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Final Record of Decision

For the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Idaho Panhandle National Forests Land Management Plan

Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah, Shoshone, Latah and Clearwater Counties, Idaho; Pend Oreille County, Washington; and Lincoln and Sanders Counties, Montana

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Introduction

This final Record of Decision (ROD) documents my decision and rationale for approving the revised Idaho Panhandle National Forests Land Management Plan (Plan). This revised Plan describes desired conditions, objectives, standards and guidelines, and land suitability for project and activity decision making and will guide all resource management activities on the Forests for the next 10 to 15 years. It is part of the long-range resource planning framework established by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning of 1974 (RPA), the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), and the 2012 Revision of the USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan.

I issued a draft decision for the revised Plan, subject to the pre-decisional administrative review process (objection process) as described in Subpart B of 36 CFR 219, on September 27, 2013. Twenty-two objections were submitted per the objection procedures at 36 CFR sections 219.54 (c). After Reviewing Officer Jim Peña's review of objections and participation in an objection resolution meeting, he received a new job and Greg Smith was delegated as the new Reviewing Officer. Reviewing Officer Greg Smith issued his written response on September 8, 2014. The response of the reviewing officer is the final decision of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (36 CFR 219.57 (b)(3)). All objection letters and responses are available in the project record.

This final ROD, the errata to the final environmental impact statement (EIS), the final version (2015) of the revised Plan, and the planning record incorporate all the reviewing officer's instructions. I have assessed the additional information provided per his instructions and find them to be within the range of environmental effects analyzed in the final EIS.

Forest Setting

The Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF or "Forests") consist of major portions of three individual proclaimed national forests: the Kaniksu, the Coeur d'Alene, and the St. Joe. In 1973, major portions of these three forests were combined to be administratively managed as one national forest, collectively referred to as the IPNF. The IPNF are divided into five ranger districts, which are also the geographic areas (GA) defined within the revised Plan: Bonners Ferry (Lower Kootenai GA), Coeur d'Alene River (Coeur d'Alene GA), Priest Lake (Priest GA), Sandpoint (Pend Oreille GA), and St. Joe (St. Joe GA). Together, they consist of more than 2.5 million acres of public lands in the panhandle of north Idaho, with small areas extending into eastern Washington and western Montana. Of the total 2.5 million acres, about 2,351,100 acres are in Idaho, 31,200 acres are in Montana, and 118,400 acres are in Washington.

The IPNF as a whole are characterized by several mountain ranges interspersed with large lakes and extensive river valleys. The Selkirk Mountains, Cabinet Mountains, Purcell Mountains, Coeur d'Alene Range, and Bitterroot Range are all part of the rugged terrain of the IPNF. Lakes Coeur d'Alene, Pend Oreille, and the upper and lower Priest are dominant water features in the area. Major river valleys consist of the St. Joe, Coeur d'Alene, Priest, Pend Oreille, Clark Fork, and Kootenai.

The Forests contain some of the most diverse and productive forests in the Northern Region of the Forest Service. They are the home of several threatened and endangered plant and animal species, and provide diverse aquatic and terrestrial habitats. Grizzly bear, woodland caribou, Canada lynx, and bull trout are examples of some of these rare and listed species.

For over a century, these productive lands have generated forest products, contributing to the local and regional supply of forest products in response to national demands. These products include lumber, house logs, pulpwood, posts and poles, and firewood. In addition to the economic value of the timber resource, timber harvest is used to move vegetation towards desired

conditions, improve watershed condition, improve wildlife habitat, and reduce wildfire risk through reduced fuel loads. Timber harvest also provides jobs and income in logging and manufacturing of wood products.

The IPNF also contain lands rich with minerals. Developing mineral resources, especially gold, silver, lead, zinc, and copper, is part of the history of northern Idaho and is tied to the settlement of the area in the mid-1800s. Development of these resources has provided local jobs and income and provided a supply of these minerals in response to public demand.

The principal population centers within the IPNF are Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint, Idaho. Some of the smaller communities that have social, economic, and historic ties to the IPNF include St. Maries, Wallace, Kellogg, Priest River, Bonners Ferry, and Priest Lake. The nearest larger urban area, Spokane, Washington, has a social and economic influence on the local communities. The majority of land administered by the IPNF is located in Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah, and Shoshone counties in Idaho, and Pend Oreille County in Washington. Smaller portions of land are also found in Lincoln and Sanders counties in Montana, and Latah and Clearwater counties in Idaho. Logging, mining, and ranching have played important roles in many of these communities throughout the history of the area and continue to do so in varying degrees today.

Recreation opportunities abound in the IPNF. Visitors come from across the nation, as well as Spokane and local communities, to fish and boat the numerous rivers and lakes. Other popular recreation activities include hiking, biking, sightseeing, horseback riding, hunting, off-highway vehicle use, recreational prospecting, snowmobiling, skiing, gathering forest products, driving for pleasure, and wildlife viewing. This recreation is important to the local economy and is a major reason people choose to live in this area.

The landownership pattern in and near the IPNF enhances collaborative planning and partnership opportunities. The Forests are within and/or encompass portions of the wildland urban interface, private, state, county, or other federal land, as well as rural communities and populations centers. People of different backgrounds and values, but with shared interests in forest management, work together with the Forest Service to manage the resources in ways that consider all values and uses of the Forests.

Other distinctive features of the IPNF are described in chapter 1 of the revised Plan.

Land and Resource Management Planning

The 1987 Forest Plan and Forest Plan Revision

The 1987 Forest Plan (1987 Plan) has provided a framework for management of all forest resources; including recreation, timber, water resources, and wildlife habitat, for the last 27 years. As forest practices, recreation uses, and species-based knowledge have evolved, the 1987 Plan has been amended. The 1987 Plan, as amended, continues to provide measures to protect species and habitat while providing recreational uses, generation of forest products, and development of mineral resources. The monitoring and evaluation reports indicate that implementation of the plan has protected soils, treated weeds, provided habitat for threatened and endangered species, and generated forest products. The Forests continue to have a diversity of plant and wildlife species, while providing for multiple uses.

Plan revision was initiated based on legal requirements and significant changes that had occurred in conditions and demands since the 1987 Plan went into effect. The Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) (2003) documents the need to establish or change forest plan management

direction. Revision is also warranted because the 1987 Plan is beyond the 10 to 15 year duration provided by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) (16 U.S.C. 1606(e) (5) (A)).

The need for revision also comes from new public issues, new desires, and new expectations of public land and resource management. Topics of specific interest to the KNF public include forest access, recreation, inventoried roadless areas (IRAs), fire, timber management, soils, aquatic species, and wildlife habitat, as well as vegetation and watershed restoration.

The Revised Forest Plan

The final EIS and revised Plan were developed according to the NFMA, its implementing regulations at 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 219; the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA); the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations at 40 CFR 1500–1508; and the Forest Service NEPA regulations at 36 CFR 220. According to transition language of the 2012 Planning Rule at 36 CFR 219.17(b)(3), the responsible official may elect to use the provisions of the prior planning regulations (1982 Planning Rule, dated September 30, 1982, as amended) to prepare plan amendments and revisions. For this revision of the IPNF Plan, I have elected to follow the provisions of the planning regulations in effect prior to May 9, 2012, referred to collectively in this document as the 1982 Planning Rule. References in this final ROD refer to the 1982 Planning Rule version of 36 CFR unless indicated differently in the citation.

The final EIS discloses the environmental consequences of the alternative management strategies considered and describes how these alternatives respond to issues and concerns raised during public participation processes.

Nature of Forest Plan Decisions

The nature of forest plan decisions is outlined in the NFMA. A forest plan provides overall guidance for the management of National Forest lands. It is based on law, science, and input from citizens. The forest plan establishes goals, desired conditions, objectives, standards, and land suitability to assure coordination of multiple uses (e.g., outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, wildlife and fish, and wilderness) and sustained yield of products and services. Similar to local government land-use zoning, the forestwide and management area direction in the forest plan are used to guide future management decisions and set consistent expectations for the types of activities permissible on the forest.

This forest plan decision is strategic in nature, does not make a commitment to the selection of any specific project, and does not dictate day-to-day administrative activities needed to carry on the Forest Service's internal operations (e.g., personnel matters, law enforcement, or organizational changes). The forest plan programmatic management direction will be implemented through the design, execution, and monitoring of site-specific activities such as relocating a trail, conducting a prescribed burn, or harvesting timber. The decisions for these activities will be consistent with the strategic decisions made in the revised Plan and are subject to separate analysis under the NEPA.

Tribal, Agency, and Public Involvement and Collaboration

A variety of opportunities for meaningful dialogue and public participation were provided throughout the plan revision process, including the initial ecological and socioeconomic sustainability assessments, development, and finalization of the plan, and the consideration of

effects in the final EIS. As explained in chapter 1 of the final EIS, the revised Plan is based in part on public involvement and collaboration over the course of many years.

In late 2000, the IPNF began working on revision of the 1987 Plan under the 2000 Planning Rule. In April 2002, the Forests published a notice of intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register*, announcing the revision of the Land Management Plan with a 12-month public comment period.

From April 2002 to May 2004, the IPNF hosted public meetings, open houses, and field trips, and held meetings with county commissioners. Approximately 19 informational and comment meetings took place in and around the local communities during the scoping process, which started in April 2002 with the NOI in the *Federal Register* and ended in May 2004. The Forest continued briefings and meetings with tribes; Congressional representatives; state, county, and local elected officials; other agencies; and interested groups as the revision process continued through the ROD.

In addition, the IPNF hosted approximately 90 workgroup meetings from August 2003 to September 2005. These meetings were held in the communities within the IPNF and the workgroups focused on the geographic areas (GAs) surrounding each of these communities. The purpose of these workgroup meetings was to: 1) share information about the revision topics; 2) collaboratively discuss and develop desired conditions for each of the revision topics within the workgroup's GAs; 3) gain an understanding of the issues and appreciation of others' viewpoints; and 4) discuss Starting Option maps and potential changes to suggest to the forest supervisor.

On May 12, 2006, the Forests released the Proposed Land Management Plan under the 2005 Planning Rule. Open houses and public meetings were held to share the Proposed Land Management Plan, Comprehensive Evaluation Report, and other documents for the 120-day public comment period. Public comments on the proposed Plan were analyzed and summarized in a report (the Analysis of Public Comment Report, March 2007). Based on public and agency comments, the revision team began development of the final revised Plan. A court injunction (March 30, 2007) resulted in suspension of forest plan revision activities under the 2005 Planning Rule. The 2008 Planning Rule was released in April of 2008 and forest plan revision resumed under that Rule. A final revised Plan release was anticipated for winter of 2009 when a court ruling invalidated the 2008 Planning Rule in June 2009. The 2000 Planning Rule was reinstated in December of 2009, with transition provision allowing the Forest Service to follow the procedures of the 1982 Planning Rule. The Forests issued a second NOI in March 2010 to revise the forest plan using the 1982 procedures under the 2000 Planning Rule. The 2012 Planning Rule became effective May 9, 2012, with similar transition provisions allowing the Forests to continue revision using the 1982 procedures. All the public comment received on the various forest plan revision products over the life of the Plan revision were used in developing the draft Plan and draft EIS released in January of 2012.

In addition to the open houses, workgroup meetings, and individual group, agency, and local government meetings held as requested throughout the planning process, the forest hosted the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle Zone (KIPZ) website (http://www.fs.usda.gov/kipz) providing additional access to the planning effort documentation. This site linked to the Kootenai and IPNF webpages with maps and GIS data providing additional detailed information for interested publics.

The initial 90-day comment period for the draft EIS was extended an additional 30 days through May 7 of 2012. Comments received during this 120-day comment period have been either incorporated or answered in the final EIS accompanying this record of decision.

As stated in the 2010 NOI to revise the forest plan, the IPNF elected to follow the pre-decisional administrative review process (objections) outlined in 36 CFR 219. Twenty-two objections meeting the objection filing requirements at 36 CFR 219.54(c) were considered by the reviewing officer. Also, 96 requests from interested persons were received and granted. Comments received from one individual did not meet filing requirements but were forwarded to me and my staff for consideration while making this final decision.

After the initial review of the written objections received for the revised Plan and final EIS, Reviewing Officer Jim Peña decided to hold a meeting in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho on April 29, 2014, to have additional engagement with objectors and interested persons on proposed remedies for four areas of concern: local government coordination, Wild and Scenic River eligibility determinations, Recommended Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, and Management Indicator Species. Approximately 23 objectors and co-objectors and 14 interested persons participated in the meeting, either in person or by phone. All objectors and interested persons participating in the meeting were given an opportunity to speak on each of the issue areas. The purpose of the meeting was not to re-state the contents of the objection letters or to bring forward information not previously submitted, but rather focused on a discussion of the remedies under consideration specifically for those four issue areas. During the meeting objectors helped to clarify understanding of the issues and suggested improvements to remedies proposed for consideration in the final response to objections. Interested persons provided additional thoughts. The feedback received was very helpful for our consideration of the issues and potential remedies.

All objections and the final agency response can be found on the forest website at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/ipnf.

Decision Summary

After considering the effects to the ecological, social, and economic environment as described in the final EIS, I have selected Alternative B Modified for the IPNF Land and Resource Management Plan (Plan). This alternative emphasizes moving towards desired conditions and contributing to ecological, social, and economic sustainability. The revised Plan includes goals, desired conditions, objectives, standards, guidelines, timber suitability, management area direction, monitoring and evaluation direction, and recommendations for wilderness allocations for Congressional consideration. The decision components are fully supported by the environmental analysis documented in the final EIS, as required by law and regulation.

The final EIS includes the site-specific analysis to support my decision to restrict over-snow motorized and mechanized uses in the management areas where these uses are not considered suitable for meeting the desired conditions. In addition to approving the programmatic direction of the revised Plan, this record of decision authorizes an accompanying closure order as per 36 CFR 261 Subpart B* to align the allowed uses within the management area direction as follows:

- Restrict mechanized use on 176,305 acres and 212 miles of trail in Research Natural Areas and the Scotchman Peaks, Mallard Larkins, Selkirk, and Salmo-Priest recommended wilderness.
- Restrict over-snow motorized use on 176,305 acres in Research Natural Areas and Scotchman Peaks, Mallard Larkins, Selkirk, and Salmo-Priest recommended wilderness. (No additional restrictions to over-snow motorized use will occur on snow trails, as none currently exist in recommended wilderness and research natural areas.)

- Restrict the use of hand-held motorized equipment in management areas allocated to recommended wilderness or primitive areas, except for administrative use.

(*Some commenters expressed concerns about the Plan's effect on road access so I want to note my decision does not change current motorized route designations. The IPNF completed non-winter motor vehicle use designations as required by Subpart B of the Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212) in 2009 for the Coeur d'Alene Ranger District and the Kaniksu Zone. Site-specific analysis for the St. Joe travel management plan is ongoing under a separate planning effort and a designation decision is expected in 2015. Additional site-specific NEPA analysis would be required for any future motor vehicle use map (MVUM) designation changes.)

I have considered how the revised Plan responds to public comments, internal management concerns, and national direction and policy. My decision is based on the management direction in the revised Plan, the analysis of effects disclosed in the final EIS, and the planning record in its entirety. This decision applies only to National Forest System land on the IPNF. It does not apply to any other Federal, State, or private lands, although the effects of these lands and the effects of my decision on lands surrounding the IPNF are also considered.

Components of the Programmatic Decision

There are six fundamental components of the programmatic decision made in the plan revision. The following sections discuss these components of the decision in detail.

