

DECISION NOTICE

and

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE

for

Adoption of an amendment to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness General Management Direction which is an appendix to the Bitterroot, Clearwater, Lolo, and Nez Perce Forest Plans

BITTERROOT FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 12
CLEARWATER FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 12
LOLO FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 21
NEZ PERCE FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 19

Decision

It is our decision to select Alternative 3 as described in the supplemented Environmental Assessment titled "Forest Plan Direction (Vegetation) for the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness (November, 1995). This decision establishes goals and objectives for managing the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness within ecosystem management principals. It specifically addresses direction to diminish the spread of weeds, ensure that impacted sites are restored with native vegetation, and maintain or restore rare plant populations.

The decision will amend the current Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness General Management Direction by adding goals, objectives, management standards and monitoring indicators contained in the document titled "Vegetation." Management guidelines are included that provide managers with examples of how to implement the goals, objectives, standards and monitoring.

The amendment will replace current pages in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness General Management Direction pages with new pages attached to this decision notice.

Rationale for Decision

We have considered reasonable alternatives and possible environmental effects of the proposed action in making our decision to approve this amendment. Public participation has been encouraged throughout the development of the proposed amendment. Members of the public were asked to identify issues early in the amendment process (June 1989) and were given the opportunity to comment on the goals and objectives in the first draft of the amendment. Nine subsequent public meetings were held to review drafts of the proposed amendment and discuss new issues. Letters were sent to public interests in the areas surrounding the Bitterroot, Clearwater, Lolo and Nez Perce National Forests to solicit comments on the final draft. Three responses were received during this final scoping phase. Two were supportive of the proposed amendment and one was concerned about the effects on recreation use from management actions that may result from the amendment.

A May 1995 decision that would have amended Alternative 2 to the forest plans was appealed. The decision was withdrawn and Alternative 3 was developed. Alternative 3 addresses issues raised in the appeal by incorporating wording changes and clarifications worked out during discussions with the appellant and intervenor. Alternative 3 was mailed to the public for a 30-day review period. Twelve

responses were received during this review period. Four were supportive of the Alternative, seven suggested changes and/or raised concerns about the Alternative, and one addressed consultation requirements with other government agencies. Several of the respondents were concerned about the statements describing the responsibilities of outfitters to control weeds in their area of operation. Alternative 3 describes management guidelines (defined as "a preferred or advisable course of action") that define this responsibility as a process of mutual agreement between the outfitter and the Forest Service. Several respondents suggested that outfitters' responsibility for weed control be mandatory and were concerned that the wording was in conflict with federal regulations governing special use permits. Alternative 3 outlines a preferred course of action which includes working with outfitters to come up with a control strategy that meets the needs of both the Forest Service and the outfitter. It does not, however, preclude the option of requiring certain practices or procedures of the outfitter under the special uses permitting authority. A number of wording changes were made to Alternative 3 based on public comments. A summary of public comments and responses to Alternative 3 is included in the EA.

Based on the environmental effects analysis in the EA, we have determined that any effects on recreation use, or other elements of the human environment, as a result of this amendment will not be significant. The effects of any projects that may be proposed to implement this direction will be disclosed in a site specific environmental analysis.

We believe our decision is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. We did not select Alternative 1 - No Action because it does not provide managers with specific direction for controlling the spread and introduction of weeds, ensuring the viability of rare plant populations, and protecting native plant communities. We did not select Alternative 2 because it contains unclear language regarding the role of outfitters in the control of weeds and uncertainty over how possible management methods would be used.

Determination of Non-Significance (NFMA)

Based on our review of the following factors, we have determined that the Proposed Action (amend the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness General Management Direction with new management direction titled "Vegetation" - Alternative 3 in the Environmental Assessment) is not a significant change in the Forest Plan. The determination has been made in accordance with the requirements of the National Forest Management Act (16 USC 1604 (f)(4), 36 CFR 219.10 (e) and FSM 1922.5).

Although the proposed amendment applies to the entire 1.3 million acre Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, it does not alter the level of goods and services projected by the forest plans. This amendment is timely in that it will provide management direction to reduce the spread of noxious weeds. Since public involvement and staff work on this amendment has been underway for several years, it is reasonable to complete the amendment rather than defer to the forest plan revision process.

The Proposed Action will become effective following appropriate public notification and completion of procedures for administrative review of the decision.

Finding of No Significant Impact (NEPA)

The direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of this proposed amendment have been reviewed and documented in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and project file.

Based on this review, we have determined that this is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulative with other actions and therefore an environmental impact statement is not needed.

Implementation of management activities after the adoption of this amendment will be consistent with the management goals, objectives, standards and guidelines, and monitoring requirements outlined in the 1992 Selway-Bitterroot General Management Direction (GMD). The GMD is an appendix to the Bitterroot, Clearwater, Lolo, and Nez Perce Forest Plans.

