Chapter

1

MEDICINE BOW NATIONAL FOREST

Revised Land and Resource Management Plan

Forestwide Direction

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of this document provide overall direction for managing the Medicine Bow National Forest. This forestwide direction combines regional goals (which apply to all National Forests in the Rocky Mountain Region of the Forest Service) with goals, objectives, strategies, standards, and guidelines specific to the Medicine Bow National Forest. Additional direction can be found in Appendices A, B, and C which reference national goals, policies, statutes, regulations, and agreements.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goals are broad statements, which describe overall conditions the Forest will strive to achieve. They are generally timeless and difficult to measure. Goals describe the ends to be achieved rather than the means of doing so.

Objectives are measurable steps to accomplish goals. Objectives are generally achieved by implementing projects or activities. Objectives are not targets. Targets depend on budgets, which may or may not reflect forest plan emphasis.

Strategies are recommended courses of action that lack the specificity of objectives, but contribute toward reaching desired conditions or goals. They provide general program guidance.

Also contributing to forestwide direction are the regional goals for the Rocky Mountain Region. These goals, described in detail in the *1992 Rocky Mountain Regional Guide*, are listed below. Although the Regional Guide was withdrawn effective February 1, 2002 (Federal Register Vol. 67, No. 25, February 6, 2002), the goals remain appropriate and valid.

1. Protect the basic soil, air and water resources.
2. Provide for multiple uses and sustainability of National Forests and Grasslands in an environmentally acceptable manner.
3. Provide for the variety of life through management of ecosystems.
4. Provide for scenic quality and a range of recreation opportunities, which respond to the needs of National Forest and National Grassland customers and local communities.
5. Emphasize cooperation with individuals, organizations, and other agencies in coordination of planning and project implementation.

6. Promote rural development opportunities.
7. In cooperation with other landowners, strive for improved land ownership and access patterns to the mutual benefit of both the public and private landowners.
8. Improve fiscal efficiency for all programs and projects.

The goals, objectives, and strategies presented here are tiered to the USDA Forest Service Government Performance and Results Act Strategic Plan, 2000 Revision. This strategic plan lists the goals, objectives, and strategies that reflect the Forest Service's commitment to a sustainable natural resource base for the American people. All goals and objectives fall under the overall mission of the Forest Service, which is to sustain the health, productivity, and diversity of the land to meet the needs of present and future generations. "Caring for the land and serving the people" expresses the spirit of this mission. Implicit in this statement is the agency's collaboration with people as partners in caring for the Nation's forests.

The Forest Service mission and strategic goals and objectives are derived from the laws defining and regulating the agency's activities. Goals and objectives describe tangible progress toward achieving the agency's mission through implementing land and resource management plans. These plans guide on-the-ground natural resource management to ensure sustainable ecosystems and to provide multiple benefits.

Forest Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal 1 – Ensure Sustainable Ecosystems

Promote ecosystem health and conservation using a collaborative approach to sustain the Nation's forests, grasslands, and watersheds.

Subgoal 1.a: Improve and protect watershed conditions to provide the water quality and quantity and soil productivity necessary to support ecological functions and intended beneficial water uses. (USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2000 Revision Objective 1.a)

Objectives

1. Over the life of the plan, improve watershed condition in 20% of 5th-level Hydrologic Unit Code watersheds.
2. Over the life of the plan, maintain or improve water quality by achieving an 80% reduction in the miles of State of Wyoming designated streams not fully supporting designated beneficial uses and by maintaining existing fully supporting designated beneficial uses in all streams, lakes, reservoirs and open water bodies.

3. Over the life of the plan, maintain or improve condition of riparian or wetland habitat on the Forest. Ensure at least 80% of riparian and wetland areas will meet or move toward proper functioning condition.
4. Within 15 years, identify and then maintain, and/or improve stream flows for at least 10% of stream segments having instream flow concerns.

Strategies

a. Identify priority watersheds for improvement in water quality and watershed condition and designate watersheds for special protection of human health, public use and aquatic ecosystem values. Where appropriate, prioritize watersheds for treatment in collaboration with federal, state, and local government agencies and private landowners.
b. Identify water-use facilities that create water quality and quantity conditions incompatible with desired conditions for aquatic and stream-based resources. Collaborate with state and local governments and other interested parties and consider state law when determining ways to rectify these incompatibilities.
c. Participate in the Wyoming Best Management Practices (BMP) audit program.

Subgoal 1.b: Provide ecological conditions to sustain viable populations of native and desired non-native species. (USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2000 Revision Objective 1.b)

Objectives

1. Over the life of the plan, move terrestrial, aquatic, and riparian area composition, structure, patterns, and processes toward conditions typical of those created by natural processes.
2. Within 15 years, assess ecological conditions and current uses for at least 30% of 5th level watersheds and identify opportunities for restoration, habitat enhancement and commodity production.
3. Over the life of the plan, identify habitat improvement needs (such as fish migration barriers) in at least 30% of 5th-level watersheds. Implement improvement projects when necessary.
4. Within 3 years, identify and map old growth forestwide to be used in project planning to ensure that desired old growth amounts and distribution are maintained as defined in Chapter 1-Standards and Guidelines.

5. Within 15 years, demonstrate stable or positive trends in habitat availability, habitat quality, population distribution throughout a species range within the planning area, and other factors affecting ESA listed species, regional forester sensitive species, rare plant communities, and species of local concern and maintain or improve habitat for Management Indicator Species (MIS) across the forest in the long-term. The MIS are: northern goshawk, American marten, snowshoe hare, golden-crowned kinglet, three-toed woodpecker, common trout (brook, brown, and rainbow), Lincoln's sparrow, and Wilson's warbler.

Strategies

a. Maintain or restore terrestrial, aquatic, and riparian communities, which have been reduced in quality and quantity. Examples of such communities include ponderosa pine, aspen, willow, sagebrush and meadows.

b. Restore or maintain fire-adapted ecosystems consistent with land uses, historic fire regimes, and other plan related goals and objectives.

c. Manage grass, forbs, and shrub communities to provide for sustainable levels of grazing and browsing use by big game and domestic livestock.

d. Maintain and manage habitat to retain connectivity typical of that created by natural processes unless detrimental to threatened, endangered, proposed or sensitive species.

e. Implement management practices such as prescribed burning, timber harvest, thinning, and livestock grazing that mimic natural disturbances to move landscapes toward desired vegetation composition and structure.

f. Manage old growth forests according to the pre-fire suppression old growth conditions characteristic of the forest type, taking into account the contribution of the stand to landscape fire adaptation and watershed health and retaining the large trees contributing to the old growth structure.

g. Analyze project-level contributions to desired future conditions at the geographic area scale.

h. The Forest will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in accordance with section 7 of the ESA as amended 16 USC 1531 for all Forest Service activities or actions which "may affect" a listed species.

i. Cooperate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in development and implementation of conservation and recovery strategies and plans for plant and animal species listed as threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate under the Endangered Species Act.

j. Conduct habitat management activities and modify use in those habitats to maintain or improve conditions that support threatened or endangered species, sensitive species, and species of local concern.

k. Coordinate with the Wyoming Game and Fish to prevent introductions of fish and other wildlife species where there is potential for adverse impacts on threatened, endangered species, and sensitive species, or species of local concern.

l. For sensitive species and species of local concern whose habitat occurs exclusively on the Medicine Bow National Forest, develop conservation assessments and implement conservation strategies. For sensitive species and species of local concern with habitat on several Region 2 forests, participate in multi-forest development of assessments and strategies.

m. For Colorado River cutthroat trout:
   - Link subpopulations to create metapopulations.
   - Conduct habitat survey and assessment of known and potential Colorado River cutthroat streams.
   - In cooperation with the State of Wyoming, identify potential impacts of fishing and coordinate management through road, trail, and sign placement.

n. Maintain the ecological values of unusual plant communities (like alpine tundra), special features (like talus, coves, cliffs, and wetlands) and sites of high biological diversity.

o. Coordinate with local road management agencies during construction, reconstruction and recurring maintenance to minimize barriers to animal movement.

p. Maintain or improve security areas through vegetation management design and by decommissioning roads identified in project level analyses.

q. Map the location and intensity of snow compaction in lynx habitat to serve as a baseline for future evaluation of effects on lynx.

Subgoal 1.c: When appropriate or where necessary to meet resource management objectives, increase the amount of forests and rangelands restored to or maintained in a healthy condition with reduced risk and damage from fires, insects and diseases, and invasive species. (USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2000 Revision Objective 1.c)

Objectives

1. Within 2 years, complete Forestwide Fire Management Plan including Wilderness areas.
2. Within 15 years, implement vegetation management practices to reduce the threat of wildfire damage to communities and to reduce fuel loadings in the interface next to homes, cabins and other structures.

3. Within 10 years, implement vegetation management activities in areas most susceptible to losses from insects and disease as directed in management area and geographic area direction.
4. Within 10 years, minimize or reduce the spread of noxious weeds and non-native invasive species and implement measures that minimize new introductions.

Strategies

a. Meet with cooperators annually and continue to strengthen interagency relationships to increase wildland fire protection capabilities to provide for firefighter and public safety.

b. Participate in the Firewise community program.

c. Implement fuel reduction and treatment activities beginning with fire regimes I, II and III, and condition classes 2 and 3.

d. Reduce activity fuels resulting from all projects/activities to acceptable levels in a cost effective manner, in consideration of wildlife and soil direction for retention of downed wood.

e. Use appropriate management response (suppression or fire use) on all wildfires according to the Forest Fire Management Plan. The Fire Management Plan map illustrates how areas are allocated to each fire management category.

f. Limit mortality from insect and disease outbreaks in management areas where primary emphasis is timber production or developed recreation.

g. Plan management activities by considering the potential for insect and disease outbreaks. Design management activities to meet or enhance management area objectives.

h. Manage vegetation in high-use areas to provide for public safety, to improve forest health and to maintain or improve the desired recreation setting.

i. Implement the Forest noxious weed control and implementation plan addressing awareness, prevention, inventory, planning, treatment, monitoring, reporting and management objectives. Cooperate with appropriate public agencies and adjacent landowners.

j. Require forest users to use certified weed-free hay and forage products in order to help control further expansion of invasive and non-native species.

Goal 2 - Multiple Benefits to People

Provide a variety of uses, values, products, and services for present and future generations by managing within the capability of sustainable ecosystems.

Subgoal 2.a: Improve the capability of the Nation's forests and rangelands to provide diverse, high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities. (USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2000 Revision Objective 2.a)

Objectives

1. Over the life of the plan, rehabilitate 20% of dispersed recreation sites to meet resource standards.
2. Within 5 years, update recreation site plans, including rehabilitation and re-vegetation strategies.
3. Annually maintain or reconstruct up to 20% of National Forest trails to meet resource standards.
4. Over the life of the plan, rehabilitate 20% of existing and/or construct new trailheads and associated facilities to meet agency standards and user demand as permitted by plan direction.

Strategies

a. Provide winter and summer nonmotorized and motorized opportunities for a wide variety of uses and experiences consistent with other resource objectives.

b. Ensure that all applicable recreation facilities are available to people with disabilities.

c. Ensure that wastes generated on National Forest System Lands are disposed of according to agency standards.

d. Where off-road and off-trail resource damage is taking place, restore and protect these areas.

e. Provide a range of universally accessible opportunities, within the limits of the site characteristics, at all new or reconstructed developed recreation sites.

f. Integrate trail systems with those of other government entities and partners.

g. Conduct management activities to comply with the requirements of the adopted ROS class.

Subgoal 2.b: Improve the capability of wilderness and protected areas to sustain a desired range of benefits and values. (USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2000 Revision Objective 2.b)

Objectives

1. Over the life of the plan, meet forest plan desired conditions for areas recommended for wilderness.
2. Over the life of the plan, develop monitoring plans for all Wilderness Areas, and identify indicators and standards for those elements critical to ecological integrity.
3. Within 5 years, rehabilitate and re-vegetate campsites where soils are detrimentally impacted.
4. Within 5 years, develop and implement a heritage inventory strategy and implementation schedule to survey and evaluate sites, in support of management actions and activities as agreed upon with the State Historic Protected Areas Preservation Offices (SHPO) to include compliance with Sec. 106 and Sec. 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
5. Within 10 years, assess identified sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in conjunction with SHPO, and provide interpretation for NRHP sites where appropriate and consistent with developed preservation plans.

Strategies

a. In cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, emphasize fish and wildlife management activities within Wilderness Areas that ensure the protection of natural processes and that conform to the Wilderness Act.

b. Manage special uses to minimize impacts on wilderness values.

c. Identify and protect traditional cultural properties. Consult with federally recognized American Indian tribes when appropriate.

d. Educate, interpret, and promote partnerships to increase public awareness, protect heritage resources, and further the goals of research.

e. Limit non-research ground disturbing activities on heritage districts and sites eligible for the National Register that would create adverse impacts to the district or site.

