



Flathead National Forest

Forest Plan Revision Collaboration Overview

Flathead NF Revision Steps

Assessment (July 2013 – December 2013)



Draft Plan Development (October 2013 – September 2014)



Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Development (September 2014 – June 2015)



Final Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) Development (June 2015 – September 2016)

Public Involvement

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a topographic map of a river valley. The map features contour lines, a river channel, and various terrain features. The colors range from green for lower elevations to brown and tan for higher elevations. The river is highlighted in yellow.

Public Involvement and Collaboration

Assessment (July 2013- Dec 2013)

- Held four field trips in August and September
- Hosted an open house in October
- The “topics of interest” that will inform the assessment include: vegetation and disturbances, wildlife, aquatics, recreation and access, wild and scenic rivers.

Draft Plan Development (October 2013 – September 2014)

- Ongoing meetings with interest groups, Tribal Governments, and Local, State, and Federal Agencies.
- Collaboration to inform draft proposed plan.
- Notice of Initiation-Scoping

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Public Involvement and Collaboration

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Development (September 2014 – June 2015)

- On-going meetings with interest groups, Tribal Governments, and Local, State, and Federal Agencies
- Formal Comment period

Final Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement Development (June 2015– September 2016)

- Pre-decisional administrative review



Objectives for Working Groups:

- Collaborative learning (e.g. understanding vegetation, fire and timber harvest modeling, wilderness evaluations, species of conservation concern).
- Develop plan components (i.e. describe distinctive roles and contributions of the FNF, desired conditions, objectives) that the FS may consider when developing management area allocation (*example: non-motorized roadless recreation opportunities in a specific geographic area*).

Suggested actions for working groups:

- Review the FNF 2006 revised and annotated proposed plan
- Review 2013 preliminary Assessment information (FNF website), sideboards document
- Engage with the plan revision team in model development and evaluation information.



Overview of FNF 2006 revised and annotated proposed plan

This version of the proposed Land and Resource Management Plan includes:

- 1) changes based upon public comment received on the 2006 proposed plan,
 - 2) recent comments made by the planning team that address either new management direction (including the 2012 planning rule requirements) or edits that are expected to occur based on new information.
- ❖ This document is not considered final; the Forest Supervisor and the planning team will be looking at all options for management direction that will meet the 2012 planning rule requirements. The expectation for the use of this document is as a reference and starting point for discussion.



Plan Direction Development

Distinctive Roles and Contributions of The Flathead National Forest within the broader landscape:

The FNF plan should reflect expected distinctive roles and contributions to the local area, region, and Nation, and the roles for which the plan area is best suited.

Once described, the plan area's roles and contributions within the broader landscape can serve as a focused foundation or context helping to define the desired conditions.

**The Flathead Plan will describe forest-wide and geographic area distinctive roles and contributions.*



Plan Direction Development

Desired Conditions: A description of specific social, economic, and/or ecological characteristics of the plan area, or a portion of the plan area toward which management of the land and resources should be directed.

**The Flathead Plan will have forest-wide, geographic area-wide, and management area desired conditions.*



Plan Direction Development

Objectives: An objective is a concise, measurable, and time-specific statement of a desired rate of progress toward a desired condition or conditions. Objectives should be based on reasonably foreseeable budgets.

**The Flathead Plan (modified 2006 version) that you will be using as a reference has the measurable units and timeframes blanked out because these figures will require additional analysis.*

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a topographic map of a river valley. The map features contour lines, a river channel, and various land use patterns. The colors range from green for lower elevations to brown and tan for higher elevations.

Standards & Guidelines

Standards: A mandatory constraint on project activity decision making, established to help achieve or maintain the desired condition(s), to avoid or mitigate undesirable effects, or to meet applicable legal requirements.

Guidelines: A constraint on project and activity decision making that allows for departure from its terms, so long as the purpose of the guideline is met.

** The Flathead Plan (modified 2006 version) that you will be using as a reference does not include any standards as these were not plan components under previous planning rule requirements.*