The determination of no significant impact is based upon the following factors in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1508.27):

There are no known effects to the human health and safety, endangered, threatened or sensitive species or its critical habitat, or cultural and historic values.

The physical and biological effects are limited because of the programmatic nature of the Proposed Action. For example, the vegetation direction emphasizes the control of noxious weeds but does not make decisions to treat them or on types of treatment that may be used. Therefore, this action does not set a precedent for other projects that may have significant effects. The effects of management actions that may occur to implement direction found in the Proposed Action will be analyzed on a project specific basis according to regulations under the National Environmental Policy Act.

There are no known effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks, and based on scoping responses, the effects of the Proposed Action are not likely to be controversial. Although the use of herbicides to control weeds is controversial, the proposed action does not advocate the use of herbicides or any other method of weed control.

There are no known significant irremediable or irreversible commitments of resources and the Proposed Action does not threaten violation of federal, state or local law.

This decision is a refinement of existing direction in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness General Management Direction which is an appendix to the Bitterroot, Clearwater, Lolo, and Nez Perce forest plans. This decision is consistent with the overall goals and objectives in the Forest Plans.

This decision will be implemented no sooner than seven (7) days after publication of this decision.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 217. A notice of appeal must be filed with the Regional Forest, USDA Forest Service, Federal Building, 200 East Broadway, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807 within 45 days after the publication date of this decision. For additional information concerning this decision, contact Dan Ritter, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Coordinator, Moose Creek Ranger District, P.O. Box 464, Grangeville, ID 83530.



STEPHEN K. KELLY
Forest Supervisor
Bitterroot National Forest

1/10/96
Date

James L. Caswell

JAMES L. CASWELL
Forest Supervisor
Clearwater National Forest

1/11/96

Date

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12-Jan 96

Date

FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT

Bitterroot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Amendment 12

Clearwater National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Amendment 12

Lolo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Amendment 21

Nez Perce National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Amendment 19

Specific changes to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness General Management Direction Include:

1. Replace the "Table of Contents" with "Table of Contents - revised 1/96"
2. Replace Chapter D, "Vegetation" (existing Page D-1) with the new Chapter D, "Vegetation", Pages D-1 through D-12.
3. Replace Chapter E, "Forage" (existing pages E-1 through E-2) with the new Page E-1
4. Replace "Appendix A" (existing Pages Appendix A-1 through A-2) with the new "Appendix A", Appendix Pages A-1 through A-3.
5. Replace "Appendix B" (existing Appendix Pages B-1 through B-2) with the new "Appendix B", Appendix Pages B-1 through B-3.

TABLE OF CONTENTS - 1/96 Revision

Regional Forester's Preface

Introduction

II. Management Direction

	Page
A. Wilderness	A-1
B. Recreation	B-1
C. Visitor Information and Education	C-1
D. Vegetation	D-1
E. (This section left blank intentionally)	E-1
F. Wildlife	F-1
G. Fisheries	G-1
H. Water	H-1
I. Soils	I-1
J. Insects and Disease	J-1
K. Fire Management	K-1
L. Land Forms and Minerals	L-1
M. Land Occupancy - National Forest Lands	M-1
N. Transportation System - Trails	N-1
O. Aircraft Use and Airfield Facilities	O-1
P. Communication	P-1
Q. Administrative Activities and Facilities - Inside the Wilderness	Q-1
R. Administrative Activities and Facilities - Adjacent to the Wilderness	R-1
S. Research	S-1
T. Other Government Agency Use of Motorized Equipment	T-1
U. Cultural and Historical	U-1
V. Selway Wild River Management Zone	V-1
W. Air Quality	W-1

Appendices

A. Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements	Appendix A-1
B. Methods for Measuring or Evaluating Monitoring Requirements	Appendix B-1
C. Problem Areas Not Meeting LAC Standards	Appendix C-1
D. Planning History, Issues, and Coordination Structure	Appendix D-1
E. Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Wildlife and Fish Species	Appendix E-1
F. Trail Maintenance Responsibilities	Appendix F-1
G. Glossary	Appendix G-1

This section originally titled *Forage* was combined with Section D - *Vegetation* in a 1996 amendment. Management direction for forage can now be found in Section D - *Vegetation*.

D. VEGETATION

Goals:

Vegetation is composed of native plant communities that represent the natural diversity of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness ecosystem in composition (kinds and amounts of vegetation), structure (arrangement of vegetation), and function (processes like succession, decomposition and nutrient cycling).

Vegetative diversity and processes are maintained by natural disturbances such as fire, wind, avalanches, and insects and disease.

New noxious weed populations are eradicated. Existing undesirable and noxious weed populations are geographically contained and are not increasing.

Viability of rare plant populations is maintained or is restored if human impacts have adversely affected them.

In areas of concentrated human use, wildlife habitat and natural processes such as nutrient cycling are not adversely affected by the use of standing and down dead wood.

