

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION OF THE FOREST

This section describes the changes desired from the present condition of the Forest, resulting from planned management practices. These changes are described as of 10 years from the effective date of this Forest Plan and at the end of 50 years (the RPA planning horizon).

The Forest in Ten Years

At the end of the first decade, there will be a perceivable change in the overall character 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 timber harvest units. By the end of the first ten years, many of the roadless areas will be altered.

Areas with no planned timber harvest, such as wilderness, research natural areas, and dedicated wildlife habitats, will remain essentially unchanged, modified only by natural processes.

Areas with programmed timber harvest will have cutting units distributed through the mature forest. The harvested areas will have a managed appearance with a complete range of silvicultural practices being implemented. Post-harvest site preparation will precede tree planting. Tree plantations will noticeably develop through seedling, sapling and pole stages. Some stands reaching large pole to small sawtimber size will receive commercial stand improvement practices to optimize growth of the remaining stand. Trees will be somewhat uniformly spaced, and the species present will be representative of the natural diversity in the local areas. Approximately 244,000 acres of old growth suitable and available for timber harvest will remain.

Opportunities for roaded recreation and roads open to passenger vehicles will increase. The number of developed recreation sites will remain at approximately the same level as the present, as there is now some unused capacity. Unroaded recreation opportunities will decrease with the development of some roadless areas. However, unroaded recreation, wilderness and OCRA management areas will provide enough land to satisfy user demands. The OCRA will have more recreation facilities than at present.

Rivers and their tributaries, including appropriate adjacent lands, meeting eligibility criteria for classification under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, will continue to have their outstanding remarkable features protected while suitability studies are being completed. Additional designated rivers and the North Umpqua River, presently classified under the Act, will have their landscapes essentially unchanged, although increased whitewater recreational use will bring social change to the river environs.

Ease of access to wilderness portals will increase. Although there generally will not be overcrowded conditions, some sites will be used to such an extent that management to primitive WRS standards will be difficult.

Most viewsheds seen from highly used travel routes will generally have slightly more timber harvest activities in view, although the existing character will appear largely unchanged. The North Umpqua corridor from the Forest boundary to Soda Springs will retain its natural-appearing condition.

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Most of the cultural resource sites, especially historic, will be inventoried and protected. Historic buildings and archaeological sites near recreation travelways or campgrounds may be used as visitor interpretative centers or sites. Monitoring of projects impacting cultural resource sites will be ongoing.

Big game winter ranges will be managed to provide forage, cover and protection from impacting human disturbances. The high value area of the winter range will be managed intensively to high quality forage and cover. Areas managed for mature and old growth-dependent wildlife species will appear as they do today. Snag management "patches", snags, and cull trees left in harvest units will provide snag habitat.

Unique wildlife habitats and the habitat required for threatened or endangered species will be retained and protected. Habitat to support threatened, endangered, sensitive, and indicator species will be protected in accordance with legislative acts, recovery plans, and directives.

Reserved mature/old-growth habitat areas will remain essentially unchanged by humans. 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 begin to be distributed through areas where timber harvest is programmed. New timber harvest units will continue to provide high quality forage for deer and elk. Riparian ecosystems in harvest areas would have been managed to maintain water quality and a diverse vegetative condition for the rich variety of wildlife utilizing riparian and aquatic areas.

Habitat for species utilizing dead or downed trees will be provided throughout the Forest. Snags and trees for replacement snags will be left in areas where timber harvest occurs. Dead logs will be left on the ground for species utilizing such material as habitat and to provide woody material for nutrient cycling.

Habitat for resident and anadromous fish would be maintained in streams Forestwide and substantially improved through project works in portions of some anadromous streams that are presently well below potential. Fish populations would be stable in most streams and beginning to increase in the rehabilitated stream segments. Resident fish populations in small reservoirs and ponds would increase substantially, resultant from project activities.

Long-term soil productivity will not be significantly changed as a result of onsite activities, including fertilization.

Water yield and quality will not be significantly reduced or degraded as a result of human activity.