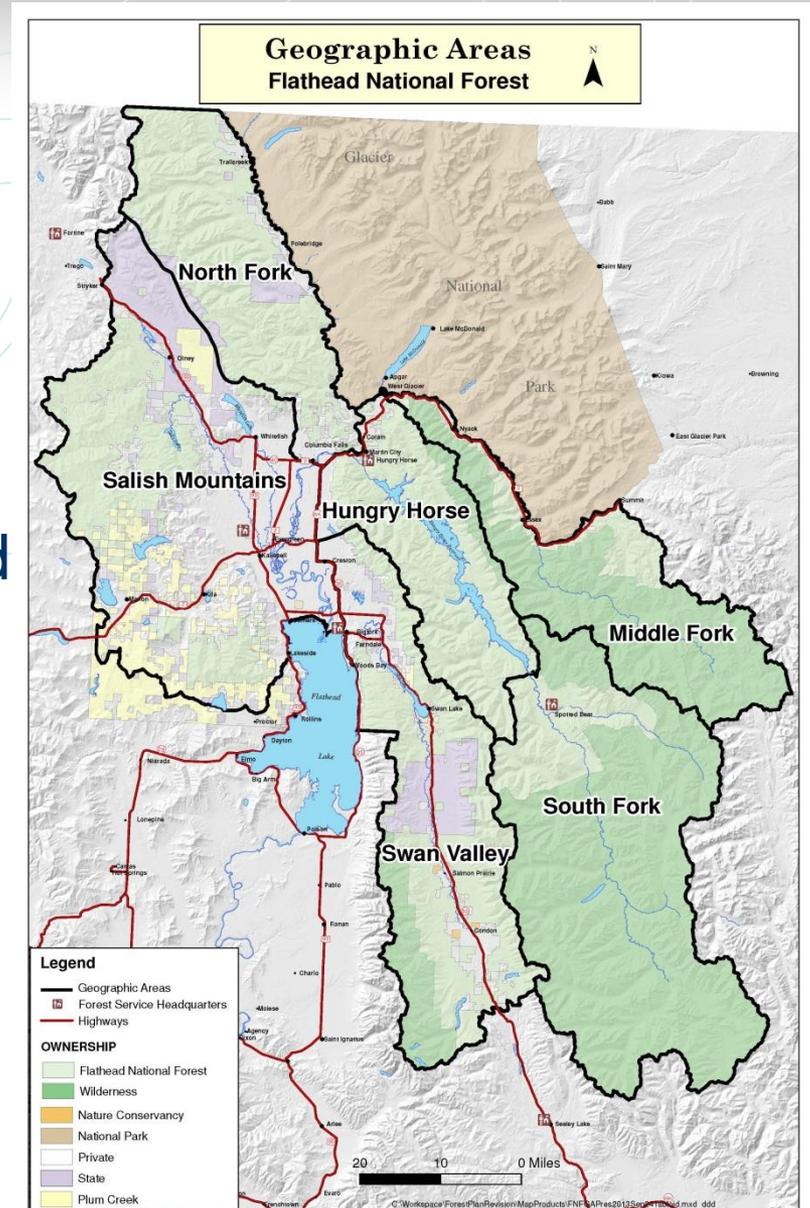
Land Suitability Determinations

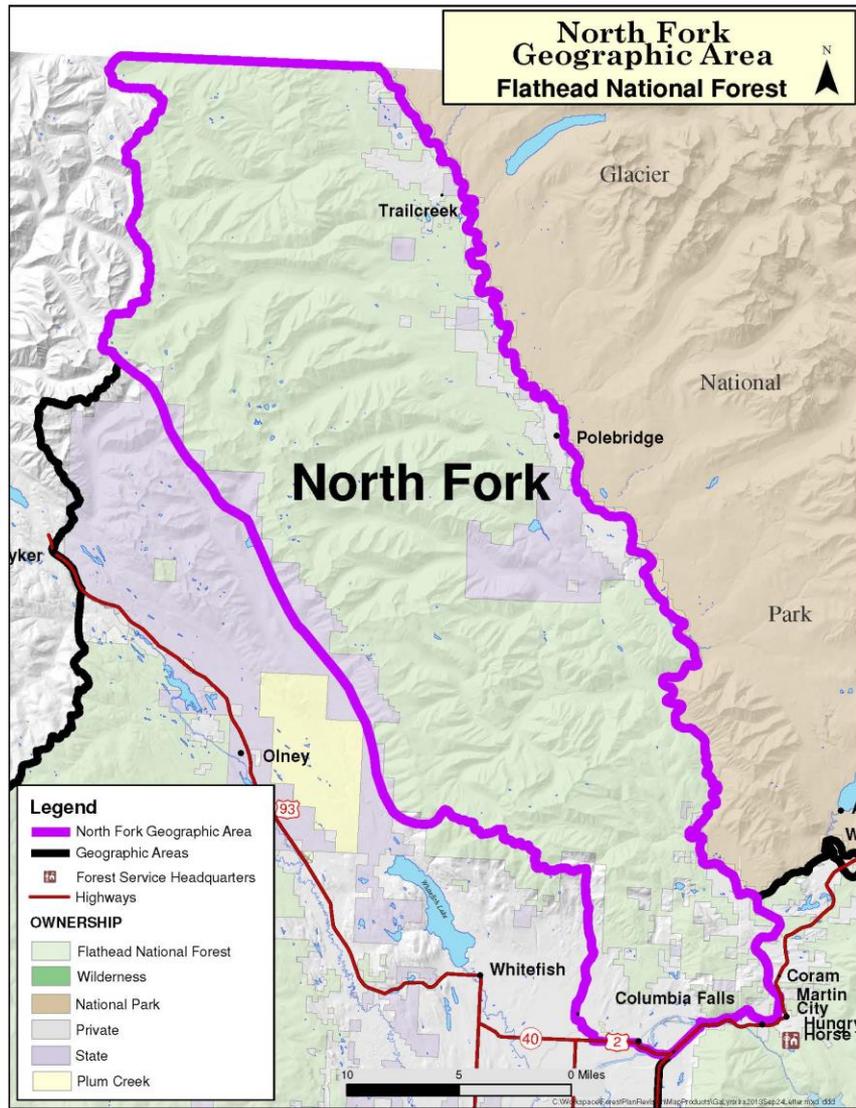
The identification of suitability of lands helps achieve the desired social, cultural, economic, and ecological conditions.

Note: Identification in a plan of the suitability of lands for a use is an indication that the use might be appropriate on those lands. It is not a commitment to allow such uses.

Geographic Areas

- Link the Forest Plan to management at a local and community level.
- Provide flexibility to respond to unique resource situations.
- Provide a tool for better communication with the public.