Subgoal 2.c: Improve the capability of the Nation's forests and rangelands to provide a desired sustainable level of uses, values, products, and services. (USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2000 Revision Objective 2.c)

Objectives

1. Between the Medicine Bow and Routt National Forests, implement a consistent timber program each year.
2. By the end of the plan period, complete environmental analyses on 95 to 100% of National Forest System grazing allotments, and reauthorize grazing permits where consistent with other resource considerations.
3. Meet annually with Wyoming Game and Fish to coordinate population management issues including big game herd objectives.
4. Within 5 years of plan approval, standardize protocols for permits to collect forest and rangeland products such as mushrooms, floral products and medicinal plants through environmentally responsible harvest and collection methods on National Forest System lands.
5. Within 10 years, develop a scenic byway plan for the Snowy Range Scenic Byway.
6. Within 5 years, prepare establishment reports for each Research Natural Area.
7. Within 10 years, develop a land ownership adjustment plan in response to resource management and public needs.
8. Within 5 years, develop a Rights-of-Way Acquisition Program in response to resource management programs and access needs. This plan will be coordinated, reviewed, and updated annually.

Strategies

a. Offer not more than the allowable sale quantity of sawtimber from forested lands determined suitable for timber production.

b. Strive to offer to the public sawtimber, products other than logs, and firewood at the average annual Total Sale Program Quantity.

c. Continue to satisfy the demand for livestock products through grazing management that is economic, environmentally sound, and compatible with other resources.

d. Coordinate with the State of Wyoming affected departments to establish forage reserves as a means of providing flexibility in a sustainable grazing program.

e. Maintain current levels of grazing opportunities on suitable rangelands to achieve desired conditions.

f. Coordinate with and assist Wyoming Game and Fish personnel in setting big game herd management objectives and in managing populations on both summer and winter ranges to assure desired vegetation conditions are being met.

g. Cooperate with American Indian tribes in consideration of traditional cultural plant use.

h. Implement management activities that will meet scenic integrity objectives.

i. Eliminate motorized access to NFS lands from private lands where alternate access to those same NFS lands is not available to the general public.

Goal 3 - Scientific and Technical Assistance

Develop and use the best scientific information available to deliver technical and community assistance and to support ecological, economic, and social sustainability.

Subgoal 3.a: Provide better assistance in building the capacity of Tribal governments, rural communities, and private landowners to adapt to economic, environmental, and social change related to natural resources. (USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2000 Revision Objective 3.a)

Objectives

1. Within 5 years, develop formal cooperation with federal, state, and county agencies, individuals, and non-government organizations for control of noxious weeds, other invasive species, and animal damage.
2. Annually, provide opportunities for individuals and organizations to assist the Forest Service in implementing and monitoring the Plan.
3. Within 10 years, identify, manage, develop, and interpret appropriate watchable wildlife and plant viewing sites.

Strategies

a. Provide opportunities for federally recognized American Indian tribes to participate in planning and management of the National Forest, especially where tribes have claimed special geographic, historical, or cultural interest.

b. Invite appropriate federal, tribal, state and local government agencies to be cooperators when conducting project level NEPA.

c. Create and foster partnerships with other agencies, accredited educational and research institutions, and other appropriate public and private sector organizations to further the goals of research, education, protection, and interpretation.

d. Encourage participation of Forest personnel in community projects and other government projects that involve management of natural resources. Invite state and local government personnel to become more involved in the design and analysis of Forest Service projects that may affect economic and social elements of the community.

e. Develop partnerships to provide new recreational fisheries and/or waterfowl and wetlands habitat.

f. Identify and participate in partnerships with private and public organizations where there are opportunities to improve ecosystem health across the landscape.

g. Identify and participate in partnerships with private and public organizations where there are opportunities to improve winter motorized and nonmotorized recreation opportunities and understanding across the landscape. Examples include Wyoming Snowmobile Association and cross country ski clubs.

h. Provide for plan implementation through traditional means such as timber sales and service contracts and in addition, newly developed tools such as stewardship contracts.

Subgoal 3.b: Improve the knowledge base provided through research, inventory, and monitoring to enhance scientific understanding of ecosystems, including humans, to support decision-making and sustainable management of the Nation's forests and rangelands. (USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2000 Revision Objective 3.c)

Objective

1. Over the life of the plan, implement inventory and monitoring systems to provide scientific information and evaluation across landscapes. Inventory habitat and populate databases with information needed to manage terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Strategies

a. Cooperate with and develop partnerships to enhance or improve inventories. (Inventories include but are not limited to bats, butterflies, MIS and landbirds).

b. Cooperate with and develop partnerships to conduct research on topics that require additional information to ensure proper management on the Forest. (Research topics include but are not limited to the effects of burning and grazing on Preble's meadow jumping mouse and the effects of snow compaction on small mammals and lynx).

Goal 4 - Effective Public Service

Ensure the acquisition and use of an appropriate corporate infrastructure to enable the efficient delivery of a variety of uses.

Subgoal 4.a: Improve the safety and economy of Forest Service roads, trails, facilities, and operations, and provide greater security for the public and employees. (USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2000 Revision Objective 4.b)

Objectives

1. Within 15 years, maintain all roads classified for passenger vehicles to national standards.
2. Within 15 years, maintain roads classified for high-clearance vehicle use and closed roads to national standards.
3. Within 10 years, implement Phase II of the October 16, 2000 Forest Supervisor Forestwide Travel Management Decision which is to complete site-specific travel management analyses to decide the future status of the Forest Transportation System.
4. Within 10 years, decommission at least 150 miles of designated roads that will be determined through project level analyses and approval.
5. Within 10 years of plan approval, meet minimum facility standards and complete an average of 10% of the health & safety items each year as identified in the Facility Master Plan.
6. Within five years of plan approval, maintain 20% of buildings, bridges, and other facilities to standard.
7. By the end of the planning period, correct critical health and safety maintenance needs on roads identified as the potential minimum road system.

Strategies

a. During site level travel management analysis, identify the minimum road and trail system by considering aquatic and riparian areas and aquatic wildlife, terrestrial wildlife and the need for security areas, ecosystem processes and functions including soil protection, economics such as expected maintenance budgets, commodity production, minerals management, range management, water production, special products, special use permits, general public transportation, administrative uses, fuels management, air quality, recreation, passive use values, and social issues.

b. Monitor for and obliterate user-created motorized roads and motorized trails.

c. Establish agreements with counties or local governments for cooperative road maintenance.

Desired Condition of the Forest

The condition of the Medicine Bow National Forest will change as this Forest Plan is implemented. This section summarizes the desired condition of the overall Forest after 10 years and after 50 years of plan implementation. Chapters 2 and 3 of this plan contain more detailed desired condition statements for individual Management Areas and Geographic Areas on the Forest.

The Forest in the Short Term

With implementation of the forest plan, management actions will have been directed at achieving the forestwide goals and objectives. The annual monitoring and evaluation program will be ongoing and will provide the tools needed to ensure that goals and objectives are being achieved.

At the end of the first decade, changes in overall character of the landscape will be small. The Forest will appear very much as it does today. Subtle changes to the landscape will have been made through timber harvest, and other vegetation treatments such as prescribed fire. Additional changes from insects, disease, and fires will also be evident on the landscape, but the extent will be largely dependent on climatic conditions.

The Medicine Bow National Forest resources are being managed in such a way as to highlight the "niche" values of the Forest—scenery, recreation, historical resources, and timber. The Forest provides special places that respond to the needs of all visitors. Settings connect visitors to natural landscapes and intriguing cultural sites, places for recreation adventure, learning, challenge, and quiet contemplation. The Forest provides many opportunities for visitors to appreciate the outstanding scenery and natural character of the land. Winter and summer recreation opportunities, both motorized and non-motorized, are being managed in such a way as to provide

outstanding experiences to meet the desires of forest visitors for scenery, solitude, setting, and continued accessibility. The Medicine Bow National Forest has many significant historic resources and they are being managed in such a way as to provide for their preservation and interpretation. Due to its moderate terrain, productive soils, and easy access, the Medicine Bow National Forest is one of the most valuable timber producing forests in the Region.

The Forest Service seeks to manage the Forest to conserve and restore watersheds, populations of native organisms, and the ecological systems encompassed by the Medicine Bow National Forest while producing a diverse range of natural resources and amenities that will contribute to sustainable economic and social systems in the region. The Forest actively works to identify degraded ecological systems and restore those identified as priorities based on criteria of ecological rarity and contribution to conservation priorities. The Forest works proactively to accomplish the federal goals of ESA species recovery and similarly to improve conditions for sensitive species to avoid the expense and ecological damage of those species slipping further into peril. Based on the principle of improving ecological integrity, the Forest Service seeks to improve economic and social sustainability of the region by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of providing recreation, timber, grazing, and other resources.

Biodiversity

Conservation and restoration of native organisms and the ecosystems that provide the foundation for biodiversity are priorities in Plan implementation. Native biodiversity will be maintained on the forest. Critical habitats identified through project implementation are managed to perpetuate habitat conditions needed for Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive (TES) and non-TES wildlife species. Progress has been made, working with the State of Wyoming, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other partners, in meeting land management plan (LMP) objectives and in accomplishing activities described in the Supplemental Tables (S tables). The Forest is actively participating in the interagency recovery of T&E species and in implementing conservation for species at risk. Native fish habitats and populations restoration projects have been undertaken where ecologically and economically feasible. Noxious weeds and non-native invasives are being accurately inventoried and aggressively treated to eliminate or contain acres of infestations. The Forest actively works with counties and others to protect ecosystems by preventing the release of undesirable nonnative species and by containing or eradicating invasive species.

Forest vegetation patterns and successional conditions will be influenced predominantly by natural disturbance processes such as fire, insects and diseases on 45% of the Forest.

Progress is being made on addressing attributes of ecosystems identified as threatened or otherwise degraded based on analysis of the Historic Range of Variability (HRV). The distribution of forested habitat structural stages across the

forest will be moving toward a sustainable pattern when considered over the long-term. On 45% of the Forest, late successional habitats and natural processes occur at higher levels. Approximately 56% of forested vegetation will be in late successional habitats, 30% in mid successional habitats, and 14% in early successional habitats (see table below).

Table 1-1. Forestwide habitat structural stages % by cover type—end of 1st decade.

Cover Type	SS1	SS2	SS3	SS4	SS5
Lodgepole	2	12	40	35	11
Spruce/fir	4	9	13	46	28
Ponderosa	10	5	7	70	8
Aspen	3	8	38	26	25
Wtd. Avg.	4	10	30	40	16

Table 1-2. Suitable acres only--habitat structural stages % by cover type—end of 1st decade.

	SS1	SS2	SS3	SS4	SS5
Wtd. Avg.	8	10	31	43	8

Over the first decade, changes in structural stage distribution will appear minor and progress toward achieving desired distributions based on HRV analysis will appear slow. However 140 years of timber harvest on the Medicine Bow National Forest, large fires that occurred in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and fire suppression after 1940 all resulted in current conditions. Therefore, changes in forest structure and composition that reflect patterns inferred from HRV analysis will not occur in one decade. Active forest vegetation management though timber harvest, natural insect and disease outbreaks, and natural and prescribed fires will all help to achieve the desired condition for habitat structural stages by cover type.

Table 1-3. Forestwide habitat structural stages % by cover type—current condition (FEIS).

Cover Type	SS1	SS2	SS3	SS4	SS5
Lodgepole	3	9	42	38	8
Spruce/fir	3	5	13	52	27
Ponderosa	13	<1	7	77	2
Aspen	4	2	50	40	5
Wtd. Avg.	4	6	32	46	12

The processes and structures necessary to maintain the biological diversity of the Forest will have been provided for across the landscape as a whole. Riparian areas will be in good or improving condition. Rare communities such as fens, wetlands, peatlands and bog habitats will continue to occur and management will ensure that these habitats support the unique taxa they harbor.

Timber Management

Timber management is implemented on the Forest to meet the objectives defined in the Plan, to maintain forest health, to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, to reduce losses to insects and diseases, and to provide wood fiber to meet the nation's demands for wood products in ecologically sustainable ways, maintaining the integrity of soil and air resources and biodiversity needs.

The Forest is implementing a consistent annual timber program between the Medicine Bow and Routt National Forests that addresses National Fire Plan project implementation, bark beetle suppression and prevention, salvage and sanitation, and other forest health needs. Timber management activities are evident on 38% of the Forest. Clearcutting is generally the optimum method for regenerating lodgepole pine. Created openings vary in size from less than 40 acres to hundreds of acres in size, or are staged to create larger patterns that would simulate natural landscape patterns caused by windthrows, insects and disease and wildfires over time. On 26% of the Forest (MA 5.15), the emphasis of harvest activities is to emulate the patterns, structures, and function of natural processes.

Silvicultural systems in spruce/fir and ponderosa pine types are generally uneven-aged management or selective harvests. Little if any clearcutting is used in these vegetation types. Aspen is generally regenerated with prescribed fires and clearcutting, where appropriate.

The minimum road system is utilized in each timber sale. During and after timber sale project implementation, roads not needed for future transportation are decommissioned.