1. Establishment of Forestwide Multiple-Use Goals, Objectives, Desired Conditions, and Quantities of Goods and Services (36 CFR 219.11(b))

Goals, objectives, and desired conditions are defined in chapter 1 of the revised Plan. The "quantities of goods and services" are defined in the objectives. Chapter 2 of the revised Plan lists the forestwide goals, objectives, and desired conditions. Chapters 3 and 4 of the revised Plan lists desired conditions by management area and by geographic area, respectively.

Part of my rationale for selecting Alternative B Modified is because of how it will achieve the goals, objectives, and desired conditions. Although the goals, objectives, and desired conditions apply to all the alternatives, each alternative achieves them in different ways and to different degrees, depending on the emphasis. I find that Alternative B Modified best achieves the goals, objectives, and desired conditions by providing for the variety of uses people told me were important, and by best recognizing the past management history and capabilities of the IPNF. Alternative B Modified provides for active management and timber harvest while moving vegetation towards desired conditions for improved resiliency. Alternative B Modified also provides areas with passive management and limited access. This balance between active and passive management is described in the effects analysis of the final EIS.

2. Establishment of Forestwide Standards and Guidelines (36 CFR 219.13 to 219.27)

Forestwide management requirements (standards and guidelines) do not vary by alternative, because they were considered the 'baseline' design criteria that ensure resources are managed in a sustainable manner. They were developed based on scientific and public input. The standards and guidelines were carefully crafted to strike a balance between providing assurances that management direction is followed, while allowing managers flexibility in the case of site-specific circumstances. Standards are limitations on actions or thresholds that are not to be exceeded. Guidelines are requirements that must be followed unless a different management action achieves the same intent as the guideline.

After careful review, I believe that the standards and guidelines provide sufficient requirements for management, provide for resource protection, and reflect the intent of the new Plan. To simplify the planning document and to keep it up to date, laws, policies, Forest Service Manual, and Forest Service Handbook direction or other regional directives are incorporated by reference from the original source and are not duplicated in the plan. I find that the forestwide standards and guidelines were developed in an interdisciplinary manner, and provide for achievement of the revised Plan's goals, objectives, and desired conditions.

3. Establishment of Management Area (MA) Direction (Multiple-use Prescriptions) with Associated Standards and Guidelines (36 CFR 219.11(c))

The revised Plan provides direction for management areas that have specific management direction that differs from the general forest. The revised Plan designates seven management area (MA) themes across the IPNF: Wilderness (Designated, Recommended, Wilderness Study Area, and Primitive Lands); Designated and Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers; Special Areas (botanical, geological, pioneer, recreational, or scenic); Research Natural Areas (RNAs) and Experimental Forests; Backcountry; General Forest; and Primary Recreation Areas. The MAs span a continuum of management emphasis from a passive approach with little human-caused change, to more active management with substantially more human-caused change designed to sustain the social, economic, and ecological attributes of the Forests. The management area prescriptions include specific standards and guidelines, which are described in chapter 3 of the revised Plan. The management area allocations were the primary difference between the three action alternatives. Based on public input, there were several important changes in the management area allocations between Alternative B (the draft Plan) and Alternative B Modified (the revised Plan).

The revised Plan allocates 6.1 percent of the Forests as recommended wilderness (MA1b), 0.8% as primitive lands (MA1e), 27.3 percent as backcountry (MA5), and 60.3 percent as general forest (MA6). The designation of areas recommended as wilderness is discussed under Decision 5 on page 10. See the map for all MA allocation acreages and locations on the web at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/ipnf.

Management Area Allocations

Land within the IPNF may be assigned to more than one management area. For example the Scotchman #2 Research Natural Area (MA 4) is nested within the Scotchman Peaks recommended wilderness area (MA 1b). In such cases, the most restrictive plan direction would apply to the area of overlap.

Table 1 lists the management areas and acreages for the preferred alternative, Alternative B Modified.

Table 1. IPNF Management Areas and Acreages

MA	Management Area Name	Acres*	Percent
1a	Wilderness	9,900	0.4
1b	Recommended Wilderness	152,100	6.1
1c	Wilderness Study Areas	6,900	0.3
1e	Primitive Lands	19,800	0.8
2a	Designated Wild and Scenic Rivers	21,300	0.9
2b	Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers	49,900	2.0
3	Botanical, Geological, Historical, Pioneer, Recreational, Scenic or Zoological Areas	13,500	0.5
4a	Research Natural Areas	14,800	0.6
4b	Experimental Forest	8,200	0.3
5	Backcountry	681,200	27.3
6	General Forest	1,507,000	60.3
7	Primary Recreation Areas	13,100	0.5
Total Acres		**2,497,700**	

*Displayed acres are based on a single management area designation. Where management areas overlap (e.g., MA2 within MA1b), the following hierarchy is used in the table 1 acre summary: MA1a, MA4, MA1c, MA1b, MA2, MA3, and MA7. There are no overlaps in MA 5 or MA 6.

As part of the decision, I am designating additional special management areas, including RNAs, Special Areas, and eligible wild and scenic rivers.

RNAs

I am designating three additional RNAs: Fortynine Meadows (178 acres), Red Horse Mountain (1,657 acres), and Upper Priest River (1,394 acres). This decision would expand the existing Therriault Lake RNA by 195 acres. The Fortynine Meadows RNA includes an undisturbed, high quality, high-elevation peatland (fen) ecosystem. The Red Horse Mountain RNA includes the upper slopes of southerly and westerly facing ridges with extensive areas of dry plant communities in unusually pristine conditions. The Upper Priest River RNA is distinguished by ancient western redcedar forests, extremely wet habitat types of western redcedar/maidenhair fern, and a diversity of rare plant species (including rare lichens). The Therriault RNA expansion includes the water source for Therriault Lake as well as unique geologic and ecologic features such as large quartzite rocks, a talus slope, and a dwarf quaking aspen forest. Establishment records will be completed after approval of the revised Plan.

Special Areas

I am designating four additional special areas and increasing the size of three special areas (see table 2). These additional special areas and acreages will be protected and managed for public use and enjoyment. They possess unique botanical, geological, recreational, or scenic values. I am adding 11,202 acres to existing special areas to incorporate the adjacent unique scenic or botanical values and improve manageability of the areas.

Table 2. Additional Designated Special Areas

Special Area Name	Acres	Values
Bath Creek Gorge	407	Geological
Emerald Creek	2,350	Recreational
Hobo Cedar Grove Botanical Area	453[1]	Botanical
Huff Lake	70	Botanical
Northwest Peaks Scenic Area	2,639[1]	Scenic
Roosevelt Cedar Groves/Granite Falls Scenic Area	193[1]	Scenic
Upper Priest River Botanical Area	5,090	Botanical
Total Acres	**11,202**	

[1] Additional acres to those designated through previous decisions.

Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers

In addition to the existing 172.1 miles of eligible rivers on NFS lands identified in the 1987 ROD, as amended (see the Wild and Scenic River section in the final EIS), I have identified approximately 21.2 additional miles of river as eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. The additions include 14.6 miles of Hughes Fork and 6.6 miles of the Kootenai River.

All 193.3 miles of eligible stream (and the associated corridors containing approximately 57,724 acres) would be allocated to MA2b. This land allocation, with desired conditions, standards, and guidelines as described in the revised Plan, would protect their free-flowing character, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values.

4. Establishment of Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements that Provide a Basis for Periodic Determination and Evaluation of the Effects of Management Practices (36 CFR 219.11(d) and 219.12(k))

The monitoring plan is described in chapter 5 of the revised Plan. Monitoring provides the feedback for the forest planning cycle by testing assumptions, tracking relevant conditions over time, measuring management effectiveness, and evaluating effects of management practices. Monitoring information should enable the Forests to determine if a change in plan components or other plan management guidance may be needed, forming a basis for continual improvement and adaptive management.

Implementation of the monitoring requirements in the 1987 Plan revealed shortcomings in the approach. The 1987 monitoring plan was overly detailed, prescriptive, and lacked flexibility. It focused on quantifying outputs rather than assessing how well the 1987 Plan was working. The revised Plan's monitoring program sets monitoring questions and indicators to help managers evaluate and assess the degree to which on-the-ground management is maintaining or making progress toward achieving the desired conditions and objectives.

Every monitoring question links to one or more goal, desired condition, or objective. However, the monitoring program strives to be realistic in terms of budget and capacity and does not include a monitoring question for every plan component. On a biennial basis, an interdisciplinary team will evaluate forest plan monitoring data and relevant broad-scale monitoring information in terms of movement toward desired conditions and efficacy of management treatments. The

biennial Monitoring Evaluation Report will summarize this evaluation and make recommendations for adjusting management action as necessary.

I have placed emphasis on monitoring and I am confident that the monitoring requirements will provide the information to evaluate implementation of the revised Plan and will facilitate adapting management in response to results and new information.

5. Recommendations to Congress for Additions to the Wilderness Preservation System (36 CFR 219.17(a))

Public opinion regarding wilderness recommendations varies widely. Many people favor recommending additional areas for wilderness while many others object to any recommendations. The Benewah, Shoshone, Boundary, and Kootenai county commissioners do not support additional recommended wilderness in the revised Plan. However, the Bonner County Commissioners have expressed support of wilderness designation for the Scotchman Peaks area.

The 1987 Plan recommended adding 146,700 acres to the wilderness preservation system. I feel this amount of recommended wilderness, together with the 9,900 acres of the designated Salmo-Priest Wilderness, provides an appropriate amount of acres to be managed for wilderness values in balance with managing for other desired conditions across the IPNF. After considering the public value of wilderness and reviewing the suitability evaluations in the final EIS, I am recommending a similar acreage (161,400 acres in total with some boundary and location changes) for addition to the wilderness preservation system in this decision. This includes Mallard Larkins (80,200 acres), Scotchman Peaks (25,900 acres), Selkirk (36,700 acres), and some areas adjacent to the Salmo-Priest Wilderness (18,600 acres).

Acreage changes from the 1987 plan in the Mallard Larkins, Scotchman Peaks, and Salmo-Priest recommended wilderness areas are primarily due to boundary adjustments to improve manageability. All three were proposed as wilderness in the 1987 plan and all three recommendations are carried forward in the revised Plan (with minor boundary adjustments) because each area has attributes that are fitting as wilderness. Mallard Larkins rated high for capability, availability, and need and the 1b management allocation is consistent with management on the neighboring Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. Scotchman Peaks rated high for capability, has broad public support, and is consistent with management on the neighboring Kootenai National Forest. The Salmo-Priest addition rated high for capability, availability, and need and is adjacent to the designated Salmo-Priest Wilderness.

In addition to boundary adjustments to improve manageability in the Selkirk area, changes include dropping the Upper Pack River area in the southern portion and, in response to public comment, adding approximately 8,100 additional acres in the Long Canyon and Parker Creek area to the north and east. All of the Selkirk roadless area rated high in capability, availability, and need but I have decided to allocate the Upper Pack River portion to MA1e–Primitive Lands instead of recommending it for wilderness to maintain opportunities for mountain biking and winter motorized recreation.

This recommendation is a preliminary administrative recommendation that will receive further review and possible modification by the Chief of the Forest Service, Secretary of Agriculture, and the President of the United States. The Congress has reserved the authority to make final decisions on wilderness designation.

The discussion on page 20 further describes my rationale around this important revision topic.

6. Determine Suitability And Potential Capability Of Lands For Resource Production (Timber And Grazing) (CFR 219.14 And 219.20)

There is some variation between the alternatives in acres suitable for timber production and acres suitable for grazing, based on MA allocation. Suitability for timber production and suitability for grazing are defined in part by management area standards and guidelines.

Suitability for timber production does not vary substantially between alternatives. Alternative B Modified has 950,900 acres (38 percent of the Forests) suitable for timber production. This is less than Alternative D, but more than Alternative C. This is a large change from the 1987 Plan as originally written, which was 1,584,100 acres. However, with forest plan amendments over the previous 26 years, including INFISH and the Grizzly Bear Access Amendment, lands suitable for timber production in the 1987 Plan were reduced to 928,900 acres (Alternative A). When compared to Alternative A, Alternative B Modified is slightly higher in acres suitable for timber production. I believe these acres represent areas where timber production is feasible, based on other resource requirements and compatibility with management area desired conditions.

Suitability for grazing only varies by alternative by a few acres. Grazing suitability is driven mostly by areas capable of producing forage. Approximately 365,700 acres of the IPNF are capable of producing forage. Within existing allotments, there is 39,150 acres capable of producing forage. Of this, approximately 18,316 acres are suitable for grazing, based on allotments and management area allocations.

Site-specific Decision to Restrict Overs-snow Motor Vehicle Use and Mechanized Use

As described on pages 5 and 6 of this ROD, in addition to the programmatic forest plan decision, this ROD also authorizes a prohibition on motorized and mechanized use in RNAs and the recommended wilderness areas.

I have included this decision to align uses with the desired conditions to provide non-motorized and non-mechanized opportunities for exploration, solitude, risk, challenge, and primitive recreation within the recommended wilderness areas. Continuing the uses could affect the wilderness character and potential for the areas we analyzed to be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Within RNAs, the purpose is to maintain undisturbed conditions for the purposes of non-manipulative research and education.

I have reviewed the analysis in the final EIS which considers the number of acres and miles of trail which would not be available for motorized and mechanized use including the effects to ecological resources such as watershed (final EIS page 198) and wildlife (final EIS page 236, 256, 263–264, 281–286, 292–293, 361–366, and the biological assessment) as well as effects to recreation opportunities in the access and recreation environmental consequences (final EIS beginning on page 442).

I recognize that motorized and mechanized recreation users also desire remote recreation areas that allow them the opportunity for exploration, solitude, risk, challenge, and primitive recreation via their recreation vehicle of choice (e.g., snowmobile or mountain bike) similar to non-motorized recreationists. This site-specific prohibition will reduce that opportunity on approximately 7 percent of the 2.47 million acre Forests, but I believe those opportunities can still be found within the MA5 backcountry management allocations (approximately 27 percent of the Forests).

Decisions Carried Forward

Three decisions that amended the 1987 Plan are retained. The revised Plan includes an explanation of the direction retained from each of these decisions and their associated biological opinions. Projects and activities implemented under the revised Plan must be consistent with the direction within these decisions. They include:

- Inland Native Fish Strategy (INFISH)—Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (USDA Forest Service, July 1995)
- Forest Plan Amendments for Motorized Access Management Within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones—Record of Decision (USDA Forest Service, November 2011)
- Northern Rockies Lynx Management Direction—Record of Decision (USDA Forest Service, March 2007)

This retained direction (desired conditions, standards, and guidelines) can be found in appendix B of the revised Plan. Copies of the Records of Decision and associated biological opinions are available on the web at www.fs.usda.gov/main/ipnf/landmanagement/planning.

Rationale for Decision

Net Public Benefit

The 1982 National Forest Management Act (NFMA) implementing regulations (1982 regulations 36 CFR 219.1) state that forest plans must "...provide for multiple-use and sustained yield of goods and services from the National Forest System in a way that maximizes long-term net public benefits in an environmentally sound manner."

I have considered the many competing public desires for uses of the IPNF in the context of ecological diversity and ecosystem integrity. I am also mindful of economic difficulties of the counties and communities surrounding the Forests and seek a decision that balances the need for resource conservation with one that contributes to the economic well-being of these communities.

I chose Alternative B Modified because, in my judgment, it maximizes the net benefit to the public by:

- Addressing all of the primary revision topics and needs for change identified in the 2003 Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS)
- Maintaining or enhancing diversity and productivity of the Forests
- Contributing to economic and social needs of people, cultures, and communities
- Providing sustainable and predictable levels of products and services
- Providing an emphasis on restoration of vegetation and watersheds to improve resistance and resiliency to disturbance
- Sustaining biological diversity and aid in conserving and recovering federally-listed species and other species with viability concerns
- Emphasizing maintaining diverse, high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities as well as a road and trail system that provides access to the IPNF
- Providing the best mix of benefits to address the needs for change identified in the AMS

- Providing consistent direction at the forest level to assist managers in making project decisions at a local level
- Emphasizing adaptive management

My choice also considered how the revised Plan responded to public comments, internal management concerns, and national direction and policy.

