

Appendix X Implementation Guidance

Implementation Guidance

This Appendix is provided to assist forest managers in implementing the Forest Plan. It addresses approaches necessary for adequate analysis, compliance with accepted procedures, and/or critical coordination actions. This direction also establishes criteria to be used in analysis and decision making. Topics with guidance include the following:

Wildlife Conservation Project Design

Plant Collection

Fire Management

Road/Trail and Access Management

Developed Recreation Site/Facilities Management

Livestock Grazing

Minerals and Energy

Land Ownership

Special Uses

Outfitter Guides

Wilderness Management

Wildlife Conservation Project Design: This forest plan focuses some management direction on certain species. As other species are studied and new information or understanding of those species is obtained, additional detailed species-specific implementation guidance may be added.

Canada Lynx – Map and monitor the location and intensity of snow compacting activities (snowmobiling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, dog sledding, etc.) that coincide with Lynx habitat, to facilitate future evaluation of effects on lynx.

Northern Goshawk – This species has been highlighted on the longer Wasatch-Cache list of sensitive species as one for which more specific information and guidance has been developed recently in The Northern Goshawk in Utah: Habitat Assessment and Management Recommendations (February, 1999.) An amendment to the 1985 Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan called the following information standards and guidelines when that direction was approved in March 2000.

Field Surveys

Where goshawk field surveys are required, complete surveys for territory occupancy within suitable habitat. Surveys will be completed during the nesting and/or post-fledgling period, and should be conducted at least one year prior to implementation of management actions.

When goshawk field surveys are required and when project planning permits, two consecutive years of surveys for territory occupancy prior to implementation of management actions is preferred.

Considerations for Goshawk Nest and Post Fledgling Areas

If a historic nest is not associated with an active nest area, management direction for home range habitat should be applied.

When an active nest area has been identified, identify 2 alternate nest areas and 3 replacement nest areas. The next two items provide recommended direction for implementation.

- Each nest area (active, alternate and replacement) should be approximately 30 acres (total of approximately 180 acres) in size when sufficient suitable habitat exists. If sufficient amounts of suitable habitat are not present, use existing suitable habitat that is available.
- Alternate nest areas should be identified in suitable habitat with similar vegetative structures as the active nest areas. Replacement nest areas should be identified in habitat which will develop similar vegetative structures as the active nest area at the time the active and alternate nest areas are projected to no longer provide adequate nesting habitat.

During active nesting periods in active nest areas (approximately 30 acres) restrict management activities and permitted uses if the activity or use is likely to result in nest abandonment.

Active nest area habitat characteristics should be used for designing or maintaining desired nest area habitats for each cover type in which nesting may occur.

Identify a post-fledgling area that encompasses the active, alternate and replacement nest areas and additional habitat needed to raise fledglings. A post-fledgling area should be approximately 420 acres in size (exclusive of nest area acres) when sufficient suitable habitat exists. If sufficient amounts of suitable habitat are not present, use existing suitable habitat that is available.

Forest vegetative manipulation within a post-fledgling area should be designed to maintain or improve the same habitat features as discussed for the goshawk home range (i.e. stand structure, snags, down logs, nest trees important in the life histories of the goshawk and its prey species common to the geographic location), except:

- Openings, as defined in glossary and Reynolds et al., created as a result of mechanical vegetative treatments (does not include wildland fire) should not exceed the following by cover type:
 - Ponderosa pine and mixed conifer 2 ac max.
 - Spruce/fir 1 ac max.
- Management activities should be restricted during the active nesting period. The active nesting period will normally occur between March 1st and Sept. 30th.

Where timber harvest is prescribed to achieve desired forest conditions, plan the transportation system to minimize disturbance to post-fledgling areas. For example, small, permanent skid trails should be used in lieu of roads to minimize disturbance to goshawk post-fledgling areas. Variance may occur if it is determined that a combination of new permanent or temporary roads and permanent skid trails would result in less overall disturbance of post-fledgling area habitat.