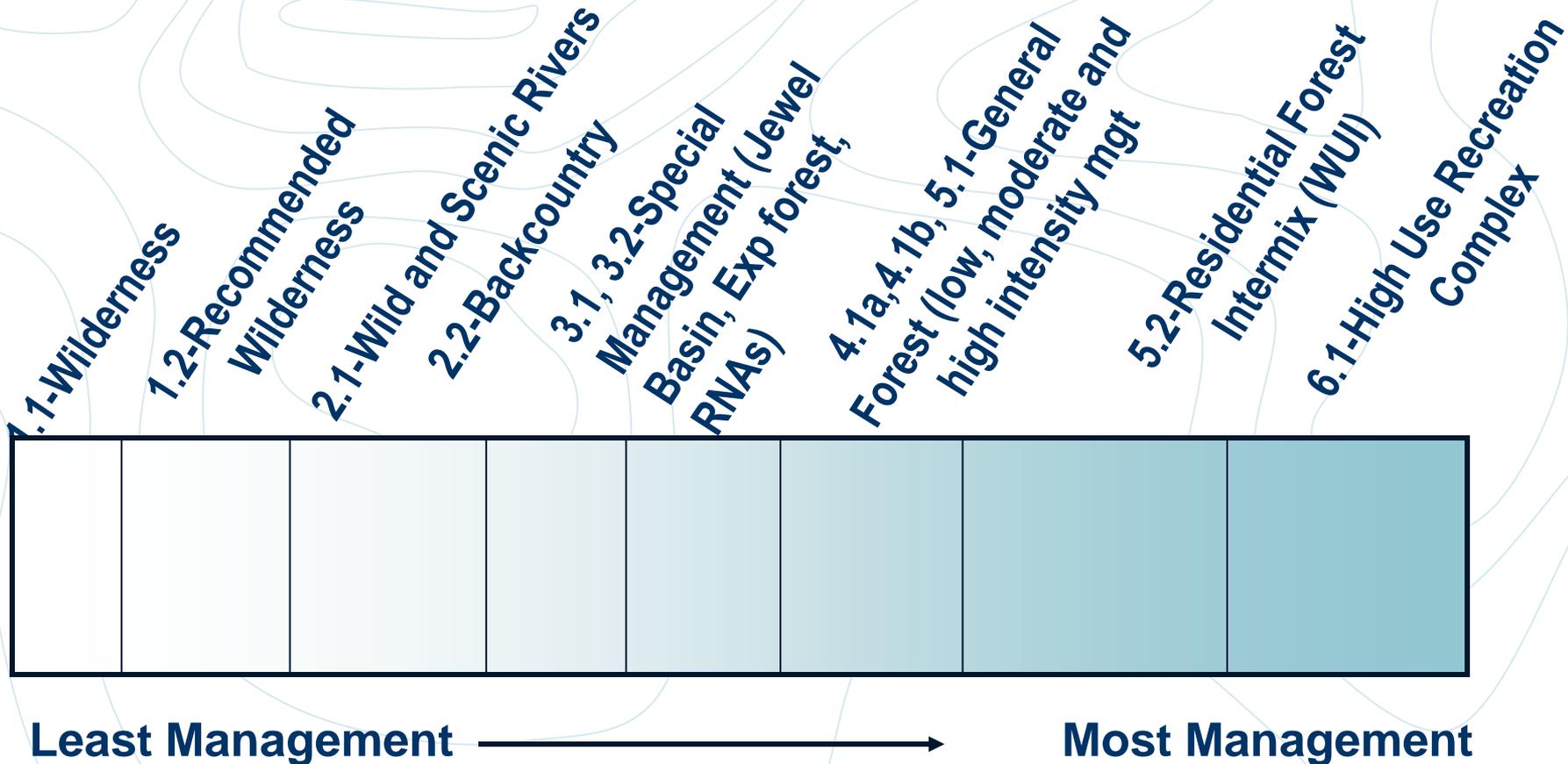




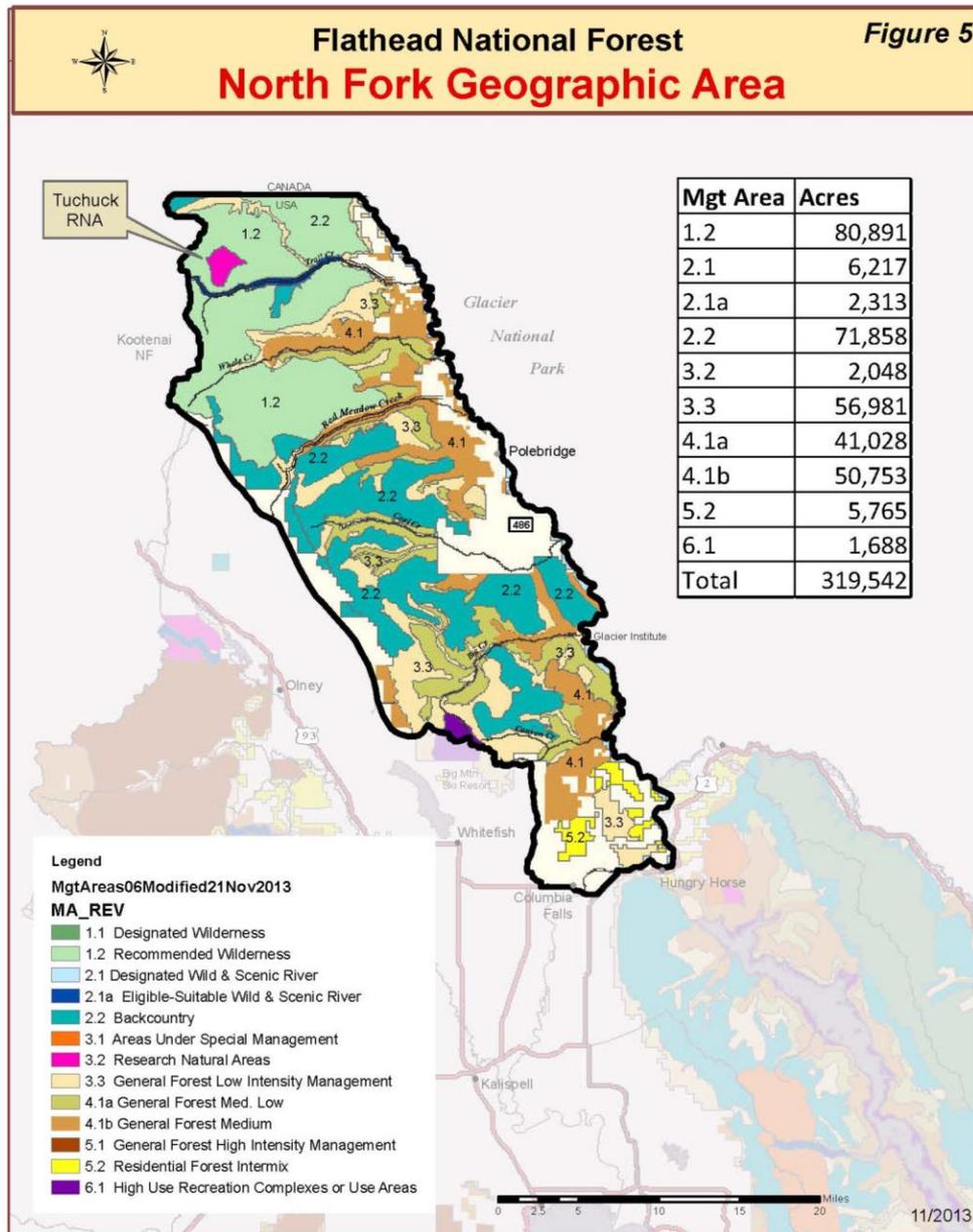
Geographic Areas and Decision Space

Management Areas

Areas within Geographic Areas with direction to achieve forest-wide desired conditions.



An example of management areas from modified 2006 Flathead National Forest Plan





Sideboards discussion and maps

- Special Designations (Inventoried Roadless Areas, Research Natural Areas, Experimental Forests, Wild and Scenic River corridors)
- Amendment 24- Winter Motorized Recreation
- Aviation Airstrips
- Amendment 21-Old Growth Forests
