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Nez Perce
National Forest



Nez Perce National Forest Plan

Final Environmental Impact Statement

APPENDICES Volume 1



APPENDIX A

IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

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APPENDIX A

IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Nez Perce National Forest Plan addresses major public issues and concerns about management of the Forest. These issues and concerns are identified and addressed in an effort to provide Forest management that is responsive to the public. They are also used to determine the scope of the EIS (40 CFR 1501.7).

A. Process

The Notice of Intent to prepare a Forest Plan and Environmental Impact Statement was published in the Federal Register and sent to the State Clearinghouse, Idaho County Commissioners, and Nez Perce Tribal Council in October, 1979.

As the first step in the public involvement process, a letter was sent to 364 landowners and mining claim holders and a brochure was sent to over 400 individuals, agencies, and organizations announcing the intent to begin preparation of a Forest Plan. Legal notices were placed in the Idaho County Free Press and the Lewiston Morning Tribune; and news releases were sent to area newspapers and radio and TV stations.

Major public issues and concerns were identified during a series of six public workshops and through comments submitted by letter. Additional management concerns were identified during eight Forest employee workshops.

A total of 247 people attended the 6 public workshops held in Moscow, Kamiah, Lewiston, Grangeville, Elk City, and Riggins. The majority of participants were from the wood products sector (31 percent) or attended as interested citizens (22 percent). Students and government employees contributed 18 percent and 12 percent respectively. The remaining participants were from environmental, conservation, and other special interest groups, and business. The Moscow workshop was heavily influenced by students from the University of Idaho. The wood products industry employees had a major influence at the other five public workshops. The Forest also received 51 written comments and a number of verbal comments concerning the initial Forest planning activities.

A structured group decisionmaking process called the Nominal Group Technique was used at the workshops. Participants were asked to list all concerns relative to Forest management, choose and rank the seven most important to them, and then distribute 100 points among the seven. The weighting system (point distribution) allowed relative distinctions to be made between concerns based on the emphasis given by participants. It also permitted the final issues to be prioritized. The Nominal Group Technique was selected for public involvement to insure that every workshop participant was given an opportunity to voice his or her concerns and to affect the final outcome of the process. A total of 819 concerns were listed. A Forest interdisciplinary team grouped similar concerns into a list of 213 issues. These were evaluated by the interdisciplinary team and screened through the following criteria:

- Is the concern applicable to the Nez Perce Forest Plan or is it better addressed at other levels of planning in other functional areas, or by sources outside of the Forest Service?
- Will the concern be addressed as a mandatory requirement of laws, regulations, or current policy?
- Is the concern widespread, involving two or more Ranger Districts or mentioned at two or more workshops?
- Does the Forest have the capability to resolve the concern through the Forest Plan?

This process reduced the original list by 50 percent. Those eliminated were deferred for resolution outside of the planning process and are in the Forest planning records. Examples are concerns such as firewood policies, availability of wilderness lands to all users, timber sale administration policies, and the Forest planning process itself. Concerns which are addressed through mandatory requirements of laws, regulations, or current policy were assigned to receive the same treatment in all alternatives.

The interdisciplinary team then grouped the remaining concerns into major categories to derive the 13 major issues to be addressed in the Nez Perce Forest Plan. These were published in a brochure which was distributed to approximately 450 interested individuals, organizations, and agencies in April, 1980. Comments submitted through letters were used to validate the brochure.

The 13 major issues were treated differently in the alternatives, as is shown graphically in Chapter II.

Additional public involvement was initiated in September, 1983 to aid in the roadless area re-evaluation. Seventy-five letters were received commenting on this subject. Planning updates were periodically prepared by the Forest Planning Team and made available to the general public and Forest employees.

The Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Plan appeared in the Federal Register on February 22, 1985, showing that the review period would end June 1, 1985; however, we accepted comments until May 1986, when the documents were ready for publication. In addition to the public comments, concerns were raised by the congressional delegation and the timber industry over the cumulative effects on the timber supply of Forest Plans in the State of Idaho. As a result, the Forest Service conducted a study, "The Idaho Timber Supply Study, February, 1987", which considered present and future timber supplies within the State. The information in this study was used in arriving at the final decision for the Forest Plan.

