CHAPTER III

RESPONSE TO ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

A major step in the development of this Plan was the identification of issues and concerns related to management of the Forest. The issues and concerns provided the foundation for development of the eight alternatives for managing the Forest

Public involvement was instrumental in identifying the major issues upon which this Plan was developed The other issues generated less public controversy and were considered to be primarily management concerns. These issues and concerns reflect the different preferences of individuals and groups, and the physical, biological, and legal limits of Forest management.

Maximizing net public benefits, while responding effectively to the public issues, is the goal of the Forest planning process. The Regional Forester selected this Forest Plan as the alternative that will best meet this goal. The net public benefit is the value to the nation of all benefits (outputs and positive effects) less all associated Forest Service costs (inputs and negative effects) The net public benefit is derived from both quantitative and qualitative criteria rather than from a single measure or index.

The first section of this chapter reviews the major issues and describes how this Forest Plan responds to them. A discussion of the Plan's response to the other issues and management concerns is presented in the second section. These sections deal only with how this Forest Plan responds to the issues. More detailed descriptions and complete discussions of the issues and related facets addressed in this chapter are presented in Chapter I and Appendix A of the accompanying EIS.

MAJOR ISSUES

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

HOW SHOULD THE FOREST MANAGE ITS TIMBER RESOURCES? HOW MUCH TIMBER VOLUME CAN BE PRODUCED WITHOUT UNACCEPTABLE DECREASES IN OTHER RESOURCE USES AND OBJECTIVES? SHOULD UTILIZATION STANDARDS DEFINING THE HARVEST SIZE OF MERCHANTABLE TIMBER BE CHANGED? WHAT HARVESTING METHODS SHOULD BE USED? HOW SHOULD THE FOREST'S LODGEPOLE PINE STANDS, INFESTED BY MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE, BE MANAGED?

This Plan will harvest approximately 24.7 million cubic feet (135.9 million board feet) of green timber annually over the first two decades. This harvest level is five percent less than the average 1979 Timber Resource Management Plan (TM Plan) level. Harvest levels in the third through fifth decades will be about seven percent less than the 1979 TM Plan. These volumes will be harvested from 704,952 acres of managed timber lands.

In accordance with this Plan, approximately 190,000 acres of timber/forage land will be allocated to uneven-aged management. An additional 75,000 acres will be managed under a harvest scenario where the large, mature/overmature trees are commercially thinned. The thinned stands will then grow for between 40 to 60 years when they will be clearcut harvested and regenerated. When this harvest regime is combined with uneven-aged management, the amount of clearcutting proposed in the draft

Forest Plan is reduced by about 70 percent. The actual acre figures for both harvest regimes will be determined on-the-ground for each specific site.

This Plan will harvest overmature beetle-infested lodgepole pine stands over a two-decade conversion period. This could stimulate new markets for both dead and live overmature lodgepole pine. Management of lodgepole pine will be designed to prevent future major losses from insect infestations.

The Plan will provide the best balance between timber management objectives and other Forest resource objectives while maintaining the harvest volumes needed for local economic stability.

LAKEVIEW FEDERAL SUSTAINED YIELD UNIT

HOW SHOULD THE LAKEVIEW FEDERAL SUSTAINED YIELD UNIT BE MANAGED IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN LOCAL COMMUNITY STABILITY?

The Plan will harvest about 10.8 million cubic feet (59.6 million board feet) annually of green timber over the first two decades. This harvest level is seven percent less than the planned average 1979 Timber Resource Plan (TM Plan) harvest level. Most of this reduction is in the lodgepole pine timber component. The reduction in ponderosa pine and pine-associated harvest volumes is less than two percent and within the range needed to retain local economic stability.

ROADLESS AREA MANAGEMENT

HOW SHOULD ROADLESS AREAS BE MANAGED? WHAT IS AN ACCEPTABLE BALANCE OF USES FOR THESE AREAS?

The Plan will manage the Forest's nine roadless areas to address the demand for a variety of goods and services. The Buck Creek, Brattain Butte, Drake-McDowell, and a portion of the Antler Roadless Areas (a total of about 23,510 acres) will be allocated and managed to provide semiprimitive nonmotorized recreation (SPNM) opportunities. An additional 4,800 acres of the Mt. Bidwell and 15,600 acres of the Crane Mountain Roadless Areas will be managed for semiprimitive motorized recreation (SPM) use. No timber harvest will occur in either SPNM or SPM areas. These allocations will also provide wildlife habitat for old-growth dependent and other species.