Role of Budgets

Some commenters were concerned with the consideration of budget constraints when setting objectives in the revised Plan (e.g., determining the predicted timber harvest level objective). Our objectives in the Plan were developed to move towards a variety of desired conditions in the various resource areas. The desired conditions are unconstrained by budget, but the quantity or amount of each objective was based largely on our current and recent past budget levels because we expect future budgets to stay relatively flat or decrease. I believe it is misleading to portray unrealistic objectives considering this expectation. The revised Plan objectives are a realistic projection of what the IPNF expects to accomplish annually over the life of the plan. The final EIS describes the effects on forest health and vegetation composition from management under current budget levels. Furthermore, if budget allocations increase or other funding opportunities arise, the revised Plan allows for an increase in outputs (e.g. developed recreation maintenance or timber volumes up to the allowable sale quantity (ASQ)).

Purpose and Need for Change – Revision Topics

Early in the plan revision process, a set of topics was developed to identify the need for changing the 1987 Plan. The list of topics was reviewed and validated at each step in the plan revision process. Revision topics represent a systematic framework for discussing the revised Plan. In addition, the revised Plan carries forward other management direction not identified as needing change or that needed only minor changes to achieve the multiple-use balance sought in this decision. Revision topics were used to develop alternatives.

Revision Topic 1 – Vegetation

The focus on vegetation management during the revision process was largely due to concerns that the forest composition, structure, and pattern had shifted away from historical conditions to the extent that ecosystems, and the goods and services that they provide, may not be sustainable, especially in light of potential impacts from climate change. Commenters generally agree that vegetation objectives and standards should emphasize healthy forests. On the other hand, opinions differ widely on the definition of forest health and the means for improving health. Some people would like to see increased management to restore and improve vegetation. Others felt no restoration was needed, but we needed increased management. Still others felt the way to improve forest health is by doing less management and protecting areas from activities.

Vegetation under the 1987 Plan focused primarily on timber production. The 1987 Plan contains very little direction on the desired conditions for vegetation and management approaches to achieve them. It did not recognize or address important natural disturbance processes as part of the ecosystem. The incorporation of broader ecological principles, including the role of fire as a disturbance process, was identified as a need for change in plan revision.

The revised Plan provides direction to improve vegetation conditions which will increase resistance and resiliency to disturbance, including climate change. The revised Plan contains desired conditions for forest composition, structure, density, and pattern and objectives for management activities that will move vegetation towards these conditions. Standards and

guidelines protect components of vegetation, providing for diversity and habitat for terrestrial species.

Some commenters were concerned about providing increased protection for old growth. Some wanted a specific management area for old growth while others wanted to prohibit any timber harvest in old growth. The Forests have been managing old growth for decades. The 1987 Plan contained forestwide direction related to old growth, including the definition of old growth, how much and what type of old growth is to be retained, and what the distribution should be. The revised Plan provides for protection and enhancement of old growth stands including desired conditions to increase the amount of old growth over the long term. Standards prohibit vegetation management activities that could decrease old growth. Guidelines allow timber harvest in old growth if it improves the resistance and/or resiliency of the stand while meeting the definitions for old growth. The revised Plan builds upon the decades of knowledge gained on the IPNF from protecting old growth, retaining the mapped old growth, and managing this resource into the future.

The final EIS analyzes changes that may occur to forest composition, structure, landscape patterns of forest conditions; the resistance and resiliency of the forest to disturbances and stressors; and the ability of the forest vegetation to sequester carbon. This analysis provided a foundation for how terrestrial vegetation may influence other resources such as wildlife habitat, aquatic resources, timber production, and fire risk.

Although there is little variation in percent of the Forests with vegetation management across the action alternatives, I believe Alternative B Modified provides the greatest potential to move forest composition, structure, and pattern toward desired conditions overall, while considering all other National Forest management resource values (see the vegetation section of the final EIS). Analysis presented in the final EIS indicates that Alternative B Modified makes the broadest improvements to vegetation composition and structure, although results are mixed by individual species and size classes. The greater overall improvement is because Alternative B Modified has more acres allowing active management to improve vegetation conditions than Alternative C. Although Alternative D includes more acres allowing active management than Alternative B Modified, the emphasis is on maximizing timber harvest, with improving vegetation composition and structure as a secondary goal. Thus, I find Alternative B Modified provides the best opportunity for improvement to vegetation condition. The amount of old growth is projected to increase under all alternatives, with the largest increase in Alternatives B Modified and C.

Revision Topic 2 – Fire Risk

In order to restore and maintain the fire-adapted ecosystems on the Forests, wildland fire (both planned and unplanned ignitions) needs to be considered as a management tool. A substantial amount of acreage on the IPNF is fairly remote in terms of road access. In many of these areas, it can be difficult or undesirable to use mechanical treatments to manage the vegetation to help achieve the desired forest conditions. Therefore, in these areas, it is especially important to consider when and where the use of fire is appropriate.

Since the 1987 Plan was written, much has been learned about the role fire plays as a disturbance process in western forest ecosystems. Fire suppression has changed the vegetation patterns, structure, and composition of forests. Therefore, the role fire plays in these ecosystems has also been altered. The altered forest composition, when coupled with additional structures and communities in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), results in conditions that need to be addressed by the revised Plan.

Under the 1987 Plan, prescribed fire (planned ignitions) may be used in all MAs but two. However, the use of natural, unplanned ignitions is fairly restrictive in the 1987 Plan. Nine MAs (10 and 13 through 20) have standards that do not allow the use of natural, unplanned ignitions and the acres that these MAs occupy is substantial, approximately 13 percent of the total acres on the IPNF.

The revised Plan allows the use of prescribed fire and natural, unplanned ignitions in most MAs. The revised Plan emphasizes the use of natural (unplanned) fire ignitions for multiple objectives as well as the use of prescribed fire, particularly in the backcountry (MA5–681,200 acres). The direction also emphasizes hazardous fuels reduction in the WUI. Some commenters wished to see increased use of fire (both prescribed and natural, unplanned ignitions) to achieve revised Plan desired conditions, and although I agree additional fire use would be beneficial, the amount of fuel treatment established in FW-OBJ-FIRE-01 (6,000 to 16,000 acres annually) is based on likely funding and staffing levels.

Some commenters were concerned with the emissions produced during prescribed burning. They requested additional forest debris utilization to avoid producing smoke. Two forestwide plan components (FW-DC-AQ-01 and FW-GDL-AQ-01) provide direction for cooperating with federal, state, tribal, and local air quality agencies as appropriate to meet air quality standards. The IPNF have been able to meet air quality standards through the appropriate timing and location of prescribed burns. In addition, the IPNF have an aggressive utilization policy to reduce slash and support biomass markets. However, there are many ecological reasons to use prescribed fire as a resource management tool in reducing forest debris rather than using it as biomass for another purpose. The ecological benefits of fire are described in the vegetation section of the final EIS.

The three action alternatives have similar approaches to the use of fire. Alternative B Modified has a mixture of fuels treatments (planned and unplanned ignitions as well as mechanical treatment). Alternative D provides more opportunity for mechanical treatment, while also allowing planned and unplanned ignitions. Alternative C has the least mechanical treatments, while providing for planned and unplanned ignitions. Alternative C is the most responsive to the desire to restore fire to the landscape. However, because of its mixture of fuel treatments and overall movement towards vegetation desired conditions, I find Alternative B Modified provides the best opportunity for mitigating hazards in the WUI and restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems.

Revision Topic 3 – Watersheds and Aquatic Species

There were two primary reasons the 1987 Plan needed to be revised for watershed and aquatic dependent resources. The first was to establish management direction that recognizes and emphasizes watershed restoration activities. The second was to address changes in the physical and biological components of the aquatic ecosystem, such as water quality impairments; threatened, endangered, and sensitive species; soil productivity; and habitat conditions. The 1987 Plan had very little direction regarding watersheds, and no direction for restoration or improvement. Since the 1987 Plan was written there has been an increased focus by the State on identifying water quality impaired streams under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. In addition, since the 1987 Plan was written, the Kootenai River white sturgeon was listed as an endangered species and the bull trout was listed as a threatened species. Both have designated critical habitat within the Forests' boundary.

The 1987 Plan was amended in 1995 by the Inland Native Fish Strategy (USDA 1995) (INFISH). This amendment provides direction for the protection of riparian and aquatic habitat and species. The INFISH resulted in improved management direction for the 1987 Plan for these ecosystems.

As described on page 12 of this final ROD, the INFISH amendment is being carried forward under the revised Plan. In addition, the revised Plan includes further direction and emphasis for watershed protection and restoration. The INFISH concept of "priority watersheds" has been refined in the revised Plan as "conservation" and "restoration" subwatersheds. Conservation subwatersheds were identified to protect stronghold populations of native salmonids and compliment restoration efforts. Restoration subwatersheds were identified based on degraded habitat conditions, water quality limitations, depressed populations of native fish species, and a relatively higher potential for improvement. Restoration subwatersheds include both active and passive restoration efforts.

Active restoration opportunities will be pursued whenever possible, and considered in the context of existing budget levels and other land management priorities. Cooperation with land owners and interested parties such as watershed councils, state agencies, tribes, and conservation districts could result in improved accomplishments because resources could be pooled to accomplish conservation and restoration actions. Passive restoration will rely on the implementation of guidelines and best management practices to maintain watershed processes and aquatic habitat conditions to allow for natural rates of recovery. It will be more prevalent in MAs such as 1a through 1e that have wilderness characteristics.

Some commenters were concerned the revised Plan does not address requirements under the Clean Water Act and other laws. The IPNF are required to follow laws, policies, and regulations that relate to managing NFS lands and the final EIS lists those that are applicable to each resource, including those related to watersheds and aquatic habitats. The revised Plan provides broad, strategic guidance that is designed to supplement, not replace, overarching direction from these sources. For example, Forest Service Handbook direction includes the requirement to protect water quality and abate or mitigate adverse water quality impacts while meeting other resource goals and objectives (FSH 2509.22). The IPNF address this mandate by implementing best management practices (BMPs) outlined in the Soil and Water Conservation Handbook (FSH 2509.22) at the project level of analysis and implementation.

The revised Plan changes the aquatic management indicator species (MIS) from those found in the 1987 Plan. The aquatic MIS under the 1987 Plan included three trout species (cutthroat, rainbow, and bull trout), which were chosen because they were "commonly hunted, fished, or trapped". Under the revised plan, I am selecting a macroinvertebrate assemblage to serve as bioindicators of water quality and aquatic habitat conditions across the planning unit. Macroinvertebrates as the aquatic MIS will provide an appropriate measure of the ecological health of a waterbody or river and can be used to reveal pollution problems. However, macroinvertebrates are not indicators of fish populations or distribution; therefore, the macroinvertebrate assemblage will not be used for that purpose. (Selection of MIS in the revised Plan is required under 36 CFR 219.19.)

Although forestwide direction common to all alternatives are designed to protect and improve soil, riparian and aquatic habitat conditions, Alternative B Modified is expected to most effectively improve the overall trend in watershed conditions across the forest. Protection and restoration measures included in the revised Plan will improve habitat conditions for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. In addition, the macroinvertebrate assemblage, used to indicate the condition of water quality and aquatic habitat conditions across the entire planning unit, is expected to improve.

I believe the selected alternative presents the best balance between acres with active restoration opportunities and acres with passive restoration. It includes a greater number of active restoration acres than found under Alternative C and allows for improved conditions on a faster trajectory

than passive restoration. Alternative D provides the highest amount of active restoration acres. However, it does not improve vegetation conditions to the degree found under Alternative B Modified. As described under the vegetation revision topic, Alternative B Modified provides the most movement towards vegetation desired conditions, which increases resistance and resiliency to disturbance. This increased resistance and resiliency of vegetation to disturbance provides protection to watersheds, with fewer large-scale disturbances that could increase sedimentation and damage stream conditions.

Revision Topic 4 – Terrestrial Wildlife

Over the life of the 1987 Plan, changes have occurred that have resulted in modifications to wildlife management. Species listed as threatened and endangered have changed. The peregrine falcon, gray wolf, and bald eagle have been removed and the Canada lynx added. Knowledge related to habitat conservation for grizzly bear, lynx, woodland caribou, and other species has continued to evolve and the sensitive species list was updated. The revised Plan incorporates new information relative to habitat fragmentation, patch size, biodiversity, and ecosystem management strategies. Recent plan amendment direction relative to listed species (grizzly bear and lynx) is carried forward as forestwide direction to help move threatened species toward recovery (see Decisions Carried Forward, page 12 of this final ROD).

In order to preserve species populations, genetic structure, biotic communities, and landscapes, there has been an increased emphasis on the maintenance of ecological functions, processes, and disturbance regimes. The desired conditions for vegetation and fire are the foundation of the IPNF approach to providing species viability through a coarse filter approach. The revised plan includes a fine filter approach by providing direction to address specific habitat components or potential management effects to specific species and/or groups of species. It provides sufficient direction for implementation activities to maintain species viability and help move threatened and endangered species towards recovery.

The revised Plan allocates 188,700 acres to MA 1 and 681,200 acres to MA 5. These MAs emphasize natural processes with minimal human intervention/disturbance, and provide wildlife security habitat. There are also opportunities for active restoration of vegetation conditions (wildlife habitat) in areas which may currently be outside of desired conditions (MA6–60 percent or 1,507,000 acres).

The revised Plan contains specific direction to provide wildlife connectivity across the IPNF in cooperation with other agencies, and is compatible with connectivity efforts in British Columbia. The direction is designed to be flexible in light of the dynamic nature of the habitat and disturbance processes on the IPNF to accommodate multiple species' habitats and will allow them to move, connect, and persist.

The revised Plan changes the terrestrial wildlife management indicator species (MIS) from those found in the 1987 Plan. The MIS under the 1987 Plan included threatened and endangered species (grizzly bear, bald eagle, and woodland caribou), elk, whitetail deer, moose, goshawk, and pileated woodpecker. Under the revised plan, the IPNF chose species whose habitat will likely be influenced by forest management to provide a meaningful measure of progress towards vegetation desired conditions. Although commenters suggested a wide variety of species, the IPNF chose landbird assemblage and elk after considering the location and type of management activities that are likely to occur. The species in the landbird assemblage were selected to represent a variety of habitat conditions that could be tied to desired conditions for vegetation. Rocky Mountain elk were selected because they are a commonly hunted species and their habitat needs (security habitat) may be influenced by planned management programs. The final EIS and

the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle Zone (KIPZ) MIS Selection documentation provide additional information regarding MIS selection. (Selection of MIS in the revised Plan is required under 36 CFR 219.19.)

Some commenters specifically requested an "old growth" MIS. However, the IPNF do not have an obligate old growth habitat species or a species that relies solely on old growth habitat. Regardless, the revised Plan recognizes the important habitat value old growth provides for a variety of species and includes direction that will maintain and develop additional old growth over time (see FW-DC-VEG-03, FW-STD-VEG-01, FW-GDL-VEG-01, and FW-GDL-VEG-02). Other important wildlife habitat components, such as snags and downed wood (coarse woody debris), will also be maintained under forestwide vegetation and wildlife guidelines (see FW-DC-VEG-07 and 08, FW-GDL-VEG-03 through 06, FW-DC-WL-13 and 14, and FW-GDL-WL-16).