During the review period, meetings were held with individuals, groups, organizations, and the general public to discuss the documents. Comments received were considered and are addressed in the Final EIS. Additional information on public involvement can be found in Chapter VI of the EIS.

B. Consultation With Others

1. Agencies and Indian Tribes

The following agencies are included on the Forest Plan mailing list. They received planning update notes which provided information on the status of the Plan, comments requested, and public meeting dates. The Nez Perce Indians were contacted to determine the presence of any sites on the Forest of religious or cultural importance to them.

Clearwater Economic Development Association
Columbia River Fisheries Council
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Council
Idaho Bureau of Mines
Idaho County Commissioners
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
Idaho Department of Lands
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
Idaho Department of Tourism
Idaho Department of Water Resources
Idaho-Oregon Regional Planning and Development
Idaho State Clearinghouse
Idaho State Historical Society
Idaho Water Resources Board
National Marine Fisheries Service
Nez Perce Tribal Council
Rural Electrification Administration
USDA Soil Conservation Service
USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs
USDI Bureau of Land Management
USDI Fish and Wildlife Service

2. Coordination With Other Public Planning Efforts

To the degree possible, the Nez Perce National Forest has coordinated this planning effort with Federal, State, and County agencies, and other public organizations. This coordination included the Nez Perce Tribe.

Following is a listing of those with whom the Forest has coordinated planning efforts:

Federal Agencies

Bureau of Land Management
Soil Conservation Service
Rural Electrification Administration
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fisheries Service
Columbia River Fisheries Council
Clearwater National Forest
Payette National Forest
Bitterroot National Forest
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
Salmon National Forest

State Agencies

Idaho-Oregon Regional Planning and Development
Idaho Bureau of Mines
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
Idaho Department of Water Resources
Idaho State Department of Lands
Idaho State Historical Society
Idaho State Governor
Idaho State Attorney General
Idaho State Clearinghouse
University of Idaho

Other

Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Council
Washington State University
Idaho County Commissioners
Gospel-Hump Advisory Committee

From the beginning, these agencies and organizations have been kept informed through a series of eight brochures and "Planning Updates" issued throughout development of the Plan. In addition, many agencies have corresponded directly with the Forest and meetings have been held with others when necessary. These are documented in the Forest planning records. Where possible, expressed concerns of these agencies have been addressed, or, in some cases, referred to other Forest units for resolution when the concern was not applicable to the Plan.

In some cases, agencies have established goals and objectives which relate directly to management of the Forest. Among them are the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Water Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Bureau of Land Management. Idaho Water Quality Standards administered through the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare also apply to activities on the Forest. The Proposed Forest Plan addresses these objectives and fulfills them to the extent possible. These relationships are discussed throughout this document and most commonly relate to water quality, fisheries, and wildlife, and, to a lesser degree, cooperative fire control and shared transportation systems.

As part of the coordination process, the Forest also made a search of Idaho County records to determine the names of private landowners with parcels within, adjacent to, or near National Forest boundaries. Direct contact was made with these individuals to determine those who desired continued coordination during the planning process. Those who specifically said they did were added to the Forest mailing list and received the same information as those agencies and organizations cited above.

The initial and continuing contacts surfaced those agencies which had plans or objectives that required interaction with the plans of the Forest. A listing of these agencies and the details of the resulting coordination follow:

a. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game

The plans of this organization were reviewed. Their goals and objectives are to provide a continuing supply of fish and wildlife for citizens of Idaho. For wildlife their plans are specific to big-game units and for fish to major drainages. The Forest has paid particular attention to these subdivisions where they overlap or are within Forest boundaries.

As a result, all alternatives have specific objectives for fish habitat on a drainage by drainage basis, and for big-game habitat objectives on summer and winter range. Road management and moose habitat management on the Forest are also influenced by Idaho Department of Fish and Game objectives.