Ungulate Grazing

When it is determined through the landscape assessment process that ungulate grazing is contributing to an identified functioning-at-risk condition relative to habitat needed to support goshawk and its prey, modify grazing practices to maintain or restore the desired seed, mast, and foliage production defined in the landscape assessment process. Review success of modifications annually. If modifications are not providing for the desired progression toward production objectives defined in the landscape assessment, modify practices through the next annual operating plan. This guideline does not apply to non-forest patches.

For non-vegetation management activities

When land exchanges, recreation facility development, ski resort construction, utility corridors (etc.) are proposed that would result in loss of suitable goshawk habitat, sufficient mitigation measures should be employed to insure an offset of the loss. The Biological Evaluation process will be used to document findings, recommend mitigation measures, and evaluate consistency with the intent of the Conservation Strategy and Agreement for Management of the Northern Goshawk in Utah (1999).

Prioritizing habitat protection

For greatest reduction in risk of loss of goshawk habitats, treat as a priority for protection habitat areas of high or optimum value as defined (by Graham, et al, 1999) when they are determined to be at risk.

Plant Collection: Collecting of plants, seeds, or plant parts for any commercial purpose requires a special use permit issued by the District Ranger where the collecting activity is proposed. When evaluating applications for commercial collecting permits, considerations should be given to the impacts on all National Forest resources, including biological diversity.

Gathering of plants for Native American Indian ceremonial use or medicinal uses are provided for through existing treaties and other special considerations that guide transactions between tribes and the U.S. Government and will be coordinated through the Forest Supervisor.

Fire Management: Qualified resource advisors (as defined in Wasatch-Cache and Uinta Forest Fire Management Plan, 2002) will be used when a fire is projected to burn past the first burn period, normally on Type I, II, and III fires.

- Consult the Forest Hydrologist or their representative if a wildland fire threatens: 303D Listed Waterbodies that may be negatively impacted by fire or municipal watersheds. As of this date, the only 303D listed waterbodies or municipal watersheds that could be negatively impacted by fire are: Pineview Reservoir and watersheds along the Wasatch Front.
- Use a resource advisor in all Type I, II and III fires who knows which species of concern (flora and fauna) may be impacted by the fire. A resource advisor should also be consulted when determining the suitability of an ignition for wildland fire use. The resource advisor should be qualified to prepare notes that advise fire managers on resource values and possible mitigation measures.
- The Forest BAER coordinator should review all Type I, II and III fires for possible rehabilitation needs. If a prescribed burn exceeds the prescription, the Forest BAER coordinator should also review the burn for possible rehabilitation needs.

The following Go/No-Go criteria in making decisions to allow wildland fire use:

- Immediate threat to life, property, or resources that cannot be mitigated.
- The availability of fire management personnel (including pertinent Specialists).
- Effects on soils, heritage resources, species-at-risk, and other resources.
- Fire weather forecasts.

If Go/No-Go considerations indicate the ignition cannot be managed as wildland fire use, document which considerations are unacceptable, and implement appropriate suppression response.

Fire Suppression Rehabilitation and Emergency Fire Rehabilitation: Use certified, weed-free material (straw, waddles, hay bales, etc.) for all rehabilitation activities.

Consider aquatic rehabilitation needs to avoid adverse effects on inland native fish whenever RHCAs are significantly damaged by wildfire or a prescribed fire burning out of prescription.

Road/Trail and Access Management:

Prior to decommissioning roads, consider opportunities for potential development or use as travel routes for motorized, mechanized, and/or non-motorized uses.

Consider the following criteria when planning for an appropriate trail system:

- Historic and future uses of the route.
- Availability of alternate routes to the same destination or use periods to minimize user conflicts.
- Damage occurring to other resources such as excessive soil loss or water quality degradation.
- Conflicts with important wildlife and fish habitat especially to species at risk.

- Impacts to visual resources, compatibility with scenic integrity objectives.
- Needs and desires for public and administrative use, for continued use, and need to reduce conflicts between users (such as walking, mountain biking, snowmobiling, horse use).
- Public and administrative user safety and desired user experience (such as solitude, noise, user conflicts).
- Cost of and funding available for continued maintenance, including snow plowing for winter use.
- Ability to enforce.
- Impacts on adjacent and inholding private landowners and necessary signing, barriers, and patrols.
- Long-term resource management needs.
- Effects on linkages to other roads and trails.
- Compatibility with mapped Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS).
- Opportunities and needs for motorized and non-motorized recreation.
- Density of roads and trails, and need for connectivity.