- Northern Rockies Lynx Management Direction
- Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy

See Part II of reference material (management direction proposed to be carried forward) for additional information.

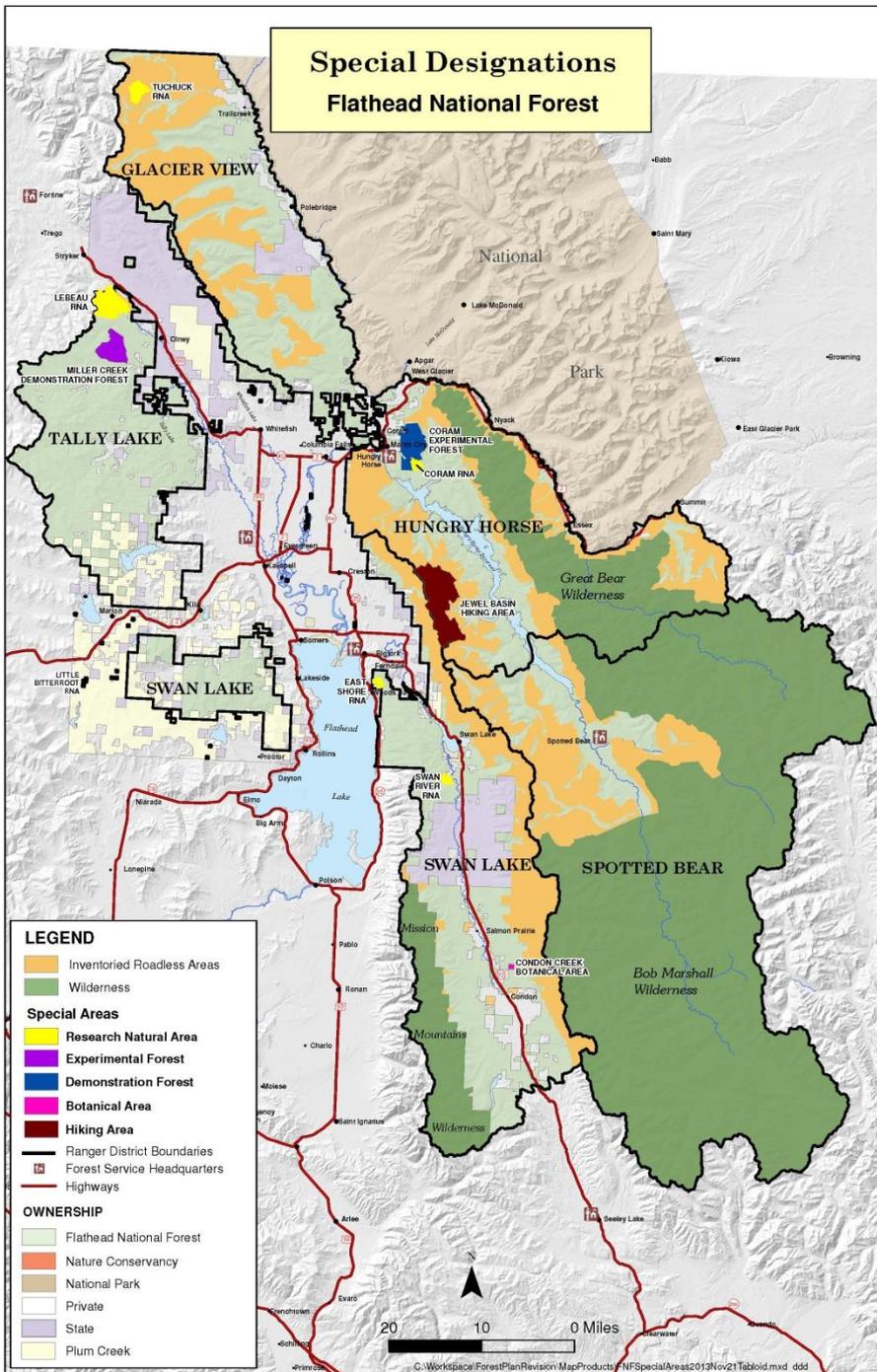


Special Designations

Special designations are designated by statute or established administratively.

- Statutorily designated areas examples are wilderness areas, and wild and scenic rivers, and inventoried roadless areas.
- Administrative designations area examples are experimental forests, research natural areas (RNA), and botanical areas.

