



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Nez Perce NF

Rt. 2, Box 475
Grangeville, ID 83530

DEAR READER:

This OVERVIEW highlights how the Nez Perce National Forest will be managed during the next 10 to 15 years, as described in the Nez Perce National Forest Land Management Plan. Normally, the Plan will be revised every 10 years but, by law, it must be revised at least every 15 years.

At the beginning of our planning process, your comments at public workshops and by mail helped us to identify what you felt were major issues and concerns.

We drafted 13 alternative approaches to managing the Nez Perce National Forest in the future and your comments once again helped guide our decisions. Almost 600 persons commented on the draft Forest Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

The alternative selected, which is the course we've charted for managing the Forest during the next 10-15 years, is explained in greater detail in the Forest Plan and other documents.

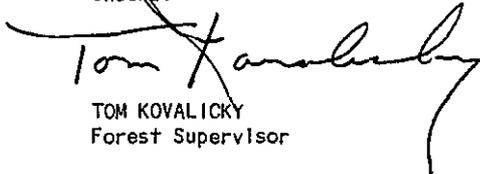
As we begin to put the Forest Plan into effect, we still need your help. You, the American public, are our neighbors and employers. We, the Forest Service, are land stewards serving the American people by caring for our public lands.

We are committed to listening to you and responding promptly, courteously, and fairly to your needs. Many of you have conflicting ideas about how these lands should be managed. In the Forest Plan, we strive to balance the many uses of the National Forest--fish, timber, water quality, and wildlife among them--with the land's ability to provide these uses now and in the future. By working together to achieve this balance, we can meet the natural resource needs of this and future generations.

Forest planning does not end with our release of these planning documents. We welcome your ideas and opinions as we implement the Forest Plan and as we periodically revise it.

If you need more information or would like a complete set of the planning documents described in the following introduction, please let us know.

Cheers!


TOM KOVALICKY
Forest Supervisor



INTRODUCTION

This OVERVIEW highlights future management of the Nez Perce National Forest as described in the Forest Plan. The OVERVIEW briefly discusses:

the major issues and how they are addressed in the Plan, including projected resource outputs and management standards; how the Plan will be monitored and evaluated;

what the amendment and revision provisions are in the Forest planning process;

the integrated resource management approach that will be used to implement the resource activities scheduled in the Plan.

The OVERVIEW also explains how we intend to meet our commitment to maintain and, if possible, increase your role in managing the Nez Perce National Forest within the Forest Plan's framework.

Additional Documents

Three major documents have been written as part of the forest planning process. This OVERVIEW offers basic information about the Nez Perce Forest Plan. If you want to know more about any specific part of the Plan, planning process, rationale for decisions in the Plan, or information on how the Plan will affect specific areas of the Forest, the following documents provide these additional details.

Environmental Impact Statement and Appendices

This document explains the is-

ssues and concerns considered in developing the Plan, alternatives considered, and environmental impacts of each alternative. Appendices to the EIS describe the analysis process and the computer models used in the analysis.

Appendices (Volume 1)

Appendix A (Identification of Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities): Describes in detail the steps in the public involvement process and how alternatives were developed to address each issue and concern raised during the public involvement process.

Appendix B (Description of the Analysis Process): This is a detailed report on the inventory and data collection, development of resource coefficients, and the use of computer models in the planning process. It also explains the use of FORPLAN, the Forest Planning Model.

Appendix C (Roadless Area Evaluation): Lists the physical and biological attributes for each of the Forest's 17 roadless areas and how each area would be affected by each alternative analyzed in the EIS.

Appendix D (Additional Analysis on the Preferred Alternative, Timber Values, Real Price Increase, and Wildlife and Recreation Values): Based on comments received on the draft Plan and EIS, additional analysis was done on the issues mentioned. This appendix displays the methodology and results.

INTRODUCTION (con.)



Appendices (Volumes 2 & 3):
Includes all letters received during the public comment period for the Draft Forest Plan, except for federal and agency responses included in Chapter 6 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Forest Plan

This document explains the Forest's goals and objectives over the next 10-15 years, management standards that will be used in meeting these objectives, management areas, how the results will be monitored, and the proposed schedule of management activities, including timber harvest and road construction.