The final EIS and revised Plan address public concerns for wildlife habitat security and demonstrate the importance of habitat security considerations for all aspects of IPNF management. The grizzly bear access amendment ROD established standards for core (secure) habitat and motorized route densities within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones and those are carried forward in the revised Plan as FW-STD-WL-02. This provides high levels of habitat security for all species. In addition, wilderness areas, recommended wilderness areas, inventoried roadless areas, and other non-motorized areas contribute to secure habitat and connectivity for some species. The IPNF coordinated with State wildlife management agencies for setting management emphasis, including elk habitat security, and the revised Plan includes direction (FW-DC-WL-17) to coordinate with state agencies for ungulate habitat management.

I believe the revised plan's broad vegetation management approach to provide ecological components and processes at multiple scales on the landscape provides the full spectrum of habitats and conditions needed for the biological organisms associated with the various ecosystems of the IPNF. As forest conditions trend toward desired conditions for vegetation and fire intensity and frequency, wildlife will experience habitat amounts, pattern, and connectivity similar to those found under the natural disturbance process they evolved with on the forest. The benefits of management under Alternative B Modified for forest composition, structure, and pattern (as described in the vegetation section of the final EIS) provide the best opportunities for improving terrestrial wildlife habitat. Even though Alternative D provides more acres with management activities, there is less emphasis on restoration and movement of vegetation towards desired conditions as found under Alternative B Modified, and less secure habitat. Although Alternative C provides the most acres of security habitat, I believe Alternative B Modified provides sufficient security and limits on road densities to benefit woodland caribou, grizzly bear, lynx, big game/ungulates, and other species. In addition, Alternative B Modified provides the greatest improvement in habitat through restoration of vegetation and movement towards vegetation desired conditions.

Revision Topic 5 – Access and Recreation

National Forests provide diverse outdoor recreation opportunities, connecting people to nature in a variety of settings and activities. Recreation on the IPNF include (but is not limited to) hunting, scenic viewing/driving, rock climbing, skiing, fishing, hiking, camping, horseback riding, mountain biking, OHV riding, and snowmobiling. Commenters stressed the important economic contribution of forest recreation use to local economies and the high-value they place on traditional access opportunities.

Most of these activities occur across the Forests without conflict and National Visitor Use Monitoring has demonstrated overall satisfaction with IPNF recreation management (see the

access and recreation section of the final EIS). However, motor vehicle access for both summer and winter recreation is an ongoing issue for the public on both a local and national level. Although the IPNF provide adequate space and terrain for diverse recreation experiences, watershed protection and wildlife security needs often limit non-winter motor vehicle use opportunities. Some commenters felt additional motor vehicle restrictions are needed to maximize ecological protections, while other commenters felt there are too many restrictions for motor vehicle use and opportunities are unnecessarily limited.

The Forest have been managing motor vehicle access and roads for decades. In 1987, the IPNF had approximately 9,500 miles of road. As shown in the final EIS, the IPNF now has 8,684 total miles of road. Of that, 4,133 miles (47 percent) are designated for either yearlong or seasonal motor vehicle use. There are 3,666 miles (42 percent) of road that are in storage or intermittent use and closed to vehicular traffic. This is close to the projection in the 1987 Plan of 50 percent yearlong or seasonally restricted. The 2010 and 2011 Forest Plan Monitoring Reports indicate 2,910 miles of road were maintained, 1.2 miles constructed, and 27 miles reconstructed during the 2-year monitoring period. In addition, 64 miles of road were decommissioned.

The Forest have also been managing over-snow vehicle access for several decades. The Forests currently have 449,246 acres closed to all motor vehicles for most or all of the winter months. These areas were closed because of Wilderness designation, recommended wilderness allocation (in some areas), semi-primitive non-motorized recreation values, or protection of specific threatened or endangered species habitat. A separate, ongoing planning process is assessing over-snow vehicle use designations on the North Zone of the IPNF that will include both the Selkirks and the area adjacent to the Salmo-Priest Wilderness Area. Generally, forest monitoring has not indicated a need for change regarding over-snow vehicle use on the IPNF.

My decision does not change non-winter motor vehicle use on the Forests. The IPNF have completed non-winter motor vehicle use designations as required by Subpart B of the Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212) for the Coeur d'Alene Ranger District and the Kaniksu Zone resulting in published MVUMs. Site-specific analysis for the St. Joe travel management plan is ongoing under a separate planning effort and a decision is expected in 2015. The areas and routes designated as motorized on the MVUMs will not change with the revised Plan, except following project-level NEPA analysis if proposed. My decision, therefore, primarily affects over-snow vehicle and mechanized (bicycle) use.

While my decision does not affect non-winter motor vehicle use, it does affect future options to consider in designating additional miles or areas for motorized use following site-specific analysis. In selecting Alternative B Modified, I considered changes to existing uses and ecological needs. Alternative C emphasized non-motorized recreation, while Alternative D emphasized motorized recreation. I felt Alternative C resulted in too many acres with motorized restrictions, which analysis shows is not needed to protect wildlife (see wildlife section in the final EIS chapter 3). Although similar to Alternative D in motorized access, Alternative B Modified provides slightly more wildlife security. Alternative B Modified is similar to current conditions, with some changes for areas that have public conflict.

Alternative B Modified provides a balance to accommodate reasonable assurances of motorized and non-motorized recreation choices, while protecting forest resources. Alternative B Modified does the following:

- Incorporates previous landscape level plan decisions to protect ecological resources such as water quality, aquatic habitats, and wildlife security (see Decisions Carried Forward, page 12 of this final ROD);

- Provides the opportunity to consider non-winter motor vehicle use designations on 91 percent of the Forests. This is a change from 96 percent of the Forests under the 1987 Plan;
- Allows over-snow vehicle use on 70 percent of the Forests. This is a change from 79 percent under the 1987 Plan;
- Allows mechanized use (e.g., mountain bikes) on 93 percent of the Forests. This is a change from 100 percent under the 1987 Plan;
- Continues to provide dispersed recreation opportunities across the IPNF with some improvements to concentrated use areas. This is an increased emphasis on improvements over what was in the 1987 Plan.

The revised Plan makes broad, strategic decisions identifying suitable uses for the land while providing the settings for balanced recreation opportunities consistent with goals for watershed health, sustainable ecosystems, and biodiversity. I believe Alternative B Modified best balances the Forests' multiple-use objectives, while maintaining diverse, high quality outdoor recreation opportunities, a road and trail system that provides access, and protection for terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

Revision Topic 6 – Recommended Wilderness

I recognize the complexity of public concerns over recommended wilderness. The Forests took into consideration all public comments related to recommended wilderness boundary changes between the draft and final EIS. Some recommended wilderness boundary changes were made while many were not. Some commenters suggested boundary changes that were not made because they were counter to our wilderness evaluation, while others suggested boundaries that were not manageable, locatable on the ground, or met the characteristics of wilderness. Some commenters did not want the Forest Service to evaluate areas for wilderness potential at all; however, the Forest Service is directed to evaluate areas for recommended wilderness under 1982 Rule 36 CFR 219.17(a) which states "roadless areas within the NFS shall be evaluated and considered for recommendation as potential wilderness areas during the forest planning process."

Some did not believe the delineation of the Inventoried Roadless Areas is correct and therefore are an inappropriate starting point for wilderness evaluation. Some felt wilderness characteristics were under-valued while others felt they were over-valued. Some commenters felt the inclusion of improvements within recommended wilderness did not meet eligibility requirements. Our direction allows the potential wilderness inventory to contain improvements such as unauthorized and user-created roads, and evidence of historic logging activities where the use of mechanical equipment is not evident. It also allows adjustment of the potential wilderness inventory area boundaries that are taken forward as the preliminary administrative recommendations for manageability.

I believe the wilderness evaluation conducted by the Forests followed manual and handbook direction, resulting in appropriate suitability determinations. Potential wilderness is based on the inherent wilderness quality determined in the capability, availability, and needs assessment. In addition to the inherent wilderness quality an area might possess, the area should provide opportunities and experiences one would expect to find in a wilderness environment. Management of preliminary recommendations considers establishing boundaries that are easy to define and locate on the ground. The final EIS and errata describe the analysis used in evaluating individual roadless areas on the IPNF and include a summary of each area's evaluation of suitability for recommended wilderness (see Appendix C of the final EIS).

The roadless area wilderness evaluation for the revised Plan's final EIS indicated 331,005 acres of the IPNF had potential and were suitable as recommended wilderness. Of these, Alternative C recommended the most acreage for wilderness at 331,100 acres. Alternative D recommended the least acreage at 138,100 acres. Alternative B Modified recommended acreage similar to the 1987 Plan at 161,400 acres. I selected the areas recommended in Alternative B Modified both because they had public support and contain outstanding wilderness characteristics.

Some commenters were concerned I inappropriately considered the 1987 Plan recommended wilderness acreage a "cap" on my recommendation. Although the recommended acres in Alternative B Modified are similar to what was recommended in the 1987 Plan, I did not consider this amount as my limit. I carefully considered a range of recommended wilderness areas, as well as other allocations, to determine the mix of land and resource uses that would best meet public needs. I find the areas recommended in this decision are an appropriate balance for the IPNF in consideration of the wilderness evaluation, alternative analyses, and public comments.

The other roadless areas that commenters suggested for recommended wilderness, but which I am not recommending, will primarily be allocated to MA1e or MA5. The desired conditions in these backcountry MAs will provide a range of non-motorized, motorized, and mechanized opportunities and secure wildlife habitat. The 19,800 acres allocated to MA1e–Primitive Lands allow over-snow motor vehicle and mechanized (bicycle) uses while protecting other wilderness characteristics

Some commenters also expressed concern over the allowed uses in recommended wilderness. The revised Plan includes desired conditions and standards for these areas that are incompatible with motorized and mechanized use. Thus, I am also making the site-specific decision to restrict over-snow motor vehicle and mechanized (mountain biking) uses within recommended wilderness. This is a change from the existing condition, where varying levels of motorized and mechanized equipment use has been allowed in some of the 1987 Plan proposed wilderness areas.

Over-snow motor vehicle use has been prohibited in the Upper Priest, the Salmo-Priest additions and portions of the Mallard Larkins since 1987. However, motorized over-snow vehicle use was allowed in the IPNF portion of the Scotchman Peaks, which was inconsistent with adjacent land management on the Kootenai National Forest. Allocation of this area to MA1b and the site-specific prohibition on over-snow motor vehicle use and mountain biking will bring consistency to management across both forests. Although over-snow motor vehicle use in the Selkirk proposed wilderness area was not prohibited in the 1987 Plan, much of the area is currently under a court-ordered motorized use prohibition for caribou. Mechanized use has been allowed in all areas under the 1987 Plan.

My decision does not allow over-snow motor vehicle and mechanized uses to continue in the revised Plan recommended wilderness because of the impact to wilderness character. However, other backcountry areas provide a range of remote mechanized, non-motorized, and motorized opportunities, and will continue to allow these uses. The boundary adjustment I am making in the Upper Pack portion of the Selkirk recommended wilderness, allocating this area to MA1e instead of MA1b, is being made in consideration of these recreation opportunities as the Forests address winter travel management in the area.

The revised Plan also allocates the Forest Service portion (6,900 acres) of the Grandmother Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA) as MA1c. The BLM continues to administer an additional 12,140 acres of the WSA. MA1c desired conditions are similar to those in MA1b, however motorized recreation existing at the time of Forest Service acquisition (single-track

motor vehicle use) is allowed to continue. Some commenters felt that the area should have been allocated as recommended wilderness (1b) and some felt that single track motorized use should be prohibited within the 1c allocation, while still others felt that the area should also allow ATV use. The wilderness evaluation for the Grandmother Mountain IRA (which includes the WSA) determined that this area's suitability for recommendation as wilderness is limited due to its moderate availability rating, complex boundary, and intermixed ownership. This determination is consistent with BLM management of the WSA, which also did not recommend it for wilderness. The continuation of existing single track motorized use with no expansion of new uses is consistent with maintaining the suitability of the area as required by law.

I find the analysis for the final EIS gave independent consideration to forest-specific issues pertaining to recommended wilderness management. The analysis considered impacts of existing motorized and mechanized use in the evaluation of the forest's 48 IRAs for wilderness capability and availability as described in Appendix C to the final EIS. In particular, the Forests addressed mountain biking, over-snow and motorized uses, explained how site-specific uses were analyzed, and discussed why continuation of some uses would compromise wilderness values of areas recommended for wilderness.

With respect to mountain biking, the analysis examined how mountain biking as an activity is inconsistent with the "primitive and unconfined" definition used to determine wilderness suitability, and discusses the continued growth of the sport and increasing use on public lands. I believe the analysis examined how mountain biking can lead to user conflicts and resource impacts and gave adequate consideration to site-specific trails in recommended wilderness such as the Long Canyon Trail #16 in the Selkirk recommended wilderness. The project record and final EIS discussed the number of miles of trail (212 miles) currently open to mountain biking that will be closed by my decision.

I believe the Forests' analysis of over-snow use examines how this activity is incompatible with more primitive activities and the opportunity for solitude associated with wilderness character. The final EIS and project record explain how existing over-snow use was considered while examining wilderness capability and availability. Specifically, the current over-snow use in the Scotchman Peaks recommended wilderness area was determined to be inconsistent with the management of the adjoining recommended wilderness on the Kootenai National Forest. The management area designation for this area now aligns with the adjacent forest.

Wilderness is highly valued by many, and represents deeply held values and beliefs. Yet, recommendation and potential Congressional designation of lands for wilderness will necessarily result in losses of other opportunities such as snowmobiling and mountain biking. The revised Plan provides a balance of opportunities in response to the broad range of public values.

Revision Topic 7 – Timber Production

Timber harvest on the IPNF has been an important management issue since the Forests were established. The management direction in the 1987 Plan emphasized the production of timber, with the majority of MAs allowing or promoting timber management. This is reflected in the established allowable sale quantity (ASQ) in the 1987 Plan of 280 MMBF/year for the first decade. In the 1990s, the IPNF began to focus on ecosystem management and ecological sustainability, with a decreased emphasis on commercial timber production and an increased emphasis on timber harvest as a tool to restore vegetation, improve wildlife habitat, or to address other resource requirements (e.g., riparian habitat conservation direction under the Inland Native Fish Strategy and grizzly bear management). In addition, there has been new or updated threatened and endangered species recovery direction, policy changes regarding IRAs, and

declining budgets and reduced staffing over the past several years. Subsequently, timber production levels have been well below the ASQ established in the 1987 Plan, with an average volume sold of 52.5 MMBF/year in 2008 and 2009. Although the ASQ is intended to represent the maximum sustainable harvest level subject to management constraints with no budget limitation, there is a public expectation that the full ASQ can be achieved and support the commensurate level of local jobs and income displayed in the 1987 Plan's analysis.

The final EIS reanalyzed the ASQ based on changes in policy and ecosystem needs, and also considered an evaluation of timber suitability as required by 36 CFR 219.14. The revised Plan outlines the ASQ as 120.6 MMBF/year over the first decade. The revised Plan also provides a predicted annual volume sold of 44.6 MMBF/year, based on current budget levels. If budgets increase, the Forests have the ability to increase timber harvest above the predicted timber volume sold up to the ASQ. This represents the maximum level of sustainable timber harvest given management requirements for other resources such as water quality, old growth, and wildlife habitat.

Some public commenters are concerned about what they perceive as modest projections for timber harvest in the revised Plan. They would like the IPNF to achieve sustainable and reliable harvest levels but prefer the revised Plan include a higher ASQ. They would also like the objective for timber harvest in the revised Plan to match the ASQ rather than the predicted volume sold, which is constrained by budget.