Special Designations Flathead National Forest



Special Designations



Special Designations

Inventoried Roadless Areas

Flathead National Forest -

~478,975 acres

Prohibits the cutting, selling or removing timber except in specific cases.



Special Designations

Wild and Scenic Rivers

The free-flowing condition, water quality, and outstanding remarkable values that made river segments eligible for designation, or for which they were designated, would be protected and perpetuated.



Special Designations

Research Natural Areas 6 RNAs, totaling ~10,200 acres:

- *Coram, East Shore, Lebeau, Little Bitterroot, Swan River, Tuchuck*

Research Natural Areas prime consideration is maintenance of natural conditions and processes to protect Research Natural Areas against human activities that directly or indirectly modify the integrity of the ecological processes.

Experimental and Demonstration Forests

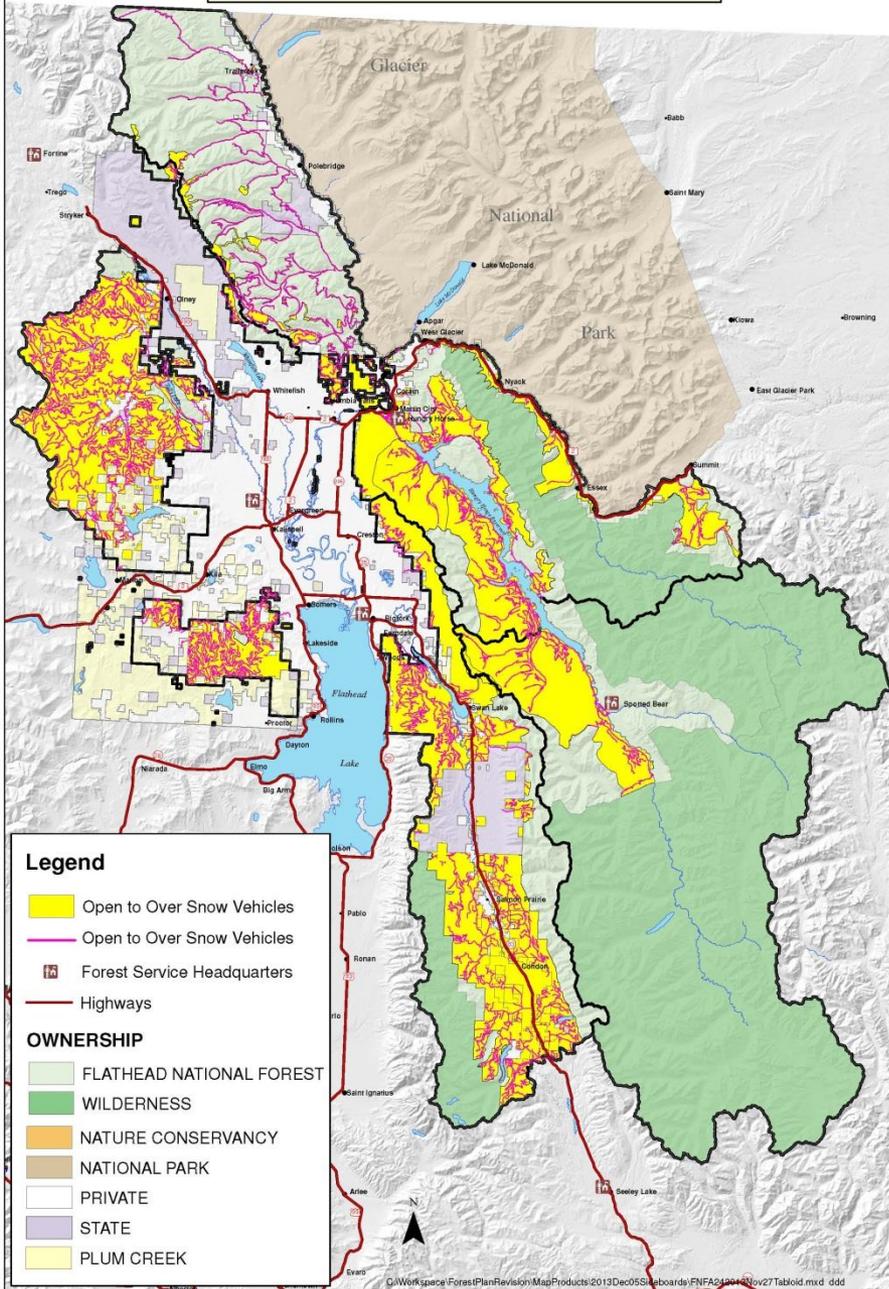
- Coram Experimental Forest, ~8,000 acres
- Miller Creek Research Demonstration Forest, ~4,950 acres



Amendment 24-Winter Motorized Recreation Plan

Established where and when to allow over-snow motorized vehicle recreation activities

Amendment 24 Flathead National Forest



Amendment 24



Aviation Airstrips

Four existing airstrips on the Flathead National Forest would continue to provide public access:

- Condon
- Schafer
- Meadow Creek
- Spotted Bear

Wurtz and Sondreson were private airstrips on land acquired by the Forest Service through willing sellers to protect the scenic values and wildlife habitat in accordance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and Flathead River Management Plan. These two former airstrips were never open to public use and are not maintained for that purpose.