Approximately 1,700 acres of the Coleman Rim and Deadhorse Rim Roadless Areas will remain undeveloped. No timber harvesting will occur within these areas, which will be allocated for wildlife habitat and SPM recreation opportunities.

Within the Deadhorse Rim Roadless Area, 841 acres will be recommended for designation as a research natural area (RNA). An additional 655 acres will be set aside for consideration as a future RNA. Other areas of the same size will be studied and compared for viability as a substitute for this acreage. If no such area is found within three years, the set-aside acres will be re-evaluated as a RNA. No timber management or commercial livestock grazing will be planned within this area

Of the roadless area acreage not allocated to SPNM or SPM, about 5,300 acres will be allocated to provide habitat for old-growth dependent species All remaining roadless area acreage will be scheduled for other resource objectives, such as timber management, forage production, dispersed or developed recreation, streamside management/riparian management (SMU/RIP), scenic quality, and/or big game management.

RANGE MANAGEMENT

WHAT SHOULD THE FOREST DO TO HELP MAINTAIN THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF LOCAL RANCHING OPERATIONS? HOW MUCH GRAZING SHOULD BE OFFERED YEARLY ON THE FOREST? WHAT RANGE MANAGEMENT INTENSITIES SHOULD BE APPLIED TO CONTROL LIVESTOCK USE?

Under this Plan, an annual average of 71,000 AUM's will be permitted. Although additional capacity is available, there will be a need for some adjustments to improve problems along riparian areas. All needed range improvements and the development of adequate allotment management plans should be completed within the first decade. As a result, livestock will be able to utilize more uniformly almost all of the suitable forage areas without unacceptable damage to other resources such as soil, water, or wildlife habitat. Well-planned and properly coordinated livestock management will also allow proper utilization of the available forage with a minimum of conflicts with other resources.

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES HABITAT MANAGEMENT

AT WHAT LEVELS SHOULD THE FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITATS BE MANAGED? HOW CAN THE FOREST BEST MEET THE SUBSISTENCE NEEDS OF THE KLAMATH INDIAN TRIBE?

Forest managers wish to ensure that: 1) the Forest meets the intent of legislation affecting wildlife, such as the Threatened and Endangered Species Act and the National Forest Management Act; and 2) the different public interests regarding wildlife can be addressed without excessive reductions of other resource outputs.

This Plan will allow the Forest to provide sufficient habitat to ensure: 1) recovery of federally-listed threatened and endangered species; 2) viable or increasing populations of federal candidate species and Regional Forester's sensitive species; 3) the continued existence of viable populations of all other native vertebrate species on the Forest; and 4) adequate provision for the fish/wildlife subsistence needs of the Klamath Tribe.

The Forest has two threatened and/or endangered species, the peregrine falcon (presently in the first year of reintroduction) and the bald eagle. This Plan calls for the endangered peregrine falcon to be fully reintroduced to the Forest by 1996 through a multi-agency effort as outlined in the Peregrine Recovery Plan (Pacific Population). Three to four pairs (similar to historical levels) will be established on or adjacent to the Forest. Twenty occupied or potential bald eagle (a threatened species) nest or roost sites will be allocated as bald eagle management areas. Bald eagle breeding populations will be expected to increase from 6 to 12 pairs over time. These sites cover 27,120 acres, 6,820 acres of which are timber lands.

Ten species/groups present on the Forest have been identified as representative wildlife management indicator species. Populations of these species will be monitored to assess the effects of resource management activities on different habitats and their associated populations.

Table 10. Fremont National Forest Management Indicator Species/Groups

INDICATOR SPECIES	REPRESENTATIVE OF:
Mule Deer	Hunted species
Bald Eagle	Threatened species
Trout Family	Riparian/stream ecosystems
Three-toed Woodpecker	Overmature/mature lodgepole pine
Red-naped Sapsucker(1)	Aspen and deciduous riparian ecosystems
Primary Excavators (all cavity nesters)	Dead trees
Goshawk	Overmature/mature ponderosa pine; mixed conifers
Peregrine Falcon	Endangered species
Pine Marten	High-elevation forests, both lodgepole and mixed conifers
Pileated Woodpecker	Overmature/mature mixed conifer forests

(1) The American Ornithological Union changed the name of the yellow-bellied sapsucker to red-naped sapsucker

Deer and trout habitats will be managed within Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODF&W) population objectives (including numbers of surplus animals) under this Plan. These objectives will be achieved through habitat improvement, mitigation measures, and land allocations. In meeting the management objectives of ODF&W, the Forest will also meet the subsistence needs of the Klamath Tribe for the next 10 to 15 years.

