness		Traditional uses along forest routes and transitioning into the backcountry.		
KEY ACTIVITIES in support of the niche for the coming decade		River rafting, jet boats, viewing scenery & wildlife, hiking, interpretation & education of cultural resources, and fishing.		Hiking/backpacking, horseback riding/packing, viewing wildlife and scenery, fishing, snowmobiling, and hunting.		Family camping, hunting, hiking, fishing, winter sports/snowmobiling, gathering forest products (firewood, mushrooms), Interpretation & Education, driving for pleasure and OHV use.		
Infrastructure	SITE TYPE/ DEVELOPMENT SCALE Needed to provide key activities Sites will typically be the lowest dev scale possible to maintain visitor experience & protect the resource		<u>Site Type</u>	<u>Dev. Scale</u>	<u>Site Type</u>	<u>Dev. Scale</u>	<u>Site Type</u>	<u>Dev. Scale</u>
			River campgrounds	3-4	W & S River campgrounds	2-3	Lake Campgrounds	3-4
			River Day Use	3-4	Wilderness TH	2-3	Scenic Byway Campgrounds	2-3
			Trailheads/CG	2-3	Snow-parks	2-3	Scenic Byway Day Use	2
			Observation. Sites	3-4	Scenic Byway Day Use	3-4	Wilderness TH	2
			Boating Sites	3-4			Interpretive Sites	3
			Scenic Byway, VIS & Interpt. Sites	3-4			Snow-parks	2-3

	<p>SITE CAPACITY Low <50 Medium = 50-150 High >150</p>	<p>Low – Upland Medium – Snake River, Hells Canyon Byway</p>	<p>Medium – Key Wilderness Portals and Corridors Low – All else</p>	<p>High – Union Creek/Anthony Lake Complexes Low – All else</p>
--	---	--	---	--