It was not possible to satisfy all of the needs of this agency in every alternative. However, one alternative was formulated specifically to satisfy Idaho Department of Fish and Game needs.

b. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

This agency formulated and administers the State Water Quality Standards. The Department of Health and Welfare is currently working to perfect a more specific definition of the "serious injury" portion of the water quality standards. When this is completed the Forest will adapt to it.

c. The State Land Board

The objectives of the State Land Board are to return optimal revenues to the State while still protecting the resources that they administer. There is no significant State land within the boundaries of the Forest, but several small tracts are immediately adjacent. In discussing State plans for these areas with the local manager it was agreed that all Forest alternatives would continue the coordination and cooperation presently in practice. This is mainly in the area of fire management, but includes annual meetings to coordinate other needs as they arise.

d. The Idaho Department of Transportation

Several State highways run through or adjacent to the Forest. All alternatives will continue the present coordination that is necessary for the reconstruction and maintenance of these highways.

e. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

The BLM plans have been reviewed and discussed with the local manager. All alternatives will continue the present coordination and cooperation that takes place in regard to road, wildlife, fish, and facility management. Annual meetings will be held to deal with new needs as they arise.

f. The Nez Perce Tribe

Management plans for tribal lands deal with lands far removed from Forest boundaries, therefore there is no direct coordination or consideration necessary. However, the Tribe is guaranteed certain rights within the Forest by treaty. These rights will be continued under all alternatives. Because of

these treaty rights, the Tribe has made requests for additional considerations within the Forest plan. They have asked that presently roadless areas remain roadless, that habitat for fish and game be maintained at its highest level, and that Forest road management plans consider their reasonable needs for late season access to favored hunting areas. All alternatives considered respond to these needs to some extent.

g. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

Forest coordination with the Fish and Wildlife Service is principally concerned with management of anadromous fish and with recovery of threatened and endangered plant and animal species. Informal consultations are frequently held. Formal consultation will take place on this document.

In addition, riparian areas on the Forest are being inventoried under the National Wildlife Inventory Standards for wetlands.

h. Idaho County

The Idaho County Land Use Plan is not complete at this time, but its development has been tracked, and no difficulty is foreseen in coordinating any of the Forest alternatives with the County plan as it is presently envisioned. All alternatives will continue the present coordination search and rescue efforts, road management, and law enforcement.

1. Clearwater, Bitterroot, Wallowa-Whitman, Payette,
and Salmon National Forests

The Clearwater Forest adjoins the Nez Perce on the north, the Bitterroot on the east, the Wallowa-Whitman on the west, and the Payette and Salmon on the south.

Coordination with these neighboring Forests is ongoing, involving day-to-day operations as well as Forestwide Planning. However, additional coordination was necessary with the Clearwater, Bitterroot, and Payette National Forests in evaluating contiguous roadless areas.

C. Selected Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities

Following is a discussion of the major issues, concerns, and opportunities that are the focus of the Nez Perce National Forest Plan and EIS. A detailed discussion of the present situation is given in Chapter III of the EIS. The issues are based on an analysis of the Forest's public involvement.

1. Timber

What level of sustained annual yield of timber products should the Forest provide while still maintaining Forest productivity and meeting local, regional, and national needs?

a. Resource Situation

During the period 1974-83, an average of 102 million board feet of timber has been sold each year on the Nez Perce National Forest. Dominant species harvested include grand fir, Douglas-fir, and, to a lesser degree, western larch, ponderosa pine, and lodgepole pine.

The majority of the timber was purchased by mills in Grangeville, Riggins, Elk City, Kooskia, and Kamiah. In June 1979, the timber industry in Idaho County employed 674 workers, or 33 percent of the total number employed in the regional area excluding proprietors and farm workers. During the second quarter of 1979, employees of the timber industry were paid \$11 million, or 46 percent of all wages paid during that period. Given the local importance of the timber industry, any reduction in National Forest timber sale offerings is likely to be viewed negatively by many Idaho County residents. The interrelationship of timber management and its effects on other Forest resources and uses is likely to change under varying harvest levels.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

- (1) To what degree will employment levels in the local wood products industry be affected by future harvest levels?
- (2) How much of the total forest land can be designated for management of the timber resource considering other forest values?
- (3) To what degree can timber production be feasibly increased through more intensive management and improvements in wood utilization?
- (4) What is the level of expenditure warranted to obtain optimum timber harvests?
- (5) How many old-growth stands will be preserved?
- (6) To what extent will the receipts to Idaho County be affected?
- (7) Will sale programs be based on land capability rather than political and economic pressures?
- (8) Will logging systems be conventional or will specialized systems predominate?
- (9) Should intensive timber management be practiced on low as well as highly productive sites?
- (10) How will the Forest Plan provide for implementation of pest management?

c. Procedure to Resolve

These issues were analyzed within the range of the alternatives by a varying range of timber management prescriptions that allowed for a range of management intensities and timber harvest volumes. The effects of these differences were analyzed among the alternatives. Standards and guidelines are developed for specific resource protection management practices within the management

prescriptions and for each alternative. Indicators of how this issue was addressed in the alternatives include the level of timber harvest volume produced by decade (MMCF and MMBF), the number of acres identified as suitable for timber management, and the volume representing the long-term sustained yield capacity.