Amendment 21- Direction Related to Old Growth Forests

- ❑ Maintain all existing old growth stands
- ❑ Vegetation management within existing old growth are very limited:
 - Maintaining and restoring old growth composition and structure
 - Reducing risks to sustaining old growth composition and structure
- ❑ Actively manage the FNF to achieve an amount and distribution of old growth similar to what occurred historically
- ❑ Actively manage the FNF to maintain or restore landscape patterns (e.g. patch sizes, distribution) of old growth and other forest structure classes
- ❑ Develop larger old growth patch sizes where needed
- ❑ Established new objectives and standards for retention of large live trees, snags, and coarse woody debris throughout the forest and in timber harvest areas

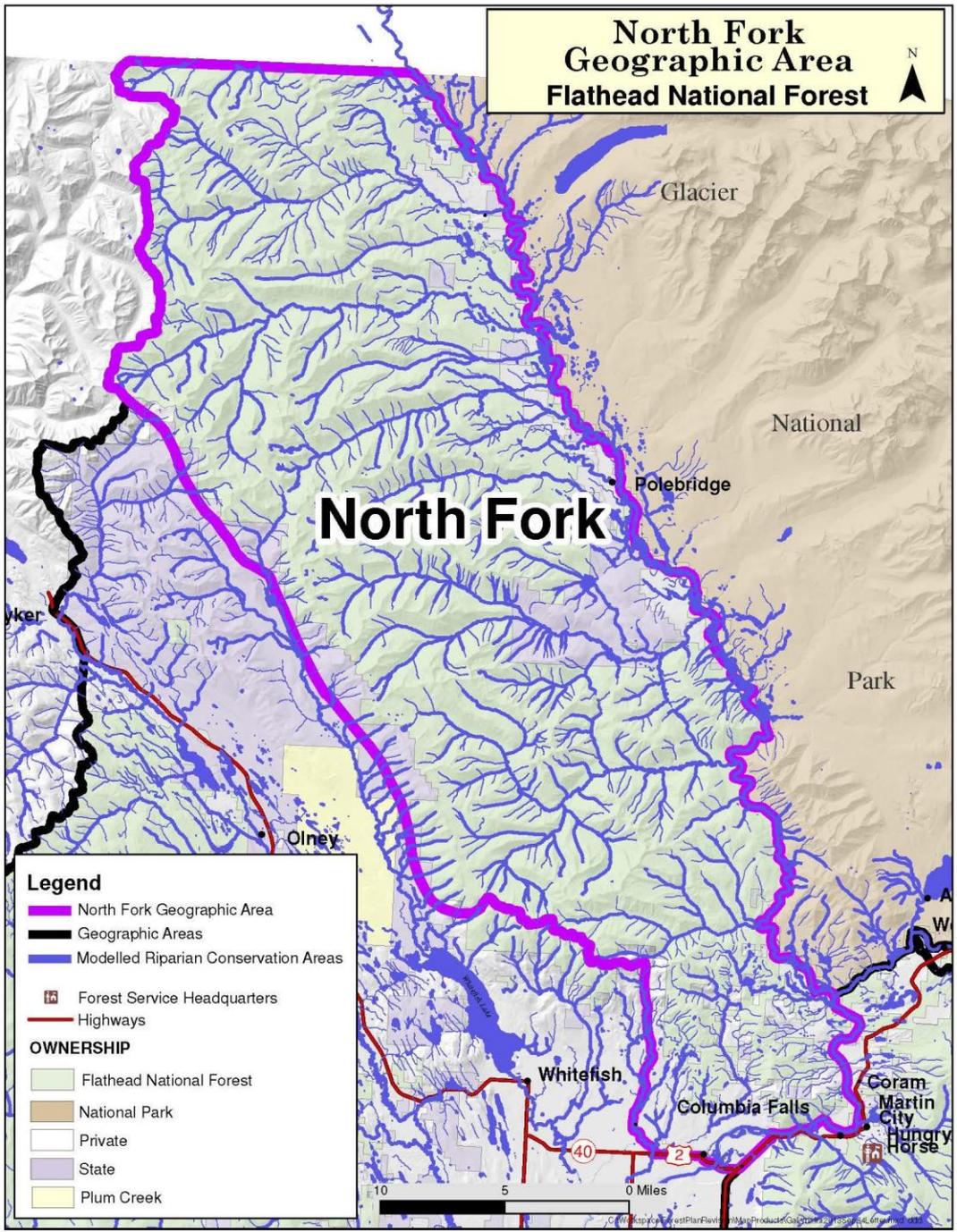


Inland Native Fish Strategy - 1995

Direction for conservation of native fish

Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas

- 300' fish bearing streams
- 150' non-fish bearing streams
- 100' intermittent streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands > 1 acre
- 50' intermittent streams, others < 1 acre
- Vegetation management must meet riparian objectives