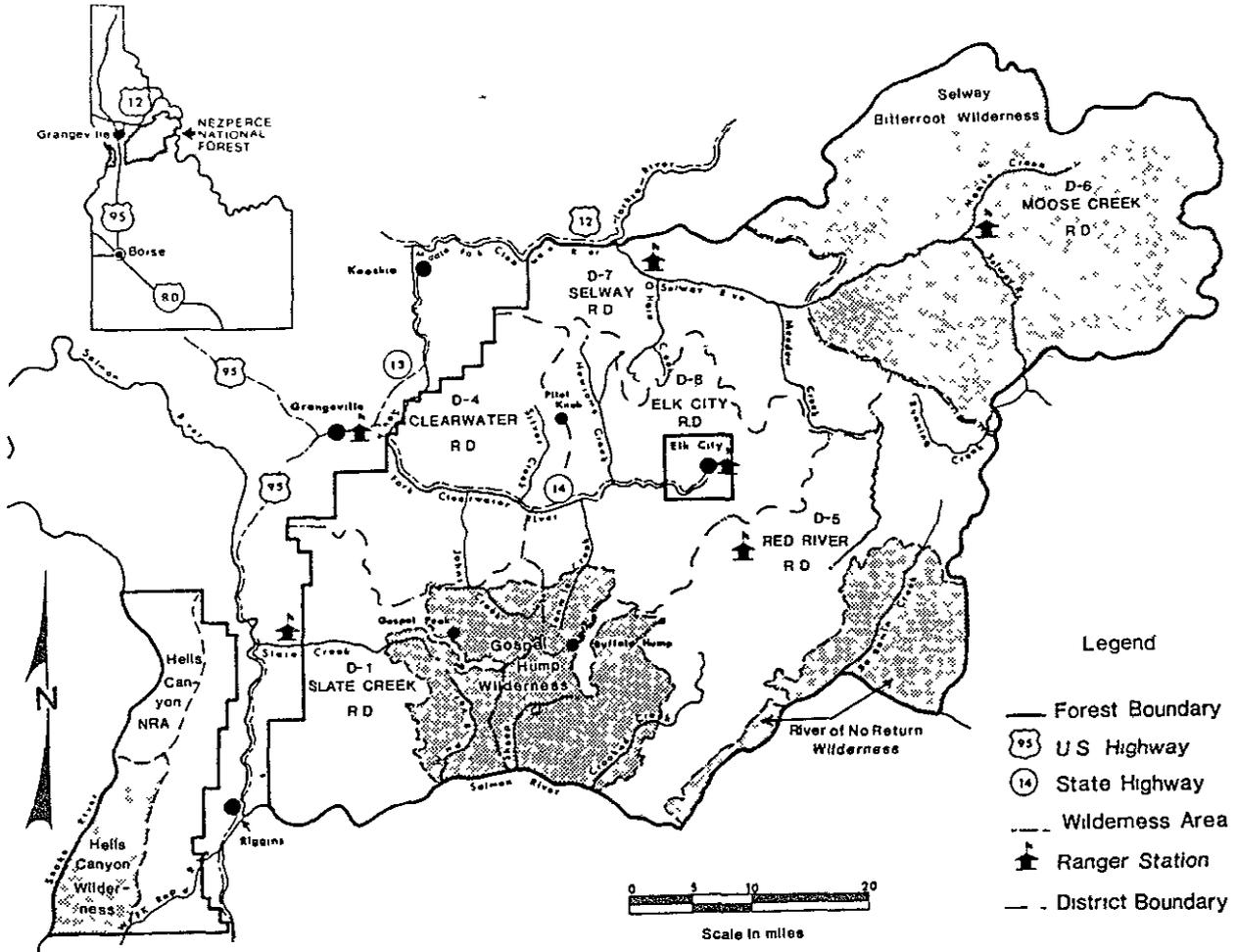
Record of Decision

This official documentation, signed by Regional Forester Jim Overbay, explains the final decisions in the Forest Plan and the rationale for those decisions.

These documents are available for review or loan from any Nez Perce National Forest office. They can also be reviewed at the Clearwater National Forest office in Orofino, the Idaho Panhandle National Forest office in Coeur d'Alene, and at area libraries.

For more information, contact: JOE BEDNORZ, Planning Staff Officer; Nez Perce National Forest; Route 2, Box 475; Grangeville, ID 83530; (208)-983-1950.

