

# OVERVIEW

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service  
Northern  
Region

## Clearwater National Forest Plan



***"Caring For The Land and Serving People"***

Dear Reader:

This overview highlights our Forest Plan by pointing out major features and discussing some of the critical issues. The Plan provides direction, monitoring requirements and a probable schedule of management practices over the next 10 to 15 years.

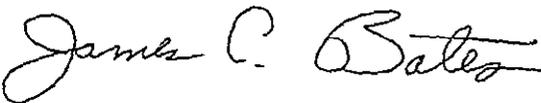
Development of the Forest Plan has been a long a difficult task. During the planning process we studied and compared numerous management strategies which balanced the uses and demands of the Forest. This included analyzing over 3300 public responses to the draft Plan. Making the final decision was a very complex process involving compromises and trade-offs, but we have arrived at a workable balance that responds to public concerns.

We are committed to a tradition of strengthening the nation and increasing its wealth -- our economic, environmental and spiritual wealth. The Clearwater National Forest is a national treasure, and its beauty and bounty is appreciated by all of us. We intend to manage the resources while keeping the streams clean, and fish and wildlife abundant.

As we implement our Plan, the years ahead will be challenging. Many people care for and often have conflicting needs and concerns about how these lands should be managed. Since each citizen is a "stockholder" in the lands we manage, your views and thoughts are important in everything we do.

Remember this document is only an overview. If you need more information or would like a complete set of Plan documents, please contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James C. Bates". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

JAMES C. BATES  
Forest Supervisor

## RESPONSE TO CRITICAL ISSUES

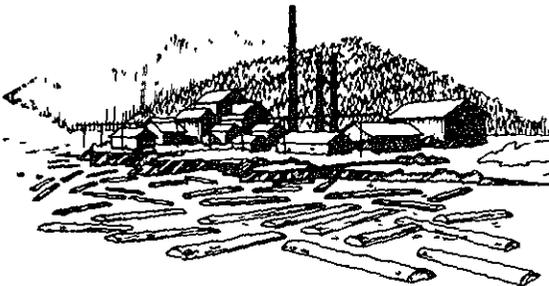
### 1. Timber Supply

The timber industry contends that more timber is needed from the Clearwater National Forest because timber supply on industrial private land in the area is dwindling. Local community leaders fear the loss of jobs and income from the lack of available timber. The Idaho Timber Supply Study, completed by the Forest Service in February, 1987, showed that the harvest on industrial lands in North Idaho will decrease in the future but that the total timber supply is adequate to meet existing harvest levels. However, our analysis on the Clearwater Forest indicates demand may be increasing and total supply may not be adequate to meet that demand some time after 1995.

The yearly timber volume in the draft Forest Plan was 160 million board feet (MMBF). In

the final Forest Plan we have increased this to 173 MMBF to respond to the potential difference between possible demand increases and supply from other ownerships. During the past 10 years, the Clearwater Forest has offered an average of 165 MMBF and sold an average of 140 MMBF.

We have identified that up to 100 MMBF can be harvested from areas which currently have roads. This limit is necessary to meet wildlife, diversity, old growth, scenery and size of opening requirements and standards of the final Plan as required by the National Forest Management Act. The remaining 73 MMBF per year would have to come from areas currently without roads. The sale program will be reduced if these areas are unavailable due to lack of funds or legal challenges