Consider the following criteria when planning for seasonal or temporary closure of roads or trails:

- Potential for use to cause unacceptable damage or loss to soil and water resources due to weather or seasonal conditions.
- Potential for use to cause unacceptable wildlife and/or fish conflict, habitat degradation or harassment.
- Potential for use to impact species at risk and their habitat, especially during times of breeding, young rearing or other times critical to survival.
- Potential for safety hazard due to weather-related conditions.
- Whether the route could serve a seasonal, public, desired user (such as ATV, hiking or mountain biking) or administrative need.
- Whether the area accessed has a seasonal need for protection.
- Opportunity to provide a diversity of recreational experiences and/or reduce user conflicts such as ATV, hiking, horse riding or mountain biking.
- Need to protect the road/trail investment and minimize maintenance costs.
- Need to comply with Forest contracts, permits, cooperative agreements, road purchase agreements, or easement deeds requiring that road use be controlled.
- Needs for coordination of recreational hunting and fishing opportunities with state agencies.

Developed Recreation Site/Facilities Management: During watershed assessment and/or site specific planning for reconstruction, evaluate existing facilities located within riparian habitat conservation areas for meeting site-specifically developed riparian management objectives and take actions to meet objectives where practical.

Livestock Grazing: During allotment management planning develop site-specific desired future condition descriptions for vegetation composition, structure and pattern.

Minerals and Energy: Reclamation will be considered satisfactory when the disturbed areas have been reclaimed in accordance with operating plan requirements.

Safety zones will be established between seismic operations and any site occupied by other National Forest users.

Surface management for private oil and gas minerals will be negotiated with the owner and operator to be as close as possible to the standards used for federal minerals; prohibiting such development is not an alternative.

All borrow sources will have and follow a development and reclamation plan.

Land Ownership: Where possible, in areas with complex development, Forest boundary adjustments (acquisitions and/or conveyances) should use physical characteristics readily identifiable on the ground.

Land acquisitions will be guided by the following criteria:

Priority 1 Acquisitions: (not listed in any order of priority)

- Lands and associated riparian ecosystems on water frontage such as lakes and major streams.
- Important or critical habitat lands needed for the protection of species at risk. Supports objective of protection of fish and wildlife habitats.
- Lands needed for the protection of significant historical or cultural resources, when these resources are threatened or when management may be enhanced by public ownership.
- Lands that enhance recreation opportunities and protect aesthetic values.
- Lands needed for protection and management of administrative and Congressionally designated areas.
- Rights-of-way with the greatest risk of loss and need for public access.
- Lands needed to enhance or protect watershed improvements that affect the management of National Forest or Grassland riparian areas.
- Environmentally sensitive lands such as wetlands and old growth.
- Buffer lands needed for protection of lands acquired for specific purposes listed above.
- Lands needed to support a particular goal or objective.
- Land interests where development of the mineral estate or other interest would preclude management of the surface to meet forest plan goals.

Priority 2 Acquisitions: (not listed in any order of priority)

- Key tracts of an ecosystem that are not urgently needed, but will promote more effective management of the ecosystem and will meet specific needs for vegetative management, valuable watershed management, research, public recreation or other defined management objectives. Generally, will support consolidation objectives.
- Lands needed to protect resource values by eliminating or reducing fire risks, soil erosion or occupancy trespass.

- Lands needed to reduce expenses of both the Forest Service and the public in administration and utilization. Consolidation of split estates.

Priority 3 Acquisitions:

- All other lands desirable for inclusion in the National Forest System.