2. Timber, Roads, and Water

What is the compatibility of timber harvest, road development, water quality, and associated anadromous fish habitat?

a. Resource Situation

High quality water from the Forest provides important habitat for fisheries and makes significant contributions to downstream hydroelectric power generation, irrigation, and municipal uses. About 3.6 million acre-feet of water leaves the Forest each year, enough to supply the domestic requirements of more than 18 million people.

About 95⁴ miles of stream on the Forest provide spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous fish, a multi-million dollar resource. An important native trout fishery also exists on the Forest that provides a wide range of recreational fishing opportunities.

Sediment from timber harvest and road building activities is the greatest threat on the Forest to water quality and spawning and rearing habitats of fish. To concurrently manage both the timber and fisheries resources to their greatest potential will require stringent and often expensive erosion control measures.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

- (1) How will streambanks and riparian zones be protected?
- (2) To what degree will anadromous fishery aquatic habitat be maintained and populations enhanced?
- (3) What will be the consequences (sediment) of timber harvest and associated road development activities on watersheds and fish habitat?
- (4) Will the westslope cutthroat trout receive adequate consideration for species perpetuation?

c. Procedure to Resolve

Within the range of alternatives, these issues were analyzed by varying levels of fishery objectives for specific watersheds and associated constraints on road construction and timber harvesting and by assigning key anadromous fish habitat to roadless management. These objectives and constraints were specific to prescription watersheds and varied according to the overall fishery objective of each alternative. Standards and guidelines are developed for specific resource protection management practices. Indicators of how this issue was addressed in the alternatives include the Forestwide anadromous fish

habitat potential, anadromous smolt production, market benefits of anadromous fisheries, miles of road construction, and the level of timber harvest volume.

3. Roadless Areas

Should some or all of the Forest's roadless areas remain roadless, be opened to roaded development, or be recommended to Congress for wilderness classification?

a. Resource Situation

The roadless resource on the Nez Perce National Forest consists of 503,162 acres in 16 areas.

All roadless areas on the Forest have been considered at least once by Congress for wilderness classification, and several have been considered more than once. Between 1975 and 1980, 340,000 acres were so designated. This was in addition to the 560,088 Nez Perce acres included in the 1964 Wilderness Act.

National Forest Management Act regulations require that all roadless areas in the National Forests that are not legally exempt must be re-evaluated for wilderness classification.

All of the Forest's roadless areas are, by definition, eligible candidates for inclusion into the National Wilderness Preservation System. They range in size from 8,006 to 201,535 acres. Six adjoin existing wildernesses; the others are smaller and more isolated. Most of these are near development activity of one kind or another; and some are completely surrounded by roads. Two of these smaller areas contain established Research Natural Areas. Four of the roadless areas contain or are immediately adjacent to rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Wilderness classification or continued roadless management of these lands enhances fish, wildlife, and recreation values, but constrains the landbase available for timber harvest and other roaded management activities.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

(1) What will be the effects on timber harvest and other Forest outputs if some or all of these areas remain undeveloped?

(2) How should areas remaining roadless be managed?

(3) What effect will court decisions and Congressional actions have on Forest plans for these areas?

c. Procedure to Resolve

These issues were analyzed by assigning various combinations of the 16 identified roadless areas to Wilderness prescriptions or prescriptions that preclude new road construction within the area. Standards are developed for specific resource protection management practices for the unroaded prescriptions. Indicators of how this issue was addressed in the alternatives

are the number of acres recommended for Wilderness and the acres assigned to prescriptions precluding road construction.

4. Wildlife

To what degree should wildlife demands be provided?

a. Resource Situation

Diverse habitats found in the Forest provide for many wildlife species. Of these, several are considered threatened and endangered -- the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, the gray wolf, and the grizzly bear. Although there have been no recent sightings of the falcon, suitable habitat is present. Habitat also exists for the gray wolf and grizzly bear. Bald eagles are known inhabitants during the winter months. Other non-game species of particular importance include the osprey, pileated woodpecker, and marten. The eight big-game species represented on the Forest also draw a great deal of interest.