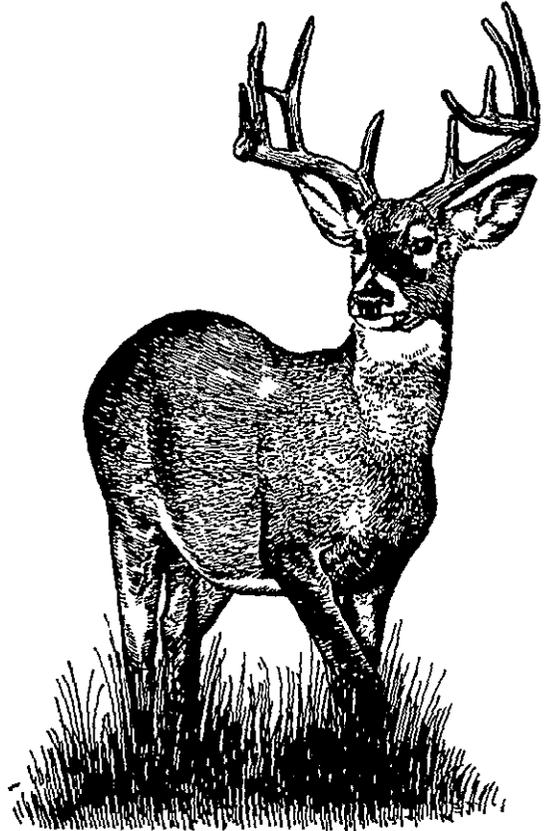
## 2. Roadless Areas and Wilderness

The Clearwater Forest contains 259,165 acres of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and an additional 950,311 acres of land without roads. These roadless acres offer opportunities for different types of management.

Many public comments have been received about these areas. Some people feel threatened by "locking up" more land in wilderness or roadless allocations while others feel just as

threatened by "developing" the land. Those who want to develop the land think of it as contributing to their livelihood, while those who want the land preserved think of it as a heritage for future generations.

Based on these public comments, we are now recommending 198,200 acres of additional wilderness and 242,240 acres of lands without roads. These lands are to remain undeveloped to provide recreation, pristine fisheries and undisturbed high quality elk habitat. (See enclosed map).



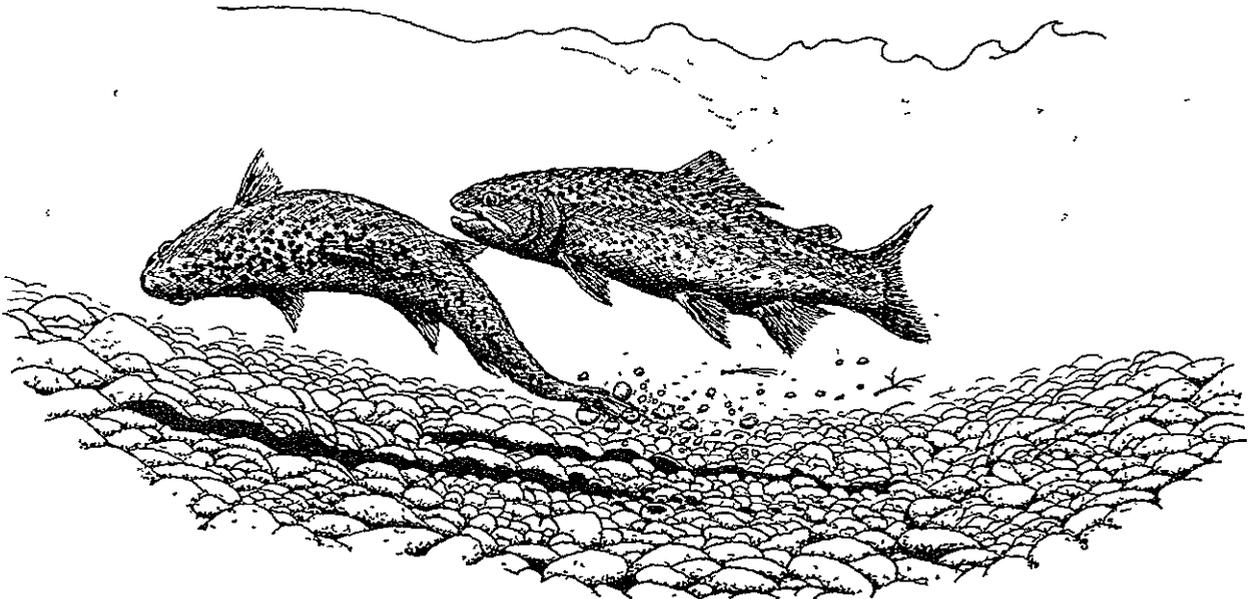
### 3. Water Quality Standards

Some of those who commented on our water standards in the draft Plan thought the standards would prevent timber from being harvested and that the standards were higher than necessary to meet State standards. Others were concerned that the standards were not strict enough to protect possible damage to soil, water, fish and riparian areas. Both sides were skeptical about the ability of our computer programs to adequately predict sediment. The Native American Tribes emphasized that water quality and anadromous fisheries are the most important resources provided by the Forest and must be improved to meet treaty obligations. There were also concerns that future funding and monitoring would be inadequate to protect water quality and fisheries.