The final EIS includes a detailed analysis to determine sustainable levels of timber harvest relative to desired conditions and forest management requirements. I believe the ASQ level is the maximum that could be achieved given additional funding (nearly triple the current budget) and habitat and water quality protection constraints for other resources. Providing an objective that is realistic given current budgets levels is appropriate. The predicted volume sold is a reasonable estimate of the sustainable timber volume that could be sold given current funding levels. The social and economic section of the final EIS highlights the importance of forest outputs on local economies and communities, as well as how forest management affects jobs and income. The IPNF staff works to ensure the economic feasibility of all commercial timber sales and I find the amount of timber harvest predicted in the revised Plan is achievable, given current budget levels. Thus, timber harvest will continue to contribute to the viability of the forest products infrastructure.

The revised plan also considers utilization of non-sawlog material in keeping with National and Regional Forest Service direction to increase availability and utilization of biomass. Not only does this support non-saw/biomass material markets, it is important for reducing fuels and restoring forests while protecting air quality and reducing required collections for brush disposal.

I find Alternative D is most responsive to this revision topic. It has the highest level of ASQ and predicted timber volume and provides the most wood fiber in response to public demands. Alternatives B Modified and C provide lower levels of forest products. However, in consideration of the full range of National Forest management resource values, I believe Alternative B Modified provides the best opportunity for sustainable timber production while contributing to an economically viable forest products industry.

Alternatives

All alternatives in the final EIS adhere to multiple use and sustained yield of goods and services (36 CFR 219.1(a), (b)). In addition, they share objectives and standards for managing forest resources and complying with applicable laws and policies. They also contain the same direction

to contribute to the diversity of desired native and non-native plant and animal communities and contribute toward the recovery of threatened and endangered species. Forestwide direction identified in the revised Plan applies to all action alternatives.

The revision topics drove alternative development. The primary difference between alternatives is in the allocation of acres by MA to meet the purpose and need for change, and address one or more of the revision topics.

Each alternative was developed to be in compliance with applicable law and regulation, as well as national policy and direction including, but not limited to, the Healthy Forests Initiative, National Fire Plan, and National Energy Policy.

The following did not change between the action alternatives in the final EIS and errata:

- **Forest Plan Goals, Desired Conditions, and Standards and Guidelines—**Management area and forestwide direction for goals, desired conditions, standards, and guidelines remained constant for all action alternatives.
- **Experimental Forests—**Allocation of Experimental Forests (MA4b) remains constant for all action alternatives.
- **Developed Recreation Sites—**Existing developed recreation sites were retained in all alternatives. There were no site-specific proposals to remove or create developed recreation sites. Allocation of primary recreation areas (MA7) remained constant for all action alternatives.
- **Utility Rights-of-Way and Communication Sites —** Direction for and location of designated utility rights-of-way and communication sites remained constant for all alternatives.
- **Wild and Scenic Rivers—**Direction for, and allocation of, designated and eligible wild and scenic rivers (MA2a and 2b) remains constant for all action alternatives.
- **Wilderness Study Area—**The Grandmother Mountain Wilderness Study Area and its management would continue as outlined by the Land Exchange Acts (the act of 1992, [P.L. 102-584] and the act of 2006, [P.L. 109-372]) regardless of which alternative is selected for implementation.
- **Designated Wilderness**—The Salmo-Priest Wilderness Designation remains constant for all alternatives.

Alternatives Considered in Detail, Including the No-Action Alternative

The no action and three action alternatives are summarized as follows. See the final EIS for a full description and analysis of effects. Table 5 on page 37 of the final EIS contains a comparison of the MA allocations for each alternative.

Alternative A is the no-action alternative. This alternative is the 1987 Plan, as amended to date, and accounts for current laws and regulations. New information, inventories, and technologies were used to evaluate this alternative. Output levels were recalculated for this alternative based on these new sources of information and amended direction. The no-action alternative retains the 1987 Plan goals and objectives, standards and guidelines, and MA prescriptions, as amended. This alternative serves as the baseline for comparison with the action alternatives.

Alternative B Modified is based on Alternative B from the DEIS, with modifications in response to comments. This alternative is the preferred alternative. It is the result of collaborative efforts since 2003 and responds to the identified purpose and need. This alternative emphasizes moving towards desired future conditions and contributing to ecological, social, and economic sustainability. Alternative B Modified would manage approximately 6 percent of the Forests as recommended wilderness (MA1b), 27 percent as backcountry (MA5), and 60 percent as general forest (MA6). Thirty-eight percent of the Forests would be suitable for timber production.

Alternative C emphasizes wilderness values and protection of backcountry while moving towards desired conditions. There is an increased emphasis on natural disturbance processes (such as unplanned wildfire ignitions for multiple objectives) and prescribed burning. Mechanical treatments (e.g., timber harvest, stream improvements) also occur in order to move towards watershed and vegetation desired conditions. Alternative C would have more opportunities for backcountry and non-motorized recreation (MA1 — 335,300 acres; MA5 — 630,000 acres). This alternative also has more acres recommended as wilderness (331,100 acres) than any other alternative. About 56 percent would be allocated to general forest (MA6). Thirty-six percent of the Forests would be suitable for timber production.

Alternative D emphasizes achieving desired condition through mechanical means. Timber production is emphasized while moving towards vegetation desired conditions. This alternative has the most acres available for timber production and motorized access, with 63 percent allocated to MA6 (general forest). There would be fewer acres allocated to recommended wilderness (MA1b—approximately 5 percent) and backcountry (MA5–less than 25 percent of the Forests). Thirty-nine percent of the Forests would be suitable for timber production.

Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Detailed Study

Federal agencies are required by NEPA to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives and to briefly discuss the reasons for eliminating any alternatives that were not developed in detail (40 CFR 1502.14). Public comments received in response to the proposed action provided suggestions for alternative methods for achieving the purpose and need. Some of these alternatives may have been outside the scope of this revision effort or duplicative of the alternatives considered in detail. Over 19 alternatives (or alternative variations) were considered, but dismissed from detailed consideration for reasons summarized in chapter 2 of the final EIS.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations require agencies to specify the alternative or alternatives which were considered to be environmentally preferable (40 CFR 1505.2(b)). Forest Service policy (FSH 1909.15) defines environmentally preferable as: “An alternative that best meets the goals of Section 101 of NEPA. …Ordinarily this is the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protects, preserves, and enhances historical, cultural, and natural resources.”

I find, based upon the laws and regulations guiding National Forest System management, that Alternative B Modified is the environmentally preferred alternative. Although Alternative C would allow the fewest mechanical ground-disturbing activities and lowest acres allowing motorized use, it does not address the six goals of NEPA as well as Alternative B Modified does. I base my finding on the following comparison showing how the alternatives address the goals of Section 101 of NEPA:

1. **Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustees of the environment for succeeding generations**

Alternative B Modified emphasizes moving forest conditions toward desired future conditions while contributing to ecological, social, and economic sustainability. Alternative B Modified provides the most movement towards vegetation desired conditions while providing sustainable levels of timber harvest similar to current levels. The higher timber harvest levels under Alternative B Modified than Alternative C provides the IPNF sustainable share of products and uses demanded by the public, while having a higher probability of improving and restoring vegetation for future generations than does Alternative D. Alternative A would provide the least improvement toward desired conditions.

2. **Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings**

Alternative B Modified achieves maintenance of a safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing forest better than the other alternatives because it provides the best mix of resource utilization, active and passive management, and motorized and non-motorized recreation uses along with the safeguards provided by standards and guidelines for maintaining water quality, scenery, and wildlife habitat. Alternative B Modified provides recommended wilderness at levels similar to current levels of Alternative A, recommending the best of our backcountry areas for this designation. Alternative B Modified also provides timber harvest levels similar to current Alternative A levels and maintains access to important recreational areas better than Alternative C. Although Alternative D provides higher levels of timber harvest and access opportunities, it does not provide the levels of recommended wilderness as is currently enjoyed on the Forests.

3. **Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences**

The beneficial uses that are most varied between alternatives and that I considered in this finding are wood fiber production and a reasonable balance between motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities. Alternative B Modified achieves a higher level of reasonable, sustainable beneficial uses than Alternative C. While Alternative D provides higher levels of wood fiber production and motorized recreation allocations, it does so at the expense of non-motorized recreation allocations. Although the beneficial uses of Alternative A are similar, Alternative B Modified also provides the most movement of vegetation towards desired conditions, which will provide for more resistant and resilient forests. This improves the health of our forests and watersheds, which enhances wildlife habitat and reduces undesirable and unintended consequences.

4. **Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment, which supports diversity and variety of individual choice**

Part of preserving our historic and cultural national heritage is recognizing that humans *are* a natural aspect of our national heritage – humans have utilized the physical and cultural resources offered by the IPNF for thousands of years. Recognizing that, I find that the best way to preserve that heritage, and the environment that supports diversity and variety of choice, is to manage for a National Forest that provides a balance between the physical resource use and the appropriate protection of cultural and historic resources. Based upon the collaborative public efforts, tribal consultation, and the effects of each alternative displayed in the final EIS, I find that Alternative B Modified meets this goal better than the other

alternatives. It improves on Alternative A and provides the best balance of uses between Alternative C's emphasis on wilderness values and protection of backcountry and Alternative D's emphasis on achieving desired conditions through mechanical means.

5. **Achieve a balance between population and resource use, which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities**

The public demands a variety of products and uses that can be provided by their National Forests. National forest lands and resources are evaluated as important local resources that contribute to the quality of lifestyles in the region. The final EIS alternative analysis compares the various values the public uses to determine their quality of life varying from economic resource extraction values (timber harvest and minerals) to less tangibly-defined resources such as wilderness values and backcountry protection. The challenge is in defining the balance sought in this goal, and I find that Alternative B Modified achieves that balance. Alternative B Modified provides more resource use than Alternative C, but more opportunities for backcountry protection than Alternative D.

6. **Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources**

I find Alternative B Modified enhances the quality of renewable resources and provides sustainable use of renewable resources. The standards and guidelines and the management area allocation under Alternative B Modified provides for levels of resource use that are similar to current levels of Alternative A, while providing protection measures and preserving areas as backcountry or recommended wilderness. While Alternative D provides higher levels of resource use, it does not provide for as much vegetation restoration as does Alternative B Modified. Alternative C emphasizes more passive management and greater amount of backcountry and recommended wilderness, but it does so at the expense of resource utilization and does not achieve as much vegetation restoration as Alternative B Modified.

Range of Alternatives

After considering the analysis in Alternatives A through D, and the alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed study, I believe a reasonable range of alternatives was carefully evaluated in compliance with the NEPA.

Although consideration of budget constraints reduced the variation in the effects of the actions across the alternatives, the analysis in the final EIS covered a full spectrum of management intensity ranging from a preservation emphasis in Alternative C to a highly-managed, commodity output and motorized recreation emphasis in Alternative D. All action alternatives are realistic, implementable, and responsive to the revision topics. In order to provide a range of alternatives, Alternative C includes recommended wilderness areas that are not consistent with the Idaho Roadless Rule. If Alternative C was selected, an adjustment to the Rule would be required prior to implementation.

Role of Science

The development of the final EIS and the revised Plan has been based on consideration of the best available science throughout the planning process. This has occurred by comprehensively reviewing available scientific research and other information relevant to the resource areas addressed. Scientific conclusions are drawn from well-supported data sources and data availability is disclosed. Scientific sources relied on were cited, responsible opposing views were discussed, incomplete and unavailable information was acknowledged, and scientific uncertainty

and risk was addressed in relevant portions of the final EIS or project record. In addition, the specific modeling and analysis methods used were documented as appropriate.

The revised Plan provides for the sustainability of the resources of the IPNF, while directing the coordination and management of multiple uses of national forest land such as recreation, timber, mining, wildlife, fish, watershed, and wilderness. Recognizing that conditions on the IPNF do not remain static, that new information is constantly surfacing, and that scientific uncertainty is associated with some conclusions regarding resource effects, the revised Plan embraces an adaptive management approach. See page 44 of this final ROD and chapter 5 of the revised Plan for more information regarding the IPNF adaptive management framework.

Relationship to Other Entities

The Planning Rule under 36 CFR §219.7(c) requires the review of planning and land use policies of other Federal Agencies, State and local governments and Indian tribes. This review includes (1) consideration of the objectives of these entities as expressed in their plans and policies; (2) an assessment of the interrelated impacts of these plans and policies; (3) determination of how the revised Plan should deal with impacts identified; and (4) where conflicts with Forest Service planning are identified, consideration of alternatives for resolution.

County, State, and Federal plans were reviewed during the plan revision process. These plans are referenced and incorporated in numerous areas of analysis in the final EIS, including social and economic, water, air, wildlife, fire, and vegetation. Direction in the revised Plan incorporates information from these other plans.

County Governments

The Forests worked with county governments in developing the revised plan. Their comments were reviewed and carefully considered. Many meetings were held with the counties throughout the planning process (see the planning record, volume 1, and volume 2).

The interdisciplinary team reviewed the counties' comprehensive management plans and did not find any direct conflicts or inconsistencies in the revised Plan. However, we did find conflicts with the Benewah County Natural Resource Plan that cannot be rectified with additional alternative development. Areas where the Forests found the Plan and the counties' comprehensive management plan goals are well-aligned in several areas include:

- the similar Boundary and Benewah County Comprehensive Plan forestry guidelines that "planning decisions should encourage multiple uses of forest resources and promote harvest, thinning, and other silvicultural practices to ensure safety and to improve the health and diversity of forest land";
- a Benewah County Comprehensive Plan tourism objective to "cooperate with State and Federal agencies, cities, adjoining counties and private associations in the planning and development of all types of recreational activities and facilities;"
- a Bonner County Comprehensive Plan natural resources goal to "strive to manage its natural resources to attain the greatest long term public benefit";
- a Shoshone Comprehensive Plan parks, recreation, and open space goal to "encourage the suppliers of recreational opportunities to provide a variety of recreational facilities" including "establish coordination with State and Federal agencies to provide for additional sites for recreation";

- and a Kootenai Comprehensive Plan economic development goal to “protect the use of the County’s diverse natural resources in an environmentally responsible way so as to maximize the positive economic impact of tourism and recreational use”.

The Bonner and Kootenai County plans also discuss the importance of their county natural resource values and include goals and/or policies for protecting critical wildlife habitat, water resources, and air quality, which are well-aligned with the IPNF land management plan goals and desired conditions.

Despite the consistency between land use plans, I understand county representatives perceive issues regarding economic effects related to expected timber outputs and motorized access. The final EIS social and economic section discusses these impacts, but I acknowledge the counties still dispute whether my decision will strike the correct balance between ecological protection and local economic need. With a large federal land base in northern Idaho, I recognize the local economic base is dependent on access and use of the Forests. I believe a productive working relationship between the Forests and county governments is vital for successfully implementing the Plan and supporting the economic base within the ecological considerations the Plan describes. For this reason, the Plan includes desired conditions and objectives which emphasize the Forests’ commitment to work with the counties, and other government agencies, in order to achieve multiple use goals on the IPNF.

State

Several Idaho State agencies are affected by, or affect Forest Service management. These include the Idaho Department of Fish and Game; the Idaho State Parks and Recreation; the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality; the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission; and the Idaho Department of Transportation. The Forests coordinated information with State agencies during all phases of the plan revision process. Those offices provided formal comments during the scoping and other public involvement stages. Statewide assessments were considered in the development of the revised Plan.

In addition, the Forests worked with the Idaho Roadless Commission to ensure the revised Plan was compatible with the Idaho Roadless Rule. Adjustments were made to the management area boundaries for Alternative B Modified to provide consistency with the Rule.