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

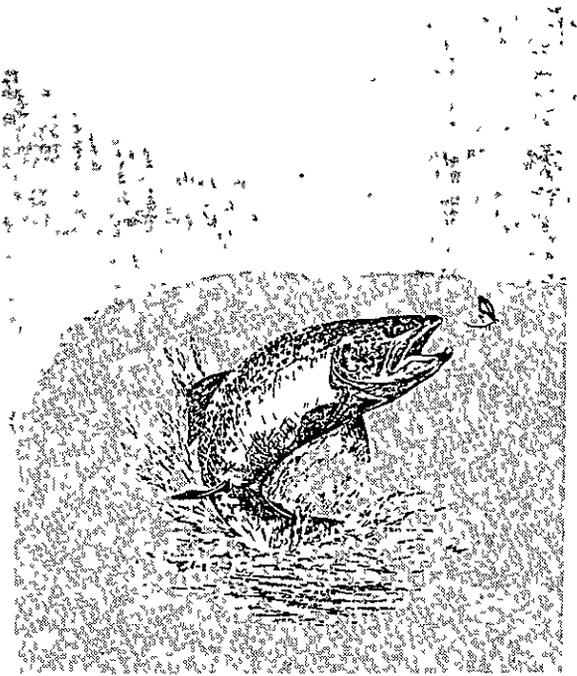


Legend

- Forest Boundary
- 95 U.S. Highway
- 14 State Highway
- Wilderness Area
- 🏠 Ranger Station
- - - District Boundary

0 5 10 20
Scale in miles

A LITTLE ABOUT THE FOREST...



The Nez Perce National Forest contains over 2.2 million acres in Idaho County, Idaho. It lies just north of the Salmon River and extends from the Oregon border on the west to the Montana border on the east. Elevations range from less than 1,500 feet above sea level in the Snake River canyon to more than 9,000 feet in the Seven Devils Range. Generally, the land is steep and rugged, but high-elevation rolling hills are also common.

Parts of the Hells Canyon, Frank Church-River of No Return, and Selway-Bitterroot Wildernesses and all of the Gospel-Hump Wilderness

are within the Forest. In addition, parts of four classified wild and scenic rivers (Middle Fork of the Clearwater, Salmon, Selway, and Rapid River) flow through or are adjacent to the Forest. These wildernesses and rivers, protected under Acts of Congress, are nationally known.

Nez Perce streams are important to the anadromous fishery of the Columbia River system. The Forest has the habitat potential to produce 10 percent of all summer steelhead and spring chinook salmon in the system. The Nez Perce Tribe has hunting and fishing treaty rights, and has interests in fishery and wildlife habitat management on the Forest. This Forest has been the home of the Nez Perce Indians for centuries.

Idaho County, population 14,700, contains several small communities, the largest of which is Grangeville, the county seat, population 3,600. Over 80 percent of Idaho County is in Federal ownership, much of which is managed by the Forest Service. As a result, lifestyles and economies of the local communities are dependent on Forest outputs.

Although the major uses of the Nez Perce National Forest today are timber supply and recreation, traditional uses such as grazing and mining have continued. Tourism and recreation are growing segments in local economies and are dependent on the Forest's wilderness, wildlife, fisheries, and recreation resources.

ISSUES



The Nez Perce Forest Plan is part of the long-range resource planning process established by the National Forest Management Act in 1976. Involving the public has been an essential part of the planning process and development of the Plan. During several public meetings and workshops, issues and concerns about the future management of the Forest were identified. Based on these issues and concerns, 13 alternatives were developed to address them.

The resource outputs and potential environmental impacts of each alternative were analyzed and displayed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which was released for public review in February 1985. Public meetings were held to present these results and comments in response to the draft were sought and accepted.

After reviewing these comments, several alternatives and issues were analyzed further and some changes were made. As a result, the preferred alternative identified in the DEIS was modified based on the comments and is the selected alternative in the final EIS and Forest Plan.

The development of the Plan was driven by issues and concerns identified by the public and the Forest staff. The following section highlights the major issues and how the Plan addresses them.

Timber Harvests



The Issue

The amount of timber that should be harvested on the Forest was a controversial, complex issue because of its relationship to many other forest resources. Many people pointed out the important role timber harvesting and processing plays in local and regional economies. They also felt that steady or increasing harvests were compatible with other forest uses. The significance of the timber resources in Idaho's national forests to the regional timber supply was shown in findings of the Idaho Timber Supply Study completed earlier this year.

Others felt timber harvest was harmful to other resources, such as water, fish, and wildlife. They felt timber harvests should be reduced to emphasize resources other than timber. Because timber sales and har-

vests declined in the early 1980s, they felt that reducing harvests would not have significant impacts on local and regional economies.

The Decision

The Final Forest Plan sets an average annual allowable sale quantity of 108 million board feet. This includes 5 million board feet of commercial volume other than green sawtimber. This additional volume has traditionally been part of the Forest's total timber sale program. About 4,500 acres per year will be harvested to produce this timber sale level.