This Plan will provide for old-growth dependent species by providing habitat to carry minimum viable populations of those species In addition, on 60 percent of the Forest, old-growth habitat will be increased by 10 percent. This increase will come from additional old-growth units and increases in the size of some MR units The increase in habitat will allow for old-growth dependent species populations that are slightly larger than minimum viable populations. Site occupancy rates are expected to be around 60 percent. MR's for old-growth dependent species are displayed in Chapter IV of this Plan.

In addition to allocated old-growth habitat, about 21,100 acres of lodgepole pine, 4,700 acres of ponderosa pine, and 19,800 acres of pine-associated old growth present in roadless areas, wilderness, or similar areas will provide suitable old-growth habitat throughout the life of this Plan.

A total of 9,000 acres of pure aspen stands will be allocated to wildlife habitat and visual diversity. The 5,000 acres of mixed aspen/conifer stands (including those in Management Area 5) will be managed to provide timber production, wildlife habitat, and visual diversity. The distribution of these stands will remain the same, and habitat quality could increase over time. This management will provide for present or somewhat higher populations of dependent species.

Management Areas 2, 3, 7, 14, and 15 will be managed to provide habitat for 100 percent of the potential population of cavity-dependent species Management Areas 4, 6, 12, and 13 will be managed to provide habitat for cavity-dependent species at a level dictated by safety concerns. Management Areas 1 and 5 will provide habitat to carry cavity-dependent species at 40 percent of the potential population. Cavity-dependent species habitats in Management Areas 8, 9, 10, 11, and 16 will occur at natural levels.

Other wildlife species which breed in or migrate through the Fremont National Forest generate public interest for viewing or management These include: introduced Rio Grande turkeys, diurnal and nocturnal raptors, waterfowl, and pronghorn antelope. Minor land allocations (about 200 acres), mitigation measures, or standards and guidelines will be used to meet the needs of these animals. Populations of most of these species on the Forest are expected to remain at current levels or decline slightly.

The bighorn sheep, river otter, and shortnosed sucker will be reintroduced to the Forest in cooperation with the ODF&W. Species reintroductions will increase the Forest's animal diversity, as well as viewing, hunting, and trapping opportunities.

KLAMATH TRIBE

HOW SHOULD THE FOREST BE MANAGED TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THE KLAMATH TRIBE REGARDING ITS TREATY RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS USES?

This Plan will address Klamath Tribe concerns regarding fish and wildlife through the measures discussed under the Fisheries and Wildlife issue. The Forest assumes that achievement of the ODF&W population objectives for mule deer and trout will also meet the subsistence needs of the Klamath Tribe for these animals

Per Public Law 89-665 (Historic Preservation Act of 1966), and Executive Order 11593 the Forest Service is required to manage, in a spirit of stewardship, significant cultural resources The American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 states that the Forest Service shall allow American Indians to practice their traditional Indian Religion on Forest Service managed lands without federal interference. In cooperation with the Klamath Tribe, sites within former Reservation lands on the Bly and Silver Lake Ranger Districts that provide Tribal members opportunities to meet tribal needs will be protected as they are identified.

The Plan calls for an ongoing program to inventory and evaluate cultural resource sites on Forest Service managed lands. Priority will be given to conducting inventories and evaluations for those project areas where proposed ground-disturbing activities would have the greatest potential to adversely affect cultural resource sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Ongoing protection, maintenance, and interpretation needs of eligible resources will be based on evaluation results

Consultations with the Klamath Tribe will be conducted according to the guidelines set forth in ORS 97.740-97.960 (Protection of Indian Graves), American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978), and Archaeological Resources Protection Act (1979)

OTHER ISSUES/MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

RECREATION MANAGEMENT

WHAT RANGE OF RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO FOREST VISITORS? WHAT LANDS SHOULD BE MANAGED TO MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE SCENIC RECREATION? TO WHAT DEGREE SHOULD TRAILS BE DEVELOPED AND/OR IMPROVED? HOW MANY AND WHAT TYPE OF RECREATION SITES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED, AND TO WHAT LEVEL SHOULD THEY BE DEVELOPED? HOW SHOULD POTENTIAL CONFLICTS AMONG DIFFERENT RECREATION USES BE MANAGED?