Tribes

During development of the revised Plan, the IPNF consulted with the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the Kalispel Tribe, the Coeur d′Alene Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Spokane Tribe of Indians. The Kootenai National Forest took the lead to consult with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes on forest plan revision. As a result, specific tribal comments were incorporated in the final EIS and revised Plan.

Federal

Management of federal lands adjacent to the IPNF was considered in the development of the revised Plan and the analysis of cumulative effects in the final EIS.

Consideration of national scenic and historic trails, utility corridors, recommended wilderness, and other management concerns across boundaries were discussed with the Colville, Nez Perce-Clearwater, and Kootenai National Forests. The forests met to ensure management problems were not created with the IPNF revised Plan.

In addition, the Forests worked with the Border Patrol on developing direction within the revised Plan to coordinate on issues relating to national security along the northern international boundary.

Climate Change

Scientific understanding and public awareness of global climate change has increased dramatically in recent years. There is broad scientific consensus that increases in average global temperature is very likely if atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases continue to accumulate at current rates. How these potential global changes might translate to climatic changes on the IPNF is much more uncertain.

The continuous forest planning process allows us to adjust our management plans as new, locally specific information with sufficient scientific confidence becomes available. The goals and objectives of the forest plan are consistent with maintaining the resilience and diversity of the vegetation, watersheds, and wildlife of the IPNF in the face of the potential effects of climate change. Over the next 10 to 15 years, projected changes in global and continental average temperatures are much less than for later this century. Projected changes in precipitation patterns over the next 10 to 15 years are even smaller, although of greater uncertainty. Moreover, a 10 to 15-year time period is relatively short in terms of global and regional climate trends and conditions may not differ from the range of variability experienced in recent decades.

The Forest Service is undertaking substantial efforts to better understand the potential effects of climate change on resource management and the associated uncertainties at the scale of individual national forests. Ongoing national, regional, and forest-specific monitoring and scientific research will continue to add to our understanding, and will help to inform evaluations of whether adjustments in management actions are needed to maintain the health, diversity, and productivity of the National Forests and Grasslands, including the IPNF.

The revised Plan goals and objectives are designed to maintain or improve the health, diversity, and productivity of the IPNF. However, if planning, management, and monitoring information on resource conditions and trends, including those that may be affected by long-term climatic trends, indicate a need for change, the IPNF will adjust forest plan direction as necessary.

Findings Related to Laws and Regulations

The Forest Service manages the IPNF in conformance with many laws and regulations. I have reviewed the statutes specific to individual resources as described in chapter 3 of the final EIS, and I find this decision represents the best possible approach to both harmonizing and reconciling the current statutory duties of the Forest Service. Following are summaries of how the revised Plan addresses compliance with some of the more prominent applicable laws and regulations.

American Indian Religious Freedom Act

Federal agencies must make a good faith effort to understand how Indian religious practices may come into conflict with other forest uses and consider any adverse impacts on these practices in their decision-making practices. There are seven federally-recognized American Indian nations with cultural affiliation on the IPNF: the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, the Coeur d′Alene Tribe of Idaho, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the Spokane Tribe of Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the Nez Perce Tribe. Within the boundaries of the IPNF, there are two tribes with Treaty reserved, off-reservation rights: the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. In addition, the Coeur d′Alene Tribe of Idaho has reserved rights through executive order on a limited section

of the Coeur d′Alene River Ranger District. The Nez Perce Tribe has a wide ranging aboriginal territory that coincides with the general location of the Coeur d′Alene Tribal lands within the IPNF, but off reservation; rights associated with ceded lands under the Stevens Treaty of 1855 are located to the south of the Forests' boundary. Both the Spokane and the Colville Tribal territories lay within Washington, to the west of the Forests' boundary, but both visited the environs of the IPNF during the historic and prehistoric periods.

The revised Plan is strategic and programmatic in nature, providing guidance and direction to future site-specific projects and activities. No effects on American Indian social, economic, or subsistence rights are anticipated as a result of this revised Plan. The Forests will continue to consult with tribes during site-specific management activities that may impact treaty rights and/or cultural sites and cultural use. The revised Plan desired conditions, objectives, and guidelines include provisions in consideration of American Indian rights and interests and cultural resources. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with this act.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act

The purpose of this act is to provide protection for archaeological resources found on public lands and Indian lands of the United States. The legislation provides civil and criminal penalties for those who remove or damage archaeological resources in violation of the prohibitions contained in the act. The act prohibits the removal of archaeological resources on public lands or Indian lands without first obtaining a permit from the affected Federal land manager or Indian Tribe and requires Federal agencies to develop plans to survey lands under their management to determine the nature and extent of archaeological and cultural resources.

The revised Plan is strategic and programmatic in nature, providing guidance and direction to future site-specific projects and activities. Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and 36 CFR 800 regulations require assessments to establish the presence of historic properties within the area of potential effect for any site-specific activities and also meet the intent of this act. In addition, the Forests will continue to consult with tribes during site-specific management activities that may impact cultural sites and cultural use. The revised Plan desired conditions, objectives, and guidelines include provisions in consideration American Indian rights and interests and cultural resources. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with this act.

Clean Air Act

According to the Clean Air Act of 1990 and the Organic Administration Act of 1897, the USDA Forest Service has the responsibility to protect the air, land, and water resources from the impacts of air pollutants produced within the national forest boundaries and to work with states to protect those same resources from degradation associated with the impacts of air pollution emitted outside of the national forest.

The revised Plan is strategic and programmatic in nature, providing guidance and direction to future site-specific projects and activities. The revised Plan does not create, authorize, or execute any activities with the potential to alter air quality, although it does provide for the consideration of certain types of activities such as prescribed burning. Forestwide desired conditions and guidelines include direction for meeting air quality standards established by Federal and State agencies during planning for prescribed burns. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with this act.

Clean Water Act

The intent of the act is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. The revised Plan is strategic and programmatic in nature, providing guidance and direction to future site-specific projects and activities. The revised Plan does not create, authorize, or execute any ground-disturbing activity, although it does provide for the consideration of certain types of activities. The revised Plan contains direction to ensure all site-specific projects meet or exceed State Best Management Practices prepared under guidance of the Clean Water Act. Implementation of the revised Plan is expected to contribute to protecting or restoring the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of waters of the United States in accordance with the Clean Water Act. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with this act.

Endangered Species Act

The purpose of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved and to provide for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species. Section 7(a)(1) of the act requires federal agencies to carry out programs for the conservation of listed species. In addition, ESA requires federal agencies to insure that any agency action does not jeopardize the continued existence of the species (ESA Section 7(a)(2)). ESA also requires the USFWS and Forest Service, respectively, to base the biological opinion and subsequent agency action on the use of best scientific and commercially available data (16 U.S.C. 1536(a)(2)).

In accordance with Section 7(c) of the act, USFWS identified the listed and proposed threatened or endangered species that may be present on the Forests. Biological assessments (BAs) were prepared for the identified terrestrial, aquatic, and plant species.

The terrestrial BA found implementation of the revised Plan *may affect, and is likely to adversely affect* Canada lynx, grizzly bear, and woodland caribou. The BA also determined that implementation of the revised Plan will *adversely affect* designated critical habitat for Canada lynx and woodland caribou. The BA outlines the specific reasons why implementation of the revised Plan may have short-term adverse effects to these species and critical habitats, and how it will result in overall net benefits.

The aquatic BA found implementation of the revised Plan *may affect, and is likely to adversely affect* bull trout. The BA also determined the revised Plan will *adversely affect* designated critical habitat for bull trout. As documented in the BA, implementation of the revised Plan will provide for an overall net benefit to bull trout and bull trout designated critical habitat. The BA outlines the specific reasons why implementation of the revised Plan may have short-term adverse effects to this species and critical habitat, and how it will result in overall net benefits.

The aquatic BA found implementation of the revised Plan will have *no effect* on Kootenai River white sturgeon or its habitat. As documented in the BA, forest management activities have not been identified as a factor in the decline of the Kootenai River white sturgeon. Therefore, land management activities allowed under the revised Plan will not affect Kootenai River white sturgeon or its habitat.

The plant BA determined the revised Plan would have *no effect* on the water howellia and Spalding's catchfly. These species have no known occurrences on the IPNF; however, suitable habitat potentially exists for these plants and they are listed as "suspected." The protection measures offered for these species in the revised Plan result in the determination of no effect.

The USFWS issued Biological Opinions (BOs) covering Canada lynx, grizzly bear, woodland caribou, bull trout and critical habitat for Canada lynx, woodland caribou and bull trout. The BOs determined that the actions as proposed are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of Canada lynx, grizzly bear, woodland caribou, or bull trout, and are not likely to destroy or adversely modify Canada lynx, woodland caribou, or bull trout critical habitat. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with the requirements of the ESA.

Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898)

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, requires that federal agencies make achieving environmental justice part of their mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of their program, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. The Order further stipulates that the agencies conduct their programs and activities in a manner that does not have the effect of excluding persons from participating in, denying persons the benefits of, or subjecting persons to discrimination under such programs, policies, and activities because of their race, color, or national origin.

In accordance with Executive Order 12898, the revised Plan has been assessed to determine whether it would disproportionately impact minority or low-income populations. The social assessments for the IPNF (Russell and Adams-Russell 2003, Russell and Downs 1995) and the assessment of social conditions and trends (Russell et al. 2006) did not identify any disproportionate impacts from forest management. In addition, collaboration and public involvement on the revised Plan did not identify any concerns regarding disproportionate impacts to low-income or minority populations. The revised Plan is strategic and programmatic in nature, providing guidance and direction to future site-specific projects and activities. Future site-specific activities will consider potential disproportionate effects on minority or low-income communities during project planning. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with Executive Order 12898.

Federal Land Policy and Management Act

This act allows the granting of easements across National Forest System Lands. The revised Plan is strategic and programmatic in nature, providing guidance and direction to future site-specific projects and activities. The revised Plan does not create, authorize, or execute any specific activity, although it does provide for the consideration of granting easements and rights-of-way. Forestwide desired conditions include strategic easements to provide reasonable public and administrative access. Therefore, the revised Plan is consistent with the act.

Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act

The procedures of the 1982 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219.12(f)(6)) require that at least one alternative be developed that responds to and incorporates the Resources Planning Act (RPA) Program's tentative resource objectives for each National Forest as displayed in Regional Guides. The last RPA Program was developed in 1995 and the Regional Guide for the Northern Region was withdrawn on November 26, 2001, as required by the 2000 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219.35 (e)). The Forest Service Strategic Plan 2007–2012 in lieu of an RPA Program, was completed in accordance with the Government Performance Results Act and the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The Strategic Plan does not recommend outputs to incorporate in specific forest plans, but all alternatives analyzed in detail in the final EIS support the broad strategic objectives.

Invasive Species (Executive Order 13112)

Executive Order 13112 directs federal agencies to prevent the introduction of invasive species; detect and respond rapidly to and control populations of such species in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner; to monitor invasive species populations accurately and reliably; to provide for restoration of native species and habitat conditions in ecosystems that have been invaded; to conduct research on invasive species and develop technologies to prevent introduction; and to provide for environmentally sound control of invasive species; and promote public education on invasive species and the means to address them. All of these actions are subject to the availability of appropriations. FSM 2900, Invasive Species Management, sets forth National Forest System policy, responsibilities, and direction for the prevention, detection, control, and restoration of effects from aquatic and terrestrial invasive species (including vertebrates, invertebrates, plants, and pathogens).

The revised Plan is strategic and programmatic in nature, providing guidance and direction to future site-specific projects and activities. The revised Plan does not create, authorize, or execute any ground-disturbing activity, although it does provide for the consideration of certain types of activities that may have the potential to affect the dispersal of invasive species. The revised Plan includes forestwide desired condition statements, objectives, guidelines, and specific MA direction that stress the need to treat new invaders and utilize best management practices that limit the introduction and spread from management activities. In addition, other direction serves to protect watershed, soil, riparian, and aquatic conditions in ways that will reduce management caused disturbances which otherwise may increase weed spread or introduction. In addition, the monitoring program includes indicators associated with invasive plant species and effectiveness of treatments. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with Executive Order 13112.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Executive Order 13186

Executive Order 13186 (January 10, 2001): “Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds” was issued by President Bill Clinton in furtherance of the purposes of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Acts, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act. This order requires including effects of federal actions on migratory birds as part of the environmental analysis process. On December 8, 2008, the Forest Service signed a Memorandum of understanding with the USFWS to complement the Executive Order (USDA Forest Service 2008) and the Forest Service agreed to: (a) incorporate migratory bird habitat and population objectives and recommendations into the agency planning process, in cooperation with other governments, state, federal agencies, and non-federal partners and (b) strive to protect, restore, enhance, and manage habitat of migratory birds, and prevent the further loss or degradation of remaining habitats on NFS lands.

The IPNF observe conservation strategies within the Partners in Flight Conservation Plan (PIF 2000). The use of this plan supports the goal of maintaining long-term sustainability of migratory bird species and their habitats as specified by this act and the E.O. The revised Plan includes forestwide and MA direction related to key stressors for migratory birds and their habitats, including direction to maintain or improve forest resilience, composition, and structure. Future site-specific activities or projects with the potential to impact migratory bird habitat will be analyzed with site-specific NEPA processes and comply with revised Plan direction. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and E.O. 13186.

Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act

Consistent with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. 528–531) (MUSYA), the Forest Service manages the NFS to sustain the multiple use of its renewable resources in perpetuity while maintaining the long-term health and productivity of the land. Resources are managed through a combination of approaches and concepts for the benefit of human communities and natural resources. As demonstrated in the final EIS and as required by MUSYA, this revised Plan guides sustainable, integrated resource management of the resources on the IPNF in the context of the broader landscape, giving due consideration to the relative values of the various resources in particular areas. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with this act.

National Environmental Policy Act

This act requires public involvement and consideration of potential environmental effects. The environmental analysis and public involvement process complies with the major elements of the requirements set forth by the Council on Environmental Quality for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508). These include 1) considering a broad range of reasonable alternatives, 2) disclosing cumulative effects, 3) using best scientific information, 4) consideration of long-term and short-term effects, and 5) disclosure of unavoidable adverse effects.

The IPNF considered a broad range of alternatives in the final EIS and has compiled a comprehensive record of the effects relevant to the alternatives considering best scientific information. The revised Plan adopts all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm. These means include provisions for providing the ecological conditions needed to support biological diversity and standards and guidelines to mitigate adverse environmental effects that may result from implementing various management practices. The revised Plan includes monitoring requirements and an adaptive management approach to assure needed adjustments are made over time.

The revised Plan does not represent an irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources. The revised Plan is a programmatic level planning effort and does not directly authorize any ground disturbing activities or projects. Future ground disturbing activities and projects will be consistent with this revised Plan and subject to additional site-specific public involvement, environmental analysis, and pre-decisional review processes. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with the act and CEQ implementation regulations.

National Forest Management Act

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires the development, maintenance, amendment, and revision of land and resource management plans for each unit of the National Forest System. These plans help create a dynamic management system so that an interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, and other sciences will be applied to all future actions on the unit (16 U.S.C. 1604(b), (f), (g), and (o). The Forest Service is to ensure coordination of the multiple uses and sustained yield of products and services of the National Forest System (16 U.S.C. 1604(e)(1)).

The NFMA requires the Secretary of Agriculture to promulgate regulations for developing and maintaining forest plans. On April 9, 2012, the Department of Agriculture issued a final planning rule for National Forest System land management planning (2012 Rule) 77 FR 68 [21162-21276]. According to transition language of the 2012 Planning Rule at 36 CFR 219.17(b)(3), the

responsible official may elect to use the provisions of the prior planning regulations (1982 Planning Rule, dated September 30, 1982, and as amended[1]) to prepare plan amendments and revisions. The IPNF elected to use the provisions of the 1982 Planning Rule for the plan revision. References in this final ROD to sections of 1982 Planning Rule version of 36 CFR are indicated in the citations.

