Proposed and Possible Actions

This document, Proposed and Possible Actions, provides an overview of the types of projects that may occur during the planning period to achieve or maintain desired conditions. These are not commitments and would have to go through a project-level decision making process with public involvement.

Fire Management

Periodic burning is necessary to restore and maintain many of the Nez Perce National Forest's native ecosystems. These burns also serve to reduce fuel loading which will lessen the chances of uncharacteristic wildfire. During initial treatments, most planned burns may need to occur in the dormant season. Increasingly burns will also be carried out during the growing season. Wildland fire use is intended to play a large role in restoring and maintaining ecosystems.

Air Quality

The Forest Service coordinates with the Montana/Idaho State Airshed Group when scheduling prescribed fires. Prescribed burning is likely to generate smoke and particulate matter, and the prescribed burning program is expected to be as great as or greater than occurred during the previous planning period. Most of the emissions estimated from prescribed fires on the Nez Perce National Forest are likely to drift east toward Missoula, Montana, and the Bitterroot Valley. The Forest Service must follow state regulations and Region 1 guidelines in regard to smoke management.

Wildlife

Wildlife habitat management involves establishing and maintaining the vegetation diversity necessary to provide food, cover and security for all wildlife species native to the Forest. Management actions will likely focus on the establishment and maintenance of a range of forest types and size classes, ranging from shrubby openings to old forests. Secure blocks of habitat should be well distributed throughout the Clearwater National Forest to ensure wildlife habitat security. This will involve managing human access, including possibly closing unauthorized roads and trails to ensure some habitat is free from the disturbance of motor vehicles.

Fisheries

Fisheries management may include actions needed to: (1) ensure a steady stream of large woody debris is available to provide in-stream nutrients; (2) actions needed to ensure streamside shading and stream bank stability; and (3) actions needed to prevent the unnatural accumulation of sediments from sources such as roads and trails.

Actions anticipated to improve fish passage include reconstruction or removal of road crossings which limit upstream migration of native fish and other stream-associated species. To see a current list of needed actions by watershed, refer to the subwatershed summaries in the Supporting Documentation (http://www.fs.fed.us/cnpz/forest/documents/sup_docs/index_water_clw.shtml).

Recreation and Scenery

Recreation management includes those activities associated with controlling visitor impacts to resources and other visitors; constructing and maintaining facilities and trails; and providing a positive visitor experience. Specifically, the following types of actions are likely to occur:

- Trail construction, reconstruction, maintenance and relocation;
- Construction of facilities such as parking areas, toilets, trailheads, information kiosks, fishing access and boating access points;
- Maintenance of facilities such campgrounds, picnic areas, toilets and parking lots.

Scenery management primarily involves actions that mitigate the effects of other activities, whether these activities are Forest Service projects or activities associated with visitor use. Most of these measures are associated with treating vegetation so that the impacts of management are less obvious. For example, slash from logging or prescribed burning would likely be chopped up so that it lies close to the ground in highly scenic areas, thus reducing visual impacts.

Scenery management may also involve actions to create and maintain scenic vistas along roads and trails.

Lands and Special Uses

Lands program actions are likely to include maintaining landlines and actions associated with adjusting national forest system ownership through purchases, exchanges or other conveyances.

Special use program management involves permitting uses (e.g. easements), structures (e.g. communication towers), outfitter/guides and special events.

Heritage Resources

Heritage resources activities will likely consist of conducting surveys to identify significant sites, and follow-up actions necessary to protect, stabilize, or salvage sites. Law enforcement is an important element of heritage resource protection, since such sites are may be subject to vandalism and illegal collection of artifacts.

Roads

Road management will include activities such as road grading, ditching, application of gravel and paving. Construction, reconstruction, and relocation are likely to occur to some extent to support resource management. Unauthorized roads are likely to be closed and perhaps decommissioned.

Water

Stream restoration actions are likely to occur at selected stream segments to improve degraded conditions and stream channel stability. Such actions may include: (1) reshaping stream banks to stable slopes; (2) removing streamside berm material that

disconnects streams from floodplains; (3) constructing instream structures to stabilize channels and improve aquatic habitat; (4) planting riparian-type vegetation; and (5) treating noxious weeds in riparian areas.