This Plan will provide 23,510 acres of unroaded, semiprimitive nonmotorized recreation settings, 35,616 acres of semiprimitive motorized recreation settings, and 235 miles of scenic travel corridors. The 22,823-acre Gearhart Mountain Wilderness will continue to provide wilderness recreation opportunities.

Several developed recreation sites will be refurbished and facilities will be provided to accommodate groups and disabled users. The highest priority will be given to reconstructing the East Bay Campground along Thompson Reservoir.

Trail systems which currently provide access for recreational enjoyment in undeveloped areas allocated to multiple use management will occasionally be disrupted or replaced by roads as the surrounding area becomes available for timber harvest. The completion of the National Recreation Trail (NRT) system will offset these changes by maintaining a range of environmental settings along the trail for hikers and equestrian users to experience.

ROAD MANAGEMENT

HOW DENSE A ROAD NETWORK SHOULD BE MAINTAINED ON THE FOREST? HOW SHOULD ROAD STANDARDS BE MANAGED?

Under this Plan, an arterial/collector network of approximately 1,000 miles will provide the basic access to the Forest. These arterial and collector roads will be managed at a higher standard than other roads within the Forest transportation system, in order to serve multiple resource needs and travel efficiency. The arterial/collector network will be maintained for passenger cars and will provide access to within three miles of any location on the Forest (other than allocated wilderness or semiprimitive nonmotorized areas). The remainder of the Forest transportation system will be managed for high-clearance vehicles, closed, or obliterated, depending on the resource objectives in specific locations.

Road densities within allocated semiprimitive motorized areas will be limited to a maximum of 0.5 miles of road per square mile of land. Road densities in roaded-natural appearing and roaded modified settings will be 1.5 and 2.5 miles per square mile respectively.

Roads will be constructed, reconstructed, maintained, and managed to meet identified land and resource management objectives. Construction and maintenance standards will be the minimum needed to meet the objectives, in order to reduce cost and environmental impact. If necessary, sale activity roads will be closed or obliterated when no longer needed for timber sale management.

An ongoing monitoring program will be undertaken to insure that road management objectives are consistent with resource objectives and are followed.

WATER QUANTITY AND QUALITY

HOW SHOULD WATERSHEDS BE MANAGED TO MAINTAIN OR IMPROVE WATER QUALITY? WHAT STEPS SHOULD THE FOREST TAKE TO ENSURE THAT ITS USE OF WATER DOES NOT INFRINGE UPON THE RIGHTS OF DOWNSTREAM USERS?

A few groups and individuals have stated concerns regarding Forest management of water sources, primarily in connection with fisheries and agriculture. The Klamath Tribe, which has retained fishing rights on that part of the Forest making up former Klamath Reservation lands, views the establishment of minimum streamflows and the retention of good stream water quality as quite important. Some agricultural water users downstream from the Forest feel that the cumulative effects of Forest activities may have an effect on the availability of water for agricultural purposes. The Lakeview Water Users Association and others have occasionally voiced concern over the Forest's use of reserved water rights.

Implementing this Plan will result in general long-term improvement of water quality. Forested SMU/RIP zones on pine and pine-associated stands will be managed through low intensity uneven-aged systems, while lodgepole pine will be managed on a 120-year extended rotations. Harvesting will normally be by single-tree or group-selection marking with emphasis on providing optimum conditions for dependent resources, particularly water quality and fish habitat.

Both the Clean Water Act and direction from the Environmental Protection Agency provide for development of control programs based on preventative land management prescriptions (Best Management Practices - Appendix H of the EIS). These practices will be implemented for all activities to ensure state and federal water quality standards are met and to work toward the overall goal of water quality improvement. In addition, the Forest will cooperate in the development of a State Nonpoint Source Assessment Report and a State Management Plan, as required by the Water Quality Act of 1987.

The Plan will improve riparian habitat quality in all major riparian systems Improvement in quality should approach 15 percent in twenty years and be very evident along large streams Habitat improvements, better livestock management, allocations of riparian areas to fish/wildlife resources, and implementation of riparian standards and guidelines will all contribute to improved quality. Nonforested riparian zones will be managed to increase the presence of late seral or climax riparian community types (ecologic determination, Kovalchik 1986). This may require fencing in some locations, very intensive livestock management in others, and some structural improvements in a few.