NFMA Diversity Requirements

The NFMA also requires that forest plans "provide for diversity of plant and animal communities based on the suitability and capability of the specific land area in order to meet overall multiple-use objectives, and within the multiple-use objectives of a land management plan adopted pursuant to this section, provide, where appropriate, to the degree practicable, for steps to be taken to preserve the diversity of tree species similar to that existing in the region controlled by the plan" (16 U.S.C. §1604 §6 (g)(3)(B)). The 1982 planning rule requires that "Forest planning shall provide for diversity of plant and animal communities and tree species consistent with the over-all multiple-use objectives of the planning area" (36 CFR 219.26). In addition, land management plans shall provide direction to manage fish and wildlife habitat to maintain viable[2] populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species in the planning area (36 CFR 219.19).

My interdisciplinary team identified the species that occur on the forests, determined which of those species have conservation needs, narrowed down which species could be affected by forest management, screened the risks to species through a coarse filter (ecosystem diversity), and developed additional plan components where necessary through a fine filter approach (species diversity).

The overall goal for ecological sustainability is to sustain native ecological systems and support diversity of native plant and animal species. The focus in the sustainability analysis was on species that are of regional or local conservation concern as indicated by documented threats to populations or habitats. Native vertebrates and invertebrates known to occur on land administered by the IPNF were considered.

The initial focus of the assessment process was on ecosystem diversity, both in addressing the needs of healthy, diverse, and resilient ecosystems within the plan area, and in determining the extent to which maintaining ecosystem diversity will also maintain populations of plant and animal species within their ranges in the plan area. Ecosystem diversity is defined as the variety and relative extent of ecosystem types including their composition, structure, and processes. An assumption relative to terrestrial animals is that ecosystem diversity will maintain habitat for the persistence of the vast majority of species. This has often been referred to as the "coarse filter" conservation approach. For IPNF, a coarse filter ecosystem diversity evaluation was used to compare existing vegetation communities to a set of reference conditions in order to evaluate changes in disturbance regimes and ecological communities. Based on the results of this evaluation, proposed forest plan components were developed to maintain or move vegetation

[1] The 1982 provisions can be found online at http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/includes/nfmareg.html.

[2] For planning purposes, a viable population shall be regarded as one that has the estimated numbers and distribution of reproductive individuals to ensure its continued existence is well distributed in the planning area (36 CFR 219.19).

communities towards a desired level or condition. A similar evaluation was done for ecosystem diversity of aquatic systems.

A complementary approach (species diversity) to the ecosystem diversity analysis was used for those species for which ecological conditions necessary to sustain populations may not be provided by maintaining ecosystem diversity. In these cases, a species-specific approach was used in the analysis and for the establishment of plan components (where necessary). The assessment of individual species is often referred to as the "fine-filter" approach.

The complete analysis as well as the plan components can be found in the document *Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle National Forests: Providing for Ecological Sustainability in the Revised Forest Plans*, which is located in the project record and on the forest website.

My review of the planning process, the final EIS, and the information provided in the ROD indicates the revised Plan and its preparation meet requirements for revising plans under the provisions of the 1982 Planning Rule, as allowed in the transition provisions of the 2012 Planning Rule at 36 CFR 219.17. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with the act.

National Historic Preservation Act

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires each Federal agency to take into account the effects of its actions on historic properties, prior to approving expenditure of Federal funds on an undertaking or prior to issuing any license. Furthermore, an agency must afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (an independent Federal agency created by NHPA) an opportunity to comment on any of the agency's undertaking that could affect historic properties. National forests must work closely with the appropriate scientific community and American Indian Tribes concerning cultural resources. Heritage inventories are to be completed prior to any ground disturbing activities associated with project level decisions. In addition, the laws and policies that govern cultural resource protection on Federal lands are coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) of Idaho, Montana, and Washington, who serve in an advisory capacity.

The revised Plan is a programmatic level planning effort and does not directly authorize any ground disturbing activities or projects. Site-specific projects undertaken in response to direction in this revised Plan will fully comply with laws and regulations that ensure protection of heritage resources. The revised Plan includes Forestwide desired conditions, objectives, and guidelines for cultural resources to fully integrate heritage resource management with other management activities. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with this act.

Roadless Area Conservation Rule and Idaho Roadless Rule (36 CFR 294)

The Idaho Roadless Rule (36 CFR 294 Subpart C) applies to inventoried roadless areas managed by the IPNF, that are within the State of Idaho. This rule was promulgated in 2008 (73 FR 201). The Rule designates management theme or classifications for roadless areas in Idaho. This rule went through a separate public review and analysis process. The rule states "the prohibitions and permissions set forth in the rule are not subject to reconsideration, revision, or rescission in subsequent project decisions or land and resource management plans or revisions undertaken pursuant to 36 CFR 219" (36 CFR 294.28(e)). Therefore, the rule provides higher level management direction for roadless areas in Idaho and limits the scope of the revised Plan. The rule only provides management direction for road construction, reconstruction, timber cutting, and discretionary mineral activities. Based on this higher level direction, the revised Plan was

developed to conform to the management themes and direction in the Idaho Roadless Rule for those portions of inventoried roadless areas in Idaho.

Management direction for inventoried roadless areas that are not within the state of Idaho is compliant with the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (36 CFR 294 Subpart B, published at 66 Fed Reg. 3244-3273). The 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule includes a prohibition on road construction and road reconstruction in inventoried roadless areas and prohibitions on timber cutting, sale, or removal except in certain circumstances. The revised Plan is a programmatic level planning effort and does not directly authorize any road construction, reconstruction, or timber removal. Therefore, the revised Plan is fully compliant with these Rules.

Use of Off-road Vehicles on Public Lands (Executive Order 11644 as amended by Executive Order 11989)

This Executive Order addresses the use of off-road vehicles on public lands. It requires the Forest Service and other federal land management agencies to "establish policies and provide for procedures that will ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands" (section 1). The Executive Order directs agencies to designate the "specific areas and trails on public lands on which the use of off-road vehicles may be permitted, and areas in which the use of off-road vehicles may not be permitted" (section 3).

Early efforts to manage motorized travel on the IPNFs began in 1969 with special designation areas prohibiting motorized use to protect specific characteristics and/or aesthetics. The IPNF initiated forestwide travel planning in response to this E.O. and initially met designation requirements with the publication of the first travel plan map in 1976. Based on ongoing monitoring, the maps were revised in 1978, 1979, and 1980. Another assessment was completed in 1981 to resolve user conflict and protect natural resources such as aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitats. Revisions and updates to the travel plan maps continued through 2007 as needed. In 2010, the Coeur D'Alene unit published the IPNF's first motor vehicle use map (MVUM) as required by 36 CFR 212 subpart B, identifying the roads, trails and areas, by vehicle type and season of use, designated for (non-winter) motor vehicle use. The Kaniksu unit followed with the publication of a MVUM in 2011 and the St. Joe unit anticipates publication of its MVUM in 2015. Over-snow vehicle use continues to be governed by administrative orders pursuant to 36 CFR 261.53, 261.54, and 261.55, which include area closures established through site-specific planning to protect wildlife habitat and non-motorized recreation. In the Selkirk Mountain area of northern Idaho, the federal district court has imposed an injunction on snowmobile use for the protection of caribou.

In addition to the specific motorized recreation management reflected in the travel maps, the 1987 Plan considered off-road vehicle use per the E.O. and the NFMA implementing regulations at 36 CFR 219.21(g) (1982 Rule) when it allocated motorized and non-motorized use in specific management areas (see additional discussion regarding management area allocations below).

Section 8 of the Executive Order includes requirements for monitoring the effects of off-road vehicle use and adjusting designations as needed. It states: the "agency shall monitor the effects of the use of off-road vehicles on lands under their jurisdictions. On the basis of the information gathered, they shall from time to time amend or rescind designations of areas or other actions taken pursuant to this order as necessary to further the policy of this order."

The IPNF monitor the effects of off-road vehicle use, and when necessary to further the policy of this order or to otherwise further the purposes for which the Forests were established, amends or

rescinds motor vehicle use designations. The access and recreation section of the final EIS documents the 44-year history of managing motorized recreation on the Forests, which includes the 2011 Grizzly Bear Access Amendment (establishing motorized route density standards to minimize wildlife harassment).

In addition to the requirement for designating where off-road vehicles may or may not be permitted, section 3 of the Executive Order requires "that designation of such areas and trails will be based upon the protection of the resources of the public lands, promotion of the safety of all users of those lands, and minimization of conflicts among the various uses of those lands". More specifically, the regulations further require that the designation of areas and trails shall:

1. Be located to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, or other resources of the public lands.
2. Be located to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats.
3. Be located to minimize conflicts between off-road vehicle use and other existing or proposed recreational uses of the same or neighboring lands, and to ensure the compatibility of such uses with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account noise and other factors.
4. Not be located in officially designated Wilderness Areas or Primitive Areas.[3]

The management area allocations in the revised Plan do identify areas and trails "on which the use of off-road vehicles may be permitted, and areas in which the use of off-road vehicles may not be permitted". However, it is important to note that this decision is programmatic in nature. The revised Plan sets desired conditions, goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and suitability to frame and guide future forest management decisions. The management area suitability allocations are my primary programmatic tool at the forest scale to "minimize conflicts" by identifying broad areas where motorized or non-motorized use may or may not be suitable.

The management areas where motorized use is inconsistent (unsuitable) with meeting desired conditions include standards or guidelines that do not allow motor vehicle use broadly (MAs 1a, 1b, 1e, 2a (wild), 2b (wild), MA 3 (botanical, geological, pioneer, and all scenic but Northwest Peaks) and 4a) or do not allow motor vehicle use except for designated routes (MA 2a (wild), 2b (wild), 4b). Although the programmatic nature of the Plan only identifies management area suitability and does not prescribe site-specific activities, this ROD also authorizes a site-specific prohibition on over-snow motorized use to align current recreation uses with the Plan's desired conditions in MA 1b–Recommended Wilderness and MA 4a–Research Natural Areas. (See ROD page 5–6.)

Areas with desired conditions and/or guidelines that state motor vehicle use "may occur" or "is allowed" are considered "open" allocations (portions of MAs 1c, 1e, 2a (recreational), 2b (recreational), 4b, 3 (recreational and Northwest Peaks scenic), 5, 6, and 7) where motorized uses is considered a suitable activity. However, while the use is considered suitable, the revised Plan does not mandate off-road vehicle use or indicate the area is subject to unmanaged off-road vehicle use. In fact, despite the "open" allocation, off-road motor vehicle use in these areas is constrained by site-specific motor vehicle use designations and site-specific over-snow motor vehicle prohibitions, as well as applicable Plan standards and guidelines with the intent and effect

[3] The remainder of subsection 4 concerns National Parks and other lands not found on the IPNF.

of minimizing adverse effects of that use and minimizing conflict among the various uses of those lands.

My decision makes limited adjustments to the 1987 Plan's (as amended) "closed" and "open with constraints" suitability allocations. These adjustments coincide with allocation changes for recommended wilderness and research natural areas (see pages 7–9, 10, and 20 of this final ROD), conforming allowed uses to the management emphasis for those lands. The final EIS discloses the effects relevant to my decision on the revised Plan (see the effects analysis discussions under vegetation, watershed, wildlife, and access and recreation in chapter 3 of the final EIS). My decision to immediately conform actual uses to the allocations through certain site-specific closure orders further minimizes otherwise potential conflicts.

I considered the effects of off-road vehicle use on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, including minimizing effects on resources of public lands, promoting safety of all users of those lands, and minimizing conflicts among the various uses of those lands. I believe those effects have been "minimized." As discussed here, page 19 of this final ROD, and in the final EIS, we have been actively managing this use for over 40 years. Previous and ongoing management actions, both programmatic and site specific, have reasonably reduced and minimized the adverse effects of off-road vehicle use and conflict among the uses of the Forests. I find the final EIS for the revised Plan demonstrates continuing consideration of the minimization criteria required to protect the resources of the IPNF, to promote the safety of users, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands. Therefore, the revised Plan is in compliance with this Executive Order.

Wetlands (Executive Order 11990) and Floodplains (Executive Order 11998)

These Executive Orders require Federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, short- and long-term effects resulting from the occupancy and modification of flood plains, and the modification or destruction of wetlands.

The revised Plan is strategic and programmatic in nature, providing guidance and direction to future site-specific projects and activities. The revised Plan does not create, authorize, or execute any ground-disturbing activity, although it does provide for the consideration of certain types of activities. It contains direction to ensure all site-specific projects meet or exceed State Best Management Practices. Implementation of the revised Plan is expected to contribute to protecting soil and water, wetlands, and riparian areas to minimize effects to flood plains and wetlands. Therefore, the revised Plan is in full compliance with these orders.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

This act establishes a National Wild and Scenic Rivers System with three classes of river systems: wild, scenic, and recreational. The purpose of the act was to protect the river "…for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations" and to preserve select river's free-flowing condition, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act also directs that each river in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (National System) be administered in a manner to protect and enhance a river's outstanding natural and cultural values. It allows existing uses of a river to continue and future uses to be considered, so long as existing or proposed use does not conflict with protecting river values. The Congressionally designated St. Joe Wild and Scenic River segments and 21,300 acres of associated corridor are allocated to MA2a with direction to protect these values.

Evaluation of the eligibility of rivers and streams for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was conducted for the preparation of the revised Plan as required by the act and Forest Service Manual policy (FSM 1924.03). In addition, management area direction in the revised Plan provides protection for the outstandingly remarkable values identified for those rivers identified as eligible. Therefore, the revised Plan is compliant with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Wilderness Act and Section 1782 of the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act

The Wilderness Act of 1964 established a National Wilderness Preservation System to be administered in such a manner as to leave these areas unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness. It provides the statutory definition of wilderness and management requirements for congressionally designated areas. Section 1782 provides for the study of certain lands within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to determine their suitability for designation as wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act, and for other purposes. These areas are referred to as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). The Grandmother Mountain WSA was acquired from the BLM with this designation.

Evaluation of existing wilderness and areas for wilderness potential was included in the environmental analysis for the revised Plan, which includes specific management area direction for the management and protection of wilderness values on the IPNF as provided by the Wilderness Act. Management direction for those areas with existing legislative Wilderness and WSA designations is consistent with all law, regulation, and policy. Therefore, the revised Plan is compliant with these Acts.

Pre-decisional Administrative Review Process (Objection Process)

The revised Plan and the draft ROD were subject to review and objection pursuant to 36 CFR 219 regulations. More than 200 individual issues were identified from the objections received and each was considered in the review. The review focused on ensuring the revised Plan meets current requirements and to determine whether changes are warranted to improve upon the analysis and decision based on the objections submitted.

The issues covered a broad range of resources and topic areas, including climate change; economics; fire and fuels management; invasive species; minerals; monitoring; multiple use management; public involvement; soils; timber production; transportation management; vegetation management, including old growth; Wild and Scenic River eligibility; recommended wilderness designation and management; and various aspects of wildlife and fisheries management. Objectors were concerned that the draft ROD did not appropriately address public interests and violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Forest Management Act (NFMA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Wilderness Act, and the Wild and Scenic River Act, among others.

After a deliberative and extensive review of concerns raised by objectors involving complex regulatory and management issues, the reviewing officer responded to all the objectors in writing. He provided me with specific instructions, which I have complied with as described in appendix 1.