Grazing of pack and saddle stock does not adversely affect native plant and animal populations, water quality, soil conditions, or other wilderness values.

Objectives:

New populations of noxious weeds identified in the Wilderness will be eradicated.

Percent cover of designated weed species in Key Areas will decrease or remain stable from year to year.

Designated weed species will not occupy Weed Free Areas.

Resource conditions will meet individual grazing management plan standards.

All known rare plant populations will be monitored to ensure that self-sustaining populations are maintained.

Management Standards:

Priority areas for prevention and control of weed populations will be where weeds threaten to spread into Weed Free Areas, boundaries of existing weed populations targeted for containment, and areas critical to plant and animal species habitat.

Methods used in the eradication or containment of noxious or undesirable weed populations will be designed to have no significant adverse effects to native plant or animal populations or natural processes. Manual and cultural removal of weeds will be evaluated first and given preference over the use of herbicides and biological control methods. Introduction of approved biological control agents will only be allowed if the agent is host specific. Site specific environmental analyses will be conducted prior to initiating control methods.

Native plants, appropriate to the specific habitat type, will be used when rehabilitating sites. The first priority in selecting seeds or plant propagation materials will be to collect on, or adjacent to, the site. Introduced species may be retained if they are non competitive and naturalized.

Priority for implementing management actions to move toward desired conditions will be based on the severity of human impacts and sensitivity or uniqueness of the associated ecologic land unit type.

Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators:

New populations of noxious weeds identified and eradicated.

Percent cover of designated weed species in Key Areas.

Presence of designated weed species in Weed Free areas.

Monitoring indicators listed in Grazing section of Vegetation Management Guidelines.

Elements of individual grazing management plans that address resource conditions.

Current fire regimes compared to historic regimes.

Dead wood retention in heavily used camping areas.

Population trends of rare plant species.

Management Guidelines:

Inventory and Classification

Vegetation management efforts will primarily focus on maintaining natural processes and a landscape mosaic within the range of natural variability. However, elements such as rare plants, alpine lakes, hot springs and other special features will be given individual attention in vegetation inventory, classification, and mapping efforts.

A vegetation classification and mapping strategy will be used in conjunction with the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Opportunity Class map to help determine acceptable levels of human use in areas based on ecologic considerations. The classification will also provide the framework for identification of potential species habitat.

Ecologic land units will be mapped in the Wilderness to describe areas of different biological and physical potentials that define the limits or range of existing and future ecologic conditions. Important landscape features such as vegetation patterns and habitat linkages will be identified. This information, in combination with inventories of existing vegetation, wildlife, and human aspects, will facilitate an ecological approach to wilderness planning and management.

Fire

Fire is a primary force in sustaining natural composition, structure and function in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness ecosystem.

Existing conditions and natural conditions will be identified and compared to establish management needs. Where fire suppression activities have disrupted natural processes, discontinuing suppression should be considered.

Threatened, endangered and sensitive plant and animal species habitat will be addressed in all fire management planning.

Insects and plant pathogens

Native insects and disease have an important role in maintaining natural ecosystem processes (ie. energy/nutrient cycling, wildlife habitat) by killing and defoliating vegetation.

Insects and disease function differently in disturbed ecosystems. Long term fire suppression can create artificially large insect and disease populations. Therefore, outbreaks that originate on disturbed lands may have an unnatural influence in wilderness.

When unnatural outbreaks on adjacent lands threaten natural processes in wilderness, control measures should be initiated outside the Wilderness. Native insect and disease outbreaks originating in the Wilderness will be allowed to fulfill their role whenever possible. Management of insect and disease populations, that have the potential to spread across administrative boundaries, will be evaluated site specifically and negotiated between adjacent ownerships.

Weeds

Many non-native plant species reside in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Some are more influential than others. Aggressive, introduced species, such as spotted knapweed and yellowstar thistle, displace native grasses and forbs. In addition to changing the composition of natural communities, reduction in native plant populations can lead to decreased wildlife forage, soil instability, and can influence the role of natural fire in the ecosystem.

Weeds can be transported into the wilderness by people and stock. Humans can carry weed seeds on their clothing and equipment, and stock can transport weed seeds through their digestive system. Weed seeds can also be transported by pets, aircraft, and fire fighting activities.

The introduction of any new weed species will be actively prevented. Forests will cooperate with counties and states to develop weed free livestock feed programs and in the interim, use of certified weed free feed will be encouraged both at portals and within the Wilderness.

Education efforts will focus on the use of prevention measures to address the transport of weeds by aircraft, stock, people, dogs, and fire fighting activities.

Travel routes to the Wilderness (roads or trails) and portals will be managed to control weeds, with priority on roads or portals accessing areas that are highly susceptible to weed encroachment. Interior airfields and administrative sites inside or associated with the Wilderness will also be weed control priorities.