The interaction of wildlife species with their environment is incredibly complex. Close coordination between wildlife needs and Forest management activities that could affect the abundance and variety of wildlife habitats is essential. Because the Forest Service manages wildlife habitat and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game sets bag limits and seasons and otherwise manages wildlife populations, cooperation and coordination between the agencies is a necessity if increased demands for wildlife are to be met.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

- (1) Do management activities create too much habitat accessibility?
- (2) Will habitat for threatened and endangered species continue to be maintained?
- (3) Will suitable habitat be provided for all indigenous wildlife?
- (4) Will ecological diversity be provided to maintain a variety of wildlife species?
- (5) Will coordination with management goals of the Idaho Department of Fish & Game be increased?
- (6) Will Forest visitors be more likely to view wildlife than at the present?
- (7) How will fire management affect wildlife habitat?

c. Procedure to Resolve

Standards in all alternatives are established to provide habitat levels sufficient to provide viable populations of current wildlife population and also to protect critical components of wildlife habitat. Examples are minimum old-growth allocations and riparian protection measures. All alternatives provide for meeting T & E requirements required by regulations. Within the range of alternatives, the emphasis on wildlife and fisheries varies by the land-use patterns assigned, and broad Forestwide standards to enhance

habitats. Indicators of how this issue is resolved by the alternatives includes the acres allocated to old growth, acres of riparian area within the suitable landbase, and the objectives of each alternative for wildlife.

5. Recreation, Recreation Access, and Roads

To what degree should motorized recreation use be preferred over nonmotorized use?

a. Resource Situation

Each year the Forest transportation system of more than 2,300 miles of trail and 2,000 miles of road is reviewed to determine if deletions, additions, or other changes are needed in the Forest Travel Plan, a map showing where and when travel restrictions exist on the Forest. Most travel restrictions are implemented to reduce erosion and resultant sedimentation of streams, to provide for protection of key wildlife habitat areas, or to minimize user conflicts. Determination of future transportation needs including availability of roads and trails for motorized access is an integral part of the Forest Plan.

Forest statistics show that use of roads and trails for pleasure driving, cycling, or hiking accounts for more than 40 percent of all recreation use on the Forest. As motorbiking, four-wheeling, cross-country skiing, hiking, and other road- and trail-oriented activities increase, unwanted encounters between motorized and non-motorized forms of recreation use will also increase. This will be particularly true in areas coveted by both motorized and non-motorized recreationists.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

- (1) Will access be maintained to provide continued recreation opportunities on the Forest for the elderly and handicapped?
- (2) Will opportunities for off-road vehicle use on the Forest be increased or decreased?
- (3) Will the transportation system provide for user dispersal, resource protection, and a variety of quality recreation opportunities for all seasons?
- (4) What role will energy consumption play in use allocations?
- (5) What will the level of maintenance be on Forest roads and trails?

c. Procedures to Resolve

A wide range of land use patterns were analyzed in the alternatives that provided varying mixes of recreation opportunities, from primitive, nonmotorized opportunities to motorized recreation opportunities. The amount of Forest area planned for development and the miles of road constructed in each alternative have significant influence on the relative mix of recreation opportunities. In addition, standards written to guide road-use patterns in the future determine where and what kind of recreation opportunities will be available on the roads.

6. Recreation

How should conflicts between competing recreational activities be settled?

a. Resource Situation

Approximately 83 percent of all recreation use on the Forest involves activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, berrypicking, and pleasure driving. Developed recreation opportunities occur primarily in the 27 campgrounds on the Forest, half of which are located along the Salmon, Selway, or South Fork of the Clearwater Rivers. These rivers also provide floating and boating opportunities.

Total Forest recreation use was estimated at 863,400 recreation visitor days during 1980, a 52 percent increase over 1975 levels. As all recreation uses continue to increase, the question will be where to balance the various uses so that each opportunity is equitably represented on the Forest. Determination of carrying capacities and future demands for the various uses will be key factors in finding the desired balance.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

- (1) Will emphasis be increased for recreation management and development of facilities?
- (2) Will winter recreation opportunities be enhanced?
- (3) What role will energy consumption concerns play?
- (4) Will the Forest continue to provide recreational opportunities for a wide variety of interests and abilities?

c. Procedure to Resolve

A variety of land use patterns involving different categories of recreation opportunities were analyzed in the alternatives. Some alternatives emphasized recreation opportunities associated with road access and development, while others emphasized recreation opportunities associated with roadless management. Specific opportunities with these broad categories are addressed in management prescriptions and broad standards and guidelines to implement the alternative.