The demand for minerals and mineral materials will increase over the next 10 years with the most activity being in prospecting, exploration, and extraction of gold and other precious ores. As existing rock sources are depleted and rehabilitated, new sources will be developed further from the areas of use or in areas with physical and biological sensitivity. The physical and biological impacts associated with mining and quarrying rock will be mitigated at higher cost to the miner or mineral material user.

As the demand for and prices of minerals increase, new discoveries will be made; road access may be necessary through portions of the Forest currently unroaded.

Developed and administrative sites with high value capital improvements will be withdrawn from mineral entry.

The administrative Forest boundary between all private ownership and National Forest System land will have been surveyed and posted. Landline location and posting of Congressional boundaries will be ongoing. Administrative boundary markers will be maintained.

Land use permit numbers will have increased slightly with the emphasis being related to river corridors and recreation opportunities.

Land ownership pattern will be almost unchanged, with minor adjustments due to small tract claims, acquisition of private lands, and disposal of isolated Federal parcels as opportunities arise.

The principal access roads will be readily identifiable, having paved or gravel surfaces and will look suitable for passenger car use. Signs will assist travelers in finding their destination. Some roads will appear less inviting for use. These less inviting roads will look rough or primitive, but most will be available for use by the more experienced traveler in vehicles with high ground clearances. Continued road system development and improvement will be taking place in areas where resource development activities are planned. Some roads will be closed.

The primary economic influence zone (Douglas, Lane, and Jackson Counties) will benefit from stable harvest of high-value timber and increased recreation use from the Umpqua National Forest. Timber harvest will provide continued support for local governments (as a result of higher timber prices) and a stable basis for sustaining employment in the lumber and wood products industry. It is anticipated that the number of mills dependent on large diameter timber will be reduced. Some mills will be refitted to manufacture smaller diameter logs, others will cease operations. Additional employment opportunities will be provided through new wood product development.

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.

Increased recreation use, particularly along the Highway 138 corridor and in the Mt. Bailey ski area, is expected to provide additional employment opportunities. Only limited opportunities for economic growth are anticipated as a result of increased use of range and mineral resources.

The Forest in 50 Years

By the end of the fifth decade, there will be changes evident in the overall character of the landscape within the Forest boundary. The majority of roads needed for resource management will have been constructed and the landscape in parts of the Forest managed for commodity production will have a heavily altered appearance. Sensitive viewsheds will have a natural or near natural appearance. Rehabilitation objectives in some areas of the viewsheds will have been realized and these areas will have returned to a more natural condition.

Areas with no timber harvest, such as wilderness, research natural areas, and dedicated areas, would still remain essentially unchanged except for the effects of fire storm, and the slow process of natural succession.

DESIRED CONDITION

Because of the continuing need to protect watershed conditions, to provide for wildlife habitat needs, and to control costs, a portion of the road system will be managed in a self-maintaining state with no vehicle traffic planned. Some of these self-maintaining roads will be in the process of being opened to accommodate future cycles of timber management activities.

Much of the Forest will have a managed look, showing a variety of age classes --- from newly planted tree seedlings to mature, large-diameter trees. Approximately 47,000 acres of old growth suitable and available for timber harvest will remain. An additional 219,000 acres of old growth not suitable or available for timber harvest will remain.

Areas with programmed timber harvest will be a mosaic of stands of various sizes and ages. The desired condition of this available commercial forest land is that of a regulated forest where the stands exist in age and size class proportions and grow at rates such that a high level of timber yield can be sustained.

Trees in managed stands will be somewhat uniformly spaced; the species present will be representative of the natural diversity in the local areas.

A completed road system will ensure easy vehicle access to the vast majority of the Forest. Many of the unroaded recreation management areas will have achieved near capacity during peak-use seasons. The OCRA will retain opportunities for solitude. There will be new developed sites on the Forest located on existing travel corridors and destination areas.

Whitewater use on the North Umpqua River will have increased to the extent that controls and permits for floating will be necessary.

More extensive recreation use of the Rogue-Umpqua Divide and Boulder Creek wildernesses will be such that wilderness objectives will be in danger of not being met. Permits may be necessary for recreation use. Mt. Thielsen Wilderness will still provide remote settings and experiences of solitude.

