

**Forest Service Manual
National Headquarters - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Manual 2600 – Wildlife, Fish, And Sensitive Plant Habitat Management
Chapter 2640 - Stocking and Harvesting**

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Approved by: Jack Thomas, Chief

Date approved:

Responsible Staff:

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Superseded Document(s):

Digest: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

2641: Revised direction which should have been included in Amendment 2600-95-2 was inadvertently omitted.

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2640.2 - Objective

To provide diverse opportunities for esthetic, scientific, and consumptive uses of wildlife and fish resources on a sustained-yield basis under applicable Federal and State laws and regulations.

2640.3 - Policy

It is Forest Service policy to:

1. Provide habitat for stocked species and assist in stocking and introduction operations to restore locally extinct indigenous species, to recover threatened and endangered species, and to introduce new species in coordination with State and Federal agencies.
2. Provide a variety of fishing, hunting, trapping, viewing, studying, and photographing opportunities and experiences in cooperation with the State fish and wildlife agencies.
3. Emphasize the protection, enhancement, and maintenance of habitats for production of wildlife and fish. Introductions or stocking of species may be made to restore resources following environmental changes, to provide recreation opportunities where reproduction is insufficient to meet demand, or to introduce new species desired by the public.
4. Favor native or desirable non-native species over new exotic species in stocking and introductions.

2640.4 - Responsibility

2640.41 - Regional Forester

The Regional Forester shall:

1. Reach joint agreement with the appropriate State fish and wildlife agencies on proposals for introductions of the following fish and wildlife on National Forest System lands:
 - a. Exotic and nonindigenous fish and wildlife to a National Forest where they do not presently occur.
 - b. Federally listed endangered and threatened species.
2. Coordinate exotic and Federally listed species introduction proposals with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

3. Coordinate recommendations on hunting, fishing, or trapping regulations to State and Federal fish and wildlife agencies in States with more than one Supervisor's Office.

2640.42 - Forest Supervisor

The Forest Supervisor shall:

1. Reach joint agreement with the appropriate fish and wildlife agencies on proposals for stocking or introduction of the following fish and wildlife on National Forest System lands:

- a. Stocking to supplement existing populations.
- b. Stocking to re-establish populations where they formerly occurred.

2. Cooperate with State fish and wildlife agencies in local arrangements for capturing, stocking, and introducing fish and wildlife.

3. Recommend hunting, fishing, or trapping regulations, as needed, in accordance with memorandums of understanding with the States. In States with more than one Supervisor's Office, the Forest Supervisor shall coordinate these recommendations with the Regional Office.

2641 - Wildlife and Fish Stocking and Introductions

To ensure coordination of uses and protect Federal interests, Forest Service officials shall cooperate with each State when the States or Forest Service develop wildlife and fish introductions and stocking programs on National Forests and Grasslands. Coordinate with respective State agencies to ensure that stocking and introduction efforts on National Forest System lands do not compromise Federal interests (for example, compliance with the Endangered Species Act and Wilderness Act).

The State has the responsibility to make the determination as to which wildlife and fish species are native or indigenous. The Forest Service has the responsibility to prevent damage to resources occurring on National Forest System lands. Resolve disputes in stocking and introduction matters in accordance with procedures outlined in the Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) between the Forest Service and each State agency. Such MOU's must document agreements on each fish and wildlife translocation project and appropriate environmental documentation.

2642 - Introduction of Indigenous and Nonindigenous Wildlife and Fish

Occasionally, areas and conditions are found that would best suit fish or wildlife that are not indigenous to a forest. Introductions of wild turkeys in certain western

forests are an example. Once introduced, further introductions are considered stocking and an environmental analysis is not required unless the action is determined to be controversial.

2643 - Applicability of State Fish and Wildlife Laws and Regulations

The Forest Service actively cooperates in the development of State fish and wildlife laws and regulations and may assist in the enforcement of State fish and wildlife laws on National Forest System lands. Pursuant to FSM 2610, Regional Foresters shall ensure that memorandums with State fish and wildlife agencies recognize the role of the Forest Service in cooperating in the development of State fish and wildlife laws and regulations, especially those addressing hunting, fishing, and trapping as they would apply to occupancy and use of National Forest System lands.

2643.1 - Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Regulations

Hunting, fishing, and trapping of fish and wildlife and associated practices on National Forest System lands are subject to State fish and wildlife laws and regulations, unless one or both of the following apply:

1. State fish and wildlife laws and regulations conflict with Federal laws; or
2. State laws and regulations would permit activities that conflict with land and resource management responsibilities of the Forest Service or that are inconsistent with direction in forest plans.

2643.12 - Use of Bait for Resident Game Hunting

The use of bait for the purpose of taking resident game on National Forest System lands is a hunting practice.

The practice is prohibited on National Forest System lands where State hunting regulations prohibit its use. Where States permit the use of bait for attracting resident game, this activity is allowed on National Forest System lands, subject to State hunting laws and regulation, unless the authorized officer determines on a site-specific basis that there is a need to prohibit or restrict the practice.

1. A site-specific restriction or prohibition on baiting is appropriate when the authorized officer determines that one or more of the following circumstances exists:
 - a. The State laws and regulations on placement of bait are not adequate to protect forest land, other resources, or users in a particular location. The determination of the adequacy of State laws and regulations shall be based on consideration of the likely impact of baiting on such matters as

water quality, public health and safety, the potential for litter, sanitation problems, or the potential to threaten the viability of wildlife;

b. The effects of baiting are inconsistent with direction in the applicable forest plan; or

c. The State laws and regulations conflict with Federal law, such as the Endangered Species Act.

2. Where the authorized officer determines that baiting should be restricted or prohibited, the following actions are necessary:

a. The officer shall immediately inform the State fish and wildlife agency of the determination; and

b. If, after consultation and coordination, the State is unable to resolve the matter with the Forest Service, the authorized officer shall close the area to baiting or otherwise restrict baiting by issuing an order pursuant to Part 261 of Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR Part 261).

Where the hunting season is underway and it would be impracticable to issue an order to close an area to baiting, the authorized officer shall take such measures as appropriate and practicable to ensure consistency with forest plan management direction; compliance with Federal laws, orders, and regulations; and protection of forest users and resources. For example, the officer might close a road or gate to restrict access.

Closure of an area to baiting is not the only way to address the practice of baiting. It is expected that land managers as part of their day-to-day management of National Forest System lands and resources will be cognizant of the effects of hunting activities and take such proactive measures as may be necessary to ensure resource protection. Also hunter education programs could be implemented in consultation with the State agencies.

The policy in this section, in and of itself, does not compel an authorized officer to undertake a specific decision to allow baiting on National Forest System lands in those States where the practice is permitted.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect valid existing treaty rights of American Indian Tribes.

For the purposes of this section and to assure consistency in coordination of national forest wildlife matters with State agencies, the authorized officer is the Regional Forester or Forest Supervisor responsible for executing memorandums of understanding with the State wildlife agency (FSM 2610).

2643.2 - Experimental Forests

State hunting and fishing laws apply on Forest Service-administered experimental forests. Where an experimental forest is established within a National Forest boundary, include its use for hunting and fishing in a cooperative wildlife management agreement with the concurrence of the Station Director involved.

The Station Director is responsible for experimental forests established on leased or donated land or by cooperative agreement. Wildlife and fish management should be compatible with primary uses and should have the concurrence of the lessor, donor, or cooperator (FSM 4060).