7. Roads

What road standards (width, alignment, surfacing) and locations are necessary to support Nez Perce Forest activities?

a. Resource Situation

The Forest has 2,050 miles of road that vary from the most primitive of standards to two-lane paved highways. Some of the roads in the Forest system today were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. Others were built to accommodate mining operations in the early 1900s.

In addition to projected logging and recreation traffic needs, overriding considerations in determining road standards today are the need to control the amount of sediment delivered to streams and the need to minimize impacts on wildlife habitat. Sediment control may require design features to facilitate drainage of water, minimize the size of cuts and fills, and otherwise control erosion. These sediment control measures increase road costs.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

(1) Are new roads cost-efficient?

(2) What are the effects of different standards on soil, water, and big-game resources?

(3) Can standards be reduced and still meet management objectives?

c. Procedure to Resolve

The amount of road access and road standards necessary to implement varying levels of forest management were analyzed in the development of management prescriptions. As a result, the road standards and road density were determined for each management prescription involving road access. In most cases, these prescriptions were ones that include timber harvesting. The standards for each of these prescriptions includes a list of possible mitigation procedures that may be used to achieve the sediment mitigation levels necessary to meet the fishery objectives of each alternative. The miles of road constructed by time period and associated costs are indicators of how this issue was treated in each alternative.

8. Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers

To what extent should use be controlled to maintain the quality of wild and scenic rivers, wildernesses, and other pristine attractions?

a. Resource Situation

The Nez Perce National Forest contains part of the Selway-Bitterroot, Hells Canyon, and Frank Church-River of No Return Wildernesses and all of the Gospel-Hump Wilderness. In addition, parts of four rivers classified under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act are located on the Forest. These are the Salmon, Middlefork of the Clearwater, Selway, and Rapid Rivers.

Management of all classified areas except the Gospel-Hump Wilderness is shared with one or more National Forests adjacent to the Nez Perce.

Increased use in these areas threatens the pristine setting which is the basis of their popularity. User education programs, patrols, greater enforcement of regulations, and implementation of permit systems are among the options to reduce impacts.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

(1) How will the quality of Wilderness, and Wild and Scenic River Corridors be maintained?

- (2) Are user controls necessary?
- (3) How will limits of acceptable change be determined?
- (4) Are trail systems adequate to accommodate and disperse use?
- (5) Are controls on horse use and domestic livestock grazing necessary to maintain quality?

c. Procedure to Resolve

Wild and Scenic Rivers

In all alternatives, the Wild and Scenic River corridors will be managed to protect the resource values of the areas as prescribed by law. The level at which different uses within the area are controlled to maintain the scenic and recreational opportunities is in large part dependent on the funding available. The funding levels associated with the management prescriptions assigned to the Wild and Scenic River corridors in the alternatives reflects the degree to which specific issues will be addressed.

Wilderness

In all alternatives, the wilderness resource will be preserved to the extent possible under existing laws and regulations. The capacity and quality of the wilderness resource for future use are directly linked to the wilderness resource management programs.

Varying levels of funding for wilderness management were analyzed during the development of wilderness management prescriptions. Factors considered were current use and conditions and projections for future use. Based on this analysis, varying funding levels were selected for each wilderness on the Forest. Wilderness management will reflect the funding levels portrayed by the management prescription assigned to each in the alternatives.

9. Grazing, Recreation, and Wildlife

How should livestock grazing be balanced with other resource demands?

a. Resource Situation

Domestic livestock grazing on the Forest dates back to the 1860s. It reached its peak when 70,456 head of sheep were permitted in 1918 and 13,992 head of cattle in 1919. Sheep grazing declined rapidly during World War II and has never regained its prominence.