Recreation and Scenery Management

The character and qualities of the Medicine Bow National Forest, which draw visitors from around the country, will remain in place and be enhanced by the addition of Special Interest Areas, Research Natural Areas, and Recommended Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Recreationists continue to enjoy the scenery of both mountain forests and non-forested areas. A broad spectrum of recreation opportunities, ranging from primitive to developed, are available. Both motorized and non-motorized winter and summer recreation opportunities are present on the Forest. Motorized travel is allowed on designated roads and trails forestwide. Winter motorized recreation is allocated on 64% of the Forest. The desired condition is to decrease the extent of the Forest used by motorized vehicles, increase the spatial extent of cross-country ski use, and decrease the extent of the Forest available to snowmobile use. Increase the amount of the Forest where management direction will maintain opportunities for solitude in a non-motorized environment.

Visitors to the Medicine Bow National Forest are able to enjoy native plant and animal communities in a variety of settings. They are encouraged to learn about these unique environments, their flora and fauna, and multiple uses through contact with Forest Service personnel, interpretive and informational signs, maps and brochures, and through web-connections.

The Forest offers outstanding scenery and special places, wilderness and remote areas, and provides facilities and services that create a sense of welcome. Developed recreation sites, cabins, lookouts, and other visitor facilities are clean, well maintained, tastefully signed, and provide universal access and services to the public. Access to outdoor recreation facilities and services for our diverse customers has been improved. Visitor feedback is actively sought and incorporated into work plans to improve the quality of recreation opportunities and experiences, information delivery, appearance and care of facilities, and professional behavior and training of employees and volunteers. Monitoring shows that appropriate scenery management objectives are attained. The value of the Forest for year-round recreation is recognized and regarded as important. Consistent, reliable USFS field presence is provided at appropriate levels in every season.

The Forest is working with State Trails and other partners to develop opportunities and educational programs to ensure responsible year-round recreation. Partners encourage responsible off-trail snowmobile riding in the winter and off-road vehicle riding in the summer (on designated roads and trails). Volunteers also help plan and maintain a variety of trail opportunities for horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobile riding.

Special Areas

An increase in the number of Special Interest Areas, Research Natural Areas, Recommended Wilderness Areas, and Recommended Wild and Scenic Rivers, along with designated Wilderness, will provide a variety of historical, biological, and scenic values and opportunities for solitude. Thirteen Special Interest Areas are managed for their historical, biological, and other values. Interpretation of these values is being accomplished through a variety of methods. Five Research Natural Areas have been approved for addition to the existing Snowy Range Research Natural Area. One completely new recommended wilderness area (Rock Creek) and recommended additions to the Huston Park and Encampment River Wilderness areas will be managed to maintain wilderness characteristics. Our four designated Wilderness Areas will continue to be managed as Wilderness Areas. Two recommended wild and scenic rivers on the Forest are being managed to maintain their wild and scenic character.

Trailhead facilities, including signs, are well-maintained at all wilderness portals. Areas of overuse within wilderness areas are identified and appropriate management practices are put into place to attain wilderness goals. Noxious weeds and invasive non-native plants are inventoried, aggressively treated, and contained/reduced.

Wilderness/leave no trace education is being done through a variety of avenues (personal contacts, trailhead information, school programs, I&E programs with user groups, permit systems, etc.). Wilderness monitoring is being done in all designated wilderness areas, and wilderness resources are being managed to protect wilderness values.

Roadless Management

Existing wilderness occurs on 7% of the forest. Areas recommended for wilderness designation occurs on 3%. Roadless character would be maintained on 28% of the Forest (302,658 acres). In wilderness areas, research natural areas, and on 95% of unroaded landscapes, natural processes such as wildfires, insects, and diseases may occur at higher levels. The desired condition is to maintain roadless character on the vast majority of the inventoried roadless areas on the forest.

Oil and Gas Leasing and Mineral Development

Oil and gas leasing is available on 24% of the Forest with a variety of leasing stipulations. However, oil and gas leasing is not expected to be a major output on the Forest in the next decade.

The Forest cooperates in the implementation of mineral development on the forest, especially "recreational gold panning." The Forest continues meeting needs for mineral materials, particularly those needed for roads serving National Forest users.

Prompt service and due process is given to those who request to use the National Forest System lands and hold rights to develop mineral resources on National Forest System lands and under private mineral ownership. Basic stewardship of the land occurs during oil and gas and mineral development projects, and soil productivity and capability for ecological function is maintained.

Fire and Fuels Management

The National Fire Plan (NFP) direction came to the Forest Service in 2001. In carrying out the NFP, the Forest, and our partners, work together to galvanize fire preparedness, suppression, and prevention efforts. Working together, we have identified communities threatened by wildfires, developed strategies and prioritized projects to avoid, reduce, and mitigate fire losses in those communities, increased efforts to protect natural resources, including watersheds, wildlife and TES habitats, and rehabilitated and restored forests.

The State of Wyoming posted their list of Communities at Risk in the *Federal Register* on August 17, 2001. The Forest continues to actively participate with the Wyoming State Forester, counties, other federal and state agencies, and other fire agencies to jointly develop fire management plans and fuels reduction projects to address protection of these communities at risk. Additionally, the Forest has institutionalized the goals of the NFP, working with states and counties to reduce fuels in interface areas, communities at risk, and areas of high resource value. By

the end of the decade all these areas will have NEPA completed for fuels reduction treatments and those treatments (and follow-up treatments) are being scheduled and implemented in the appropriate conditions.

A Fire Management Plan is in place. Prescribed fire and wildland fire use plans will be in place to manage fires under prescribed conditions to meet Land Management Plan (LMP) direction when conditions allow. The Forest has successfully increased the number of acres of fuels treated annually and has a consistent annual program for fuels treatment.

Through an integrated vegetation management program that includes timber, fuels, range, and wildlife, condition classes of forest vegetation are being managed to achieve lower risk of catastrophic losses in high value areas. The Forest utilizes a variety of tools, such as timber sales, stewardship contracts, service contracts, force account and volunteer labor, and prescribed fires to achieve desired conditions. The Forest is actively working with the State, other agencies, counties, and communities to restore healthy, resilient ecosystems on lands at risk from catastrophic fire, improving the condition and function of critically important watersheds, while sustaining biodiversity.

Watershed Protection and Water Yield

Watershed conditions are improved on 20% of the 5th level watersheds on the Forest. The Forest is maintaining existing beneficial uses in all streams, lakes, reservoirs, and open water bodies. Riparian and wetland habitat (including fens) conditions are maintained or improved to ensure that at least 80% of riparian and wetland areas will meet or move toward proper functioning condition. Stream flows are improved for at least 10% of the stream segments having in-stream flow concerns. Watershed improvement projects are planned and implemented along with other major projects (e.g., timber sales, fuels reduction projects, road reconstruction or decommissioning). Watersheds are prioritized for treatment in collaboration with federal, state, and local government agencies and private landowners. The Forest participates with other agencies in the Wyoming Best Management Practice (BMP) audit program and audits show that BMPs are being effectively implemented on all projects to minimize water quality degradation. Disturbed areas contributing to water quality degradation are promptly restored.

Forests in the Hog Park Reservoir and North Fork Encampment River watersheds are managed to maintain long-term water quality and quantity, while reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire and insects and diseases. When consistent with other resource values, cost effective, and environmentally and scientifically feasible, vegetative manipulation to enhance water yield above Forest reservoirs is being implemented.

The North Fork Encampment River watershed is managed under multiple-use prescriptions that protect or improve the high quality and quantity of municipal water for the town of Encampment. Water quality is being emphasized in special uses, minerals, grazing, recreation and other resource areas. Municipal water quality protection is the priority.

Rangeland Management

Rangeland management is implemented in a manner to meet Plan objectives. Rangeland vegetation will include a mix of seral stages across the landscape. Approximately 10-20% of the vegetation will be in early seral, 60-80% will be in mid seral, and 10-20% in late seral stages. All grazing allotments are being managed under NEPA-sufficient allotment management plans. Livestock grazing will be balanced with the needs of grazing/browsing wildlife dependent on NFS lands, as well as with recreationists and other users. Grazing in riparian areas is closely monitored and livestock grazing is managed so that all grazed riparian areas are in or moving towards fully functional conditions. Range improvements have been evaluated to determine their effectiveness in improving the range forage resource or to facilitate their use by livestock while minimizing conflicts with wildlife and forest users. Noxious weed populations are being identified and mapped with the primary emphasis in preventing new noxious weed infestations while aggressively pursuing control and eradication of existing populations.

Roads, Trails, and Travel Management

Implementation of the Plan results in an overall decrease in roads and travelways on the forest. User-created roads and trails are decommissioned and revegetated as budgets allow. System roads identified as unneeded in the minimum efficient road system are also being decommissioned through project implementation. The road and trail systems will meet public and resource management access needs and provide valuable recreation opportunities while providing wildlife security areas. Forest system roads will be maintained to the appropriate standards.

Forest level roads analysis is completed as is site-specific travel management planning for each mountain range. The road system provides access and motorized recreation opportunities that have been identified through appropriate and collaborative processes. Routes are prioritized for maintenance to achieve the goal of eliminating deferred maintenance. Project level NEPA analyses and decisions result in actions to attain a manageable road system; eliminating critical health and safety, resource protection, and other deferred maintenance needs, and reducing total road mileage consistent with resource objectives in the project area. Travel management decisions are implemented through appropriate signing, mapping, physical closures, seasonal closures, and special orders. Special travel management orders are in place for all non-motorized areas and areas with motorized use

restrictions. A trail system for a wide variety of uses and users, both motorized and non-motorized, is signed and maintained to standard.

Approximately 150 miles of unneeded roads and many miles of user-created roads will have been decommissioned to reduce resource damage. Some of these unneeded roads will have been converted to managed recreation trails for both motorized and/or non-motorized uses. Increased law enforcement actions are undertaken in identified problem areas. Policies and procedures are in place to protect natural resources, promote the safety of all users, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of the Forest.

The Forest in the Long Term

After five decades of plan implementation, several changes will be apparent across the landscape.

Biodiversity

Native biodiversity will be maintained on the Forest. Critical habitats identified through project implementation are managed to perpetuate habitat conditions needed for TES and non-TES wildlife species. T&E recovery plans have been implemented as well as conservation strategies for species at risk. Native fish habitats and population restoration projects have been implemented. Noxious weeds and non-native invasive species are being accurately inventoried and aggressively treated to eliminate or contain acres of infestations. Forest vegetation patterns and successional condition will generally be influenced by natural disturbance processes such as fire, insects and diseases on 45% of the Forest.

In managed stands, there will be only a slight increase of late successional forested habitats. However, on approximately 45% of the forest, where restoration of natural processes may occur, more acres in early successional stages could also be present. While these natural disturbance events are not expected to be significant in the first decade, the possibility of large-scale disturbance events, such as wildfire and insect and disease epidemics, will have increased with the passage of time. Due to the increased age of trees, and the increased presence of mountain pine and spruce beetles, large portions of the Forest could be impacted, especially if climatic conditions favorable to insects and disease occur.

A well-distributed system of stands managed as old growth is in place representing at least 15% to 25% of forested habitat and provides key habitat conditions needed for TES and non-TES wildlife species. Biological diversity will continue to be maintained across the Forest. Fens, wetlands, and riparian areas are maintained and contribute toward positive maintenance of biodiversity.

After five decades, ecological components identified as vulnerable based on HRV analysis, will be on a trend to more sustainable conditions. The distribution of forested habitat structural stages across the forest will be moving toward a sustainable pattern based on HRV analysis. Activities on 38% of the Forest result in an age-and size-class distribution that facilitates achievement of objectives for wood fiber production and other resource needs. On 55% of the Forest, late successional habitats and natural processes occur at higher levels. Approximately 55% of forested vegetation will be in late successional habitats, 28% in mid successional habitats, and 17% in early successional habitats (see following table).

Table 1-4. Forestwide habitat structural stages % by cover type—end of 5th decade.

Cover Type	SS1	SS2	SS3	SS4	SS5
Lodgepole	2	16	36	23	23
Spruce/fir	4	15	21	28	34
Ponderosa	6	8	16	45	28
Aspen	3	12	26	17	41
Wtd. Avg.	3	14	28	26	29

Table 1-5. Suitable acres only--habitat structural stages % by cover type—end of 5th decade.

	SS1	SS2	SS3	SS4	SS5
Wtd. Avg.	10	7	31	25	28

The processes and structures necessary to maintain the biological diversity of the Forest will have been provided for across the landscape as a whole. Riparian areas will be in good or improving condition.

Timber Management

Timber management is meeting objectives to maintain forest health, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, reduce losses to insects and diseases, provide wood fiber to meet the nation's demands for wood products in ecologically sustainable ways, while maintaining the integrity of soil and air resources and biodiversity needs.

The Forest is implementing a consistent annual timber program between the Medicine Bow and Routt National Forests that addresses National Fire Plan project implementation, bark beetle suppression and prevention, salvage and sanitation, and other forest health needs. Timber management activities are evident on 38% of the Forest. Areas where timber harvest has occurred will now have a definite managed appearance. Areas of thinned trees will be visible, and some areas harvested in the 1950s will be ready for harvest again.