One of the highest priorities of management is the maintenance and enhancement of water quality and fisheries habitat. In addition, we are required by numerous State and Federal laws to maintain high quality water by not causing any irreversible damage.

We will continue to use our computer models to help us make decisions because they have been tested and are reliable. They provide the best indicators of impacts that we have. We will continue to improve on our methods through monitoring, evaluating and updating.

Application of our water quality standards will protect water quality and ensure that resident fish will be maintained at current levels and that anadromous fish populations will increase.



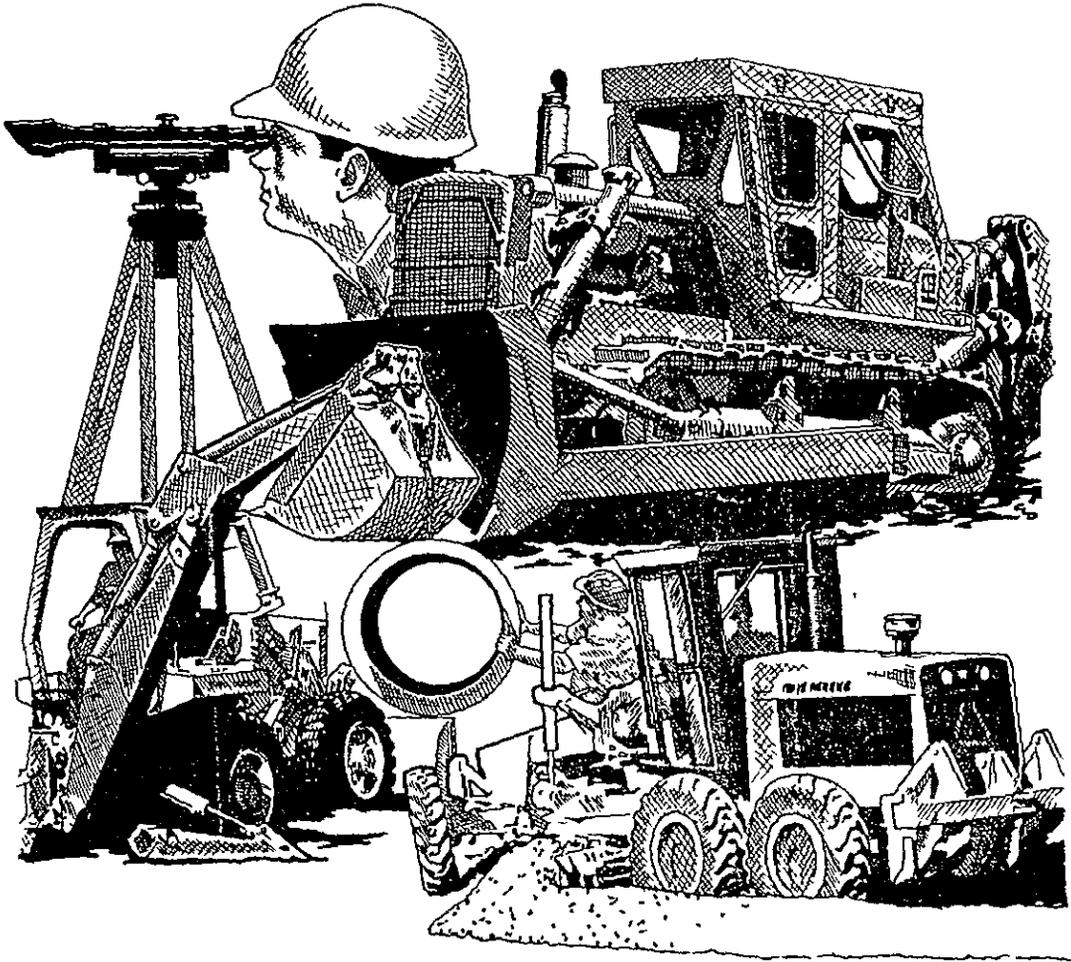
#### 4. The Level of Road Construction, Cost and Road Management

This issue is tied closely to timber harvesting, roadless lands and elk habitat issues.

A segment of our publics recognized that roads were necessary for resource development but questioned the design standards and costs association with road building. Another segment of the public contended that roads cause destruction to soil, water, fisheries, wildlife and scenery, and that new construction should be reduced or eliminated. Although proposed new road construction may increase from 62 miles in

the draft to 69 in the final, the Forest Plan has responded to these issues by reducing the design standards.