Change From Current Management

The allowable sale quantity (ASQ) of 108 million board feet is an increase of 10 million board feet over the average timber volume offered on the Forest over the past 10 years.

Wilderness/Roadless Area Proposals

The Issue

Other than existing wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, and Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, about 503,000 acres of the Forest is currently roadless. Some people commented that all remaining roadless areas should be developed and roads built into them for timber harvests and easier access for recreation. Others felt certain areas should remain roadless because the values in those areas of resources other than timber were greater than the potential timber values. Still others expressed a desire for some or all of the remaining roadless areas to be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

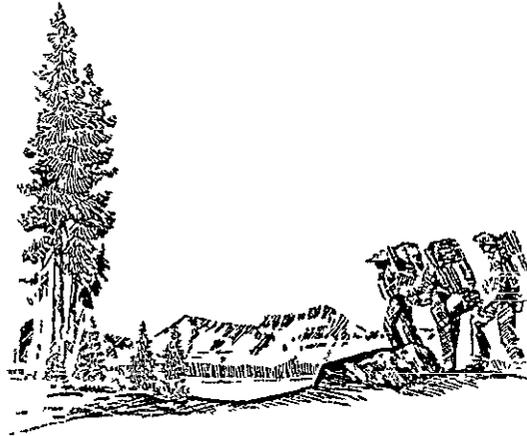
The Decision

No additional wilderness is proposed in the Final Plan. Of the approximately 503,000 roadless acres, about 376,000 acres or 75 percent will be available for further development and timber harvest. Areas not available for timber harvest are:

Silver Creek/Pilot Knob--13,300 acres will be managed to protect and preserve cultural sites important to the Nez Perce Tribe.

Rapid River--19,343 acres in the Rapid River watershed will be managed with emphasis on water quality and anadromous fish.

East Meadow Creek--94,203 acres will be deferred from timber management. This area may be included in the acres suitable for timber management in the future, depending on further resource inventories, monitoring results, and changes affecting timber sale viability.



Change From Current Management

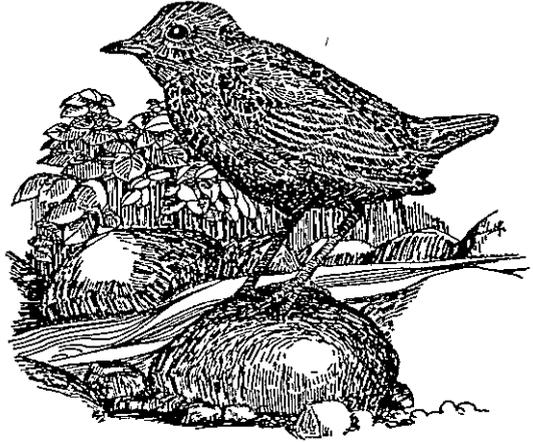
Many of the roadless areas that have not been entered for timber harvest in the past will have some road construction and harvest in them over the next 10 years. About 28 million board feet or 27 percent of the AS set by the Plan will come from these roadless areas.

The Rackliff-Gedney Roadless Area, proposed for roadless management in the draft Plan, is scheduled for limited timber harvests in the Plan. However, through the use of prescribed fire, most of the area will be managed for wildlife browse.

Wildlife

The Issue

The Forest contains a large, diverse wildlife habitat and species population. Many people were concerned about future management of Forest wildlife, particularly major game species--deer and elk. Some people were concerned that populations of species requiring old-growth timber stands would decline because of excessive harvesting of suitable old-growth habitat. Others commented that big game such as deer and elk seemed to benefit from increased browse and forage that occurs after timber harvests and, thus, further development and harvesting would benefit big game. Still others stressed the need to manage grand fir-Pacific yew plant communities (moose winter range) and questioned the ability to harvest timber in these areas without destroying moose habitat.



The Decision

The potential of deer and elk winter range on the Forest to support these species will be increased by emphasizing timber harvests and prescribed burning on winter habitat. Each year, about 5,000 acres of brushfields will be burned and 1,250 acres of timber on big game winter habitat will be harvested. Specific habitat objectives of 100%, 75%, 50% and 25% have been set for all big game summer habitat across the Forest using the North Idaho Elk Coordinating Guidelines to measure habitat effectiveness. About 53,000 acres of moose winter habitat in grand fir-Pacific yew stands will be maintained by using modified harvest systems on gentle slopes and by not harvesting on steep slopes. About 10% of the Forest's timbered acres will be managed for old-growth habitat for wildlife. At least 5% of the forested acres in each watershed on the Forest will be assigned to existing old growth habitat and another 5% will be managed to meet future needs for old-growth habitat.