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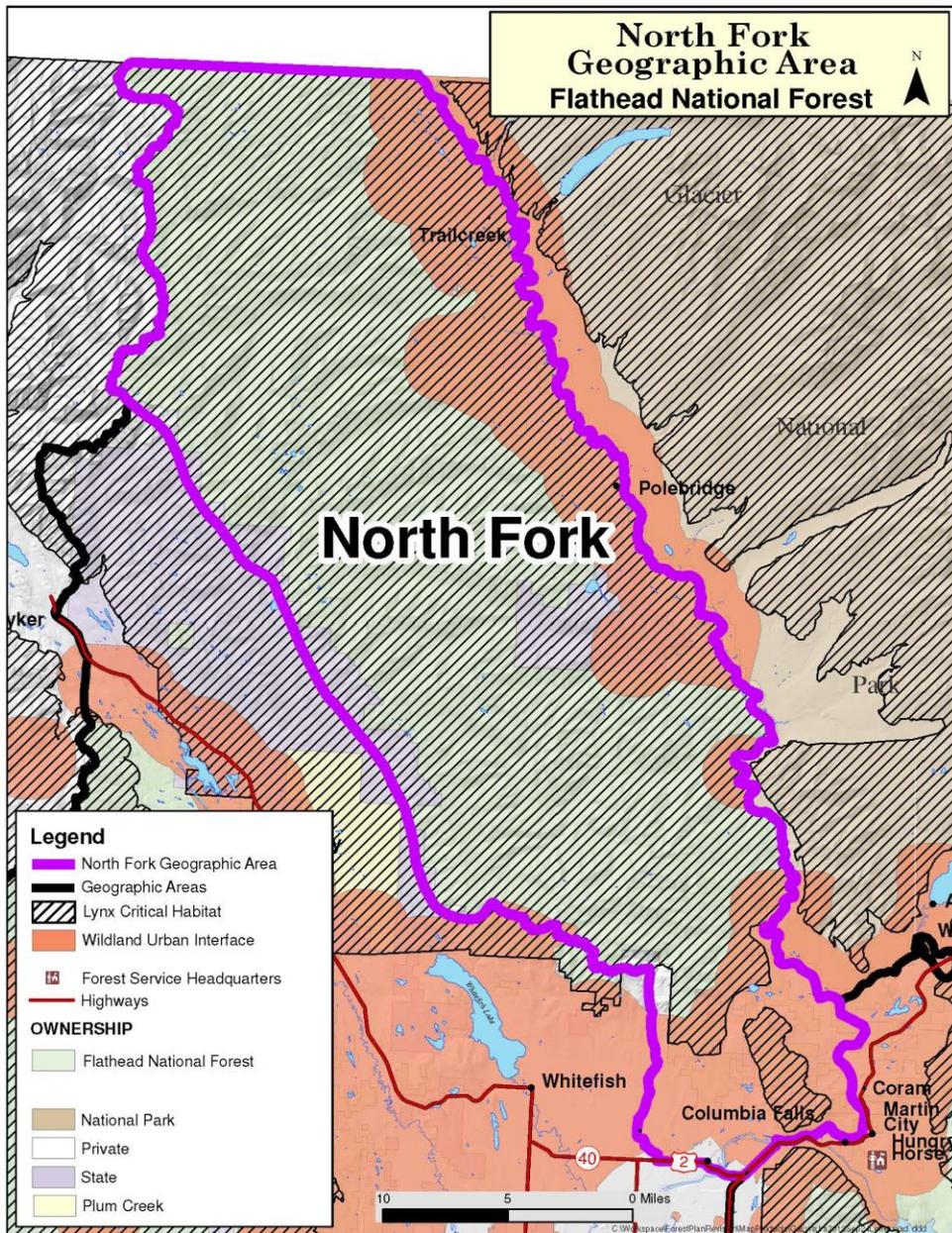


Forest Plan Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment (2007)

- Forest-wide goals, objectives and standards for management of national forests providing boreal forest Canada lynx habitat, to provide for lynx recovery.

Canada Lynx Critical Habitat (2009)

Designated in all FNF geographic areas with the exception of the Island Unit portion of the Salish Geographic Area



Geographic Areas and Decision Space *(cont.)*



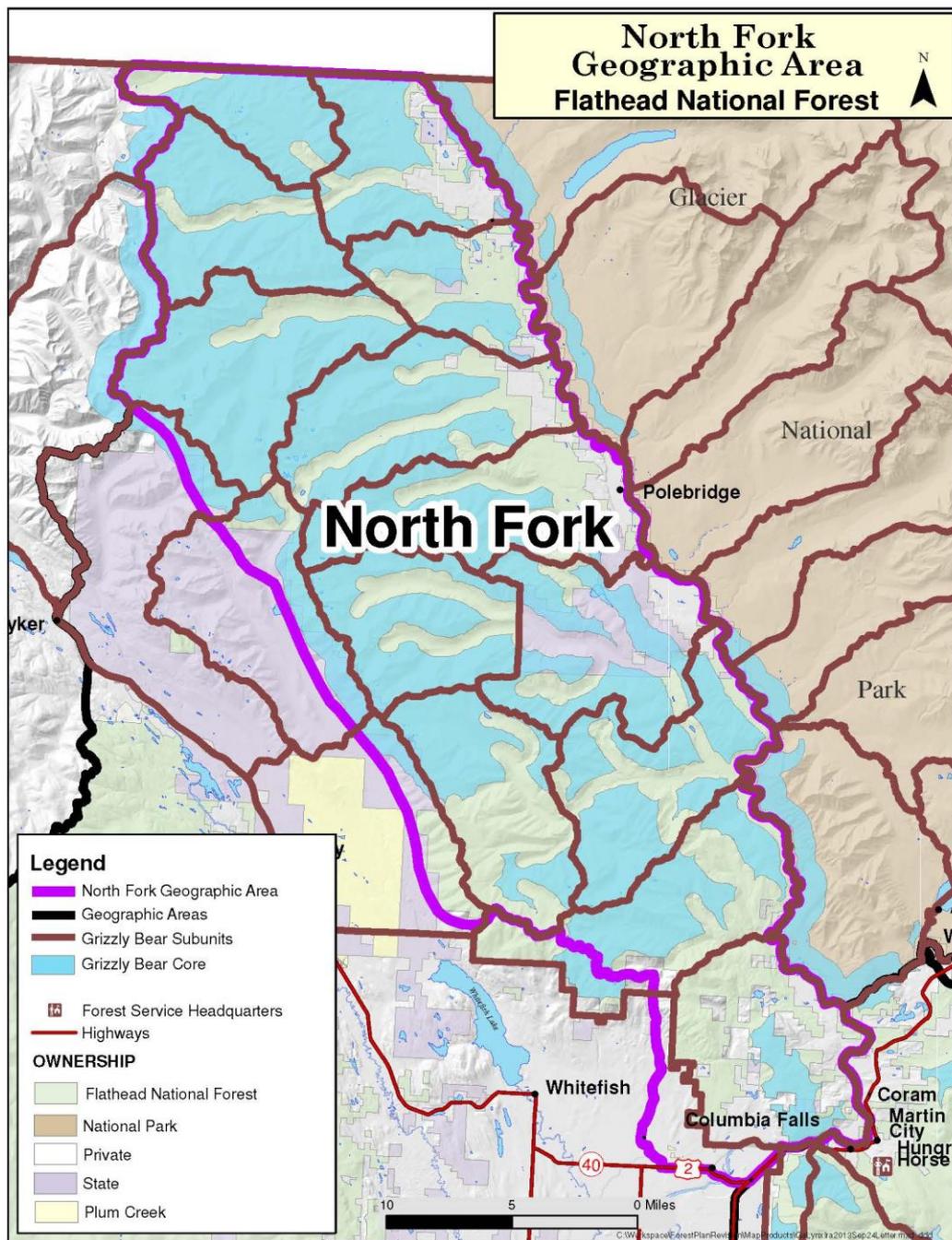
Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy (GBCS)