A number of Weed Free Areas will be identified on each district. These areas will represent different plant communities, and will be managed in a weed-free condition by containing the weeds outside the area. Based on inventory data, these areas could be either completely free of weeds, or may be free of specific, designated species. Species will be "designated" on each District by the District Ranger in close consultation with Forest Supervisors and other agencies responsible for the management and control of exotics. State noxious weed lists will be consulted when determining weed management priorities.

When control of a weed population is being evaluated, all applicable control practices for a given species will be considered. The minimum tool principle will be applied in that the methods that accomplish control objectives while causing the least disturbance to the wilderness resource will be selected.

Key Areas for monitoring will be identified throughout the Wilderness based on ecologic land unit type. These will include areas where weeds are likely to displace native plant communities, where weeds are likely to impact critical wildlife habitat, areas with differing levels of infestation, and weed-free areas. Existing weed populations boundaries that are targeted for containment will also be identified as Key Areas. Specific weed species to be monitored will be designated for each Key Area.

Cooperative agreements will be developed with owners of private inholdings and adjacent lands, user groups, and adjacent public land managers to prevent the spread of introduced plants. Cooperative agreements will also address education as appropriate.

Assertive information and education programs will be developed to help achieve management objectives. Stock users, pilots and other visitors will be contacted prior to entering the Wilderness and at Wilderness portals when possible.

Outfitters and guides permitted in the Wilderness, state outfitters/guides boards and associations, other stock user groups, and any interested group or individual will be included in information,

education, and cooperative efforts. Opportunities for outfitters to help control weeds in their areas of operation will be explored. The areas in which outfitters can help control weeds, and the methods to be used to control weeds, will be the result of a mutual agreement between the outfitter and District Ranger. This agreement will be formalized in the outfitter's operating plan prior to each season of operation. Typical areas that outfitters can provide assistance with weed control are assigned campsites, base camps, spur trails accessing outfitter camps, and stock holding areas.

Hunter information and education will also be accomplished through coordination with state wildlife agencies. Pilot organizations and agency air operations personnel will be included in these efforts. Other user groups, organizations, and individuals will be included in education programs.

The message will convey both the goals of vegetation management and appropriate prevention practices to avoid transportation of weeds by people, stock, dogs, vehicles and aircraft. Education messages will address pre-trip, portal, and wilderness travel practices and weed identification.

Possible Management Methods

The following management methods are not decisions in this plan but serve as a menu of possible actions for managers. They are not an exhaustive list nor do they preclude other actions not listed. They are ranked from least restrictive to most restrictive.

For preventing new introductions:

- Educate all users, particularly stock users and pilots, encouraging preventative practices.
- Initiate cooperative agreements with adjacent land owners or managers
- Eradicate aggressive species from portal areas or boundary areas
- Require the use of certified weed free feed.

For retaining identified weed free areas:

- Educate all users, particularly stock users and pilots, encouraging alternative practices
- Contain introduced species to areas outside the weed free areas
- Eradicate introductions into the weed free areas
- Require the use of certified weed free feed

Rare Plants

There is little information documented on the status of rare plants in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. There are several known Forest Service designated "sensitive" species in the Wilderness and others that have potential habitat there. Little monitoring has been done on these populations.

All human activities will be managed to protect and recover rare plants. Management of federally designated threatened, endangered and sensitive species and State Species of Special Concern will be conducted in cooperation with state and federal agencies in accordance with recovery plans.

Potential habitat for rare plant species will be identified during area analyses and project planning. Biological evaluations and assessments will be conducted for proposed and existing activities that may affect rare plants.

Research and monitoring necessary to protect and perpetuate these species will be allowed and will utilize the minimum tool principle. Proposed research projects will be reviewed to assure consistency with the Wilderness management objectives that pertain to specific proposed activities.

Rare plant protection will be considered in all plans for management activities and projects within the Wilderness.

Possible Management Methods Where Rare Plant Populations Occur

The following management methods are not decisions in this plan but serve as a menu of possible actions for managers. They are not an exhaustive list nor do they preclude other actions not listed. They are ranked from least restrictive to most restrictive.

- Education
- Manage fire to sustain populations when appropriate
- Use trail maintenance standards to direct use to more resistant sites
- Signing at trailhead
- Limit grazing in specific areas
- Discourage or prohibit camping on certain sites or locations
- Discourage or prohibit overnight use
- Seasonal campsite closure

Live trees and shrubs

Damage to trees and shrubs occurs in many sites in the Wilderness. Impacts include hacking, carving, girdling and root damage due to trampling.

Management actions to address damage to trees and shrubs will be based on the severity of the damage and the sensitivity of the species. Species that are less common and/or less resistant to damage, like thin-barked aspen and birch trees, will be given higher priority than those that are more common and/or more resistant to impacts.

Possible Management Methods

The following management methods are not decisions in this plan but serve as a menu of possible actions for managers. They are not an exhaustive list nor do they preclude other actions not listed. They are ranked from least restrictive to most restrictive.