Recreation and Scenery Management

The physical setting and scenic beauty of the Medicine Bow National Forest will continue to draw visitors. Recreation opportunities ranging from primitive to developed will be available. The Forest will continue to utilize the knowledge and expertise of user groups to provide high quality recreational opportunities. There will be a well-developed system of motorized and non-motorized trails that address recreational demand as well as protection of wildlife habitats. Both motorized and non-motorized winter and summer recreation opportunities will be present on the Forest.

Special Areas

Special Interest Areas, Research Natural Areas, Recommended Wilderness, Recommended Wild and Scenic Rivers, and designated Wilderness continue to provide a variety of historical, biological, and scenic values and opportunities for solitude.

Roadless Management

Roadless character would be maintained on 95% of the existing inventoried roadless areas on the forest. In wilderness areas, research natural areas, and on 95% of unroaded landscapes, natural processes such as wildfires, insects, and diseases will occur at higher levels.

Oil and Gas Leasing and Mineral Development

The Forest supports energy development activities on 24% of the Forest under a variety of leasing stipulations. However, oil and gas leasing is not expected to be a major output on the Forest. The Forest cooperates in the implementation of mineral development on the forest and continues meeting needs for mineral materials, particularly those needed for roads serving National Forest users. Basic stewardship of the land occurs during oil and gas and mineral development projects, and soil productivity and capability for ecological function is maintained.

Fire and Fuels Management

The Forest continues to actively work with the Wyoming State Forester, Counties, other federal and state agencies, and other fire agencies to jointly develop fire management plans and fuels reduction projects to address protection of communities at risk. Additionally, the Forest has institutionalized the goals of the NFP, working with states and counties to reduce fuels in interface areas, communities at risk, and areas of high resource value. These areas all have NEPA completed for fuels reduction treatments and those treatments (and follow-up treatments) are being scheduled and implemented in the appropriate conditions. The Forest has a consistent annual program in fuels treatment aimed at maintaining lower risk around

communities. The Forest has implemented an effective, integrated vegetation management program that includes timber, fuels, range, and wildlife, so condition classes of forest vegetation are changing to achieve lower risk of catastrophic losses in high value areas.

Watershed Protection and Water Yield

Watershed conditions are improved on all of the 5th level watersheds on the Forest. The Forest is maintaining existing beneficial uses in all streams, lakes, reservoirs, and open water bodies. Riparian and wetland habitats (including fens) are maintained or improved to ensure all are in proper functioning condition. Stream flows are improved. BMPs are being effectively implemented on all projects to minimize water quality degradation. Disturbed areas contributing to water quality degradation are promptly restored. When consistent with other resource values, cost effective, and environmentally and scientifically feasible, vegetative manipulation to enhance water yield and quality above Forest reservoirs is being implemented.

Rangeland Management

Rangeland management is implemented in a manner to meet Plan objectives. Rangeland vegetation will include a mix of seral stages across the landscape. Approximately 10-20% of the vegetation will be in early seral, 60-80% will be in mid seral, and 10-20% in late seral stages. All grazed riparian areas are in fully functional condition. Aggressive control and eradication of noxious weed populations is being undertaken, as well as important preventative measures to restrict infestations of noxious weeds and non-native invasive species.

Roads, Trails, and Travel Management

A wide variety of trail systems for a wide variety of uses and users, both motorized and non-motorized, are signed and maintained to standard. The road and trail systems will meet public and resource management access needs and maintain valuable recreation opportunities while maintaining wildlife security areas. Forest system roads will be maintained to the appropriate standards. The minimum road system for the Forest has been achieved.

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Forestwide Standards and Guidelines

This direction applies forestwide unless more stringent or restrictive direction is found in the plan's management area prescriptions (Chapter 2) or geographic areas (Chapter 3). Additional direction is found in Appendix B, which references national and regional policies. The source of the standard or guideline is identified in [brackets] for each standard and guideline.

Standards are actions that must be followed or are required limits to activities in order to achieve forest goals. Deviations from standards must be analyzed and documented in a forest plan amendment.

Guidelines are advisable courses of action that should be followed to achieve forest goals. Deviations from guidelines must be analyzed during project level analysis and documented in a project decision document but do not require a forest plan amendment.

Physical

Air

Standards

1. Conduct all land management activities to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local air quality standards and regulations including: [R2 Desk Guide]
    a. The Clean Air Act (federal), as amended, 1990. P.L. 95-95
    b. Wyoming Air Quality Standards and Regulations (WAQSR)
2. Meet requirements of the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD), State Implementation Plans (SIP), and applicable Smoke Management Plans. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]

Guideline

1. Minimize the amount and impact of smoke for each prescribed fire by identifying smoke sensitive areas, using "best available control measures," monitoring smoke impacts, and following guidance in the WAQSR Chapter 10; Section – 2 Open burning restrictions. [R2 Desk Guide]

Mineral and Energy Resources – Leasable Minerals (see Appendix E)

Standards

1. Recommend against or deny consent to the Bureau of Land Management for issuance of leases, permits, or coal exploration licenses where operational damages to surface resources could not be reclaimed to acceptable conditions. Operational damages to surface resources include impacts from surface based access, product transportation, and ancillary facilities necessary to production and related operations. [R2 Desk Guide]

2. Do not make lands administratively available for leasing, or authorize leasing by the Bureau of Land Management, where operational damages for on-site and off-site surface and subsurface resources cannot be mitigated, would be irreversible and irretrievable with no potential for reclamation, and attachment of the "No Surface Occupancy" stipulation would prevent the effective recovery of the federal mineral resource. The decision on whether or not to lease will be based on site-specific consideration. [R2 Desk Guide]
3. Limit noise levels from oil and gas production facilities within ¼ mile of developed recreation sites or residential areas to be no more than 70 decibels at the edge of the developed site. This standard applies only to constant, routine, day-to-day production noises. It does not apply to noise from drilling and testing of production nor temporary noises such as work-over rigs and maintenance or repair tasks. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]

Guidelines

1. Promote use of closed circulation systems. Discourage the use of open reserve pits for oil and gas drilling operations. In cases where the use of pits for drilling operations is justified, analyze and monitor construction and use for minimal potential for leakage and structural failure (including pit solidification). [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Restrict or prohibit the use of production pits. [R2 Desk Guide]
3. Do not charge additional fees or require additional permits for off-lease activities necessary to mitigate Forest Service issues when such activities are directly related to administration of a drilling permit. [R2 Desk Guide]
4. Do not allow field offices unless operator can show that they are essential to production operations. When operator can demonstrate need for such facilities, they will be limited in size and design to serve only those purposes for which they are necessary. [R2 Desk Guide]
5. Prohibit rig stacking and storage of equipment not being used. [R2 Desk Guide]
6. Reduce the impacts to air quality and loss of energy resources by only allowing flaring of oil and gas wells during production testing of wells. Connection to a pipeline or re-injection well will be required once production is established. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. [R2 Desk Guide]

7. Ensure proper plugging of abandoned wells to prevent cross contamination of aquifers.

Mineral and Energy Resources –Minerals (Geophysical)

Standard
1. Where no effective mitigation measures are possible, prohibit geophysical (seismic) operations that cause surface disturbance in Research Natural Areas, Special Interest Areas, Recommended Wilderness, recommended Wild and Scenic Rivers, American Indian traditional use areas and known National Register sites.

Guidelines
1. Minimize surface and other resource disturbance from geophysical operations. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Do not allow new road construction, unless other alternatives have been assessed and determined to be more environmentally damaging. [R2 Desk Guide]

Mineral and Energy Resources– Reserved and Outstanding Rights

Standard
1. Negotiate surface management for private oil and gas minerals with the owner and operator to be as close as possible to the standards used for federal minerals. [R2 Desk Guide]

Paleontological Resources

Standards
1. Protect key paleontological resources (Classes 3, 4, and 5 of the Fossil Potential Classification) from disturbance, or mitigate the effects of disturbance, to conserve scientific, interpretive, and legacy values. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Prior to ground-disturbing activities, conduct paleontologic surveys in any area where there is a high potential to encounter these resources (Classes 3, 4, and 5 of the Fossil Potential Classification). [Thunder Basin National Grassland]

Guidelines
1. Survey and post federal land boundaries where paleontological sites have Fossil Potential Classification sensitivity rankings of 3, 4, or 5. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Provide authorization for appropriate survey and collection of significant fossil resources by noncommercial, scientific, or educational institutions, and provide appropriate opportunities for recreational (hobby) collecting of non-significant fossil materials, where consistent with forest plan goals and objectives. [R2 Desk Guide]

Soil

Standards

1. Limit roads and other disturbed sites to the minimum feasible number, width, and total length consistent with the purpose of specific operation, local topography, and climate. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Construct roads and other disturbed sites to minimize sediment discharge into streams, lakes, and wetlands. [R2 Desk Guide]
3. Stabilize and maintain roads and disturbed sites during and after construction to control erosion. [R2 Desk Guide]
4. Reclaim roads and disturbed sites when use ends, as needed, to prevent resource damage. [R2 Desk Guide]
5. Manage land treatments to limit the sum of severely burned and detrimentally compacted, eroded, and displaced land to no more than 15% of any activity area (FSH 2509.18). [R2 Desk Guide]
6. Maintain or improve long-term levels of organic matter and nutrients on all lands. [R2 Desk Guide]

Guidelines

1. Prohibit soil-disturbing activities (e.g., road construction, well pad construction) on slopes greater than 60% and on soils susceptible to high erosion and geologic hazard. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Perform an on-site slope stability examination on slopes over 40% prior to designing roads or activities that remove most or all of the timber canopy. Limit intensive ground-disturbing activities on unstable slopes identified during the examinations. [R2 Desk Guide]

Water and Aquatic

Standards

1. Do not remove naturally occurring debris from stream channels unless it is a threat to life, property, or important resource values or otherwise covered by legal precedent. [Routt National Forest]
2. Manage land treatments to conserve site moisture and to protect long-term stream health from damage by increased runoff. [R2 Desk Guide]
3. Manage land treatments to maintain enough organic ground cover in each land unit to prevent harmful increased runoff. [R2 Desk Guide]
4. In the water influence zone next to perennial and intermittent streams, lakes, and wetlands, allow only those actions that maintain or improve long-term stream health and riparian condition. [R2 Desk Guide]

5. Design and construct all stream crossings and other instream structures to allow passage of water and sediment, to withstand expected flood flows, and allow free movement of resident aquatic life. [R2 Desk Guide]
6. Conduct actions so that stream patterns, geometry, and habitats are maintained, or improved toward robust stream health. [R2 Desk Guide]
7. Maintain long-term ground cover, soil structure, water budgets, and flow patterns in wetlands to sustain their ecological function, per 404 regulations. [R2 Desk Guide]
8. Return and/or maintain sufficient stream flows under appropriate authorities to minimize damage to scenic and aesthetic values, fish and wildlife habitat, and to otherwise protect the environment. [R2 Desk Guide, WCP Handbook]
9. Manage water-use facilities to prevent gully erosion of slopes and to prevent sediment and bank damage to streams. [R2 Desk Guide]
10. Place new sources of chemical and pathogenic pollutants where they will not reach surface and groundwater. [R2 Desk Guide]
11. Apply runoff controls to disconnect new pollutant sources from surface and groundwater. [R2 Desk Guide]
12. Apply chemicals using methods that minimize risk of entry to surface and groundwater. Exception: EPA certified piscicides used to eradicate undesired, non-native aquatic species are exempted from this standard. [R2 Desk Guide]
13. Permit water developments and movement of stream or lake sediments only when evidence exists that disease-causing organisms or undesirable species would not be introduced into otherwise uncontaminated waters.[Medicine Bow NF]
14. Design activities to protect and manage the riparian ecosystem. Maintain the integrity of the ecosystem including quantity and quality of water. [R2 Desk Guide]
15. In watersheds containing aquatic, wetland or riparian dependent TES species, allow activities and uses within 300 feet or the top of the inner gorge, (whichever is greater), of perennial and intermittent streams, wetlands and lakes (over 1/4 acre) only if onsite analysis shows that long-term hydrologic and riparian function, channel stability, riparian and stream habitat will be maintained or improved. [R2 Desk Guide]

Guidelines

1. Locate activities and facilities away from the water's edge or outside the riparian areas, woody draws, wetlands, and floodplains unless alternatives have been assessed and determined to be more environmentally damaging. If necessary to locate activities or facilities in these areas, then: [Thunder Basin National Grassland]
    a. Deposit no waste material (silt, sand, gravel, soil, slash, debris, chemical, or other material) below high water lines, in riparian areas, in the areas immediately adjacent to riparian areas or in natural drainageways (draws, land surface depressions or other areas where overland flow concentrates and flows directly into streams or lakes).
    b. Prohibit deposition of soil material in natural drainageways.
    c. Locate the lower edge of disturbed or deposited soil banks outside the active floodplain.
    d. Prohibit stockpiling of topsoil or any other disturbed soil in the active floodplain.
    e. Locate drilling mud pits outside riparian areas, wetlands and floodplains. If location is unavoidable in these areas, use containerized mud systems (preferred) or seal and dike all pits to prevent leakage.
    f. Rehabilitate gravel pits, if located in riparian zones, to simulate a natural riparian/aquatic situation.
2. Install fish migration barriers only if needed to protect endangered, threatened, sensitive or unique native aquatic populations and only where natural barriers do not exist. [Medicine Bow NF]

Biological

Biological Diversity

Standards

1. Manage old forest to retain or achieve at least the minimum percentages of old growth by cover type by mountain range shown in the following table. If stands meeting the old growth definition do not exist at these percentages, manage additional stands that are closest to meeting old growth criteria as recruitment old growth to meet these desired percentages. [Medicine Bow NF]

Table 1-6. Cover types and percentages in old growth forest by mountain range.

