

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION OF THE FOREST

This Plan will be reviewed every five years and normally revised every 10-15 years. This section describes the Forest as it is expected to be in 10 years if the management direction described in this plan is implemented. Following that is a description of what the Forest is expected to be like if the Plan were to continue as direction for 50 years into the future.

THE FOREST IN TEN YEARS

At the end of the first decade there will be perceivable change in the overall character of much of the landscape within the Forest boundary. The landscape in the parts of the Forest managed for commodity production will be modified by new roads and harvest units. By the end of the first 10 years, many of the unroaded areas allocated to Management Areas that allow timber harvest would be developed.

Sensitive viewsheds will still appear in a natural or near natural visual condition. Areas with no programmed timber harvest, such as Wilderness, Research Natural Areas, Botanical and Special Interest Areas, and dedicated wildlife and riparian habitats will remain largely unchanged and natural in appearance.

Areas with programmed timber harvest will have cutting units distributed through the mature forest, with a complete range of silvicultural practices being implemented. Existing harvested areas and plantations will continue to develop through sapling and pole stages with some stands reaching large pole to small sawtimber size. Trees will be somewhat uniformly spaced and the species present will be representative of the natural diversity of the site.

Opportunities for roaded recreation will increase. Developed recreation capacity will keep pace with demand as new sites are developed and others are expanded. Opportunities for unroaded recreation will continue to be provided in three Wildernesses and in portions of five roadless areas (Sherwood, Brown Mountain, Condrey, McDonald, and Kangaroo). The total acres available for unroaded recre-

ation will continue to decrease, however, as timber harvest activities occur in some areas.

The Upper Rogue Wild and Scenic River will continue to have its outstanding features protected although increased recreational use will bring social change to the river environs.

Ease of access to Wilderness portals will increase. Although there should not be overcrowded conditions, some sites may be used to such an extent that management to Primitive Wilderness Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (WRS) standards will be difficult.

Most of the cultural resource sites on the Forest will be inventoried and protected. Historic buildings and archaeological sites near travelways or campgrounds may be developed for interpretation to recreational visitors.

Unique wildlife and botanical habitats and those habitats required for threatened or endangered species will be retained and protected. Riparian ecosystems will remain essentially unchanged by humans. Of the 100,000 acres of old-growth, 83% will remain after ten years of Plan implementation. Seral stages of terrestrial and aquatic plant associations will be provided in a distribution to maintain native and desired non-native plant and animal species and communities. Habitat for species favoring early seral stages will be distributed through areas where timber harvest is programmed.

New harvest areas will continue to provide high quality forage for deer and elk. Big-game winter ranges will be managed to provide forage, cover, and protection from impacting human disturbances.

Habitat for resident and anadromous fish would be maintained in streams, lakes, and ponds on the Forest. Substantial improvement through project work will occur in some stream and lakes that are currently below their potential. Riparian management prescriptions will maintain or lower summer water temperatures, provide energy input to the aquatic ecosystem, and future large woody material Habitat and watershed improvement projects will increase habitat diversity and maintain stream channel stability.

FOREST MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

Forest soil productivity will be maintained. Water yield and quality will not be significantly reduced or degraded as a result of human activity. High quality domestic water supplies will continue to be provided.

Mineral development on the Forest will increase, with the most activity being in prospecting, exploration, and extraction of gold and other precious metals. The physical and biological impacts will be minimized, with higher costs to the miner or developer. As existing rock sources are depleted and rehabilitated, new sources will be developed.

Land use permit numbers will increase slightly to accommodate appropriate requested uses. The administrative Forest boundary will have been surveyed and posted and maintained to standard Landline location and posting of Congressionally designated areas will also be substantially complete.

The Forest will make some progress toward a more efficient land ownership pattern through acquisition or exchange programs and minor adjustments due to small tract claims.

The principal access roads will be readily identifiable, having paved or gravel surfaces. There will be 937 miles of access roads managed to encourage or accept passenger car use. Signs will assist travelers in finding their destination. There will be 1465 miles of road open to and managed for high clearance vehicle use. These will look rough and primitive to discourage use by travelers in passenger cars. Some of the roads managed for passenger car use and some of the roads managed for high clearance vehicle use will be closed seasonally to protect resource values, such as watershed and wildlife habitat.