- Education
- Use of news media to inform of conditions and restrictions
- Restore site or components of site to prevent further degradation
- Signing at trailhead
- Signing on site
- Protect wilderness resource with appropriate facilities
- Encourage or require use of certain practices and/or equipment such as hobbles, highlines, and portable corrals.

- Discourage or prohibit camping on certain sites or locations
- Concentrate and channel use with facilities
- Remove damaged features
- Enforce CFR 261.9 a. which prohibits damaging any natural feature or other property of the United States.

Standing and down dead wood

Snags and downed wood play an important role in maintaining natural processes. The dead wood component contributes to functions such as nutrient and energy cycling and wildlife habitat. Dead wood is commonly used for firewood by Wilderness visitors. In some high use areas, long-term absence of dead wood can have a significant impact on site productivity. This impact is of primary concern in areas that represent unique plant and animal habitats. The impact of fire wood gathering in campsites may not be significant in the context of the entire 1.3 million acre Wilderness. However, the impact of extensive fire wood gathering in relatively unique habitats (eg. high-mountain lake basins) can be significant. The effects may be especially important when considering the total acres within the SBW that have similar vegetation and habitat characteristics.

In heavily used camp areas including administrative sites, monitoring will be conducted to assess dead wood retention. The amount of dead wood retention will be evaluated by comparing impacted sites with unimpacted sites in comparable vegetation community types. Monitoring results can be used in implementing management strategies to maintain or restore dead wood functions where necessary.

Assessment and Inventory Needs

Little information has been gathered about the current condition relating to dead and down wood. Before any management actions are taken to address impacts from wood gathering, managers will need to assess the current situation and analyze effects in the context of similar habitat types across the SBW and impacts to plants and animals that depend on those habitats. Monitoring indicators need to be selected and monitoring protocols developed. Some possible indicators of down dead wood retention include: 1) Distance necessary to travel from campsite to obtain firewood; 2) Percent volume or size of down wood retained at a site; 3) Percent or size of snags retained at a site; 3) Number of snags or logs inhabited by wildlife.

Possible Management Methods

The following management methods are not decisions in this plan but serve as a menu of possible actions for managers. They are not an exhaustive list nor do they preclude other actions not listed. They are ranked from least restrictive to most restrictive.

- Use of news media to inform of conditions
- Signing at trailhead
- Signing on site
- Encourage or require use of alternative fuel source in designated areas
- Close identified sites to snag cutting
- Close identified sites to downed wood gathering

- Seasonal campsite closures
- Use trail access management to direct use

Grazing

There are no established cattle or sheep grazing allotments in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Pack and saddle stock grazing occurs throughout the Wilderness in conjunction with outfitter operations, Forest Service administration and recreational visitor use.

Grazing management plans for pack and saddle stock will be developed and based on: 1) ecologic land unit type; 2) needs of other resources and; 3) grazing capacity.

Range analyses will be conducted to provide an inventory of the resource and a narrative evaluation of the resource data including management alternatives for grazing management planning.

Guidelines for completing a range analysis are listed below:

Inventory

- Determine suitability of areas currently grazed by pack and saddle stock.
- Map vegetation type, soils, condition/trend, production, utilization, etc.
- Identify potential conflicts with other resources. An assessment of wild ungulate grazing can be included if necessary.

Compilation of Data

- Acres by condition/trend
- Comparison of present and potential condition
 - Describe successional stages
 - Determine cause of site condition
 - Address site rehabilitation needs
- Grazing capacity
- Actual use records
- Grazing history

Evaluation

- Develop and compare alternatives to resolve discrepancies between grazing capacity, actual use and needs of other resources.

Grazing management plans will be developed based on range analysis information. The procedure for developing these plans is outlined in the Northern Region Range Analysis Handbook (FSH 2209.21, R-1, Chapter 830, Appendix D) and summarized below:

Action Plan

- Existing use and grazing capacity
- Grazing system
- Livestock management

Monitoring Plan

- Production/utilization studies
- Condition/trend benchmarks
- Visual examinations

Management objectives will be developed within the grazing management plans based on ecologic land unit type.

The following is a menu of possible monitoring indicators that could be used to measure progress toward achieving the management objectives:

Species composition and density, forage production, forage utilization, riparian condition, time of year site is grazed, length of time site is grazed, soil condition, salt containment, type of stock, number and behavior, competition with wildlife for forage, displacement of wildlife, potential threatened, endangered and sensitive species habitat.

Displacement of or competition with threatened, endangered and sensitive animal and plant species, and other species that may be affected, will be addressed in the grazing management plan.

Priority for establishing grazing management plans will be based on ecologic land unit status and sensitivity. Rare and sensitive ecologic land units will be given higher priority than common and resistant units.

Rehabilitation of grazing sites will be prioritized based on information contained in the grazing management plans. See direction in Site Rehabilitation section.

Possible Management Methods

The following management methods are not decisions in this plan but serve as a menu of possible actions for managers. They are not an exhaustive list nor do they preclude other actions not listed. They are ranked from least restrictive to most restrictive.