Most viewsheds seen from sensitive routes will have undergone a discernable, but acceptable, change because of timber harvesting. The North Umpqua and Diamond Lake viewsheds will remain natural appearing. The patterns within the general Forest will be formed primarily by cultural activities and not by nature. Only areas excluded from timber harvest will retain their natural appearances.

Most of the cultural resource sites, especially historic, will have been inventoried and protected. *Historic buildings and archaeological sites near recreation travelways or campgrounds will have been considered and/or developed as visitor interpretative centers or sites.* Monitoring of projects impacting cultural resource sites will be ongoing.

The major factor influencing wildlife populations will be the large areas of immature and second-growth timber. In big game winter range, forage will be scheduled to insure proximity to cover areas. High quality cover will be available in areas managed under the four-part winter range prescription.

Areas managed for mature and old growth-dependent wildlife species will look similar to today's Forest, with major components such as snags and down trees common throughout stands. However, these stands will be isolated within large expanses of immature stands. Snag patches and unique wildlife habitats will be available to provide a distribution of wildlife species throughout the Forest.

Habitat for threatened and endangered species will be provided and managed to meet the requirements of recovery plans.

Soil productivity will not be significantly reduced or impaired as a result of onsite activities.

Stream habitat for resident and anadromous fish would be maintained at or near potential Forestwide. All of the degraded anadromous stream segments will have been rehabilitated by the end of the second decade and project work will be limited to maintenance of old structures. Anadromous fish populations will be maintained at or near maximum in all streams on the Forest. Resident fish populations in small reservoirs and ponds will be maintained at a high level.

Water yield and quality will not be significantly reduced or degraded as a result of human activity.

The demand for locatable minerals and mineral materials at the end of 50 years is likely to increase. Factors beyond Forest Service control, including new technologies, economic conditions, and new materials developments, will have a significant influence on demands. Forest Service response to demands will be within law, policy, regulations, in effect during the Plan period. As existing rock sources were depleted and rehabilitated, new sources will have been developed. The physical and biological impacts associated with mining and quarrying rock will be mitigated at higher cost to the miner or mineral material user. As the demand for and prices of minerals increase, new discoveries may be made.

Developments, special natural areas, roads/bridges, cultural and administrative sites with exceptional value will have been withdrawn from mineral entry

Additional landline location will occur on a project-needed basis.

The number of land use permits will continue to increase with the emphasis on river corridor- and recreation-related opportunities

Land ownership patterns will be unchanged except for minor adjustments as opportunities arise to protect resources and resolve public/private conflicts

More intensive use of all of the resource opportunities on the Umpqua National Forest will result in much broader economic contributions to the primary economic influence area (Douglas, Lane, and Jackson Counties). The timber harvest will consist of a stable supply of wood fiber to support local area mills processing second-growth timber in addition to a component of large-diameter timber to support processing of specialty products. Payments to local governments will remain constant or slightly decrease in this period, depending on market conditions for second-growth timber products

Recreation use on the Forest will increase significantly and visitors will be looking forward to visiting historic and ancient Native American sites. In 50 years, economic dependence on the Umpqua for its recreation, fishing, and wildlife opportunities will have increased significantly. Range use will increase to approach the Forest's range capacity; more intensive mining activity will be present.

The principal access roads will be readily identifiable. They have paved or gravel surfaces and look suitable for passenger car use. Signs will assist travelers in finding their destinations. More roads appear less inviting for use. These less-inviting roads will look rough or primitive, but most will be available for use by the more experienced traveler in vehicles with high ground clearance. Road system development will be nearly complete. Continued improvements will be taking place in areas where resource development activities are planned. More roads will be closed.

By the end of the fifth decade, nearly 98 percent of the planned Forest development road system will be in place and providing efficient travel into and through the Forest. All of the arterial and collector road system will be complete, while some local roads will be needed to complete the overall system. The majority of the 1,500 miles of Forest development roads built during the previous five decades to utilize the timber resource will have been classified as local road facilities.

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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 no vehicle traffic planned. However some of these self-maintaining roads will be in the process of being opened to accommodate future cycles of timber management activities.

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.