Wildlife (con.)

Change From Current Management

The aggressive prescribed burning program scheduled in the Plan is a major increase in the amount of wildlife habitat actively managed. For the first time, the Plan also establishes specific habitat objectives for big game summer range across the Forest to guide development of individual projects. In previous management plans, old-growth habitat was discussed in generalities and the availability of this habitat in wilderness and unroaded areas was thought adequate to meet resource needs. In the Forest Plan, distribution and management of old growth are specifically addressed through management standards and the assignment of specific stands to be managed as old growth.



Water Quality and Fish

The Issue

Habitat on Forest streams and rivers can produce 10% of the summer steelhead and 9 percent of the spring chinook salmon in the Columbia River Basin. Roads built to access timber stands and for other resource uses are the primary source of sediment that enters streams and reduces their suitability as fish habitat. Many people were concerned that the level of road construction and timber harvest in the draft Plan and proposed management standards would not adequately protect water quality and fish habitat. Others felt proposed management standards and practices used to reduce sedimentation from roads were adequate and that the amount of road building and timber harvests could be increased without significant impacts on water quality or fish.

The Decision

Anadromous fish habitat will be managed to achieve 87% of its potential. (100% of its potential represents the habitat in a pristine, undisturbed condition.) 4,000 acres of direct habitat improvements in the streams is included in the Plan's schedule of activities. All state and federal water quality standards will be met or exceeded on the Forest.

Changes From Current Management

Acceptable levels of sedimentation or "sediment budgets" have been established in the Plan for each watershed on the Forest based on the specific fish habitat and water quality objectives for that watershed. These sediment budgets will be used during project planning and analysis to assure that the objectives are met. Forestwide, current fish habitat potential is 84%. This will be increased to 87% during the Plan period with direct habitat improvements in streams and rivers.



Roads/Forest Access

The Issue

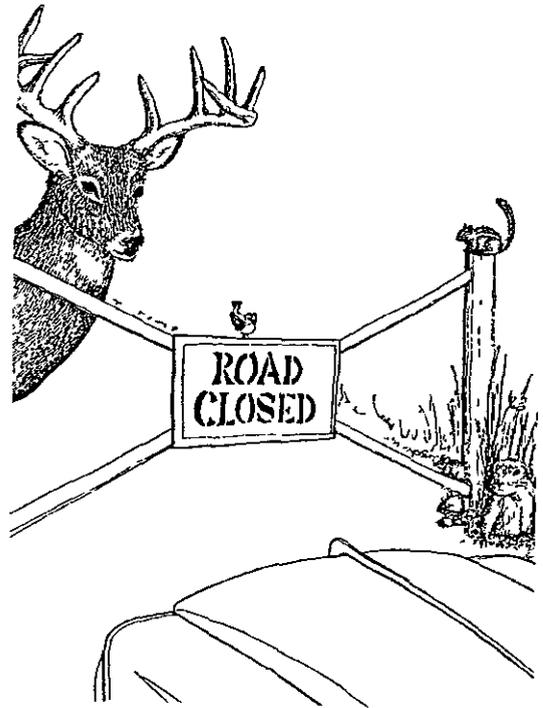
About 40% of the acres suitable for timber harvest in the Plan are currently unroaded. As a result, additional miles of new roads are necessary to develop these areas for timber harvesting. Many comments on the draft Plan indicated that people felt too many miles of roads were to be built and the result would be adverse impacts on wildlife, water quality, and roadless recreation opportunities. Others felt the problem was not the additional miles of road to be built but that past attempts to manage the Forest's road system along with other resource programs, such as wildlife, were ineffective. Also, the public did not always understand the reasons for closing some roads and not others. Many people also felt the Forest trails system is neglected in favor of roads, many of which they felt were "overbuilt," i.e., too wide and too much clearing and disturbance of the sites.

The Decision

Over the next 10 years, about 830 miles of road will be constructed or reconstructed, which is necessary to achieve the Plan's timber management objectives. However, many of these roads will be permanently closed or otherwise restricted to provide security for wildlife. The Forest's access management policy describes the decision process that will be used to determine road closures and restrictions. In addition, 200 miles of trails will be built or rebuilt during this period.

