

Resource Commitments

This section contains effects disclosures that are required by federal law, regulation, or policy, and that generally apply to all the preceding resource area effects sections in this chapter.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE EFFECTS

Forest Plan revision and Forest Plans do not produce unavoidable adverse effects because they do not directly implement any management activities that would result in such effects. The Forest Plans do, however, establishment management emphasis and direction for implementation of activities that may occur on National Forest System Lands in the planning period. If and when those activities occur, the application of Forest-wide, MPC, and Management Area standards and guidelines (as described in Chapter III of the revised Forest Plans) would limit the extent and duration of any resulting environmental effects. However, some unavoidable effects could still occur. These potential effects are described by resource area throughout Chapter 3 of the FEIS, primarily under Environmental Consequences, Effects Common To All Alternatives.

RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM USES AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Short-term uses are those expected to occur for the planning period (10-15 years), including recreation use, timber harvest, and prescribed burning. Although these uses are not directly implemented by the Forest Plans, the potential for these uses are described in Forest Plan goals and objectives, both at the Forest-wide and Management Area levels (see Chapter III in the Forest Plans).

Long-term productivity refers to the capability of the land to provide resource outputs for a period of time beyond the planning period. Minimum management requirements, established by regulation (36 CFR 219.27), provide for maintenance of long-term productivity of the land. Minimum management requirements are contained in Forest-wide and Management Area standards and guidelines, and would be met under any alternative. They ensure that the long-term productivity of the land is not impaired by short-term uses.

Monitoring and evaluation, as described in the revised Forest Plans (Chapter IV), applies to all alternatives. A primary purpose of monitoring is to ensure that long-term productivity of the land is maintained or improved. If monitoring and evaluation show that Forest Plan standards and guidelines are inadequate to protect long-term productivity of the land, then the Plans will be adjusted (through amendment or revision) to provide for more protection or fewer impacts.

Although all alternatives are designed to maintain long-term productivity, there are differences among the alternatives in the long-term availability or condition of resources. There may also be differences among alternatives in long-term expenditures necessary to maintain or achieve desired conditions. The differences are discussed throughout the various sections of Chapter 3.

IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources are defined in Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Environmental Policy and Procedures (9/21/92).

Irreversible commitments of resources mean the consumption or destruction of nonrenewable resources, such as minerals or cultural resources, or the degradation of resources such as soil productivity, which can be renewed only over long periods of time.

Irretrievable commitments of resources are opportunities foregone; they represent tradeoffs in the use and management of Forest resources. Irretrievable commitments of resources include expenditure of funds, loss of production, or restrictions on resource use. When one alternative produces less of a natural resource (such as timber volume) or offers fewer opportunities for use (such as non-motorized recreation) than another alternative, the difference represents an irretrievable commitment of resources.

The decisions made in forest plan revision do not represent actual irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources. This is because forest planning identifies what kinds and levels of activities are appropriate in different parts of the Forest; it does not make project decisions. (For more information, see Chapter I of the Forest Plans, Decisions Made in a Forest Plan). The decision to irreversibly or irretrievably commit resources occurs at: (1) the time the Forest Service makes a project decision, such as approving a new trail or timber sale; (2) the time Congress acts on a recommendation to establish a new Wilderness or to include a stream segment in the Wild and Scenic River System; or (3) the time the Regional Forester designates a Research Natural Area.

ENERGY REQUIREMENTS AND CONSERVATION POTENTIAL

Energy is consumed in the administration of natural resources from the National Forests. The main activities that consume energy are timber harvest, restoration activities including mechanical vegetation treatments and prescribed and wildland fire use, recreation use, road construction and reconstruction, range use, and administrative activities of the Forest Service and other regulatory agencies. Energy consumption is expected to vary only slightly by alternative. Those alternatives with higher potential for restoration activity, timber harvest and/or road construction, reconstruction and obliteration (5, 1B, 2, 7, and 3) are expected to have higher levels of energy use. Alternatives that have lower potential for these activities (4, 6) are expected to have slightly lower levels of energy use.

Several opportunities exist under all alternatives to provide for energy conservation or conversion from less plentiful fuels to more plentiful fuels. For example, car-pooling and combining trips saves fuels and wear and tear on the Forest fleet. The use of electronic communication devices for sharing information rather than scheduling meetings at one location

saves energy spent on travel. Improving energy efficiency of government buildings can conserve energy. More energy-efficient equipment for all activities like timber harvesting, road construction and reconstruction or road maintenance can be required. More energy-efficient management methods can be explored and implemented as well.

PRIME FARMLAND, RANGELAND, AND FORESTLAND

No prime farmland, rangeland, or forestland has been identified in the planning area. Forest Plan revision or the Forest Plans would not directly affect such lands, although implementation of the Plans could have indirect effects. Regardless of the alternative selected for implementation, National Forest System lands would be managed with sensitivity to the values of any adjacent private or public lands.

EFFECTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Effects on the human environment are documented throughout Chapter 3 of this EIS. Further documentation can be found in the project record.

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 (59 Fed. Register 7629, 1994) directs federal agencies to identify and address, as appropriate, any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations.

Idaho is becoming racially more diverse, although the state's population remains largely white and Anglo-Saxon. In 1995, non-Hispanic whites comprised 91.4 percent of Idaho's citizens and Hispanics 6.8 percent, with African-Americans, Native Americans and others comprising the remainder. However, the Hispanic population has increased by about 50 percent from 1990 to 1996 (Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs, 1999). Canyon County, included in the SWIEG socioeconomic assessment area, includes 25 percent of the state's Hispanic population (Idaho Dept. of Commerce, 1998d). Although there are few data available, there is a sense that Idaho Hispanics use and relate to National Forests in ways similar to the State's predominantly white population (Ramirez, 1999). Consequently, it is not likely that any alternative would adversely affect Hispanic populations in ways different from other populations.

There is no information available to determine how African-American populations would be affected by any alternative. However, based on past experience within the Ecogroup, it is unlikely that African-American populations would be adversely affected by any alternative, because African-Americans have typically been involved in Forest Service activities as individuals or families, rather than as a distinct population.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Potential effects to species listed under the Endangered Species Act can be found in Chapter 3 of this EIS (Soil, Water, Riparian, and Aquatic Resources, Wildlife Resources, and Botanical Resources sections) and in the Biological Assessment that was completed for Forest Plan Revision. Management direction to protect these species, or to provide for their habitats, can be found in Chapter III of the revised Forest Plans (TEPC Species section and Management Areas).

WETLANDS AND FLOODPLAINS

There are numerous amounts of wetlands and floodplains spread throughout the planning area, with estimates of 25,000 miles of perennial and intermittent streams, their associated floodplains, and 34,000 acres of lakes, reservoirs, and wetlands. Forest Plan revision and Forest Plans do not directly implement any management activities that would result in loss of wetland or floodplains. Revised Forest-wide management direction identifies the need to restore currently degraded wetlands and floodplains, and provides a broad spectrum of standards and guidelines designed to protect soil, water, riparian, and aquatic resources. The goals and intent of Executive Orders 11988 (Floodplain Management) and 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) would be met through compliance with this direction. Documentation for this conclusion can be found in the FEIS, Chapter 3, Soil, Water, Riparian, and Aquatic Resource section and in the Forest Plans, Chapter 3, Management Direction.

CONFLICTS WITH OTHER AGENCY OR GOVERNMENT GOALS OR OBJECTIVES

Contact, review, and public involvement with other federal and state agencies indicate no major conflicts between this Forest Plan revision effort and the goals and objectives of other governmental entities.