An additional 943 miles of road will be managed for intermittent use. The time between periods of use will generally be in excess of one year. Between uses, all vehicle traffic will be eliminated from these roads with physical barriers. Continued road system development will take place at a rate of approximately 15 miles per year to provide local road access to resource development activities. Approximately 20 miles of the roads open to passenger cars will be reconstructed annually. Roads not needed for future management of the Forest will be obliterated.

The amount of total suspended particulates (TSP) from the Forest slash burning program will be reduced by 56% from baseline levels. Anticipated TSP levels should not contribute to a corresponding increase in local air pollution problems, as the burning program will be conducted in accordance with the State Smoke Management Plan.

The primary economic influence zone (Jackson and Josephine Counties) will continue to benefit from harvest of high-value timber and increased recreation use from the Forest. Timber harvest will provide less revenue to local governments due to reduced harvest levels, however this may be offset somewhat by higher bid prices for a limited resource. Employment related to the lumber and wood products industry will also decline. However, employment in the service sectors of the local economy will continue to grow.

Opportunities for the Forest to help enhance the vitality of surrounding communities will occur through a Regional initiative called the Pacific Northwest Strategy. It is envisioned that the Pacific Northwest Strategy will be a new focus of operation for many people, one that empowers Forest Service people and local citizens to look and work beyond the traditional boundaries. At the same time, it reaffirms and emphasizes working with other government agencies, local businesses, and the communities themselves in a spirit of interdependency and cooperation that has always existed at the local Ranger District level. As the Strategy becomes an integral part of doing business, its central focus will be to foster and enhance communication, cooperation, and partnerships.

THE FOREST IN FIFTY YEARS

By the end of the fifth decade there will be changes evident in the overall character of the landscape within the Forest boundary. Almost all roads needed for resource management will have been constructed. The landscape in parts of the Forest managed for commodity production will have a heavily altered appearance.

Areas with no programmed timber harvest, such as Wilderness, Research Natural Areas, Botanical and Special Interest Areas, and dedicated wildlife and riparian habitats would still remain essentially unchanged except for the effects of fire and the slow

process of natural succession. Sensitive viewsheds will have a natural or near natural appearance.

Areas with programmed timber harvest will be a mosaic of stands of various sizes and ages. Some mature and old-growth stands would remain in these areas, but the majority would now be managed stands ranging from freshly harvested units to saw-timber size. The desired condition is a regulated forest where the stands exist in varying age and size classes and grow at rates such that a high level of yield can be sustained. Trees will be somewhat uniformly spaced and the species present will be representative of the natural diversity of the site.

An essentially completed road system will ensure easy vehicle access to much of the Forest. Developed recreation capacity will keep pace with demand with some additional site expansion and development. Unroaded and Semi-primitive Motorized recreation opportunities will continue to decrease, although much of the development of roadless areas will have occurred in the first decade.

The Upper Rogue Wild and Scenic River will continue to have its outstanding features protected. Due to the increased recreation use along the River, some controls or permits may be necessary to maintain the desired recreation experience.

Although there will not be overcrowded conditions, some sites in Wildernesses may be used to such an extent that management to Primitive WRS standards will be difficult. Permits, or other direct regulatory controls may be necessary to ensure Wilderness objectives are met.

Most of the cultural resource sites on the Forest will be inventoried and protected. Historic buildings and archaeological sites near travelways or campgrounds may be developed for interpretation, and some significant structures may be rehabilitated or restored to their original historic appearance and condition.

The major factor influencing wildlife populations will be the large areas of immature and second growth timber supporting earlier successional stage species. In big-game winter range, forage and cover needs will be met at near optimum conditions. Habitat to support Threatened and Endangered species will be protected in accordance with Recovery Plans. Approximately 65,000 acres of old-growth will

remain. The majority of these acres will be found in Wilderness, Research Natural Areas, Botanical and Special Interest Areas, Backcountry Non-motorized areas, Wild and Scenic River Corridors, dedicated wildlife and riparian habitats, and some sensitive visual corridors.

Habitat for species utilizing dead or downed trees will be provided throughout the Forest, including areas of timber harvest. Snags and logs on the ground will be found in various stages of decay providing habitat and woody debris for nutrient recycling.

Habitat for resident and anadromous fish will be maintained at a fairly constant level following the second decade. Habitat improvement work will be done primarily to replace failing structures and maintain the gains achieved in earlier decades.

