

# CHAPTER TWO

## Geographic Area Direction

### INTRODUCTION

Management direction by geographic area is new for forest plans. This chapter contains a brief description of each geographic area, including a map, setting, goals and desired condition with fire suppression strategy, standards and guidelines, and a travel management strategy. This is the most detailed level of *Forest Plan* direction, and applies *in addition* to forestwide and management area direction.

Geographic areas serve two main purposes. The first is to apply management direction which is too specific to apply across the ARNF-PNG as a whole, as either forestwide or management area direction. For example, describing desired vegetation conditions in forestwide or management area direction is made difficult by the many vegetation types represented on the Forests and Grassland. These conditions can be described in a geographic area because of its smaller scale.

The second purpose is to identify what forestwide and management area direction will generally receive most emphasis within the area. This is important because there is so much forestwide and management area direction that it becomes difficult to tell which items are most important when trying to implement the *Forest Plan* in a specific area. Geographic area direction helps to focus implementation of potential projects on the most important items and helps to specify priorities among competing uses, activities, resources, or other items.

The ARNF-PNG contains 59 geographic areas, outlined in Figure 2.1. A narrative and more detailed map are included for each area; the map shows the prescription allocations and associated acreages for primary land uses within the geographic area. The narratives are grouped alphabetically for each Ranger District, and each Ranger District grouping is preceded by a figure showing the district's boundaries and the names of the geographic areas within it. The narratives are arranged in four main sections, containing the following:

**Setting:** This section describes the location and the major geographic and vegetation features of the area, other area characteristics, historic features, recreational use, past management, transportation system, and other pertinent information. This section helps orient readers to the area, but does not contain any management direction.

**Goals and Desired Conditions:** This section describes the goals and desired conditions for the area that were established within the context of forestwide and management area goals. They highlight particular emphases or additional details beyond what could be described in Chapters One and Three. **The goals and desired conditions may apply to all management areas within the geographic area or only to particular management areas. When the goals and desired conditions apply only to specific management areas they are preceded by a management area heading.**

Desired vegetation and habitat conditions are usually described as a need to increase or maintain general vegetation or habitat components such as old growth, winter range, or hiding cover. Sometimes specific components or vegetation types are described such as structural stages or particular species. Structural-stage definitions are included in the glossary. Goals and desired conditions for recreation management, travel management, and landownership patterns are also listed when additional direction or further clarification is needed.

The timber harvesting strategy is based on the *timber suitability map* and the management area direction. Generally, one of three levels is described: 1) timber harvest is not allowed; 2) limited timber harvest may take place; 3) timber harvest is probable. If timber harvest is not allowed, then it is anticipated that there would be no timber harvest in the area for any reason. Limited timber harvest is used when a need is identified to use it on an irregular or a need-driven basis to meet objectives such as wildlife-habitat improvement, fuels reduction, scenic-feature enhancement, or recreation support such as trail construction or maintenance. Timber harvest would generally be infrequent and limited in extent. Timber harvest is probable' when harvest is anticipated during the next five- to ten-year period and is expected to recur periodically.

Some areas may be scheduled for implementation of *prescribed fire*, planned and ignited by Forest Service personnel and spreading under predetermined conditions. The limits of the prescribed fire are defined in a written prescription. In some geographic areas the intended severity of the fire is specified by utilizing a classification scheme called Brown's Fire Regimes. Brown's classifications are as follows: *nonlethal understory*, *stand replacement* or *mixed/variable*. Nonlethal understory and stand replacement are self explanatory. The mixed/variable regime is one where the fire event can change character (between nonlethal and stand replacement) over time and space. The application of prescribed fire may be specific to a single forest cover type such as ponderosa pine or for all cover types within the area.

All wildland fires will be assigned an *appropriate management response* for control by one of three strategies: *direct control*, *perimeter control*, or *prescription control*. The wildland fire management responses listed for each geographic area are those which most efficiently meet fire management direction under current and expected burning conditions; they are chosen to minimize the combined cost of suppression and the values that could be lost in a fire, including ecological values, resource values and the cost of improvements.

*Direct Control* is the immediate and complete extinction of the fire; it is the most intensive and most expensive suppression method, and places the values of improvements and resources above ecological values.

*Perimeter Control* is the use of firelines to confine the active zone of spreading fire. Fireline locations are selected to minimize the combined cost of suppression and values that could be lost in a fire.

*Prescription Control* allows a fire to burn and considers it to be controlled as long as it burns within specified geographic areas and predetermined burning properties; it is generally the least intensive and least expensive suppression method.

Depending on conditions and values at risk in a particular area or time, managers may select a

method more intensive than that specified but not one that is less intensive. For example, if an area has been assigned a primary strategy of prescription control, direct control may be used if warranted by conditions at the time. Managers may not choose prescription control or perimeter control if the primary strategy for an area is direct control. A geographic area may be covered by a single strategy or by multiple strategies. If the narrative for a geographic area contains no specification of fire management strategies, readers can find the applicable information on the *wildland fire management strategy map*, included with the *Plan's* map set.