- Enforce compliance with grazing management plans
- Use of news media to inform of conditions and restrictions
- Signing at trailhead
- Promote the use of supplemental weed free feed
- Signing on site
- Concentrate and channel use with facilities
- Provide grazing in certain areas
- Provide grazing during certain times of the year
- Limit duration of grazing
- Limit stock numbers
- Limit kind of stock grazed
- Contain grazing in temporary enclosures

Site Rehabilitation

When sites are below the standard established for campsite impacts (refer to Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness General Management Direction, 1992), and natural recovery within a reasonable time period is unlikely, rehabilitation should be considered. In some cases, specific components of a site,

such as damaged trees, invite further damage and should be managed to prevent additional resource degradation.

Monitoring plans will be developed for rehabilitated sites to determine if sites are moving toward the desired condition. Necessary maintenance will be performed based on monitoring results.

Refer to previous section titled "Weeds" for specifics on managing undesirable or noxious weeds as part of a rehabilitation plan. Prioritize rehabilitation sites based on severity of impacts and ecologic land unit status and sensitivity.

Possible Management Methods

The following management methods are not decisions in this plan but serve as a menu of possible actions for managers. They are not an exhaustive list nor do they preclude other actions not listed. They are ranked from least restrictive to most restrictive.

- Signing at trailhead
- Signing on site
- Use of news media to inform of conditions and restrictions
- Restore site or components of site to prevent further degradation
- Boulder and downed wood placement
- Stabilize erosive soil (check dams, biodegradable erosion matting, water bars)
- Recontour and revegetate impacted areas
- Redesign and reconstruct access to site and travelways within site
- Concentrate and channel use with facilities

Definition of Forest planning terms used in this document

Goal: A concise statement describing a desired end result and normally expressed in broad general terms.

Objective: A statement describing measurable desired resource conditions, or ranges of conditions, intended to achieve forest plan goals.

Management Standard: A limitation on management activities that is within the authority and ability of the agency to meet or enforce.

Management Guideline: A description of a preferred or advisable course of action.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Identification of the element(s) that will be used to track progress toward achieving the objective.

Glossary

Designated Weed Species - species that are either noxious or undesirable and are designated by Ranger Districts based on site-specific needs.

Native species - an original or indigenous inhabitant of a region as distinguished from an invader.

Naturalized species - any non-native species that is genetically close or resembles a native species and one that is established in the ecosystem as if it were a native species.

Weeds - the term is used in this document to refer to both noxious species and undesirable species.

Rare plants - Region 1 designated sensitive species, threatened or endangered species listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Idaho and Montana state list of Species of Special Concern.

Noxious species - those plant species designated as "noxious" by the states of Idaho and Montana.

Undesirable species - those non-native plant species that aggressively displace native species and are easily transported through the Wilderness. Designation of undesirable species will be made on an ongoing basis from information collected in the field. District Rangers will make the designation in close consultation with Forest Supervisors and other agencies responsible for management and control of exotics.

Natural processes - processes such as nutrient cycling, decomposition, and succession that occur without the influence or manipulation by humans.

Biological control agent - an organism used to control a specific plant species.

Cultural control method - seeding or planting to control a plant species.

Ecologic Land Units - Delineations of land and water areas that exhibit similar patterns of potential vegetation, soils, hydrology, landform, lithology, climate, and natural processes.

Weed Free Areas - areas that are either completely free of weeds or may be free of a specific weed species.

Key Areas - monitoring areas where weeds are likely to displace native plant communities and where weeds are likely to impact critical wildlife habitat, areas with differing levels of infestation, and weed-free areas.

Sensitive species - those species designated by the Regional Forester for which population viability is a concern.

Threatened species - a species designated by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all, or a significant portion, of its range.

Endangered species - a species designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that is in danger of extinction throughout all, or a significant portion, of its range.

Minimum tool principal - a two-part analysis that is a fundamental guiding principal applied to all wilderness management decisions; 1. Is the action necessary to accomplish legitimate wilderness objectives; and 2. If the action is deemed necessary, what are the methods and equipment which will accomplish the task with least impact on the physical, biological and social characteristics of wilderness?

Natural - in a state provided by nature, without human made changes; wild; uncultivated.

SECTION III - APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MONITORING AND EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

The table below describes monitoring components for the composite wilderness resource. Monitoring requirements for specific resources are displayed in each updated resource section. As management direction for all resources is updated, monitoring and evaluation requirements will be added.