Direction has been added to lessen the effects of roads and road use on the other resources. Road closures to public vehicles will increase Forest wide but mostly in areas of key wildlife habitat. For example, all new roads constructed on over 207,000 acres in Clearwater National Forest land will be permanently closed to public use. This was endorsed by the Idaho Timber Industry and Idaho Department of Fish and Game through their agreement on the management of the Clearwater National Forest.





### 5. Quality of Elk Habitat

Elk summer range in the Clearwater Forest is considered the best in the State of Idaho. Many respondents to the draft Plan expressed concern that constructing roads into key summer range would have significant adverse impact on this habitat. We have lessened these impacts by establishing areas which will remain undeveloped and will maintain 100 percent of the potential habitat. Other areas have been established which include development while maintaining potential

key habitat at 75 percent or higher. Other areas which are currently roaded and those which are not critical summer habitat will be managed to maintain at least 25 percent potential habitat. This will be achieved partially through road closures. As a result, the Plan will maintain potential summer range at a level consistent with projected winter range capacities.

Elk habitat is being managed to meet long-term goals consistent with Idaho Department of Fish and Game proposals.

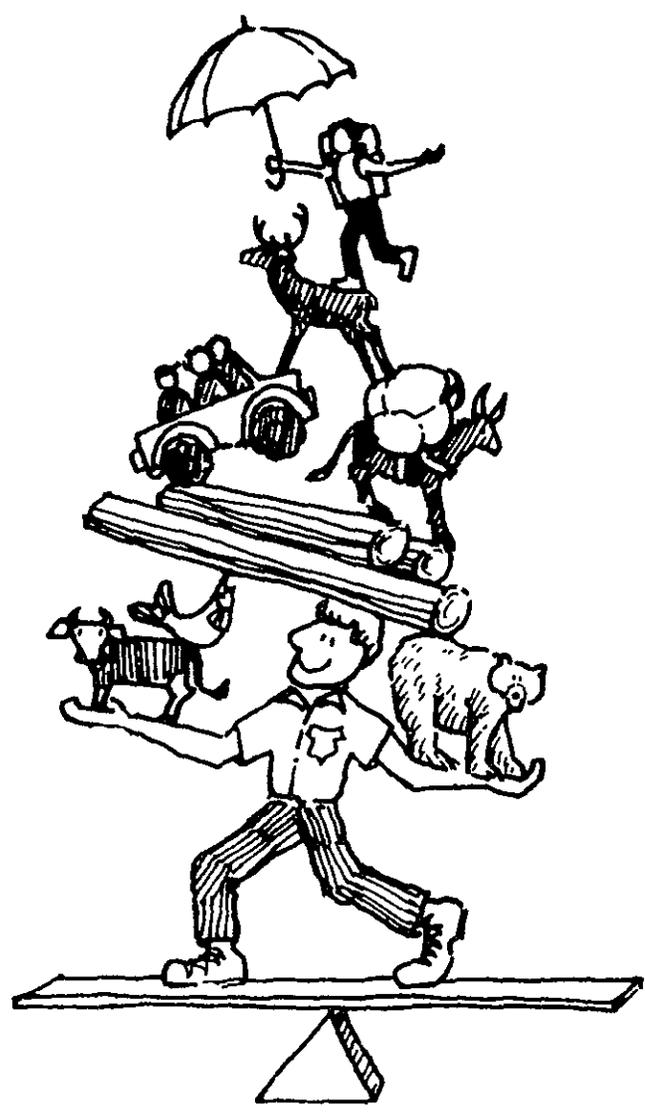


IMPLEMENTATION AND INTEGRATED  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Forest Plan provides one management plan which covers the whole Forest instead of many plans covering small areas or functional activities. In our Plan, we considered the costs and benefits of management for all resources at the same time. Our management practices are designed not only to produce income but also to protect and enhance resources which may not have a monetary value. We no longer plan and

implement our activities by individual resource; now we plan around Forest Plan goals to achieve a balance in multiple uses.

Before any activity in the Forest will be allowed, further study will be conducted by an interdisciplinary team to ensure that Forest Plan standards and objectives will be met and to identify values which may need protection.



## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation will provide both the public and us with information regarding the progress and results of implementing the Forest Plan. This information and evaluation will provide feedback for possible future changes.

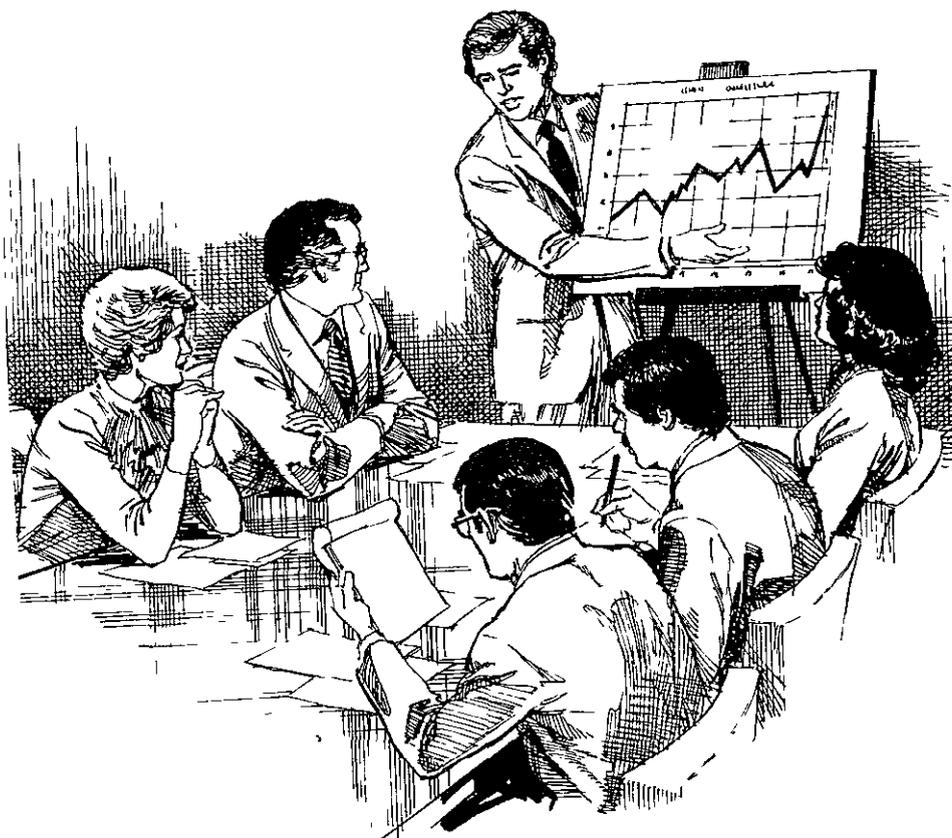
The Forest Plan displays the basic outline for monitoring. An annual monitoring program, developed in accordance with this outline, will be prepared as part of the Clearwater National Forest annual program of work. Detailed programs will be prepared for all resources and activities requiring monitoring.

These programs will be based on available

funds. If funds are inadequate to monitor the Forest Plan properly, a study will be made to develop a different course of action. This may include Forest Plan amendment or revision, or dropping of projects.

An evaluation report will display the results and trends of monitoring described in the annual monitoring report.

Data acquired by monitoring will be used to update inventories, to improve further mitigation measures, and to assess the need for amending and revising the Forest Plan.