Forest soil productivity will be maintained. Water yield and quality will not be significantly reduced or degraded as a result of human activity. High quality domestic water supplies will continue to be provided.

The demand for locatable minerals and mineral materials is likely to increase by the end of the fifth decade. Factors beyond Forest Service control, including new technologies, economic conditions, and new materials developments will have a significant influence on demands. Biological impacts will be kept to acceptable levels through improved mining and reclamation technology and competent administration of the activity.

Special Use permits will increase somewhat, especially for special recreation events. The land exchange program will have achieved a more efficient land ownership pattern as isolated blocks of National Forest ownership will have been exchanged for private inholdings. Additional land line location will occur on a project-needed basis and existing landlines will be maintained to standard.

The principle access roads will be readily identifiable, having paved or gravel surfaces, and will appear suitable for passenger car use. Signs will assist travelers in finding their destination. Some roads will continue to appear less inviting for use. They will look primitive and rough, but acceptable to the more experienced Forest traveler in high clearance vehicles.

FOREST MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

Almost 100% of the planned Forest development road system will be complete. All of the arterial and collector roads will be complete, while a few local roads will be needed to complete the overall system. The majority of the 520 miles of road built during the last five decades to meet timber management objectives will be classified as local road facilities

There will be 937 miles of access roads will be managed to either encourage or accept passenger car use. These roads will be paved or gravel surfaced and will have signing to assist travelers in finding their destinations. There will be 1,610 miles of road open to and managed for high clearance vehicle use. These will look rough and primitive to discourage use by travelers in passenger cars. Some roads will be managed for high clearance vehicle use will be closed seasonally to protect resource values, such as watershed and wildlife habitat

An additional 1,043 miles of road will be managed for intermittent use. The time between periods of use will generally be in excess of one year. Between uses, all vehicle traffic will be eliminated from these roads with physical barriers. Roads not needed for future management of the Forest will be obliterated

Because of the continuing need to protect watershed conditions, provide for wildlife needs, and control costs, a portion of the road system will be managed in a self-maintaining condition, with little to no vehicle travel planned. However, some of these partially closed or self-maintaining roads will be in the process of being reopened to accommodate future cycles of timber management activities

The amount of total suspended particulates (TSP) from the Forest slash burning program will be reduced by 57% from baseline levels. Anticipated TSP levels should not contribute to a corresponding increase in local air pollution problems, as the burning program will be conducted in accordance with the State Smoke Management Plan

The primary economic influence zone (Jackson and Josephine Counties) will continue to benefit from harvest of timber and increased recreation use from the Forest. While the value of timber harvested may be somewhat lower due to an increase in proportion of smaller second growth timber, the amount of available for harvest will increase and is likely to be offsetting from an economic stand point to local

economies and governments. Continued increases in employment related to service sectors are expected. Employment related to wood products industry may level off or slightly decrease due to improvements in technology, even with an increasing supply of timber.

Each community will have capitalized on its uniqueness and involved its citizens in the development of a desired future. The activities associated with the Pacific Northwest Strategy will continue to support the goals and plans of resource-dependent communities

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The National Forest land within the Rogue River National Forest has been divided into Management Areas, each with an accompanying Management Strategy. Each Area has different resource goals, opportunities, Standards and Guidelines. In essence, it is a unit of land to be managed to achieve a desired future condition. This is accomplished by the application of its corresponding Management Strategy, or "prescription". The acres of each Management Area are shown in Table 4-3. They are also displayed by "groupings of Management Areas" on the map accompanying this Plan. This map is intended as a general reference map only.

The Management Area maps of record consist of a set of larger scale (1:24,000) computer generated maps on file in the Forest Supervisor's office. Except for Congressionally designated or special administrative boundaries, the Management Area boundaries are not firm lines and do not always follow easily found topographic features, such as major ridges. These boundaries reflect the inventory information gathered at the Forest Planning level and represent a transition from one set of opportunities and constraints to another, with management direction established for each in the form of Management Strategies. Computer mapping characteristics also tend to "square" or "stair-step" boundaries which are intended to be curved. Minor adjustment and refinement of these boundaries will occur as higher intensity inventories are completed at project-level planning. An example might be where a visual resource management line for Management Area 6 - Fore-