Implementation

The revised IPNF Land Management Plan provides a framework and text to guide resource management options. It is a strategic, programmatic document and does not make project-level decisions or irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources. Those kinds of commitments would be made after more detailed, site-specific analysis, and further public comment as part of the site-specific National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

The IPNF will also follow all laws, regulations, and policies that relate to managing NFS land. The revised Plan is designed to supplement, not replace, direction from these sources. The final EIS lists and considers this direction for each of the revision topics and specific resources, but the revised Plan does not repeat laws, regulations, or program management policy, practices or procedures.

The revised Idaho Panhandle National Forest Land Management Plan will become effective 30 days from the date of the publication of the Notice of Availability of the final ROD in the Federal Register (per 36 CFR 219.17(a), 2012 Rule).

Project and Activity Consistency and Transition to the Revised Plan

The revised Plan direction will apply to all projects that have decisions made on or after the effective date of the final record of decision. There may be some previously approved and ongoing projects that are not consistent with the revised Plan. These projects need to remain consistent with the direction in the 1987 Plan, and are not required to meet the direction of the revised Plan. The effects of these ongoing actions were considered as a part of the baseline in developing the final EIS.

As required by NFMA and the planning rule, subject to valid existing rights, all projects and activities authorized by the Forest Service after approval of this revised Plan must be consistent with the applicable plan components (16 U.S.C. 1604(i)) as described at 36 CFR 219.15 of the 2012 Planning Rule. (Although the transition provisions at 36 CFR 219.17 of the 2012 Planning Rule allow revision of this Plan under the 1982 regulations, subsequent projects or activities approved on units with plans revised under a prior planning rule must comply with the consistency requirement at 219.15 of the current rule.)

Upon the effective date of the revised Plan, all subsequent project or activity approval documents must describe how the project or activity is consistent with the Plan by the criteria listed at 36 CFR 219.15(d) (2012 Planning Rule). Where a proposed project or activity would not be consistent with Plan direction, the responsible official has the following options (36 CFR 219.15(c) 2012 Rule):

1. Modify the proposed project or activity to make it consistent with the applicable Plan components;
2. Reject the proposal or terminate the project or activity;
3. Amend the plan so that the project or activity will be consistent with the Plan as amended;
4. Amend the Plan contemporaneously with the approval of the project or activity so that the project or activity will be consistent with the Plan as amended. This amendment may be limited to apply only to the project or activity, and may be adopted at the same time as the approval of the project or activity (36 CFR 219.15(c)(4) 2012 Rule).

Any resource plans (for example travel management plans) developed by the Forest Service that apply to the resources or land areas within the planning area must be consistent with the revised Plan components. Resource plans developed prior to plan decision must be evaluated for consistency with the plan and amended if necessary (36 CFR 219.15(e) 2012 Rule).

Authorizations for occupancy and use made before the final ROD may proceed unchanged until time of reauthorization. At time of reauthorization, all permits, contracts, and other authorizing instruments must be made consistent with the revised Plan, subject to existing valid rights, as provided at §219.15(d) (2012 Rule).

Maintaining the Land Management Plan and Adapting to New Information

Adaptive Management

A land management plan is an integral part of an adaptive management cycle that guides future management decisions and actions. Adaptive management includes:

- Defining measurable management objectives;
- Monitoring management outcomes and changing circumstances; and
- Revising management strategies accordingly.

This adaptive management cycle enables the Forests to identify and respond to changing conditions, changing public desires, and new information, such as that obtained through research and scientific findings. The Forests' monitoring program is an integral part of this adaptive management cycle, consisting of monitoring questions and performance measures (see chapter 5 of the revised Plan for additional information about the monitoring plan).

Amending the Forest Plan

A forest plan may be amended at any time based on a preliminary identification of the need to change the plan. The preliminary identification of the need to change the plan may be based on a new assessment, forest plan monitoring, or other documentation of new information, changed conditions, or changed circumstances. The amendment and administrative change process is described at 36 CFR 219.17(b)(2) of the 2012 Planning Rule.

Contact Person

Further information about the final EIS, revised Plan, and final ROD can be obtained from Mary Farnsworth during normal office hours (weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at the Idaho Panhandle National Forests Supervisor's Office (Address: Idaho Panhandle National Forests, 3815 Schreiber Way, Coeur D'Alene, ID 83815; Phone/voicemail: (208) 765-7369.

Approval

FAYE L. KRUEGER
Regional Forester
Northern Region

January 5, 2015

Appendix 1—Objection Instructions

Table 3. Pre-decisional Reviewing Official's Instructions

Instruction	Instruction Location	Response Location
County Coordination		
Ensure compliance with the requirements of 36 CFR 219.7(c) (1982) by including in the record the review of local government planning and land use policies. Further summarize that review in the final EIS. Meet with the county commissioners to discuss the compliance.	Greg Smith's letter page 6	ROD page 29 Errata to the final EIS Project record documents per county: Benewah: 02695, 02807, 02819, 02869 Bonner: 02778, 02779, 02817, 02870 Boundary: 02504, 02871 Kootenai: 0505, 02873 Shoshone: 02770, 02771, 02818, 02872 Additional summary of coordination effort: 02352, 02353, and 02866
Wild And Scenic Rivers		
Provide additional documentation on the review completed at Step 5 of the WSR eligibility process. Highlight any discrepancies between the initial assessment of streams for "potential ORVs" and the final WSR eligibility inventory. Provide an explanation for the rationale used to make final ORV determinations for all streams, both eligible and ineligible, including all those recommended by the public for consideration.	Greg Smith's letter page 8	Errata to final EIS (updated Appendix E) Project record documents 02581
Either (a) provide additional supporting documentation describing why the diversion impacts to Marble Creek are more extensive than the "acceptable waterway modifications" identified in FSH 1909.12, 82.3 – Exhibit 01, or (b) find Marble Creek to be "free-flowing," if the splash dam remnant impacts are within the acceptable range permitted under WSRA and Agency policy—and therefore eligible for WSR designation (since IPNF has identified at least one ORV for Marble Creek). If the diversion impacts to Marble Creek are found to be disqualifying under FSH 1909.12, 82.3 – Exhibit 01, consider other segmentations that would avoid those diversions and document the results of that consideration	Greg Smith's letter page 8	Errata to final EIS (updated Appendix E) Project record document 02516 and 02581

Instruction	Instruction Location	Response Location
Remove any reference to rivers on other neighboring Forests in the Region, as it should not factor into the ORV analysis. If the existence of other designated or eligible WSRs in the Region impacted it's analysis and deterred ORV findings for rivers on the forest, redo the analysis so that only river values on the Forest are considered	Attachment 2 page 15	Errata to final EIS
Clarify the wording in the FEIS as necessary to ensure that wherever "rare, unique, or exemplary" is mentioned, it is used to describe "values," not "rivers." For example, IPNF FEIS pg. 31 currently states, "The additional streams and rivers are not rare, unique, or exemplary when considered on a forest or regional basis." This sentence should be modified to state, "The additional streams and rivers do not have values that are rare, unique, or exemplary when considered on a forest or regional basis."	Attachment 2 page 16	Errata to the final EIS
Insert a specific cite to the above St. Joe WSR Plan excerpt when mentioning the St. Joe Lodge in the record. Add any available existing information to the record regarding reviews of the St. Joe Lodge special use permit that have taken place to ensure the lodge is operating within St. Joe WSR Plan guidelines, consistent with WSR wild classification. Make the St. Joe WSR Plan more readily available (e.g., post on Forest website or rivers.gov) so the public can further understand the rational for MA2a direction on the St Joe WSR, as well as the history of the St. Joe Lodge.	Attachment 2 page 17	Errata to final EIS (updated Appendix E) Project record document 02573
Recommended Wilderness And Wilderness Study Areas		
Clarify, the documentation disclosing a full analysis and rationale of the recommendations for wilderness, including responses to public recommendations received for modifications to proposed boundaries.	Greg Smith's letter page 11	ROD pages 20–23 Errata to final EIS Project record document 02551, 02569, and 02570
Clarify in the record referencing the "R1 Consistency Paper" to reflect that the paper is not binding policy, but instead is a reference tool used to assist Forests as they consider management options for recommended wilderness.	Greg Smith's letter page 11	Errata to the final EIS Project record document 02570 and 02815
Clarify in the record how the IPNF gave independent consideration to Forest-specific issues pertaining to recommended wilderness management decisions. In doing so, the IPNF should provide a more detailed explanation of the nature of impacts from motorized and mechanized uses to wilderness capability and availability.	Greg Smith's letter page 11	ROD pages 11, 20–23 Errata to the final EIS Project record document 02569 and 02815

Instruction	Instruction Location	Response Location
Review all requirements for management of Grandmother Mountain WSA and clarify in the record the rationale behind "MA1c – Wilderness Study Areas" management direction. Modify, as appropriate, all references in the record to any statutory requirements regarding management of motorized vehicle use in this WSA	Greg Smith's letter page 11	ROD page 22 Errata to final EIS
Summarize and reference in the ROD the environmental analysis supporting the site-specific decision being made. The summary should specifically address the minimization criteria described at 36 CFR 212.55. Of course, the site-specific decision to prohibit over-snow and mountain biking in recommended wilderness areas must also be supported by analysis disclosing why continuation of these uses would compromise the wilderness values of the areas recommended for wilderness.	Greg Smith's letter page 11	ROD pages 20–23, 39–40 Project record document 02569 and 02815
Enhance the documentation in the record to provide a more detailed rationale for deciding not to allocate upper Pack River as recommended wilderness.	Attachment 2 page 18	ROD page 10
Include an explanatory table, "Differences in Recommended Wilderness acres for Mallard Larkins" in the FEIS to clarify different acreage figures have been associated with Mallard Larkins at different stages of the plan revision process. Modify FEIS Appendix C (p. 160) to remove "all or" from the statement, "[a]all three action alternatives recommend all or a portion of this roadless area as recommended wilderness (MA 1b)" (in reference to Mallard Larkins IRA)---none of the alternatives recommend all of the Mallard Larkins IRA as recommended wilderness.	Attachment 2 page 19	Errata to the final EIS Project record document 02571
Supplement the record as needed to address the objector's mining-related issue in Mallard-Larkins.	Attachment 2 page 20	Errata to the final EIS Project record document 02572
Management Indicator Species (MIS)		
Clarify in the record the linkage between population monitoring, management activities, and habitat condition for species in the landbird assemblage. Ensure the rationale is clear to explain why these species are responsive to forest activities. Document clearly the monitoring objectives for each MIS.	Greg Smith's letter page 13	Project record document 01971
Clarify in the record that no inferences are being made that AMA monitoring is being used to draw conclusions about fish populations and distribution.	Greg Smith's letter page 13	ROD page 16 Errata to the final EIS

Instruction	Instruction Location	Response Location
Summarize and reference the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle National Forest: Providing for Ecological Sustainability in the Revised Forest Plans report in the Record of Decision how the other diversity-related requirements of the 1982 planning regulation are being met in the Revised Plan.	Greg Smith's letter page 14	ROD pages 36–37 Project record document 02542
Fire/Fuels		
Clarify that the monitoring and evaluation report will address effectiveness and movement toward desired condition.	Attachment 2 page 2	ROD page 9–10 Project record document 02000 (Monitoring Guide)
Planning		
Insert the word, "Goals," before the first indented paragraph under the title "Plan Elements" on page 1 of the Revised Plan.	Attachment 2 page 2	Final 2015 Plan
Recreation		
Supplement the existing analysis with analysis of individual trails.	Attachment 2 page 3	Errata to the final EIS Project record document 02568
Review to assure that the site specific analysis addresses the minimization criteria described in the travel management regulation at 36 CFR 212.55, including user conflicts.	Attachment 2 page 3	Project record document 02569
Soils		
Replace the term "managed area" in the desired condition with the term "activity area."	Attachment 2 page 3	Final 2015 Plan
Timber		
Clarify in the record the use of timber sold versus timber harvested for these calculations.	Attachment 2 page 4	Project record document 00450
Vegetation		
Clarify in the record the "gaps in explanations, questionable conclusions, and apparent discrepancies" raised by the objector concerning the use of the ERG 2012 Report and its incorporation in the FEIS	Attachment 2 page 4	Project record document 02289

Instruction	Instruction Location	Response Location
Enhance documentation for how the invasive species program will follow program requirements and standards, including but not limited to the collection and recording of treatment efficacy. Specifically, enhance documentation to show the alignment of all program activities associated with invasive species with national policy (FSM 2900), and associated law, regulations, and the provisions of E.O. 13112 related to federal agency duties	Attachment 2 page 5-6 and page 12	ROD pages 34–35 Errata to the final EIS Project record document 01674 and 02000 (Monitoring Guide)
Modify FW-DC-VEG-03 to change or clarify the term "substantial amounts," or provide clarification elsewhere in the Revised Plan	Attachment 2 page 7	Final 2015 Plan
Clarify in the record the intent of FW-GDL-VEG-03	Attachment 2 page 9	Project record document 01678
Add the 10+ inch size class for snags to the tables displayed in FW-DC-VEG-07 and FW-GDL-VEG-04, or provide an explanation for why it is not necessary.	Attachment 2 page 9	Final 2015 Plan (FW-DC-VEG-07) Project record document 01678 (FW-GDL-VEG-04)
Delete the word "generally" from the guideline [FW-GDL-VEG-04] or modify it to state "when large diameter trees are rare across the landscape, all will be left."	Attachment 2 page 9	Final 2015 Plan
Either delete the last bullet in the guideline [FW-GDL-VEG- 5] or modify it to clearly reflect a restoration objective of retaining the pattern of snag availability across the landscape to meet the diversity requirement of NFMA.	Attachment 2 page 10	Final 2015 Plan
Clarify in the record that the monitoring and evaluation report will address effectiveness and movement toward desired condition.	Attachment 2 page 11	ROD page 9–10 Project record document 02000 (Monitoring Guide)
Clarify in the record that the utility of tracking sites [per MON-VEG-02-01] does not apply to all invasive species infestations, but can be used in certain early detection and rapid response situations. If the utility of counting sites cannot be clarified, the reference to tracking sites should be removed.	Attachment 2 page 13	Project record document 02000 (Monitoring Guide)
Clarify in the record that the Forest, through compliance with law, regulation, and policy, will take an all-taxa approach to invasive species management rather than the more narrow focus on regulated noxious weeds.	Attachment 2 page 13	ROD pages 9–10 Errata to the final EIS Project record document 01674, 02468, and 02000 (Monitoring Guide)

Instruction	Instruction Location	Response Location
Watershed		
Clarify in the record that mine waste pollution and the potential for recontamination resulting from flooding caused by hydrologic changes are best addressed at the project level analysis.	Attachment 2 page 13	Errata to final EIS
Add a definition for hydrologic stability to the Revised Plan's glossary.	Attachment 2 page 14	Final 2015 Plan
Clarify in the documentation that the coefficients from WATSED were used in the analysis and not the model itself.	Attachment 2 page 14	Errata to final EIS
Wildlife and Fisheries		
Review FW-DC-WL-01 and add documentation to support the last sentence of this DC or edit this sentence to remove the unsubstantiated assumption.	Attachment 2 page 21	Project record document 02558
Ensure best available science is referenced [supporting FW-DC-WL-06].	Attachment 2 page 22	Project record document 02544
Review FW-GDL-WL-20 and FW-GDL-WL-25 and add documentation to support these guidelines or edit them to remove the unsubstantiated assumptions.	Attachment 2 page 23	Project record document 02558
Ensure documentation clearly supports the intent of this guideline [FW-GDL-WL-08] and make sure the guideline is clear.	Attachment 2 page 24	Project record document 02559