Watershed level restoration actions are likely to occur to improve sediment and water yield. Such actions may include removal, reconstruction or improved maintenance of stream-side roads to increase water infiltration and reduce chronic sediment delivery to stream channels. Upland roads may also be evaluated and treated to reduce water interception and reduce landslide risk.

Approximately 1,150 miles of water bodies within the Nez Perce National Forest have been listed as impaired or not meeting standards by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ Integrated §303(d)/§305(b) Report 2005). IDEQ has determined that those lakes and stream segments do not meet water quality standards for their designated and beneficial uses. Water body status assessments are completed in cooperation with Idaho Department of Environmental Quality through water quality assessments, total maximum daily loads, restoration plans, best management practices implementation, and monitoring. Actions likely to occur to improve impaired water bodies include: (1) riparian plantings to increase streamside shade; (2) erosion control by decommissioning and re-constructing streamside roads; (3) culvert replacement or removal; (4) riparian area fencing; and (5) mining reclamation. To see a current list of impaired water bodies and the needed actions by watershed, refer to subwatershed summaries in the Supporting Documentation.

Vegetation Management

Vegetation management activities include the fire management program (already described in this paper), managing grasslands and shrublands, and the silviculture/timber sales programs.

The silviculture/timber sale program areas may apply active management to the vegetative resource in order to move the forest toward desired conditions. Activities may include timber sales with a variety of silvicultural treatments such as intermediate timber harvest (thinning), treatments that are even age in nature (clearcut, or two-age regeneration), or uneven age (group selection). The estimated or projected size of the vegetation management program (acres of management activity) is based on the ecological needs of the resource, tempered by the historical budget and personnel levels for the Nez Perce National Forest.

Following is a table showing estimated average annual vegetation treatments to be applied to the Nez Perce National Forest for the first decade covered by this plan:

Estimated Vegetation Management Practices

(Annual Average Treatment Area (Acres) in First Decade for Lands Generally Suitable for Timber Harvest)

Practice	
Lands where Timber Production Achieves, or is Compatible with Desired Conditions and Objectives	Acres
Regeneration Cutting (even- or two-aged)[1]	1,289
Uneven-aged Management	
Intermediate Harvest	
Commercial Thinning	0
Salvage/Sanitation	0
Other Harvest Cutting	0
Reforestation[2]	1,289
Timber Stand Improvement	0
Other Lands	Acres
Regeneration Cutting (even- or two-aged)[2]	0
Uneven-aged Management	300
Intermediate Harvest	
Commercial Thinning	0
Salvage/Sanitation	0
Other Harvest Cutting	0
Reforestation	300
Timber Stand Improvement	0

Note that timber harvesting activity is dedicated primarily toward restoration of ecosystems. To see estimated activity levels in future decades, refer to the timber resource analysis documents in the Supporting Documentation.

[1] Two-aged methods regenerate and maintain stands with two-age classes. The resulting stand may be two-aged or tend towards an uneven-aged condition. Two-aged methods include clearcutting with reserves, seed tree with reserves, and shelterwood with reserves.

[2] Includes both natural and artificial regeneration.

The timber sale activities described above will yield wood products to the commercial markets in the form of pulpwood and sawtimber. The following table shows the estimated average annual outputs (MBF = Thousand Board Feet, and MCF = Thousand Cubic Feet) from the harvesting described above.

Estimated Timber Sale Program Quantity

(Annual Average Volume Estimates for First Decade)

Practice	Timber Sale Program Quantity (TSPQ)[3]
Lands where Timber Production Achieves, or is Compatible with Desired Conditions and Objectives	Million Cubic Feet
Regeneration Cutting (even- or two-aged)	3.618
Uneven-aged Management	0
Intermediate Harvest	
Commercial Thinning	0
Salvage/Sanitation	0
Other Harvest Cutting	0
Subtotal, Sawtimber (MMBF)	19.2
Subtotal, All Products (MMCF)	3.6
Other Lands[4]	Million Cubic Feet
Regeneration Cutting (even- or two-aged)	0
Uneven-aged Management	0.511
Intermediate Harvest	
Commercial Thinning	0
Salvage/Sanitation	0
Other Harvest Cutting	0
Subtotal, Sawtimber (MMBF)	2.5

[3] See exhibit 01 for primary management emphasis category definitions.

