

INTRODUCTION TO THE FOREST PLAN

PURPOSE OF THE FOREST PLAN

The Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP or the Forest Plan) directs the management of the Six Rivers National Forest for the next decade. It does not apply to any State, private or other Federal land within the Forest boundaries. The Plan's purpose is to guide the integrated protection and use of the Forest's resources, meet requirements of legislation, and address local, regional and national issues. To accomplish this, the Forest Plan:

Sets the Forest goals and objectives for the next 10-15 years (the planning period),

Sets the standards and guidelines, and the approximate timing and location of practices necessary to achieve these goals and objectives, and

Sets the requirements for monitoring and evaluation needed to insure that management direction is implemented and its objectives are met, and to trigger changes in that direction, if needed.

The preparation of Forest Plans is required by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (RPA), as amended by the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA), and the implementing regulations found in the Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR 219, issued September 30, 1982).

Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) require analysis of a Forest Plan's environmental impacts. The accompanying Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) describes the management alternatives considered for the Six Rivers National Forest and the environmental effects of each. The preferred alternative is identified and then developed into this Forest Plan. The Plan and the FEIS are to be considered as a whole, rather than as separate documents.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE FOREST PLAN TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

This comprehensive, integrated Plan applies to all areas and resources of the forest. Therefore, it either supersedes existing plans or incorporates them by reference. Where existing plans are incorporated by reference, they must be consistent with Forest goals and objectives and other management direction herein. As necessary, these plans will be amended to be consistent with the Forest Plan, once it is approved.

Upon approval of this Plan by the Regional Forester, all land and resource management activities and all budget proposals will be based on the Plan. As soon as practicable after approval, all permits, contracts, cooperative agreements, and other instruments for use and occupancy of the Forest's lands will be brought into conformance with the Plan, subject to existing rights. Note that previous contracts for timber or other commodities not yet harvested may preclude bringing such activities into full conformance with this Plan.

REGIONAL GUIDE

The Regional Guide provides general goals, standards and guidelines to be followed by the Forests in Region 5. The Regional Guide also allocates resource output objectives to individual Forests. The output targets allocated to the Forest were evaluated during the planning process to determine the feasibility and suitability of the Forest's land and resources.

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

This Forest Plan sets forth the preferred alternative for managing the land and resources of the Six Rivers National Forest. The Plan results from extensive analysis and considerations addressed in the accompanying FEIS. The planning process and the analysis procedures used to develop this Plan are described or referred to in the FEIS. The FEIS also describes other alternatives considered in the planning process. Environmental analysis of projects will be tiered to the FEIS accompanying this Forest Plan.

THE SMITH RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION ACT

The revised document entitled “Smith River National Recreation Area Management Plan” (referenced in Section 9 of the Smith River National Recreation Area Act of November, 1990) will guide management of the Recreation Area and will be incorporated in its entirety into the Forest Plan. This incorporation is not a revision or amendment to the Forest Plan for purposes of Section 6 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974. The Secretary of Agriculture will make such further revisions to the management plan as are necessary in order to include more specific development and use plans of the recreation areas. Such revisions will be made no later than five years after the enactment of this Act.

PLANS SUPERSEDED BY THE FOREST PLAN

Existing plans superseded by this Forest Plan include the following:

- 1969 District Multiple Use Plans
- 1969 Land Adjustment Plan
- 1971 Timber Management Plan
- 1974 Fox Unit Plan
- 1974 Fox Monitoring Plan
- 1975 Eightmile/Blue Creek Unit Plan
- 1978 Sierra Club Settlement Agreement
- 1979 Off-Road Vehicle Plan
- Ruth Lake Bald Eagle Territory Management Plan

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Forest Plan will be carried out by the District Rangers and their staffs. Each of the Six Rivers’ four districts covers 10 to 17 “management areas”. The Plan is comprised of a set of forest goals and objectives, and standards and guidelines for the Forest and for each management area. These reflect the capability and suitability of the land to support various activities. The District Rangers’ staffs will plan and conduct resource projects that meet this direction. Projects will continue to be planned and evaluated through the interdisciplinary process. District and Forest staffs will conduct environmental analyses and document them in the appropriate environmental documents (such as Environmental Assessments) which will be tiered to the Forest Plan EIS (40 CFR 1508.28).

If a proposed project on National Forest land is determined to be incompatible with the direction of the Plan, the project will be revised or not permitted. Conflicts that recur will result in a review of the relevant management direction in the Plan, according to its monitoring and evaluation process (Chapter 5), and may lead to Plan amendment or revision.

By the time the Forest Plan is implemented in 1995, budget proposals for 1995 through 1997 will have been submitted to Congress based on current planning. These budgets may or may not meet the budget requirements of the approved Forest Plan. Moreover, Congressional appropriations and allocations of the Chief and Regional Forester during any future period may or may not meet the budget requirements of the approved Forest Plan. In these situations, the Forest Supervisor will change the proposed Plan implementation schedules to reflect differences between proposed Plan budgets and actual appropriated funds (36 CFR 219.10e).