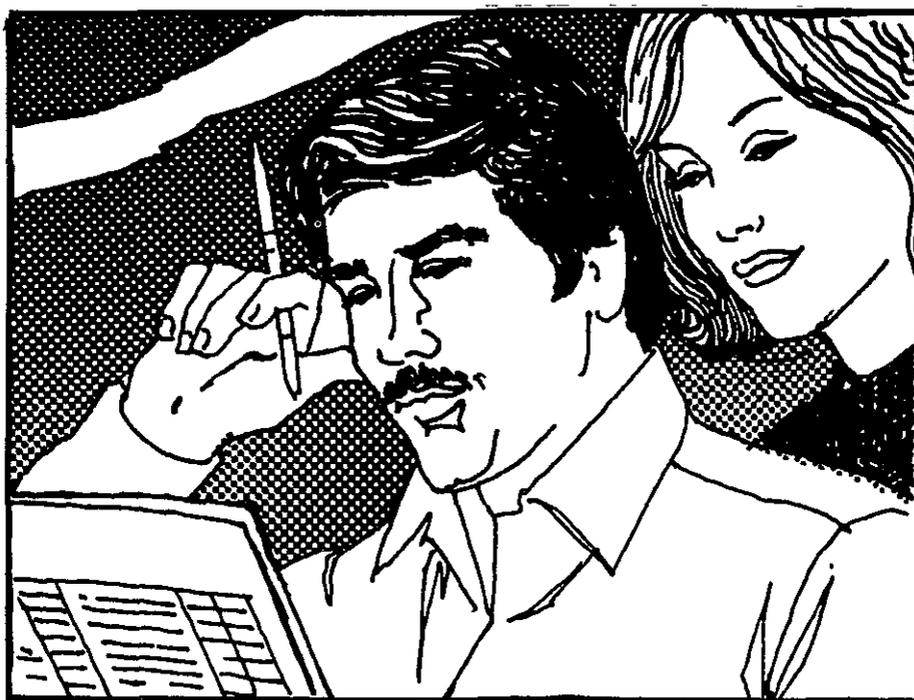


## AMENDMENT AND REVISION PROCESS

Planning doesn't end with this Forest Plan. The Forest Plan can be changed at any time by either amendment or revision. Such changes will respond to changing needs and opportunities; Congressional land designations; catastrophic events such as major flood, fire, windstorm, insect or disease epidemics; monitoring results; or major new management or significant technological changes.

In making changes, we will follow the amendment or revision procedures outlined in the National Forest Management Act and the planning regulations.

The public will be asked to comment on or to provide input to any proposed significant amendments or revisions.



## HOW TO STAY INVOLVED

In implementing our Plan, we are committed to listening to your concerns and to responding to your needs promptly with courtesy and fairness. Maintenance of your trust means being good neighbors and good hosts, working cooperatively, inviting your involvement and sharing credit for accomplishments.

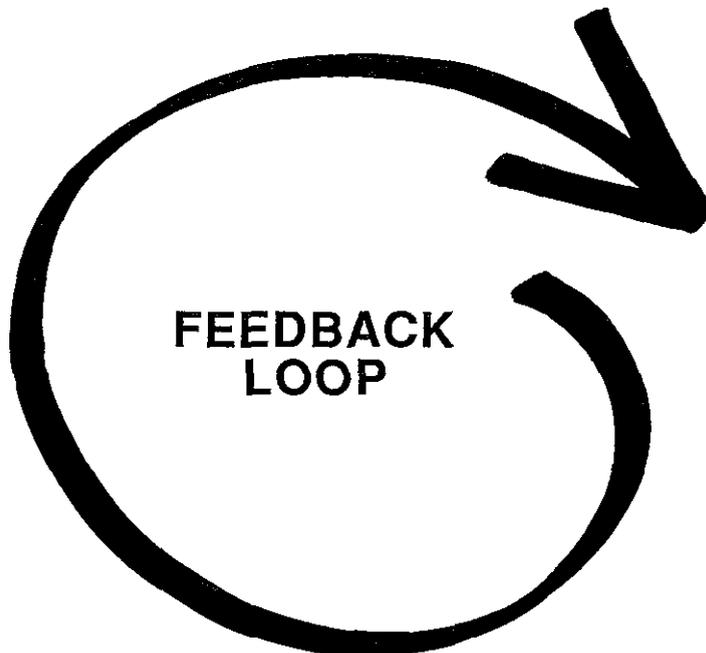
The Forest Plan contains general management direction but does not include projects or actions on specific sites. Site-specific environmental analyses will be done at the project or area level. These analyses will follow National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures, including public involvement and input throughout the process.

You can stay involved in Forest Plan implementation by participating in the NEPA proce-

dures as we analyze resource management opportunities. You can also stay involved in the monitoring and evaluation phases of Plan implementation described earlier.

Although press releases in the local newspapers will be used to announce proposed projects, we invite you to contact our office if you are interested in receiving environmental assessments and/or an Update which lists all of the environmental assessments and is issued twice a year. We also invite you to contact us if you have concerns about specific areas or activities. Our address follows:

Forest Supervisor  
Clearwater National Forest  
12730 Highway 12  
Orofino, ID 83544  
Telephone: (208)476-4541.



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