Today, 14 percent of the Forest is classified as suitable for domestic livestock grazing. Some of this 316,000 acres is transitory range created by timber harvests, although the grasslands along the Salmon and Snake River Breaks provide permanent rangeland. About 6,600 head of cattle and 3,400 head of sheep are currently permitted to graze on the Forest for part of the year. The grazing industry is an important component of the local economy. The question is where to balance grazing use on the Forest with other competing and, in some cases, conflicting uses such as wildlife and recreation.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

- (1) Will grazing-related impacts on water quality, scenery, and the recreation resource be reduced?
- (2) What is the proper balance between forage for livestock and forage for wildlife?
- (3) Will management decisions alter grazing allotments and their traditional role as an important contributor to the local and regional cattle and sheep industry?
- (4) Can the carrying capacity for domestic livestock grazing on the Forest be increased without adversely affecting other resource values?

c. Procedure to Resolve

These issues were addressed in the alternative by assigning varying intensities of grazing prescriptions to primary range lands and analyzing varying degrees of utilization on transitory ranges, consistent with the overall objectives of the alternative. The management prescriptions reflect varying levels of range management intensity and utilization. The indicators of how these issues are resolved in each alternative are the livestock grazing use in Animal Unit Months, and the total acres suitable for range.

10. Timber, Roads, and Big Game

How can timber harvest, roads, and big-game habitat needs be made compatible?

a. Resource Situation

Although elk are the most sought-after big-game animal and the one that often draws the greatest interest on the Forest, mule deer, whitetail deer, bighorn sheep, moose, mountain goats, cougar, and bear also may be found.

Timber harvest and associated activities are often viewed as a detriment to big-game management, but can be and often are used today as management techniques to improve big-game habitat. Travel restrictions and road closures in critical big-game areas and prescribed burning are also used to maintain or enhance habitat. Road closures and travel restrictions have been and will continue to be controversial.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

- (1) To what extent do timber harvest and roads affect big-game winter range, habitat use patterns, and calving areas?
- (2) To what extent can seral vegetation stages (browse) be prolonged for elk and deer use considering other resource needs?
- (3) Can elk habitat be managed to maintain or increase herd size within constraints imposed for other resource needs?

c. Procedure to Resolve

These issues were addressed in the alternatives through the assignment of varying management prescriptions, differing land use patterns and broad standards applying to road closures and summer habitat objectives.

On key winter range habitats, management prescriptions designed to enhance carrying capacities were available for assignment depending on the objectives of the alternative. In some cases, these management prescriptions involved changing land assignments from timber harvesting to non-timber (periodic burning to maintain seral brush conditions). Broad, Forest-wide standards for the management of the summer habitat were also included for those alternatives where big game was an emphasized resource.

Standards for road uses/closures were included in management prescriptions for winter habitat as well as in the broad, Forest-wide direction for summer habitat. The indicators of how these issues were resolved in each alternative are in the carrying capacity of winter and summer range in number of acres of land assignments to winter range management, and the presence or absence of direction for summer range management.

11. Minerals

What are the effects of surface resource allocation on mineral exploration and development?

a. Resource Situation

Mining activities on Federal lands are authorized by laws dating back to the late 1800s that are administered by the Department of Interior. The main effects that Forest Service activities have on mineral exploration and development include providing access to areas, determining validity of existing claims, and approving operating plans to insure that adequate protection is provided for other resources. Although some individuals have expressed a need for greater control of mining activities, it is not within the jurisdiction of the Forest Service to do so.

The following minerals exist on the Forest: gold, silver, platinum, lead, zinc, copper, stibnite, manganese, uranium, cobalt, chromite, and molybdenum. The potential also exists for quarried rocks, decorative rocks, sand, gravel, limestone, and gem stones. An increase in gold dredging and panning, as well as placer and lode mining, can be anticipated both as a recreation venture and commercial operation.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

(1) To what degree can mining be regulated to minimize impacts, given the existing mining laws?

(2) How active a role should the Forest Service play to encourage mineral exploration?

(3) Can significant contributions be made from the Forest toward meeting national mineral needs?

c. Procedure to Resolve

Under all alternatives, Forest administration of mineral activities would be in accordance with the 1872 Mining Law, the 1920 Mineral Leasing Act, the Federal Land Planning and Management Act of 1976, and 36 CFR 252.

The most significant variations between the alternatives related to these issues is in the amount of area recommended for wilderness which could result in mineral withdrawals and the amount of area planned for development and road access. Increase in access could increase the opportunities for mineral discoveries and development. Indicators of how these issues could be influenced by the different alternatives would be the acres recommended for Wilderness and the miles of road construction planned.