FOREST PLAN MONITORING REQUIREMENTS (36 CFR 219)

TABLE A-1

Item No.1	Actions, Effects, or Resources Measured	Expected Precision	Expected Reliability	Tolerance Limits	Reporting Time
1	Impacts of human activities on the composite wilderness resource	moderate	low	meets resource goals	annually
2	Impacts of management activities on the composite wilderness resource	moderate	low	meets resource goals	annually
3	Number of sites per square mile	high	high	to standard	annually (5 year rotation)
4	Number of sites at a particular impact level per square mile	high	high	to standard	annually (5 year rotation)
5	Number of other parties encountered per day	low	low	to standard	annually
6	Number of other parties camped within sight or sound	high	low	to standard	annually
7	Problem Areas managed to correct substandard conditions	high	high	to standard	annually
8	Identification & correction of sub-standard signing	moderate	moderate	to standard after 10 year phase out	3 - 5 years

Item No.1	Actions, Effects, or Resources Measured	Expected Precision	Expected Reliability	Tolerance Limits	Reporting Time
9	Evaluating maintenance and reconstruction project plans against management direction	high	high	all projects evaluated	annually
10	Achievement of trail maintenance objectives	moderate	low	meets objectives as funding permits	annually
11	Achievement of trail reconstruction objectives	high	high	meets objectives	annually
12	Impacts to non-system trails	moderate	moderate	meets non-system trail goals	5 years
13	Number of landings per day	high	high	90% of the days meet standards	1-3 years
14	Number of landings per year by user type	high	high	within 10% of standard on an annual basis, or within 5% of standard for a 3 year trend	1-3 years
15	Proportion of landings by user type	high	moderate	n/a	1-3 years
16	Length of stay	moderate	moderate	n/a	3 years
17	Condition of runway surface and facilities	high	high	meets safety standards	annually
18	Change in vegetation cover on runway surface	high	high	10% deterioration from baseline condition	3-5 years

Item No. ¹	Actions, Effects, or Resources Measured	Expected Precision	Expected Reliability	Tolerance Limits	Reporting Time
19	Assure targeted weed areas are treated and successfully eradicated or spreading reduced. Monitor trends of noxious weed establishment or spread.	moderate	low	meets objectives	3-5 years
20	Monitor trends of identified rare plants	moderate	low	meets objectives	3-5 years

¹ Item numbers correspond with Appendix B.

APPENDIX B

Methods for Measuring or Evaluating Monitoring Requirements

The following operational guidelines may be used by managers to achieve monitoring objectives. The methodology may change over the course of time as technology improves. Therefore, these guidelines are not forest plan decisions.

1. *Impacts of human activities on the composite wilderness resource* - Each year a field review will be conducted to review the effects of human activities on the wilderness resource. Situations for review will include a trail project or problem, opportunity class allocations not meeting standard, or other human-caused impacts. The review team will be comprised of Forest Service employees and Citizen Task Force representatives. The field review will rotate between each of the three forests. In addition to the formal review, Supervisor's Office staff and the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Coordinator will evaluate implementation and effectiveness of Forest Plan direction, as well as consistency of management across district or forest boundaries. Wilderness will be included in Integrated Resource Reviews. The Steering Group (District Rangers) will meet a minimum of twice annually to review observations and set priorities.

2. *Impacts of management activities on the composite wilderness resource* - The effects of management activities on the composite wilderness resource will be reviewed as described above.

3. *Number of sites per square mile (indicator)* - Each year specific areas will be identified for monitoring. The persons assigned this responsibility will make a reasonable search for site locations, verifying previously recorded locations and noting new site locations. A "roving" square mile grid will be used to determine how many sites are located within a square mile of any given site, for that opportunity class allocation. This will be analyzed to determine whether or not existing conditions conform to LAC standards. Areas not meeting standard will be recorded in the State of the Wilderness Report.

4. *Number of sites at a particular impact rating per square mile (indicator)* - Specific areas will be identified for monitoring. The persons assigned this responsibility will complete site impact worksheets for all sites within this area. A composite score reflecting all impacts will rank the site as having light, moderate, heavy, or extreme impacts. This will then be analyzed to determine whether or not existing conditions conform to LAC standards. Areas not meeting standards will be reported in the State of the Wilderness Report.

5. *Number of other parties encountered per day (indicator)* - Field-going personnel will record how many other groups they encounter per day. Multiple encounters with the same group will be treated as separate encounters. This will be recorded in the Visitor Contact Record booklets. At the end of each field season this data will be tabulated and analyzed area by area, to establish whether or not existing conditions conform to LAC standards. In addition, areas where the standard threatens to be approached will be identified, and reported in the State of the Wilderness Report.

6. *Number of other parties camped within sight or sound (indicator)* - When encountering a group, field-going personnel will informally ask them how many other groups were camped within sight or sound on the previous evening. The location of the camp and the number of other groups will be recorded in the visitor contact record booklets. In addition, field personnel will record observations from their own camp locations. At the end of each field season this data will be tabulated and analyzed area by area, to establish whether or not existing conditions conform to LAC standards. Areas not meeting standard, or where the standard threatens to be approached will be identified and reported in the State of the Wilderness Report.