Monthly instream flow recommendations for 15 of the Forest's perennial streams will be implemented under this Plan. Achieving these monthly flows will maintain or improve trout habitat and populations.

All watersheds on the Forest will be managed within the guidelines for Watershed Impact Areas, as established by the standards and guidelines (Chapter IV). Any private lands within unstable watersheds will be included in the calculations of these impacts.

ENERGY AND MINERALS RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING ALL MINERAL RESOURCES AND MOST ENERGY RESOURCES UNDERLYING NATIONAL FORESTS. RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING THE SURFACE RESOURCES LIES WITH THE FOREST SERVICE. HOW SHOULD THE FREMONT NATIONAL FOREST MANAGE LANDS AND RESOURCES AFFECTED BY MINERAL-RELATED ACTIVITIES?

The Forest will respond positively to most mineral oriented proposals subject to environmental considerations based on NEPA requirements and as agreed upon in Plans of Operation.

This Plan calls for consideration of mineral withdrawal recommendations when necessary to preserve the integrity of Research Natural Areas (RNA's); the Dog Lake, Slide Mountain and Auger Reserve Special Management areas, and silvicultural/genetic plantations. Recommendations for withdrawal from mineral entry will not be proposed in any of the roadless areas allocated to semiprimitive nonmotorized recreation management. However, "No Surface Occupancy" stipulations will be recommended for any mineral leases issued for special management areas and parts or all of the Crane Mountain, Drake-McDowell, Mt. Bidwell, Antler and Buck Creek Roadless Areas and undisturbed parts of the Brattain Butte Roadless Area.

Existing primitive road access to current mining claims in the Brattain Butte and Crane Mountain area (allocated to semiprimitive nonmotorized management under the Plan) will be permitted. New roads proposed under Plans of Operations will not be permitted if alternate means of access (such as, foot or horseback travel) to new claims and existing unroaded claims are reasonable and prudent.

INTERMINGLED OWNERSHIP AND LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENT

WHAT SHOULD THE FREMONT NATIONAL FOREST DO TO MINIMIZE MANAGEMENT IMPACTS CAUSED BY THE EXISTING INTERMINGLED OWNERSHIP PATTERN?

The Forest's Landownership Classification plan will be updated to reflect the Plan's management objectives and emphasis. The Landownership Classification plan will provide detailed analysis on acquisition and disposal targets under the Plan.

Retention and acquisition of lands in or adjacent to allocated semiprimitive nonmotorized areas will receive high priority, as will purchase of the remaining small inholdings in the Dog Lake Special Management Area. National Forest System lands important for threatened and endangered species will be retained. Private inholdings within or adjacent to these areas will receive high priority for acquisition. Retention and acquisition of Class I and II stream watersheds will also be part of landownership adjustment objectives. Acquisition/retention of these watersheds should protect soil, water, and fisheries, as well as winter range for mule deer.

Most landownership adjustment activity, although of lower priority, will occur on lands allocated to timber/forage management emphasis. Administrative cost reduction, and timber and range land productivity will be the primary acquisition emphasis for these lands. Isolated parcels of National Forest System land without unique resource values will be earmarked for disposal.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

HOW SHOULD FIRE BE MANAGED TO MAXIMIZE EFFICIENCY, MEET RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES, AND MINIMIZE IMPACTS TO AIR QUALITY?

This Plan calls for implementing wildfire suppression tactics based on a policy of appropriate suppression response. Managers will have the option to confine, contain, or control a wildfire, based on professional judgment and assessment of contributing factors such as expected weather, fire danger, and value of the resources threatened. Suppression costs will be reduced by eliminating the demand to take aggressive action on all fire reports and increasing flexibility to respond to specific situations with the appropriate level of effort.

Past fire suppression practices on the Forest have promoted changes in plant communities and have created fuel buildups that increase resource losses associated with catastrophic wildfires.

Under this Plan, a new residue management program will be implemented. The program will shift the treatment emphasis from areas of low fire occurrence and resource damage to areas of high fire occurrence and resource damage, while continuing to meet resource needs and objectives. This program will replace the more costly machine piling and burning traditionally used with less costly prescribed underburning methods.

Implementing this Plan will likely cause a short-term (first decade) increase in Total Suspended Particulates (TSP). However, by the end of the second decade total TSP will decrease below present levels. Over the long term (150 years) TSP levels are expected to decrease by 33 percent from today's levels.