12. Fire

What are the effects of fire management on other resource values and uses?

a. Resource Situation

Wildfire has been an ever-present force on the Forest. Consequently, the evolution of all native flora and fauna has been dependent to some degree on natural fire.

With a dramatic improvement in firefighting effectiveness over the last 30-40 years, the burned-over acreage on the Forest has been greatly reduced. The fires that ravaged the Forest in the late 1800s and early 1900s have not been experienced in recent years. This exclusion of fire has had a significant effect on vegetative succession, an effect which has become more pronounced over time, and one which has had varying effects on different resources.

Current Forest Service policy is immediate control of wildfires unless they occur in an area under a fire management plan, in which case a fire may be allowed to more nearly play its natural role in the environment. The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is covered by such a plan, and others are being developed. Prescribed burning is an important resource management tool when used as a silvicultural treatment to improve range and wildlife habitat, reduce fire hazard, and allow regeneration.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

(1) To what degree can fire management be incorporated into the Forest Plan?

(2) Will the natural fire program be expanded?

(3) If departures are made from the current policy of immediate control of wildfires (except in those areas currently under a fire management plan), are the risks to resources greater than the costs involved in fire protection?

c. Procedure to Resolve

These issues were addressed primarily by analyzing outputs and effects of alternatives measured by the acres where full suppression will be implemented and the number of acres where prescribed burning will be used for resource

management objectives. In most cases, prescribed burning programs are associated with slash disposal/site preparation in timber harvest areas and to maintain seral brush conditions in big-game winter range. Opportunities for prescribed natural fire have been examined within the context of Wilderness Management Plans that provide specific direction for management of each Wilderness.

13. Timber and Scenery

What is the compatibility between management of the timber resource and desires for scenic quality?

a. Resource Situation

The 2,050 miles of road on the Forest provide ready access for Forest visitors. Major travel routes follow the larger rivers. Often Forest visitors expect to view an unaltered landscape from Forest roads, many of which were constructed for management of the timber resource. Large clearcut blocks created in the past are particularly unappealing to some visitors. Today, the Forest uses a system designed to analyze physical features such as landform, water form, vegetative patterns, and rock form to determine acceptable degrees of landscape alteration.

b. Issue-Related Questions Raised by the Public

- (1) To what extent should maintenance of scenic quality be a constraining factor in the design of developmental activities?
- (2) To what extent will efforts be made for changes in appearance to be reasonable, timely, and controlled?
- (3) Will unique landscape features and areas of visual diversity in the general forest be maintained?
- (4) What constraints will be placed on clearcutting to minimize effects on scenic quality?

c. Procedure to Resolve

These issues were addressed through the development of timber management prescriptions with specified levels of visual quality management and the assignment of these prescriptions to specific areas within each alternative. These management prescriptions include standards necessary to achieve the desired level of visual quality and associated costs and other resource outputs associated with these objectives. The indicators of how these issues are resolved in each alternative are the acres assigned to the varying levels of visual quality objectives: retention, partial retention and modification/maximum modification.

D. Development of Alternatives From Public Issues and Concerns

Alternatives were formulated to deal with each of the concerns raised. It was quickly evident that the degree to which concerns for water quality or fish habitat were met limited the extent to which concerns for timber outputs could be met, and vice versa. Similar interaction takes place with concerns about the effects of roaded development on wildlife habitat. Other issues could be more easily resolved within the same alternatives, such as the effects of timber harvest on moose winter range. More detail about alternative formulation appears in Appendix B.

Alternative D was formulated in direct response to wood products industry participation. It opens all tentatively suitable lands to roaded development, and furnishes the highest first decade cut. It also displays the highest decrease in anadromous fish habitat potential.

Alternative C was developed in response to objectives of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Anadromous fish habitat potential is reduced only slightly, and elk objectives are also high. Six roadless areas are allocated to continued roadless management. However, the first decade cut is lower than that of any other alternative.

Alternative F incorporates suggestions of several environmental groups. It emphasizes fish and wildlife resources with a specified minimum level of timber production.

Other alternatives offer different combinations of timber harvests, fish and wildlife objectives, and roadless and wilderness management; the result is a complete range of alternatives.