Federal land conveyances (disposal) by exchange or other specific authority will be guided by the following criteria: **(not listed in any order of priority)**

- Lands inside or adjacent to communities or intensively developed private land, and chiefly valuable for non-National Forest System purposes. Support community expansion.
- Parcels that will serve a greater public need in state, county, city, or other Federal agency ownership.
- Inaccessible parcels isolated from other NFS lands. Parcels intermingled with non-federal lands.
- Parcels within major blocks of private land, the use of which is substantially for non-National Forest System purpose.
- Parcels having boundaries, or portions of boundaries, with inefficient configurations (projecting necks or long, narrow strips of land, etc.) Supports more logical and efficient management.
- Non-essential administrative sites.

Ownership boundary lines should be surveyed, marked, and posted to applicable Forest Service standards according to the following priorities (not in any order):

- Boundary lines adjacent to or near proposed management activities.
- Boundary lines where encroachment activity by adjoining owners is suspected or known to exist.
- Boundary lines at high risk that are in proximity to potential or planned outside development.

Special Uses: Only consider proposals for special use authorizations that encumber National Forest System lands if:

- Use is appropriate and consistent with management direction and desired conditions;
- Permit administration can be accomplished;
- National Forest resources will not be impaired; and
- Private land is not available to accommodate the use.

Outfitter and Guides: -When selecting new or reissuing existing Outfitter and Guide permits, evaluate proposals using the following criteria:

- **Skills and Equipment** -What skills and equipment are needed by members of the public to experience the National Forest? Do the desired activities include skills that require a substantial amount of time and talent to learn? Is the necessary equipment specialized and expensive or which the general public would not usually have access to? Are unique skills of an outfitter/guide almost a prerequisite to participate in the activity?

- **Knowledge** - Does the knowledge of outfitter/guides improve the ability of the public to enjoy recreation opportunities in a manner that reduces resource damage and user conflicts?
- **Safety** - Are outfitter/guide skills needed to assure a reasonable level of safety for the public? Without outfitter/guide assistance, could members of the public seriously endanger their health or lives?
- **Education** - Will outfitter/guide experience and background provide information, interpretation, and education on Forest resources, conditions, minimum-impact techniques, and management of public lands?
- **Unique Services Provided** - Will outfitter/guide contribute to meeting special management objectives such as:
 - Providing opportunities for special populations, which include children, disabled, minorities, and the elderly, to access parts of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest in order to participate in recreation and educational activities.
 - Protecting fragile resources.
 - Assisting in reducing critical resource impacts and conflicts between users.
 - Consistent with management area direction, increasing diversity of recreation opportunities and encouraging innovation in the outfitter industry.
- **Demand** - Is there a public demand for the types of services being offered?
- **Compatibility** - Will outfitter/guide operation be compatible with existing general public and/or other outfitter and guide activity presently occurring, and /or institutional use of an area? Is proposed service both physically and socially compatible with resource capabilities?
- **Feasibility of Offering Services Elsewhere** – To what extent could the proposed service be offered on private land, or in the case of Wilderness, in areas outside designated Wilderness? Are there alternative areas off National Forest lands available to conduct these types of activities?
- **Contribution to Rural Economies** - What contribution can or does outfitter/guide service make to diversification and resiliency of rural economies?
- **Available Resources** - Are there resources available to conduct required environmental analysis, implement, administer, and monitor the permit?
- **Restrictions** – To what degree will issuance of the permit result in greater restrictions on the non-outfitted public and potentially reduce their use and enjoyment of the forest?
- **Competition** – Would the proposal unduly compete with or interfere with public use of the area?

Wilderness Management: Consider the following management actions to manage use levels and patterns: permit system for day use and/or overnight use, area closures, designated camp areas, limitations on party size, length of stay at a campsite, stock and pack animals use and tethering limits.

Evaluate and manage wilderness access portals (roads and trails) to facilitate wilderness management. Use access and design of roads, parking and trailheads to manage use levels in wilderness.

Use public education and interpretation programs to foster wilderness values. Provide accurate and timely information on wilderness and alternative backcountry areas (recreation, access, regulations, wilderness values, Leave No Trace, etc).

Discourage predator control except when necessary to protect threatened or endangered species or to prevent special and serious losses of domestic livestock. Coordinate with Wildlife Services which is the Federal Agency responsible for predator control.