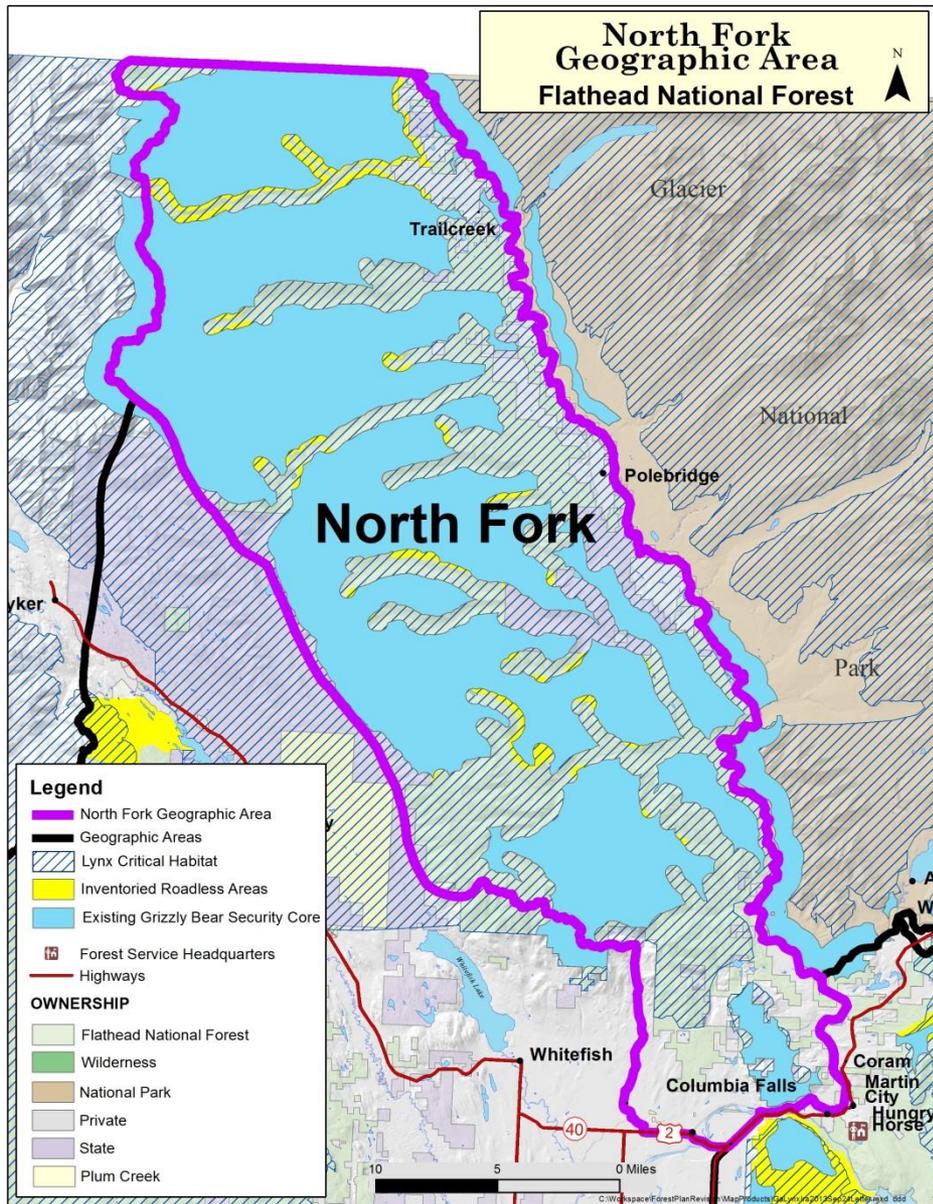
FNF lands are in the Primacy Conservation Area (PCA) and Zone 1 (an area that surrounds the PCA).

Within the PCA:

- Open motorized access density, total motorized access density, and grizzly security core maintained at 2011 baseline levels,
- Temporary increases in open road densities and temporary decreases in secure core allowed for projects based upon 5%/3%/2% in a grizzly bear subunit, calculated over a 10 year period
- The Swan valley Grizzly Bear Conservation Agreement would continue to be applied to grizzly subunits where it currently applies.

Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy





Geographic Areas and Decision Space *(con't)*



Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy (GBCS) (continued)

- The GBCS contains additional management direction for grazing, minerals, oil and gas, vegetation, and recreation.
 - Developed recreation sites would be limited to one new site in a Bear Management Unit in a 10 year period.
 - All management agencies would continue work to reduce the risk of grizzly mortality and human injury resulting from conflicts.



- **FNF Goals for Public Participation and Collaboration**

Develop a better plan through involvement with the public in a collaborative process.

Increased participation provides benefits such as improved relationships and plans that better meet diverse needs, which in turn will translate into more successful projects and activities that occur under the plan.

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How will the Forest use the input?

- **We will consider the collaborative input along with all the comments received throughout the formal public comment periods provided for under NEPA.**
- **Diverse collaborative input will reflect upon all of the necessary considerations. It must be transparent. The value of the collaborative input is that it should increase the integrity and clarity of the plan and resulting decision.**

Questions