[4] Other lands, where harvest for multiple-use objectives other than timber production (including salvage sales) may take place as described in section 62.22.

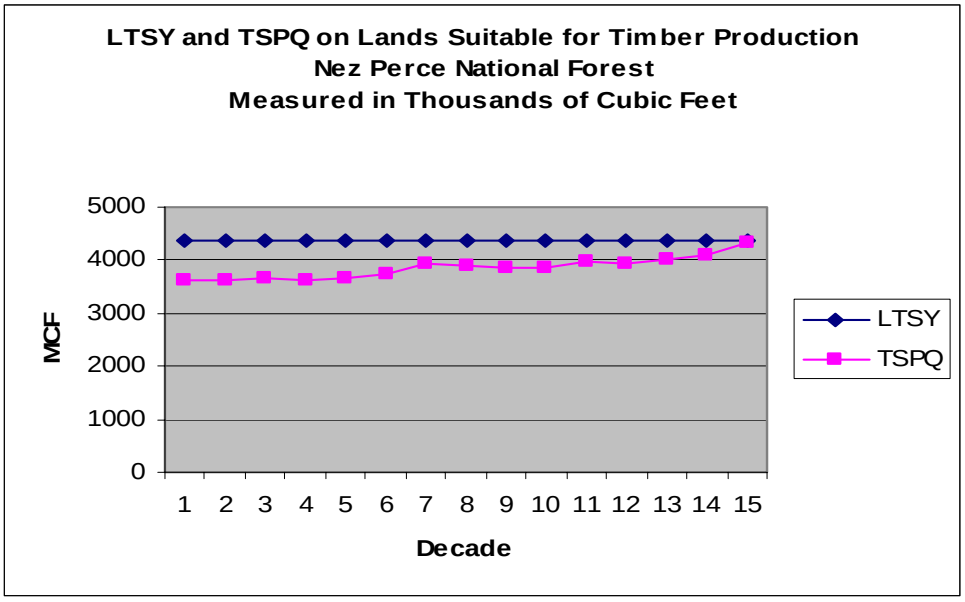
Subtotal, All Products (MMCF)	.5
Grand Totals – Sawtimber (MMBF)	21.7
Grand Totals, All Products (MMCF)	4.1

Note that both tables indicate harvesting activity on "other lands", which include those lands that have been determined not to be suitable for timber production. While this Plan estimates, in advance, that harvesting will occur on these lands, these are only estimates. Harvesting may be necessary on these lands (if suitable for harvesting) to address ecosystem diversity and desired conditions, or to deal with an unforeseen future event such as wind storm, ice storm, or insect/disease infestation.

Vegetation Management Requirements at the Project Level – This Plan makes the general determination about national forest lands that are suitable/not suitable for timber production. Final decisions about a proposed project that involves timber harvest are made at the project level. In making this determination, the following factors must be evaluated at the project level and documented in the project or case file (Reference FSH 1909.12, Chapter 61).

- A determination must be made that the project will not cause irreversible damage to resources such as soil productivity or watershed condition;
- That the area can be adequately re-stocked according to the plan's desired conditions for achieving objectives;
- In the case of regeneration harvest on lands suitable for timber production, stands should generally have reached culmination of mean annual increment (CMAI).

Finally, the harvest levels proposed must be compared to the long term sustained yield (LTSY) calculated for the Nez Perce National Forest. The following chart depicts the LTSY of 4,381 MCF per decade, compared to the estimated harvesting levels, by decade:



This chart depicts a gradual rise in the timber sale program quantity. This is a reflection the activity needed to restore native ecosystems. For more details, refer to the Timber Resource Analysis in the Supporting Documentation.