Cover Type	Percent of the Cover Type by Mountain Range
Spruce/fir	25%
Lodgepole	15%
Ponderosa pine	25%
Aspen	20%

2. Limit management of stands identified to meet the percentages identified in table 1-6 to actions necessary to maintain or restore old growth composition and structure. [Medicine Bow NF]
3. In wet meadows, fens, peatlands, and bog habitats:
   - Prohibit concentrated livestock use.
   - Actively discourage illegal motorized use.
   - Prohibit peat or bog iron mining.
   - Prohibit road construction. [Medicine Bow NF]

Guidelines

1. Identify and map old growth blocks that mimic natural patch size and distribution. Include non-linear, unfragmented blocks (over 300 acres) where available. Old growth in small, scattered stands, larger patches, and streamside stretches shall be maintained to produce a pattern that is well distributed across the landscape by making sure that some old growth is maintained in every Geographic Area. Consider connectivity when identifying scattered stands. [Medicine Bow NF]
2. Maintain some aspen stands, even at the expense of invading conifers. [R2 Desk Guide]

3. Use native species and desirable non-native species in seed mixtures; if non-natives are used to assure ground cover, select plants based on the likelihood that they will not persist beyond the rehabilitation period. Use genetically local (subsection level) plant species where technically and economically feasible. [R2 Desk Guide]
4. Operations (such as timber harvest and other vegetative treatments) and road and motorized trail construction and management should be conducted to create patch sizes of sufficient area or appropriate spatial pattern to serve the habitat needs of species or communities at risk. [Medicine Bow NF]
5. When managing vegetation, maintain existing, or move towards desired patch size, distribution, abundance and/or edge-to-interior ratios, which are characteristic of natural disturbances (fire, insects, diseases) representative of the cover types, measured at the Geographic Area scale. [R2 Desk Guide]
6. During project planning, mitigate impacts to plants of local concern so that the continued vigor and existence of the population is not jeopardized. [Medicine Bow NF]
7. In wet meadows, fens, peatlands, and bogs, limit recreation facility development that may result in concentrated recreation use of these important habitats.

Rangeland Vegetation

Standards

1. Manage vegetation toward a desired plant community, vegetative condition, or seral status, to be determined during the development of Allotment Management Plans. [R2 Rangeland Analysis and Management Training Guide]
2. Manage all suitable rangeland to remain at or be moving toward satisfactory management status. [Routt National Forest]

Livestock Use

Standards

1. Move livestock from the grazing unit, pasture, or allotment when further utilization on key areas will exceed allowable use criteria in Table 1-7 or allotment management plan. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Phase out season-long grazing in an allotment, except where determined necessary to achieve or maintain the desired plant community. [R2 Desk Guide]
3. Coordinate livestock grazing on rangelands to provide adequate cover and forage for wildlife. [R2 Desk Guide]

4. Cooperate with other government agencies to provide mitigation measures to protect National Forest resources from animal damage control activities conducted by other governmental entities. Mitigation measures emphasize protection of public safety; threatened, endangered, or sensitive species; water quality, and other resource values.[1] [R2 Desk Guide]

Guidelines

1. The site-specific analysis necessary for the preparation of allotment management plans will identify "Desired Plant Communities" and designate key areas to evaluate whether the existing plant communities are at, moving toward, or moving away from the desired conditions. [R2 Desk Guide]

2. Where supported by research or experience, develop site-specific herbaceous vegetation utilization, vegetation residue, stream bank disturbance, and woody species utilization guidelines during rangeland planning. In the absence of updated planning and approved decision documents, apply the following allowable use and riparian vegetation residue guidelines and mitigation measures. These utilization guidelines are applicable at the time the livestock leave the unit and include use by both domestic livestock and wildlife. Table 1-7 shows the maximum allowable use guidelines for the cattle allotments. Sheep allotments are given by narrative description. Table 1-8 provides riparian residue guidelines for both cattle and sheep. [R2 Desk Guide]

Table 1-7. Allowable use guidelines (uplands and areas outside riparian zones).

	If Existing Rangeland Condition Is:	
Type of Management	**Satisfactory***	**Unsatisfactory***
Season-long	30-40%	0-30%
Deferred rotation	40-50%	30-40%
Rest Rotation	45-55%	35-45%

*Note: when range trend is declining, the lower range of percentages is generally applied.

Source: Region 2, Range Analysis Handbook.

[1] Animal Damage Management of the Animal Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) is responsible for completing the necessary NEPA analysis for predator control activities. This is consistent with Forest Service policy based on and agreed to in a 1998 Memorandum of Understanding between the USFS and APHIS-ADM. The MOU requires APHIS-ADM to conduct predator and animal damage management activities consistent with the Land and Resource Management Plan.

Table 1-8. Riparian vegetation residue allowances (minimum stubble heights).

	If Existing Rangeland Condition Is:	
Type of Pasture	**Satisfactory**	**Unsatisfactory**
Spring use pasture	3-4 inches	6 inches
Summer and fall use pasture	4-6 inches	6 inches

Source: Water Conservation Practices Handbook.

3. Manage livestock grazing in riparian areas and wetlands using "best management practices." The following Watershed Conservation Practices are interrelated and should be considered and implemented as a complete package where feasible: [R2 Desk Guide]
    a. Apply short duration grazing, as feasible (generally 20-30 days), to provide greater opportunity for regrowth and to avoid utilization of woody species.
    b. Design grazing systems to limit utilization of woody species. Move livestock from riparian areas and wetlands when they begin to have a preference for woody species, especially plants in the young maturity classes.
    c. Keep stock tanks and similar features out of the water influence zone if feasible and out of riparian areas and wetlands always.
    d. Keep stock driveways out of the water influence zone except to cross at designated points. Harden water gaps and designated stock crossing where needed and feasible.
4. Place salt and other supplements at least ¼ mile from riparian areas and water developments unless specified otherwise in the allotment management plan or annual operating instructions. [Standard R2 Policy]
5. Use open herding to move sheep and use a once-over-lightly grazing pattern. [Routt National Forest]
6. Bed sheep in a new location every night. [Standard R2 Policy]
7. Coordinate with permittees in adjusting allotment use or substituting use of a vacant allotment or forage reserve for an active allotment in response to management practices (such as prescribed fire) and natural events (such as wildfire and hail storms). [Medicine Bow NF]

8. In case of low forage production due to drought, coordinate with Wyoming Game and Fish to address any imbalances in forage use by domestic livestock and big game. [Medicine Bow NF]

Special Forest/Rangelands Products

Standards

1. Plant collecting: Issue botanical collection permits to authorize collection of plants or plant parts for other than threatened, endangered, sensitive species or species of local concern. Such collections must not jeopardize the continued vigor or existence of a plant population. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Firewood permits will specify that marked wildlife trees may not be cut. [Standard Firewood Permit]
3. Firewood permits will specify that firewood collection will be prohibited within 150 feet of streams or shorelines. [Medicine Bow NF]

Silviculture

Standards

1. Use a 40-acre maximum size for openings created by even-aged management, regardless of forest type, with the following exceptions: [R2 Desk Guide]
    a. Where proposals for larger opening are approved by the Regional Forester after a 60-day public review.
    b. Where larger openings are the result of natural catastrophic condition of fire, insect or disease attack, or windstorm.
    c. Where the area that is cut does not meet the definition of created opening.
2. Use the scientifically defined silviculture systems that meet the management objectives for the landscape or individual stands of trees within the landscape setting. These systems are shown, by forest cover type, in the following table. Both even- and uneven-aged management systems can be used and applied at scales ranging from a few acres to hundreds of acres. Apply these silviculture systems in a manner that will ensure natural regeneration where artificial regeneration is not necessary for other resource objectives. Have certified silviculturists prepare or approve tree stand vegetation management treatments. The silvicultural system identified in the following table can be used to convert uneven-aged stands to even-aged management and vice versa. [R2 Desk Guide]

Table 1-9. Appropriate silviculture systems by forest cover type. [R2 Desk Guide]

Forest Cover Type	Even-aged	Two-aged	Uneven-aged
Ponderosa pine	Shelterwood Clearcut Seed tree	Irregular shelterwood	Group selection Single-tree selection
Mixed conifer	Shelterwood Clearcut Seed tree	Irregular shelterwood	Group selection Single-tree selection
Aspen	Coppice[1]	Coppice with standards[2]	Group selection[3]
Lodgepole pine	Shelterwood Clearcut Seed tree	Irregular shelterwood	Group selection
Engelmann spruce / Subalpine fir	Shelterwood	Irregular shelterwood	Group selection Single-tree selection

[1] Coppice is a vegetation reproduction method used with clearcutting. Clearcutting stimulates sprouting from the residual roots.

[2] Standards are selected overstory trees reserved for a longer rotation at the time each crop of coppice material is cut.

[3] Use of group selection as an appropriate silviculture system in aspen is currently under study to determine regeneration success but is authorized on a test basis.

3. No minimum seedling height requirements are specified. Seedlings must have survived a minimum of 1 year and be expected (on the basis of research and experience) to be able to produce the desired future stand condition specified for the area in the forest plan. The number of seedlings in the following table represents the minimum number of seedlings required, considering natural mortality, to produce a merchantable timber stand at rotation age without intermediate treatments. [R2 Desk Guide]

Table 1-10. Standard for the required minimum numbers of seedlings for adequate regeneration of a cutover site. [R2 Desk Guide]

Species	Spruce/fir	Aspen	Lodgepole pine	Ponderosa pine	Other softwood	Other hardwood
Trees/acre	150	300	150	150	150	300

Note: To assure adequate restocking of openings created as a result of completion of final harvest, as a minimum, stocking surveys are conducted at the end of the first and third growing seasons following reforestation treatment. Adequate stocking cannot be certified until after the third year growing season survey. These inventory results should be documented in the annual monitoring report.

4. When trees are to be harvested on other than suitable lands, exceptions to the 5-year restocking standard are appropriate as documented in project decisions when the harvest meets one of the following criteria: [R2 Desk Guide]

    a. For permanent openings that serve specific management direction.

    b. Where provided for in specific management practices and prescriptions.

    c. Where it is desirable to delay regeneration and crown closure to meet specific desired conditions and management objectives.

5. Timber harvest units will be designed to retain snags and snag recruits in accordance with the ranges specified in the following table. Retained snags and snag recruits are designated as wildlife trees and will be left on site if blown over.
[R2 Desk Guide, Medicine Bow NF]

Table 1-11. Minimum forest requirements for snags and continuing recruitment on forested sites following timber harvest.

Cover Type	Snags/acre within harvest units	Size	Snag recruits*/acre Within harvest units
Spruce/Fir	6-10	At least 3/acre over 25", or largest available	8-12, at least 3/acre over 15" if available
Lodgepole pine Lodgepole pine pole stands	1-2	Over 10" if available Retain 3-4 small clumps of trees per acre	8-12
Ponderosa pine	1-2	Snags over 10" if available. Retain largest available	2-4
Aspen	1		0

*a) Preferred recruits are live trees with nest holes, broken tops, dead branches, or decay, and in lodgepole, generally free from dwarf mistletoe (Hawksworth Class 2 or lower). Retain the largest snags that are present, and a range of all degrees of decay that are present on the site.
b) When using prescribed fire, and in treatments to reduce fuel in urban interface areas, it will be acceptable that snag retention and snag recruitment standards may not be met.
c) If insufficient snags are available to meet the minimum diameter level in this table, retain the largest snags available. If insufficient snags are available, retain the higher number in the range of recruits/acre (above) to compensate. Not applicable to lodgepole pole sized stands.
d) Maintain snag components and snag recruits well distributed across harvested units. If high-quality snags occur scattered across a stand, they should be left in this pattern. Snags or snag recruits may be left in clumps if this distribution occurs naturally, if mistletoe in remaining lodgepole trees threatens regeneration success or long-term stand development, or if retention in an island of live trees will help prevent blowdown.

6. Final timber harvest units will be designed to retain coarse woody debris well distributed in accordance with the ranges specified in the following table. Unmerchantable trees should be left standing to replace downed wood that is expected to be lost during site preparation treatment or if existing material does not meet the desired tonnage. [Medicine Bow NF]

Table 1-12. Coarse woody debris: Desired range at final harvest.

Downed Wood (tons/acre) Diameter> 3" and >25 feet in length)		
Spruce/fir	10-15 tons/acre	80% over 10", 50% over 25" if available
Lodgepole pine (Sawtimber Stands)	5-10 tons/acre	80% over 6"
Lodgepole pine (Pole stands)	1 ton/acre	
Ponderosa pine	5-10 ton/acre	100% over 10", 50% over 25" if available
When using prescribed fire, and in treatments to reduce fuel in urban interface areas, it will be acceptable that coarse woody debris standards may not be met.		