**Standards and Guidelines:** This section describes additional standards and guidelines for the geographic area unless there are none specific to it. These standards and guidelines were established within the context of forestwide and management area standards and guidelines and provide additional direction or restriction beyond what could be described in those sections of the *Forest Plan*. The standards and guidelines may apply to all management areas within the geographic area or only to particular management areas. When the standards and guidelines apply only to specific management areas they are preceded by a management area heading. This section will not be included if there are no standards and guidelines specific to the geographic area.

**Travel Management Strategy:** This last section of the geographic area description is a table summarizing the travel management strategy for each management area within the geographic area. The table outlines the existing transportation system and the extent of proposed changes expected to occur during *Plan* implementation. In addition to the formal system of *forest development roads* and *forest development trails*, usually called FDRs and FDTs, a sizeable number of user-created routes exist, which for planning purposes we have termed “ways.” Decisions related to user-created “ways” were made by considering historical and expected use, demand, and resource needs defined at this planning level. Site-specific environmental analysis will incorporate forestwide standards and guidelines which, along with the travel management strategy table, will help to develop overall travel management plans. Decisions about which roads and trails to keep open or to close will be implemented under formalized *travel management plans*. Table 2.1 is an example of the table that ends each geographic area description.

**Table 2.1 Example of Travel Management Strategy Table**

Management Area	Mode	Existing System	Convert Ways	New Rds/Trls	Extent of Additions	Extent of Obliterations
1.2	4WD	Y	Y	N	L	N
	MTR	N	N	N	N	N
	WMT	N	N	N	N	N
	WNM	Y	N	N	N	N
	NMT	R	N	N	N	L

The following is a guide to abbreviations used in the table:

**Management Area:**

Refer to Chapter Three for descriptions of each management area.

**Mode: (Specific Mode of Travel or Use)**

*4WD (Four-wheel-drive):* Lower standard, moderate-to-higher challenge unimproved roads, managed primarily for four-wheel-drive traffic.

*MTR (Motorized Trails):* Trails open to motorized vehicles less than 48 inches wide (motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles), in which motorized use is the primary managed use. Nonmotorized use may occur, but motorized is favored if conflicts develop.

*WMT (Winter Motorized):* Areas and/or trails managed for snowmachine use. Incidental nonmotorized winter use may occur.

*WNM (Winter Nonmotorized):* Areas and/or trails managed for nonmotorized winter use such as snowshoeing and crosscountry skiing.

*NMT (Nonmotorized Trails):* Trails managed for nonmotorized uses such as horseback riding, bicycling, hiking with none of these having priority over the other at this level of planning. Specific uses will be identified and managed for at project level planning.

**Existing System (National Forest System Roads and Trails)**

*Y:* Yes, the existing transportation system is adequate for identified uses and will be mostly retained in the future; some “swaps” may occur.

*N:* No, the existing transportation system is not adequate, or is nonexistent.

*R:* Reduce, due to resource concerns identified at this level of planning; the existing transportation system may be closed to specific modes or obliterated.

**Convert Ways (Nonsystem Roads and Trails)**

- Y: Yes*, conversion of ways to the system are likely (net increase of travel miles).  
*N: No*, existing ways will most likely be obliterated.

### **New Roads/Trails**

- Y: Yes*, new roads and/or trails will most likely be constructed in this planning period.  
*N: No*, new roads or trails will not likely be constructed in this planning period.

### **Extent of Additions (Includes New Construction and Way Conversions)**

- L: Low*, less than 5 miles will most likely be added to the system in this management area within this planning period.  
*M: Medium*, 5 to 10 miles will most likely be added to the system in this management area within this planning period.  
*H: High*, more than 10 miles will most likely be added to the system in this management area within this planning period.  
*N: None*, no additions will be made within this planning period.

### **Extent of Obliterations**

- L: Low*, fewer than 5 miles of system travelways or “ways” will most likely be obliterated within this planning period.  
*M: Medium*, 5 to 10 miles of system travelways or ways will most likely be obliterated within this planning period.  
*H: High*, more than 10 miles of system travelways or ways will most likely be obliterated within this planning period.  
*N: None*, no obliterations will be carried out within this planning period

The extent of obliteration is derived from the “way” category’s mileage of the Forest transportation inventory. For example, if a management area within a geographic area has 8 inventoried “way” miles and the strategy for that area is to not increase the transportation system, those 8 miles will be obliterated and the “extent of obliteration” will be “medium.”

Following all of the individual geographic area narratives is a table showing habitat effectiveness for all geographic areas in relation to road and trail densities. The relevance and importance of this subject are discussed in the *FEIS*.

Placeholder for Figure 2.1  
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests  
Geographic Areas