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Forest will monitor Forest Plan implementation to determine if it is being implemented as designed (implementation monitoring), if implementation is effective in meeting the Plan’s objectives (effectiveness monitoring), and if the Plan’s initial assumptions are correct (validation monitoring). Specific monitoring requirements are listed in Chapter 5 of this Plan. The Forest will collect and evaluate the monitoring results regularly to determine the need for

changes in the Plan. An annual monitoring report will be prepared to inform the public on the progress in implementing the Plan.

REVISIONS, AMENDMENTS

As directed by NFMA, the Forest Plan will be revised at least every 15 years and ordinarily every 10 years. It may also be revised whenever the Forest Supervisor determines that conditions or demands have changed sufficiently to affect goals or uses for the entire Forest. Under a schedule approved by the Chief of the Forest Service, the Forest Supervisor prepares and the Regional Forester approves Forest Plan revisions. For the purpose of a possible revision, the Forest Supervisor will review conditions of the lands covered by this Plan at least every five years.

Between revisions, the Plan can be amended to reflect changing conditions. The Forest Supervisor can prepare and approve an amendment if the change is not significant; such changes can be expected annually to adjust some of the Plan's details. If the change is significant, the Forest Supervisor prepares the amendment for Regional Forester approval. Public notification and adherence to NEPA procedures are required in either case.

Clarifications to the Plan may be made in the form of an addendum. Addendums are not intended to change management direction or emphasis, but merely to clarify the intent of the existing information. Addendums will be used as they become necessary.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

This Forest Plan is composed of five chapters, a glossary, and appendices.

Chapter I, Introduction, describes the purpose of the Forest Plan, summarizes the content, describes the Forest's geographic location, and discusses the Plan's relationship to other documents.

Chapter II, Public Issues and Forest Management Concerns, summarizes the supply and demand conditions for significant market and nonmarket goods and services associated with the planning area.

Chapter III, Summary of the Analysis of the Management Situation, summarizes the affected environment. It describes the management situation, supply and demand, and resources uses and opportunities.

Chapter IV, Management Direction, is the heart of the plan. It presents the management goals, objectives, standards and guidelines that constitute direction for resource management covered by the Plan.

Chapter V, Forest Plan Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Amendment, incorporates direction in three sections under the headings of "Implementation," "Monitoring and Evaluation" and "Amendment and Revision." Collectively, these sections explain methods of implementing management direction, monitoring and evaluating implementation activities, and of keeping the Plan current during changing conditions or discovery of other findings.

The planning records for this Forest Plan are available for review at the Six Rivers National Forest Supervisor's Office in Eureka, California. The planning records are incorporated by this reference into the Forest Plan.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND APPEAL RIGHTS

A Proposed Forest Plan and Draft EIS were published in September 1993. The public was invited to submit comments during a 90-day review period that closed in January 1994. This Forest Plan and the accompanying Final EIS were developed in response to the comments received during the 90-day review period.

The Forest Plan and Final EIS will be sent to the Regional Forester for approval. An administrative appeal of the Regional Forester's decision to approve the Forest Plan and EIS can be filed according to the

Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR Part 217). Decisions made during the planning process, before the Regional Forester approves the Forest Plan through a record of decision, are not subject to appeal.

FOREST DESCRIPTION

Six Rivers National Forest lies just east of the redwood belt of northwestern California, from the Oregon border south nearly to Mendocino County. The administrative boundary of the Forest encompasses approximately 1,092,170 acres. Of this total, 958,470 acres are National Forest System land; the remainder (133,700 acres) is in other ownership, mostly private. For the National Forest System land, 43 percent of the Forest is in Del Norte County, 35 percent in Humboldt County, 21 percent in Trinity County and 1 percent in Siskiyou County.

The Forest is bisected by four east/west routes, Highways 199, 299, 96, and 36, which connect Highway 101 to the Interstate 5 corridor and the central valleys of Oregon and Northern California. These highways follow rivers for most of their length within the Forest's boundaries, enhancing visitor access to a scenic area with many recreation opportunities. Principal communities within the influence of the Six Rivers National Forest include: Crescent City, Hiouchi, Gasquet, Orleans, Willow Creek, the greater Humboldt Bay area, and Garberville. The largest city is Eureka, with a population of 27,025 in 1990, which is the site of the Forest Supervisor's office.

To facilitate management, the Forest lands are divided into four Ranger Districts: Gasquet, Orleans, Lower Trinity and Mad River (see FEIS maps for Ranger District headquarter location). The Smith River National Recreation Area comprises a major portion of the Gasquet District. The Forest also manages the 212-acre Humboldt Nursery in McKinleyville, California. The Yurok Experimental Forest, comprising approximately 1,000 acres, is included in the total acreage of the Six Rivers National Forest, but is administered by the Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station.