7. Use the utilization standards for live and dead trees shown in the following table.

Table 1-13. Timber utilization standards. [R2 Desk Guide]

Products and Species	Unit of Measure	Minimum Diameter at Breast Height	Top Diameter	Minimum Length (Feet)	Merchantability Factor
Live Trees					
All Conifer Sawlogs	CCF (net)	7.0	6.0	8	10.67
Products other than sawlogs, all species ≥5" DBH	CCF or cords	5.0	4.0	6.5	*Variable
Products other than sawlogs all species <5" DBH	CCF of cords	*Variable	*Variable	*Variable	*Variable
Dead Trees					
Lodgepole pine Sawlogs	CCF (gross)	8.0	7.0	16	10.67
All other conifer Sawlogs	CCF (gross)	10.0	8.0	16	10.67
Products other than sawlogs, all species ≥ 5" DBH	CCF or cords	5.0	4.0	*Variable	*Variable
Products other than sawlogs , all species	CCF of cords	*Variable	*Variable	*Variable	*Variable

* Variable depending on the products being appraised.

Guidelines

1. The design of a silviculture treatment should emulate the pattern and frequency of natural disturbances found in the landscape being treated. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Regeneration harvests of even-aged timber stands should not be undertaken until the stands have generally reached or surpassed 95% culmination of the mean annual increment (CMAI) measured in cubic feet. Exceptions may be made where resource management objectives or special resource considerations require earlier harvest, such as: [R2 Desk Guide]
    a. Stands that are in imminent danger from insect or disease attack/mortality.
    b. Wildlife habitat improvement.
    c. Scenery resource enhancement or rehabilitation.
    d. Ecosystem restoration.

e. Areas managed for Christmas tree production.

f. Where other resource management objectives or special resource considerations would benefit from earlier harvest.

3. Reduce activity fuels resulting from all projects/activities to acceptable levels in a cost effective manner, in consideration of soil protection and wildlife habitat needs for retention of downed wood. [Medicine Bow NF]

4. If trees retained as snag recruits pose an unacceptable risk of spreading mistletoe to the regenerating stand, these trees may be killed by girdling or by fire. [Medicine Bow NF]

5. In spruce-fir outside of interface areas, promote the wildlife value of retained dead downed wood (1) by leaving limbs attached (to keep the log suspended), (2) providing complex structure (like jackstrawed piles), and (3) avoiding roller chopping whenever possible. [Medicine Bow NF]

Wildlife

Standards

1. Limit human disturbance at caves and abandoned mines where bat populations are documented. When closing mines or caves for safety or protection reasons, minimize disturbance and effects to microclimate, and provide access for bats. [R2 Desk Guide]

2. Prohibit new disturbances such as construction, drilling, new recreation facilities, logging, or other concentrated intense activities according to the following table. Short-term projects designed to improve habitat such as prescribed burning are permitted. [Medicine Bow NF]

Table 1-14. Timing restrictions on disturbances near concentrated breeding sites.

Species	Effective Dates	Distances
Bighorn sheep lambing areas	April 1 through June 30	1 mile
Sharp tail grouse breeding complexes	March 1 through June 30	1 mile
Sage grouse breeding complexes	March 1 through June 30	2 miles
Greater sandhill crane breeding complexes	March 1 through June 30	½ mile

Guidelines

1. During project design, maintain or increase security areas composed of blocks of hiding cover >250 acres over ½ mile from any roads or motorized trails that are open to motorized use. [Medicine Bow NF]

2. During project analysis and design, evaluate current and desired open road density at the geographic area scale and design projects, including road management to provide adequate security areas for wildlife and limit disturbances during parturition, nesting, and fledging periods. [Medicine Bow NF]
3. Protect wildlife habitat values when enhancing watchable wildlife opportunities for the public. [R2 Desk Guide]
4. Use bear-resistant garbage containers and food storage practices in areas where human/bear interaction problems occur. Convert existing trash facilities at lodges, resorts, and campgrounds through replacement. Provide signing or other educational materials for the public, outfitters, and guides. [Wyoming Game and Fish]
5. Apply seasonal restrictions as needed on motorized use of travelways to reduce disturbance in sensitive big game areas, such as birthing areas and winter range. [R2 Desk Guide]
6. Consult state and regional Partners-in-Flight Bird Conservation Plans for additional guidelines on land bird habitat management. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]
7. Regenerate older aspen stands near harvested lodgepole pine to provide habitat for species associated with young aspen and future nest sites for goshawks, cavity nesters, and other old aspen specialists. [Medicine Bow NF]

Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species

Standards

1. Prior to authorization and commencement of management activities that may disturb bald eagles or their habitats, survey suitable habitats for bald eagle nests and winter roosts. All nest surveys should be conducted using procedures that minimize the potential for adverse effects to nesting raptors. [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cheyenne Field Office]
2. For known bald eagle nest sites, develop a plan for each nest site including a map showing a buffer where surface occupancy is prohibited (within ½ mile of nest), where seasonal disturbance is prohibited (within 1 mile of nest, February 1 to August 15) and where disruption of foraging behavior is prohibited (in suitable foraging habitat, generally within a 2.5 mile radius of nest). Nests that have been occupied within the last 5 years are considered "active" (see Table 1-15). These buffers may be reduced in response to site-specific conditions in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. [Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Working Group; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cheyenne Field Office]

3. If a bald eagle winter roost site is discovered, write a management plan to ensure that habitat components are maintained. Prohibit activities within 250 yards of the roost between November 15 and March 1. [R2 Desk Guide]

4. Within each occupied northern goshawk territory, select three nests and protect 30 acres of dense vegetation surrounding each, defining the boundaries of each area based on habitat quality. If fewer than 3 nests are found within an occupied territory, substitute 30-acre areas with characteristics of nesting habitat. [Medicine Bow NF]

5. Within each occupied northern goshawk territory, designate a northern goshawk post-fledging area (PFA) of a minimum of 200 acres that includes the three 30-acre nest sites selected. The large tree component within the PFA should include snags, down dead wood, and clumps of trees with interlocking crowns. Within the PFA, prohibit management activities that may degrade goshawk foraging habitat. [Medicine Bow NF]

6. To help reduce disturbance to nesting goshawks, prohibit construction, drilling, timber harvest and fuel treatments, and other intensive management activities within ¼ mile of active northern goshawk nests from April 1 to August 30 unless site-specific conditions are such that a lesser distance can be shown to provide the same degree of protection. [R2 Desk Guide]

7. To protect nest sites for open-country raptors that are (1) on the Sensitive Species list or (2) sensitive to human disturbance near the nest and also use a limited number of nest sites year after year (listed in the following table): Prohibit construction of new facilities (surface occupancy) yearlong and prohibit activities that create human disturbance (like construction, logging, reclamation, or oil and gas drilling) within the distances and during dates shown in Table 1-15. Sensitive raptors that are not limited by nest sites need protection only from disturbance around active nests.

   Nest sites of raptors need protection for varying intervals after the last occupancy (depending on availability of nest sites). See table below. Sites may be classified as inactive following natural destruction of the site. Buffers may be reduced if site-specific conditions are such that a lesser distance can be shown to provide the same degree of protection. [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Utah Field Office Guidelines for Raptor Protection, Medicine Bow NF]

Table 1-15. Summary table of restrictions on surface occupancy and disturbance around raptor nests.

Species	Number of years the site is protected after last occupancy	Buffer for surface occupancy	Seasonal Buffer for Human Disturbance	Dates for Seasonal Disturbance Restriction
Bald eagle	5	½ mile	1 mile	February 1 to August 15
Golden eagle	7	¼ mile	½ mile	February 1 to July 31
Ferruginous hawk	7	¼ mile	½ mile	March 1 to July 31
Peregrine falcon	7	¼ mile	½ mile	March 1 to August 15
Osprey	7	¼ mile	½ mile	April 1 to August 15
Swainson's hawk	7	¼ mile	½ mile	April 1 to August 15
Northern harrier*	0**	No buffer	½ mile	April 1 to August 15
Short-eared owl*	0**	No buffer	¼ mile	March 1 to August 1

* Protect nests from disturbance only in year the nest is active.

** No occupancy buffer because these ground nesting species have more nest site options and move around from year to year

8. In habitat suitable for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, prescribed fires will be designed to burn no more than 25% of the Preble's habitat within each linear mile stretch of habitat. The percentage of habitat actually burned in each linear mile will be reported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Because of the unpredictability of fire, this standard will be achieved if no more than one of every four fires exceeds the 25% limit in size. If more than two of the first eight fires in Preble's habitat exceed 25% of the suitable habitat, the Forest Service will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to revise this standard. [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cheyenne Field Office, Medicine Bow NF]

9. Following burns in suitable habitat within the range of Preble's meadow jumping mouse, on-site surveys will be conducted to determine if vegetation has recovered, using U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines. [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cheyenne Field Office, Medicine Bow NF]

10. In suitable habitat within the range of the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, avoid placing new recreation sites, trails or roads within the riparian zone. Existing roads in designated critical habitat will be reviewed for possible closure or relocation. [Medicine Bow NF]

11. Allow no loss or degradation of known or historic habitat for the boreal toad, wood frog, or northern leopard frog. [Medicine Bow NF]

12. Forest Service employees working in boreal toad habitat will disinfect waders (nets and other items that come in contact with the water) with 10% bleach solution before moving between ponds or drainages to reduce the likelihood of chytrid fungus and other disease transmission. [Medicine Bow NF]

13. During project planning, if potential habitat occurs in the project area, survey for threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species on the US Fish and Wildlife Service's species list for the forest. Provide mitigation of potential adverse effects for species present. [Medicine Bow NF]

14. If black-tailed prairie dogs are found on forest land, activities that could have adverse effects will be halted. The area will be surveyed to determine the extent of the colony and to survey for the presence of Mountain Plovers and black-footed ferrets. Mitigation consistent with standards in the Regional Desk Guide will be adopted for the interim and will be applied to activities that may adversely affect the species present. Standards and guidelines will be modified or added to the Forest Plan as needed. [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cheyenne Field Office; Medicine Bow NF]

15. Activities will be managed to avoid disturbance to sensitive species and species of local concern, which would result in a trend toward Federal listing or loss of population viability. The protection will vary depending on the species, potential for disturbance, topography, location of important habitat components and other pertinent factors. Special attention will be given during breeding, young rearing, and other times which are critical to survival of both flora and fauna. [R2 Desk Guide]

Guideline 1. If possible, in suitable habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, burn during hibernation period (October 1 to May 15). [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cheyenne Field Office]

Canada Lynx [Based on Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy]

Applicable to All Programs and Activities:

Standard 1. New or expanded permanent developments and vegetation management activities and practices must maintain habitat connectivity.

Guideline 1. Techniques to avoid or reduce effects on lynx should be used in proposals to construct and/or reconstruct highways across federal land. Techniques such as wildlife fencing and associated underpasses or overpasses should be considered to reduce mortality risk.

Applicable to Specific Programs and Activities:

The following apply to lynx habitat inside Lynx Analysis Units (LAUs) that are within National Forest System lands. Standards applicable to LAU Boundaries:

Standard 1. LAU boundaries will not be adjusted except through agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, based on new lynx habitat information.

Standards Applicable to Vegetative Management Activities

Standards 1. Unless a broad scale assessment has been completed that substantiates different historical levels of unsuitable habitat, limit disturbance within each LAU as follows: if more than 30% of lynx habitat within an LAU on NFS lands is currently in unsuitable condition, no further reduction of suitable conditions shall occur as a result of vegetation management activities or practices. Wildland Fire Use practices and activities that restore ecological processes are excepted.

2. Timber management practices, such as timber harvest and salvage sales, shall not change more than 15% of lynx habitat within an LAU to an unsuitable condition within a 10-year period.

3. Maintain denning habitat within an LAU in patches generally larger than 5 acres, comprising at least 10% of the lynx habitat. Where less than 10% denning habitat is present within an LAU, defer vegetation management activities and practices that alter vegetation in stands that have the highest potential for developing denning-habitat structure in the future. Wildland Fire Use practices and activities that restore ecological processes are excepted.

4. Following a disturbance, such as blowdown, fires, insects, or pathogens mortality that could contribute to lynx denning habitat, do not salvage harvest when the affected area is smaller than 5 acres. Exceptions to this include:

    a. Developed recreation sites, administrative sites, or authorized special use structures or improvements.

    b. Designated roads and trails corridors where public safety or access has been or may be compromised.

c. LAUs where denning habitat has been mapped and field validated, provided that at least 10 percent denning habitat is retained and is well distributed.

5. Pre-commercial thinning may be allowed only when stands no longer provide snowshoe hare habitat (e.g., self-pruning processes have eliminated snowshoe hare cover and forage availability during winter conditions with average snow pack). Pre-commercial thinning within the home ignition zone (200 feet of administrative sites, dwellings and/or associated outbuildings) may occur prior to the stands no longer providing snowshoe hare habitat.