7. *Problem areas managed to correct substandard conditions* - Each unit will report progress with managing substandard conditions annually in the State of the Wilderness Report. Successfulness of current management strategies will be reviewed, when in the field, by Resource Assistants, Forest Supervisor's Office staff, and/or the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Coordinator. Management may also be evaluated as a part of district field reviews, or the annual field review.
8. *Identification and correction of sub-standards signing* - Districts will periodically review and update their sign inventory. New signs ordered will conform to standard. Some non-standard signs may remain for their useful life (up to ten years) if the information being provided is sufficient for meeting management objectives. Conformance with signing standards will also be identified, when in the field, by Forest Supervisors Office staff and the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Coordinator.
9. *Evaluating trail maintenance and reconstruction project plans against management direction* - When developing plans for trail reconstruction projects or annual maintenance, districts will review the opportunity class objectives and guidelines for trails management. Application of objectives and guidelines will be documented in district files, and where applicable, in any NEPA analyses.
10. *Achievement of trail maintenance objectives* - Number of trail miles receiving full maintenance (to standard) and partial maintenance are reported in the State of the Wilderness Report. Application of trail maintenance objectives will be reviewed when in the field by unit trail managers, Resource Assistants, Forest Supervisors Office staff, and/or the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Coordinator. Application of objectives may also be evaluated as a part of district field reviews, or the annual field review.
11. *Achievement of trail reconstruction objectives* - The project manager will assure compliance with trail reconstruction objectives during the project. As available, application of objectives will be reviewed in the field by Resource Assistants, Forest Supervisors Office staff, the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Coordinator, district field reviews, and/or the annual field review.
12. *Impacts to non-system trails* - Current management of non-system trails will be reviewed by district personnel. Trails not meeting the non-system trails objective will be tracked in the State of the Wilderness Report. As available, application of objectives will be reviewed by Forest Supervisors Office staff, the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Coordinator, district field reviews, and/or the annual field review.
- 13 and 14. *Number of aircraft landings per day/per year (indicators)* - This will be accomplished by visitor registration boxes and cards and electronic counters at the Moose Creek, Fish Lake, and Shearer airstrips. The data will be tabulated and used to confirm standards and analyze conformance with standards. If standards are not met, this will be recorded in the State of the Wilderness Report.
15. *Proportion of landings by user type* - Proportion of landings will be identified by administrative (district business), other administrative (fires, emergency, or other administrative use), private, and commercial (outfitter related use). Methodologies might include either observer sampling or mechanical sampling. This data will be used to determine proportions per user type if use restrictions become necessary.
16. *Length of stay per airfield landing*- This will be accomplished by observation and visitor registration boxes and cards. This will be used as a tool in determining the amount of wilderness-dependent use.
17. *Condition of runway surface and facilities* - Qualified aviation safety officers will inspect the runway surface and facilities for compliance with safety requirements.
18. *Change in vegetation cover on runway surface* - Runway vegetative cover will be sampled to identify degree of deterioration from a baseline condition.

19. Assure targeted weed areas are treated and successfully eradicated or spreading reduced. Monitor trends of noxious weed establishment or spread - Identification of new noxious weed populations will be a part of routine field observation and will be reported by wilderness users. Weed free areas will be identified and monitored for presence of Designated Weed Species. Species are "designated" by Districts based on site specific needs.

20. Monitor trends of identified rare plants - Locations of rare plants will be identified and long term monitoring protocols established to determine trends.

I chose not to implement Alternative 1 because it would not contribute to improving forest health, reducing fire severity, or providing wood fiber for local communities.

Forest Plan Amendment

The purpose of amendment No. 13 of the Clearwater National Forest Plan is to change the water quality objective for Strychnine Creek, White Pine Gulch, and Mountain Gulch (see Appendix K, pages K-2 through K-9). This change is being made due to new information gathered since the Forest Plan was developed.

Currently, the water quality objective for Strychnine Creek, White Pine Gulch, and Mountain Gulch is "minimum viable." The water quality objective for the North Fork of the Palouse, of which White Pine Gulch and Mountain Gulch are tributaries, is "low fish." To protect the habitat in these streams at a level consistent with the North Fork's habitat and to better ensure the future protection of beneficial uses of the Palouse River, the water quality objective is being changed from "minimum viable" to "low fish." The water quality objective for Strychnine Creek is being changed from "minimum viable" to "low fish" to better ensure the future protection of beneficial uses of the Palouse River.

The indicator species for White Pine Gulch and Mountain Gulch is, currently, "rainbow trout." This amendment will change the indicator species in these streams to "brook trout." Brook trout is the predominant species in both White Pine and Mountain Gulch.

Forest Service policy permits Forest Plan amendments resulting from analysis conducted during Forest Plan implementation [36 CFR 219.10(f) and FSM 1922.5]. I have determined the proposed changes are not significant, since they are minor adjustments and will not alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management.

Adoption of this amendment will not significantly change the forest-wide environmental impacts disclosed in the Clearwater National Forest Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).