Change From Current Management

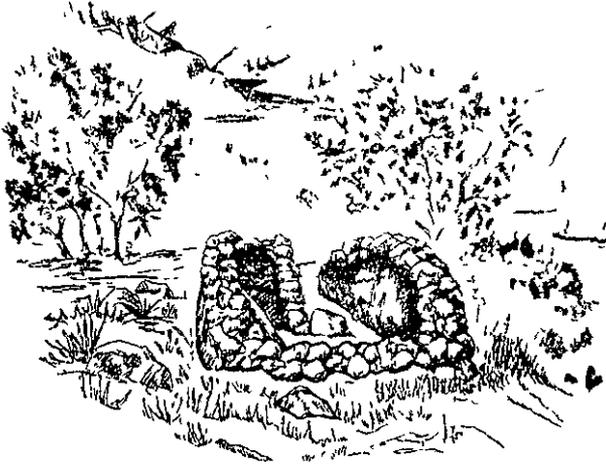
Road management, specifically road closures and use restrictions, will be emphasized more in overall forest management than it has been. In the past, the decision process centered on which roads should be closed. Now, we will decide which roads will remain open. If there are no resource management objectives to justify leaving a road open, it will be permanently closed or restricted for certain periods of time or uses.



Other Issues

The Issues

Although the issues already mentioned generated most of the comments and concerns during the Plan's development, they are not the only issues or forest resources the Plan addresses. Other resources, such as range, minerals and cultural resources also play a key role in meeting the area's social and economic needs.

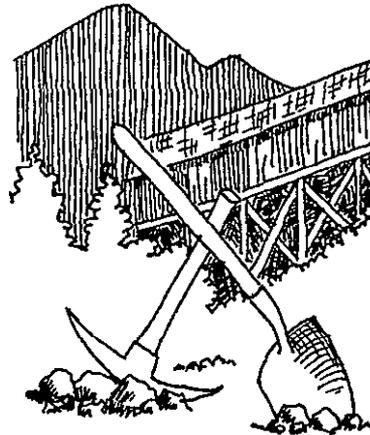


The Decisions

Range--A livestock grazing program that provides 43,000 animal unit months (AUM) per year is scheduled in the Plan. About 500 acres of range improvement and 250 acres of noxious weed control are also scheduled annually in the Plan.

Minerals--About 1,253,000 acres on the Forest will be open to mineral entry. Resource management standards in the Plan will be used in preparing plans of operation to ensure that other resource values are protected and that valid exploration, development, and production can proceed in a timely manner.

Cultural Resources--All areas of potential land disturbance will be surveyed for cultural resources. These cultural resources will be inventoried, evaluated, and protected according to the Natural Historic Preservation Act.



Changes From Current Management

The potential AUMs on the Forest will increase by about 1,000 AUMs per year. Livestock grazing plans will consider the availability of wildlife forage and adjustments made where necessary.

RESOURCE OUTPUTS SUMMARY

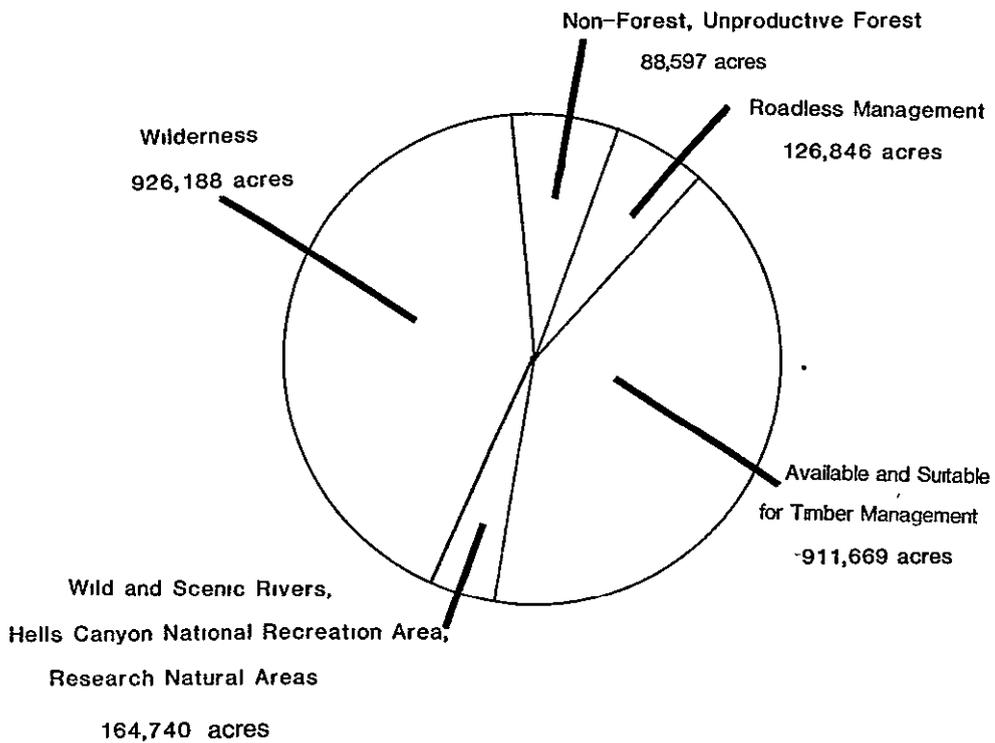
Following is a list of some of the resource outputs that will be produced by the Forest during the next 10 years. However, it is important to recognize that the output levels, in and of themselves, are not the decision. Our ability to produce some outputs described in the Plan may be directly affected by factors beyond the scope of the Plan, such as changing market conditions and independent actions of private corporations and state and local governments. Unless otherwise noted, all outputs shown are average annual levels.