Guidelines

1. Where little or no habitat for snowshoe hares is currently available, vegetation management practices in lynx habitat should be planned to recruit a high density of conifers, hardwoods, and shrubs preferred by snowshoe hares. Preference should be given to mid-seral stage stands. Provide for continuing availability of lynx foraging habitat in proximity to denning habitat.
2. Where recruitment of additional denning habitat is desired, or to extend the production of snowshoe hare foraging habitat where forage quality and quantity is declining due to plant succession, vegetation management practices should retain sufficient vertical diversity, standing dead trees and coarse woody debris. The juxtaposition of denning and foraging habitat should be maintained or improved.
3. Vegetation management should provide for the retention or restoration of denning habitat on landscape settings with a low probability of loss from stand replacing fire events.
4. Fire management activities should not create permanent travel routes that would facilitate snow compacting activities. Construction of permanent firebreaks on ridges or saddles should be avoided.
5. Habitat for alternate prey species (primarily red squirrel*)* should be provided in each LAU.

Standards Applicable to Livestock Grazing Activities

Standards

1. In fire and harvest created openings, manage livestock grazing to assure management does not prevent successful regeneration of shrubs and trees.
2. In aspen stands, manage livestock grazing to ensure impacts do not prevent or inhibit sprout survival sufficient to perpetuate the long-term viability of the clones.

3. Manage livestock grazing in riparian areas and willow carrs (in LAUs) to help maintain or achieve a preponderance of mid or later seral stages, similar to conditions that would have occurred under historical disturbance regimes.
4. Manage livestock grazing in shrub steppe habitats, within the elevational ranges that encompass forested lynx habitat (within LAUs and linkage areas) to help to maintain or achieve a preponderance of mid or later seral stages, similar to conditions that would have occurred under the historical disturbance regimes.

Standards and Guidelines Applicable to Human Uses (HU)

Standards

1. Allow no net increase in groomed or designated over-the-snow routes, outside of baseline areas of consistent snow compaction within the lynx habitat matrix, by LAU unless the grooming or designation serves to consolidate use and improve lynx habitat. This does not apply within permitted ski area boundaries, to winter logging, access to private inholdings and other access regulated by HU Standard 3.
2. If diurnal security habitat is identified as a need, then in the development or expansion of ski areas, locate the trails, access roads and lift termini, to maintain and provide lynx diurnal security habitat.
3. Restrict motorized winter access to designated routes and designated over-the-snow routes for non-recreation special uses, mineral and energy exploration and development sites and facilities.
4. Manage recreational activities to protect the integrity of lynx habitat.

Guidelines

1. In the development or expansion of ski areas, provide adequately sized inter-trail islands, including the retention of coarse woody debris, to maintain snowshoe hare habitat.
2. In the development or expansion of ski areas, provide nocturnal foraging opportunities for lynx while being consistent with operational needs, especially in landscapes where lynx habitat occurs as narrow bands of coniferous forest across the mountain slopes.
3. Plan recreational development and recreational operational uses to provide for lynx movement and to maintain effectiveness of lynx habitat.

4. Remote monitoring of mineral and energy development sites and facilities should be encouraged to reduce snow compaction.
5. A reclamation plan should be developed (e.g. road reclamation and vegetation rehabilitation) for closed mineral and energy development sites and facilities that promote the restoration of lynx habitat.
6. Upgrading unpaved roads that would result in increased speeds and traffic volume or that would foreseeably contribute to development or increases in human activity in lynx habitat should be avoided. This applies to upgrading roads to higher maintenance levels (to Levels 4 or 5) that result in substantially increased speeds, traffic volumes or potential future use.
7. New permanent roads should not be built on ridge tops and saddles and in areas identified as important for lynx habitat connectivity. New permanent roads and trails should be situated away from forested stringers.
8. Roadside brushing on low speed and low volume roads should be done at the minimum level necessary, while providing for public safety.
9. Public motorized use should be restricted on new roads constructed for project specific activities. Provide for an effective closure in the initial design of the road. Upon project completion, these roads should be reclaimed or decommissioned, if not needed for other management objectives.

Standards and Guidelines Applicable to Linkage Areas

Standard 1. When highway construction/reconstruction is proposed in linkage areas, identify potential highway crossings.

Guideline 1. National Forest System lands should be retained in public ownership.

Disturbance Processes

Fire

Standard 1. Use Appropriate Management Response[1] on all wildfires according to Management Area and Geographic Area direction. [R2 Regional Office; Medicine Bow NF]

[1] Appropriate Management Response – The response to a wildland fire is based on an evaluation of risks to firefighter and public safety, the circumstances under which the fire occurs, including weather and fuel conditions, natural and cultural resource management objectives, protection priorities and the values to be protected. Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (January 2001)

Guidelines

1. When feasible and appropriate, use broadcast burning to dispose of slash in order to return the inorganic and organic chemicals in the foliage and small woody material to the soil, to reduce fire hazard, and to provide seed beds for natural regeneration. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Where feasible and appropriate, use prescribed fire throughout the landscape, including in wilderness areas, special interest areas, research natural areas, and inventoried roadless areas to accomplish resource management goals and objectives. [Medicine Bow NF]
3. When determining the appropriate fire management response, consider the following factors: a) proximity to other ownerships including all wildland-urban interfaces, b) values at risk such as suitable timber, structural improvements, and special interest areas, c) steep topography and motorized access to the area, d) protection of watersheds especially those that provide drinking water for local communities, e) concerns related to wildlife habitat management, and f) other multiple use, ecosystem management, or agency policy objectives. [Medicine Bow NF]

Fuel Treatment

Guidelines

1. Reduce the threat of wildfire to public and private developments by following guidelines in the National Fire Protection Association Publication 299, Protection of Life and Property from Wildfire, and reduce the fuel load to acceptable levels. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Manage for fire conditions and fire fighting strategies in Wild Land Urban Interface areas with a high level of coordination with cooperating agencies and governments. Place high priority on fuel reduction and treatment activities in fire regimes I, II and III, and condition class 2 and 3 (shrublands, lower elevation mixed conifer, lodgepole pine and aspen). Additional high priorities include municipal watersheds. [Medicine Bow NF]

Insects and Disease

Standard

1. Manage vegetation in high-use recreation areas to provide for public safety, to improve forest health, and to maintain or improve the desired recreation setting(s). [R2 Desk Guide]

Guidelines

1. Use integrated pest management techniques, including silviculture treatments, to meet management area objectives. Base treatment activities on achieving multiple use and ecosystem management objectives and reducing risks to adjacent private and public lands. Give priority to areas in which values to be protected exceed the cost of protection; for example, areas adjacent to subdivisions, recreation sites, suitable timberlands, or areas of concentrated public use. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Use vegetation management practices to meet objectives and reduce the risk of insects and disease. Give priority to covertypes identified as a moderate or high risk. [Routt National Forest]
3. In project plans, consider existing infestations of insects or disease within the project area. Design activities to minimize the risk of spreading the infestation and meet multiple use and ecological objectives. [R2 Desk Guide]
4. Prohibit or modify pesticide use where it would have adverse effects on threatened, endangered, proposed, sensitive species or species of local concern and minimize risk to other non-target species. [R2 Desk Guide]

Invasive and Undesirable Plant Species

Standards

1. For all proposed projects or activities, determine the risk of noxious weed introduction or spread and implement appropriate mitigation measures. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Use only certified weed-free hay, seed, straw, or other materials for revegetation projects on the Forest. [R2 Desk Guide]
3. Include provisions necessary to prevent the introduction or spread of noxious weeds in contracts and permits for use of National Forest System lands and resources. [R2 Desk Guide]

Guideline

1. Prioritize treatments and potential invasion of noxious weeds in Wilderness, Recommended Wilderness, and RNAs when setting priorities for treatment. [R2 Desk Guide]

Social

Heritage

Standards

1. Conduct all land management activities to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations including: [R2 Desk Guide]
    a. The National Historic Preservation Act.
    b. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.
    c. American Indian Religious Freedom Act
2. Consult with designated representatives of federally recognized American Indian tribes, as required by laws and regulations, during design of projects with potential to affect cultural rights and practices to help ensure protection, preservation, and use of areas that are culturally important to them. [R2 Desk Guide]
3. In case of disturbance, follow state law regarding the discovery of human remains. [R2 Desk Guide]

Guidelines

1. Enhance and interpret significant heritage sites for the education and enjoyment of the public, and scientific study when such development will not degrade the heritage property or conflict with other resource considerations. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Protect American Indian traditional collecting areas for religious purposes. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]
3. Consider American Indian traditional cultural plant use when designing vegetative management activities. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]
4. Protect significant resources from damage by activities or vandalism through project design, specified protection measures, monitoring, and coordination. [R2 Desk Guide]
5. Leave human remains undisturbed. [R2 Desk Guide]
6. Limit non-research oriented ground-disturbing activities on heritage districts and sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) that would create adverse impacts to the district or site. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]

Recreation - General

Standard

1. On sites where dispersed recreation activities have resulted in accelerated erosion or loss of riparian/wetland function, mitigate the impacts by redirecting the use, rehabilitating or hardening the site to minimize erosion and off-site movement of soil. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]

Guidelines

1. Allow wheelchair use in nonmotorized areas as long as the wheelchair meets the legal definition of wheelchair, "a device designed solely for use by a mobility impaired person for locomotion that is suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area." (Title V Sections 507c(2) of the American with Disabilities Act) [R2 Desk Guide]
2. In areas that allow motorized use, allow individuals with a valid permit for Hunters with Qualifying Disabilities to use an ORV to retrieve downed big game, provided the most direct route is taken to and from the carcass and no resource damage occurs. [Medicine Bow NF Travel Mgmt Plan]
3. Current recreation residences may continue to be allocated as recreation special-use development areas unless environmental analyses show a higher need for these lands. [White River National Forest]

Recreation - Developed

Standards

1. Develop and implement vegetative management plans for all developed sites to enhance the natural setting and maintain or develop the desired vegetation. [Routt National Forest]
2. Provide a range of universally accessible opportunities, within the limits of the site characteristics, at all new or reconstructed developed recreation sites. [R2 Desk Guide]
3. Locate, design, construct, and manage developed sites according to the adopted recreation opportunity spectrum class and adopted scenic integrity objective. [R2 Desk Guide]
4. Close facilities if public safety or sanitation cannot be provided. [R2 Desk Guide]
5. Limit camping to 14 consecutive days. [R2 Desk Guide]

Guidelines

1. Harden sites to protect resources or accommodate user needs. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]
2. Where it is possible to screen them, design recreational facilities to blend with the elements found in the natural landscape. They should be subordinate to the overall scenic strength of the surrounding landscape. [R2 Desk Guide]

3. Manage facilities at trailheads or along trails so they are consistent with the recreation setting and provide for parking, trail information and appropriate sanitation facilities, as needed. [R2 Desk Guide]
4. When campground occupancy averages less than 20% during the normal operating season, conduct an analysis to decide whether to close the campground. [R2 Desk Guide; Routt National Forest]
5. When determining opening and closing dates for campgrounds, consider the following: [R2 Desk Guide]
    a. Use and demand.
    b. Budget constraints.
    c. Weather, site, and road conditions.
    d. Popularity.
    e. Impacts to dispersed sites.
    f. Adjacent available facilities.
    g. The role of volunteers.

Recreation - Dispersed

Standards

1. Close or rehabilitate dispersed sites or otherwise mitigate impacts when: [R2 Desk Guide]
    a. Site occupancy doesn't meet the adopted scenic integrity objective.
    b. Documented social use conflicts exist.
    c. Unacceptable environmental damage is occurring.
    d. Human use has accumulated to an unsafe level around the site.
2. Where forage is limited, use only certified noxious weed free hay, straw, or other forage products (cubes, pellets, or rolled feed) for recreational stock use. [R2 Desk Guide]
3. Close, harden, restore, or relocate dispersed recreation sites within 100 feet of lakes and streams where unacceptable resource impacts are occurring. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]
4. Do not allow snowmobile use or over-snow vehicle use off roads or off trails in any area where snow cover is inadequate for resource protection. Area closures approved by the Forest Supervisor will be posted if necessary. [Medicine Bow NF]

5. Discourage dispersed camping within ¼ mile of developed campgrounds. [Medicine Bow NF]

Guidelines

1. Recreation use will be managed to stay within the capacity for the prescribed Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective shown in the Social Setting Criteria (see following table). [R2 Desk Guide]

Table 1-16. Social setting criteria.

Primitive	Semi-primitive Nonmotorized	Semi-primitive motorized	Roaded Natural	Roaded Modified	Rural	Urban
Usually less than 6 parties per day encountered on trails and less than 3 parties visible at campsite	Usually 6-15 parties per day encountered on trails and 6 or less visible at campsites	Usually 10-20 parties per day encountered on trails and 8 or less visible at campsites	Frequency of contact is moderate to high on roads and developed sites, low to moderate on trails and away from roads	Frequency of contact is moderate to high on roads, trails and developed sites, moderate away from developed sites.	Frequency of contact is moderate to high in developed sites, on roads and trails, and on water surfaces, moderate away from develop sites	Large numbers of users on sites and in nearby areas

2. Close designated groomed over-the-snow routes (roads or trails) to wheeled vehicles unless the use is permitted. [Medicine Bow NF]
3. Consider universal design for all new construction or rehabilitation proposals in trail system analyses and decisions. [R2 Desk Guide]
4. Integrate trail systems with those of other government entities and partners. [R2 Desk Guide]
5. Consider the following in new trail construction: [Routt National Forest]
    a. Proximity to population centers.
    b. Feasibility of loops.
    c. Feature attractions, campgrounds, and interpretive opportunities.
    d. Types of trail users to be served.

e. Partnership opportunities.

f. Protection of habitats and wilderness.

g. Accessibility or universal design opportunities.

h. Protection of aquatic and riparian resources.

6. If use exceeds the area capacity for a given ROS class, employ the following management actions, in order of priority, to address the effects to the recreation setting: [R2 Desk Guide]

a. Inform the public and restore or rehabilitate the site.

b. Regulate use.

c. Restrict the number of users.

d. Close the site.

Recreation – Outfitters and Guides

Standards

1. Prohibit processing, storage, or transporting any hay, straw, mulch, or forage product which has not been certified as free of noxious weeds and seeds by a certified state or county agriculture officer. Pelletized feed or grain products are exempt. [Thunder Basin National Grassland; Routt National Forest]

2. Apply the forage utilization levels shown in Tables 1-7 and 1-8 to camps, use areas, and other areas under permit. [Medicine Bow NF]

3. Prohibit permanent facilities or caches on NFS lands. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]

Guideline

1. Consider the following criteria before making a decision to issue an outfitter and guide service permit: [Thunder Basin National Grassland]

a. There will not be significant conflict with other permitted outfitters and guides, other permittees, or other users as a result of the activities associated with the permit.

b. Other resource considerations, including the biological needs of wildlife, are considered and found compatible with the proposed activity

c. The permit furthers National Forest goals.

Scenery Management

Standards

1. Apply the Scenery Management System (SMS) to all NFS lands. Travel routes, use areas, and water bodies determined to be of primary importance are concern level 1 and appropriate scenic integrity objectives are established according to the SMS. [Routt National Forest, Medicine Bow NF]
2. Meet the scenic integrity objective of Moderate within the foreground for all National Scenic and Recreation Trails. [R2 Desk Guide]

Guidelines

1. When rehabilitating projects and areas that don't meet scenic integrity objectives specified for each management area prescription, consider the following when setting priorities for rehabilitation: [R2 Desk Guide]
    a. Relative importance of the area and the amount of deviation from the scenic integrity objectives.
    b. Length of time it will take natural processes to reduce the scenic impacts so they meet the scenic integrity objective.
    c. Length of time it will take rehabilitation measures to meet the scenic integrity objective.
    d. Benefits to other resource management objectives to accomplish rehabilitation.
2. Meet the scenic integrity objectives of High and Moderate within 1 year after completion of a project. Meet the scenic integrity objective of Low within 3 years after project completion. [R2 Desk Guide]

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

Standard

1. Conduct management activities to comply with the requirements of the adopted ROS class and the scenic integrity objective in the management area prescription. [R2 Desk Guide]

Wilderness

Standards

1. Prohibit recreational livestock within 100 feet of lake shores and streambanks, except for through travel and when watering. [R2 Desk Guide]
2 Implement a permit system (either for day use or overnight) or other measures, such as area closures, to manage use levels and use patterns when conditions are outside the standards and guidelines established for the management area prescription. [R2 Desk Guide]

3. Limit the maximum dry land party size to 15 people, with a maximum party size of 25 people and recreational stock. Establish smaller party size limits for people and livestock where biological and physical resource capability cannot support the larger level of use. Issue permits on a case-by-case basis for parties that are larger than established limits when use is compatible with other wilderness objectives. [R2 Desk Guide]
4. Permit only those uses authorized by wilderness legislation which cannot be reasonably met on nonwilderness lands. [R2 Desk Guide]
5. Manage special uses to minimize impacts on wilderness values. [R2 Desk Guide]
6. Limit river party size to a maximum of 25 people. [Standard Forest Service policy]

Guidelines

1. Control natural insect and disease outbreaks in wilderness only when justified by predicted loss of resource values outside wilderness areas. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Minimize trailing of permitted livestock in designated Wilderness Areas. [R2 Desk Guide]
3. Vegetative restoration projects may be needed where human activities have altered natural ecosystems, and there is no reasonable expectation of natural revegetation. Use native species in restoration efforts. Where non-native species must be used, select plants based on the likelihood that they will not persist beyond the rehabilitation period. [R2 Desk Guide]
4. Where resource or social impacts have been identified, minimize human impacts in wilderness by considering: [R2 Desk Guide]
    a. Limiting the number of private and outfitter/guide camps.
    b. Encouraging the use of self-contained stoves and discouraging the use of wood-fueled fires.
    c. Using a permit system.
    d. Limiting the party size and number of pack animals.
    e. Prohibiting dogs or requiring all dogs to be on voice control or on a leash. This does not apply to dogs used for livestock management operations.
    f. Implementing minimum impact suppression tactics when managing wildfires.
    g. Encouraging pack-it-out human waste disposal methods.

5. Do not develop specific trail improvement work to reduce the level of challenge to accommodate the disabled within wilderness areas. [R2 Desk Guide]
6. Use natural-appearing techniques to protect wetlands if alternate trail locations are unavailable. [R2 Desk Guide]
7. Restrict construction of new facilities or structures. Don't replace existing facilities if they become substantially damaged or uninhabitable. [R2 Desk Guide]
8. Provide interpretive information using brochures or signs located outside the wilderness, rather than on-site signs. [R2 Desk Guide]

Administrative

Infrastructure - Facilities

Standard

1. Do not retain facilities acquired from land donation, exchange, or purchase unless they serve a definite future purpose and funding is available for their maintenance. [R2 Desk Guide]

Guidelines

1. Consider minimal investment in new facilities on lands meeting the criteria for disposal. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]
2. Design night lighting to minimize light pollution. Limit continuous or dusk-to-dawn lighting at facilities. Exceptions for continuous lighting may be made for the lighting of towers or lines to facilitate flight safety, and staffed, around-the-clock operations. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]

Infrastructure – Travelways (System Roads and Trails)

Standards

1. Allow motorized use on restricted roads when: [R2 Desk Guide]
   a. Prescribed in management prescriptions.
   b. Authorized by the Deciding Officer.
   c. In emergency situations.
2. Allow summer motorized use on new or designated travelways unless a documented decision states: [R2 Desk Guide]
   a. Motorized use conflicts with the purpose for which the travelways were constructed.
   b. Motorized use is incompatible with the ROS class.
   c. Travelways are located in areas closed to motorized use and are not "designated routes."
   d. Motorized use creates user conflicts that result in unsafe conditions unrelated to weather.
   e. Physical characteristics of travelways preclude any form of motorized use.
   f. Travelways do not serve an existing or identified future public need.
   g. Financing is not available for maintenance necessary to protect resources.

3. Prohibit motorized use with wheeled vehicles on lands more than 300 feet from designated travelways except for authorized emergency services and administrative uses and unless geographic area direction identifies specific motorized access. Individuals possessing a valid permit for hunters with qualifying disabilities as issued by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department will be allowed to use an ORV to retrieve downed big game providing resource damage does not occur. [Medicine Bow NF Travel Mgt Plan]
4. Allow motorized wheelchair use in a nonmotorized area as long as the wheelchair meets the legal definition of Title V, Section 507©(2) of the Americans with Disabilities Act. [R2 Desk Guide]
5. Close designated groomed over-the-snow routes (roads or trails) to wheeled vehicles unless the use is permitted. [Medicine Bow NF]

Guidelines

1. Manage motorized use by seasonal restrictions if: [R2 Desk Guide]
   a. Use causes unacceptable damage to soil and water resources due to weather or seasonal conditions.
   b. Use causes unacceptable wildlife conflict or habitat degradation.
   c. Use causes unsafe conditions due to weather.
   d. The road or trail serves a seasonal public or administrative need.
   e. The area accessed had seasonal need for protection or non-use.
   f. Competing uses create conflicts.
2. Avoid bisecting roads and trails open to motorized use with roads and trails where motorized use is restricted. If this cannot be avoided, provide adequate signing, closure devices, or both to clearly distinguish open routes from closed routes. [R2 Desk Guide]
3. Provide a wide range of recreation opportunities and difficulty levels, both motorized and nonmotorized, with the trail system. [R2 Desk Guide]
   a. With conflicting uses, decide which trails are available for separate uses and which will be shared. Where clearly necessary, trails may be dedicated to a single use to resolve conflicts.
   b. Consider a wide range of universally accessible opportunities for all new construction or rehabilitation proposals.

c. Clearly indicate through consistent signing the appropriate modes of travel at each trailhead.

4. Decommission unneeded travelways to achieve resource objectives or where resource damage cannot be mitigated. [R2 Desk Guide]

5. Install all gates so they are easily opened and closed by all users. [R2 Desk Guide]

Law Enforcement

Standard

1. Take appropriate law enforcement or administrative actions on all unauthorized uses. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]

Real Estate – Land Adjustments

Standards

1. In land adjustment activities, give priority to acquiring or retaining land that contains habitat identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as necessary for the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species. [R2 Desk Guide]

2. Honor existing rights, such as treaty rights, mineral rights, water rights, and private property access. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]

3. As part of the land acquisition process, determine management prescription allocation. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]

Guidelines

1. In general, base land acquisitions on the premise of a willing buyer and seller. [Thunder Basin National Grassland]

2. Consider the following when identifying lands for possible disposal: [R2 Desk Guide]

   a. Lands suitable for development by the private sector, if developments (residential, agricultural, or recreational) are in the public interest.

   b. Isolated parcels of any size, such as parcels having no legal public or administrative access and the effort to acquire such access is not cost efficient or otherwise reasonable.

   c. Lands less than 2,000 acres and not contiguous to larger blocks of public lands.

   d. Existing reserved or acquired rights-of-way parcels that are no longer needed for rights-of-way purposes.

3. Consider the following when opportunities to acquire lands occur (Reference 36CFR 254): [R2 Desk Guide]

    a. Lands with important or unique resources (e.g., water frontage; wetlands, floodplains, and associated riparian ecosystems; cave resources; crucial big game winter range; threatened or endangered species habitat and habitats needed for recovery; Forest Service sensitive species or species of local concern habitat; important paleontological or geologic sites; important historical or heritage resources; traditional cultural properties; outstanding scenic values; or critical ecosystems) when these resources are threatened by change of use, or when management may be enhanced by public ownership.

    b. Important botanical, wildlife, and fishery management areas. This includes lands supporting rare plant communities.

    c. Lands with important value for outdoor recreation purposes.

    d. Lands needed to protect resource values by eliminating or reducing fire risks or soil erosion.

    e. Non-federal lands in mineralized areas that have low potential for future mineralized patents, and where the minerals will be donated to the United States.

    f. Lands that reduce Forest Service administrative costs and improvement of management efficiency. This includes: reducing or eliminating the following to decrease administrative costs and improve management efficiency: miles of landline boundaries and number of corners, special uses, title claims, rights-of-way grants and easements, numbers of allotments and intermingled ownership, livestock pastures, etc.

    g. Lands that would reduce conflicts between Forest Service, tribal lands, and private landownership objectives, especially when conflicts are adversely impacting National Forest System land management.

    h. Lands in congressionally designated wilderness and other classified areas.

    i. Lands within or around existing blocks of public ownership of at least 2,000 acres.

Real Estate – Rights of Way

Standard
1. Retain existing access rights, or acquire additional access rights where needed to meet forest plan goals and objectives. [R2 Desk Guide]

Special Uses - General

Standards
1. When the permit expires, phase out current uses and do not approve new uses where the primary activity is storage or disposal of potentially hazardous materials, including landfills. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Don't approve land-use authorizations on parcels identified for disposal if that occupancy will affect disposal action. [R2 Desk Guide]

Guideline
1. Maintain and/or improve water quantity by including conditions that minimize adverse impacts to water dependent resources and values when issuing special use permits for new or existing water use facilities.

Utility Corridors

Standards
1. Conserve existing and designated inventoried rights-of-way needed for implementation of the forest plan. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Don't authorize conflicting uses or activities within transportation and utility corridors. [R2 Desk Guide]
3. Bury electrical utility lines of 33 kilovolts or less, and telephone lines, unless one or more of the following applies: [R2 Desk Guide]
    a. Scenic integrity objectives of the area can be met using an overhead line.
    b. Burial is not feasible due to geologic hazard or unfavorable geologic conditions.
    c. Greater long-term site disturbance would result.
    d. It isn't technically feasible.

Guidelines
1. Consolidate occupancy of transportation or utility corridors and sites wherever possible. [R2 Desk Guide]
2. Ensure utility corridors are consistent between adjoining forests, regions, and other federal and state land management agencies. [R2 Desk Guide]
3 Utilize current utility corridors fully. Provide corridors in the future in areas that meet the needs of society while protecting the integrity of the environment. [Routt National Forest]