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Outputs</u>
Developed Recreation	186,000 Recreation Visitor Days
Dispersed Recreation	1,160,500 Recreation Visitor Days
Wildlife Habitat Improvements	5,000 acres
Elk Summer Range Carrying Capacity	32,300 elk
Elk Winter Range Carrying Capacity	20,370 elk
Fish Habitat Improvements	400 acres
Anadromous Fish Rearing Capacity	706,100 smolts
Resident Trout Rearing Capacity	358,000 smolts
Anadromous Fish Habitat Potential, Forestwide	87%
Livestock Grazing	43,000 Animal Unit Months
Allowable Sale Quantity	108 million board feet



LAND ASSIGNMENTS

Total Area, Nez Perce National Forest - 2,218,040 acres



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation will provide you and the Forest Service with information on progress in and results of implementing the Forest Plan. This information and evaluation will be recycled into the Forest planning process for possible changes in the future.

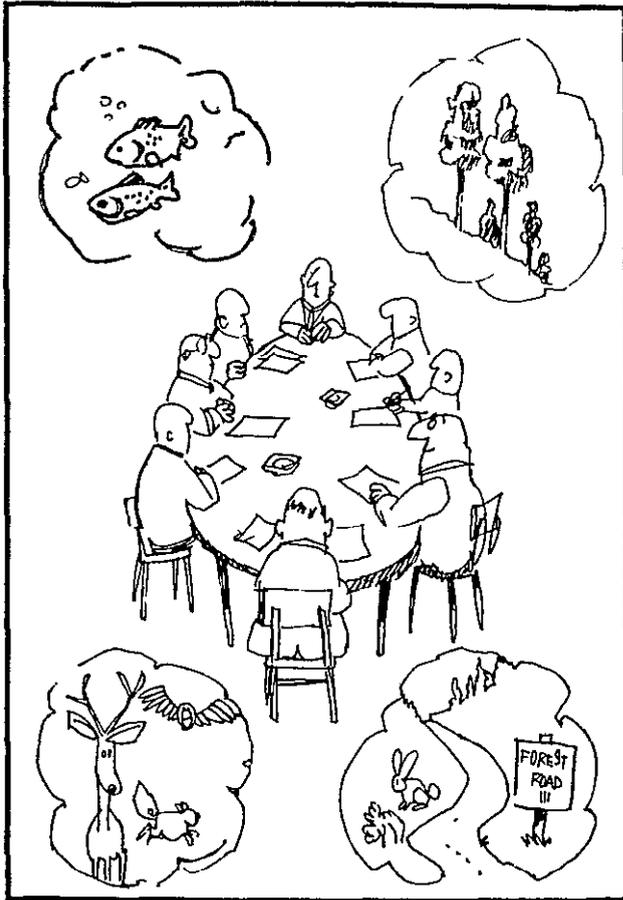
The Forest Plan displays the basic outline of the monitoring process. An annual monitoring program, developed in accordance with this outline, will be prepared as part of the Nez Perce National Forest's annual work program. Detailed programs will be prepared for all resources and activities that require monitoring and will be based on available funds. If funds for properly monitoring the Forest Plan's goals and objectives prove inadequate, another course of action will be developed. This could include amending or revising the Forest Plan or eliminating projects from the work program.

The monitoring report will describe the results of and trends in monitoring and will be evaluated and summarized annually in a public report.

Data acquired through monitoring will be used for updating inventories, improving further mitigation measures, and assessing the need for amending or revising the Forest Plan.



INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



The Forest Plan is the course we've charted for managing the Forest for the next decade. Our management practices are designed not only to produce income but also to protect and enhance the values of forest resources that don't have a definite monetary value, such as water quality, scenery, and endangered species.

In the past, we planned our activities by individual resource. Now, we plan around Forest Plan goals and objectives to achieve a balance of multiple uses, considering the ef-

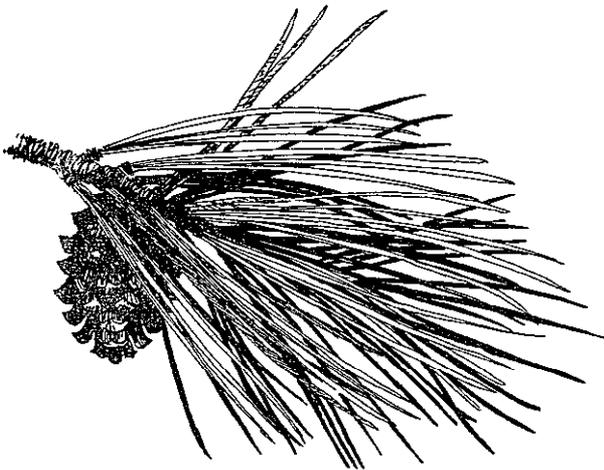
fects of each activity on other values so we achieve a balance that reflects the common good.

By doing so, we can achieve this Forest's mission, which is caring for the land and serving people. It requires a balanced consideration of all forest resources in meeting present and future needs of this and future generations. It relies on application of scientific knowledge, conservation leadership, and wise stewardship in partnership with other public agencies, tribal governments, and others interested in and affected by Forest programs.

AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

Planning doesn't end with the Forest Plan, which can be amended or revised anytime in response to changing needs and opportunities; Congressional land designations; monitoring results; major developments in management or technology; or catastrophic events such as major floods, fires, wind storms, and epidemics of forest insects or disease.

In making changes, we will follow the amendment or revision procedure outlined in the National Forest Management Act and planning regulations and will encourage the public to comment on any proposed amendments or revisions.



If funds appropriated by Congress don't match proposed annual budgets, the Forest Supervisor can change the schedule for implementing the Plan. Such changes are considered an amendment to the Forest Plan but not significant enough to warrant preparing an environmental impact statement unless the changes significantly alter long-term relationships between levels of multiple-use goods and services projected under planned budget proposals as compared to those projected under actual appropriations.



HOW TO STAY INVOLVED

In implementing our Forest Plan, we're committed to listening to your concerns and responding to your needs promptly, courteously, and fairly. Keeping your trust means being good neighbors and good hosts, working cooperatively, inviting your involvement, and recognizing accomplishments.

The Forest Plan contains general management direction but doesn't include projects or actions on specific sites. Environmental analyses for specific sites will be done at the project or area level. These analyses will follow National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures, including public involvement throughout the process.

You can stay involved in Forest Plan implementation by participating in NEPA procedures as we analyze resource management opportunities. You can also stay involved in monitoring and evaluating the Plan's implementation.

Although we will continue to announce proposed projects through our news releases, we invite you to contact our office if you're interested in receiving environmental assessments or the Environmental Analysis Update, which lists all environmental assessments and is issued annually. We also invite you to call, visit, or write us if you're concerned about specific areas or activities.

Our offices are listed below:

Nez Perce National Forest
Route 2, Box 475
Grangeville, ID 83530
(208)-983-1950

Clearwater Ranger District
Route 2, Box 475
Grangeville, ID 83530
(208)-983-1963

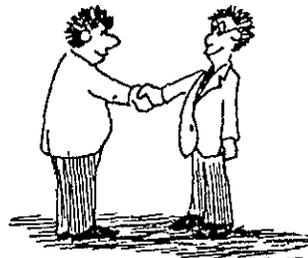
Elk City Ranger District
P.O. Box 416
Elk City, ID 83525
(208)-842-2245

Moose Creek Ranger District
P.O. Box 464
Grangeville, ID 83530
(208)-983-2712

Red River Ranger District
P.O. Box 23
Elk City, ID 83525
(208)-842-2255

Salmon River Ranger District
Slate Creek Ranger Station
HC01, Box 70
White Bird, ID 83554
(208)-839-2211

Selway Ranger District
Fenn Ranger Station
HCR 75, Box 91
Kooskia, ID 83539
(208)-926-4258



NOTES

