Why Should ODF Prepare Forest Plan Alternatives?

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Objectives for this presentation

- Compare incremental approach to alternative-based approach to planning

- Explain why ODF should pursue a more traditional alternative-based planning process.

Forest planning objectives

- A good forest plan:

  - Describes management strategies that can be implemented:
    - legally, physically, logistically, economically, financially

  - Empowers land managers

  - Adapts to changing conditions

  - Provides certainty about forest uses

  - Enjoys support from stakeholders

Forest planning objectives

- A good <u>public</u> forest planning process:

    - Facilitates learning

    - Answers relevant questions

    - Provides relevant info for decision makers

    - Demonstrates that the decision represents "balance"
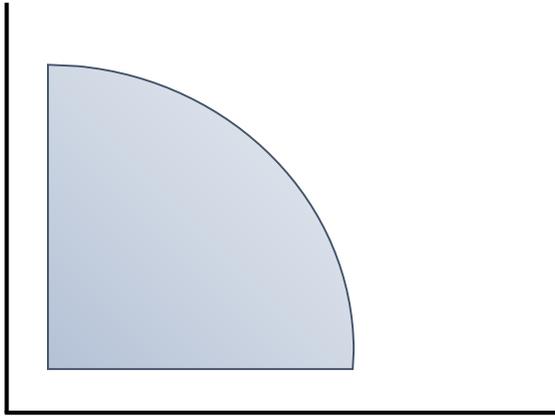
    - Builds support for the final decision

Standard Alternative-based Approach

1. Public involvement – identify issues, concerns, opportunities

2. Assessment of the resource
   a. Current distributions of acres, volumes, habitats, uses, etc.
   b. Projections and analysis of resource capabilities (What is the most xxxx we can get? What is the least zzzz that we can produce?)
   c. Relationships between resources
   d. Impacts of current laws, regulations, etc.

3. Create, analyze, discuss a wide range of forest plan alternatives
   a. What would the forest look like if we did xxxx v. yyyy?
   b. What would we have to do to make the forest look like zzzz?
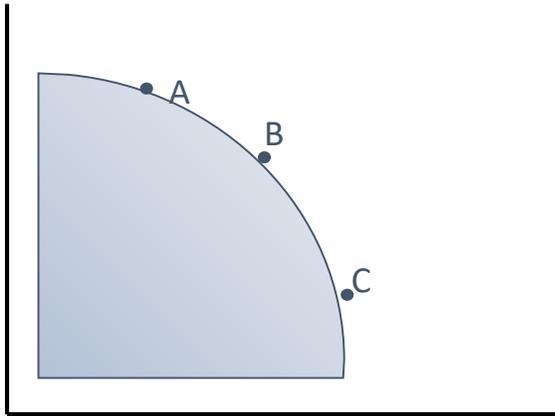   c. What is the effect of various constraints – budgets, policies, etc.

4. Make a decision
   Either select an alternative, or create a new one.

Alternative-based planning process

Step 1: Assessment – What is the decision space?

Step 2: Create and compare alternatives – Points on the decision space

	ALTS		
FACTOR	A	B	C
1	↑	↑	−
2	↓	−	↑
3	↓	↓	↑
y	↑	−	↑

Step 3: Decision – Select results you want

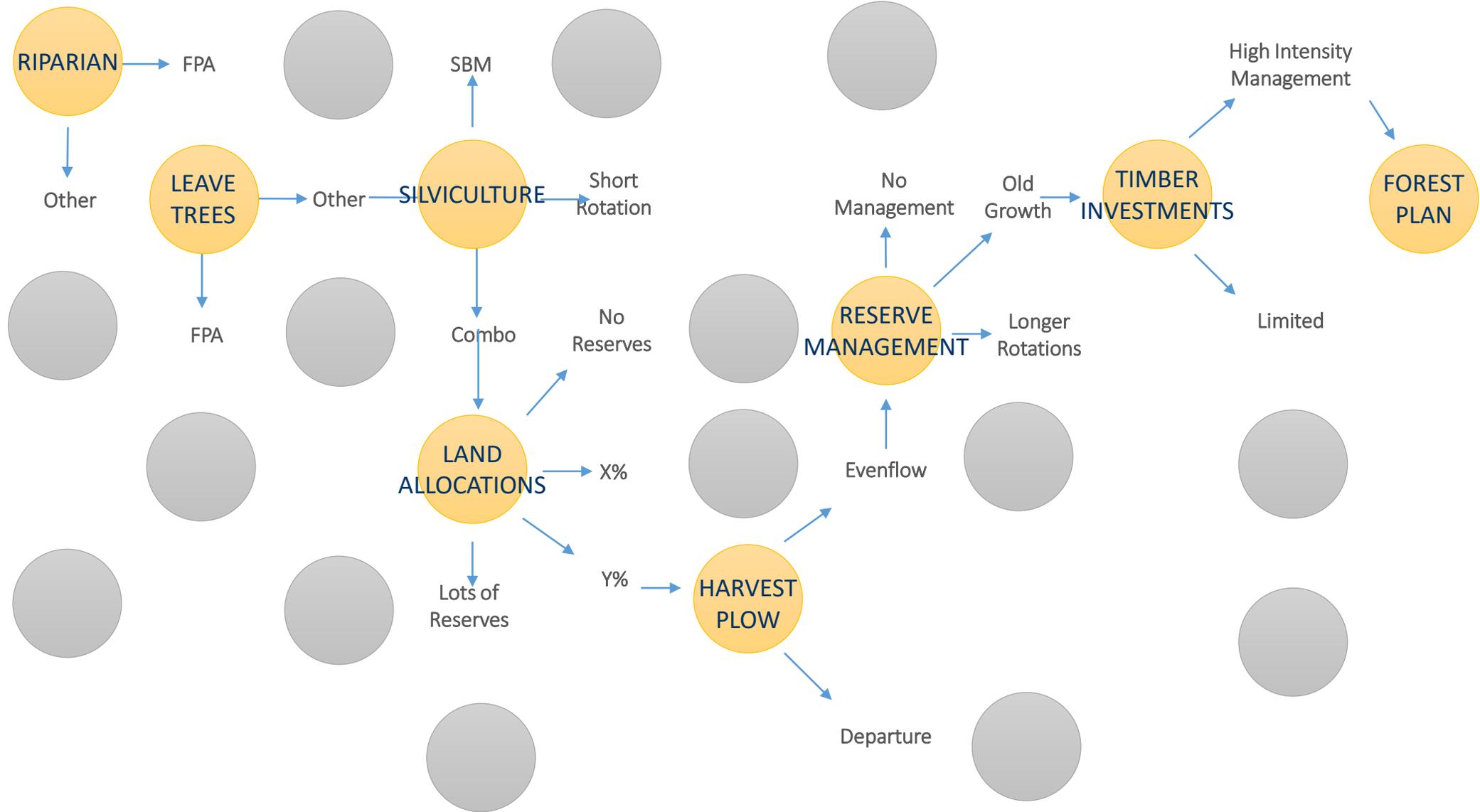# "Standard" Alternative-based Approach

- Federal and state laws and regs require an evaluation of alternatives
  - NEPA 1970
  - NFMA 1976
  - FLPMA 1976
  - WA SEPA
  - MT MEPA
  - CA SEQA
  - OR none….
- Modeling tools are designed to generate alternatives.

Incremental approach to planning

- Make decisions about the key components of a forest plan, one at a time:
  - Standards
  - Land allocations
  - Silviculture
  - Activity flows
  - Investments

Some level of
analysis at
each step?

- When all of the decisions are made, then calculate the inputs, outputs and impacts.

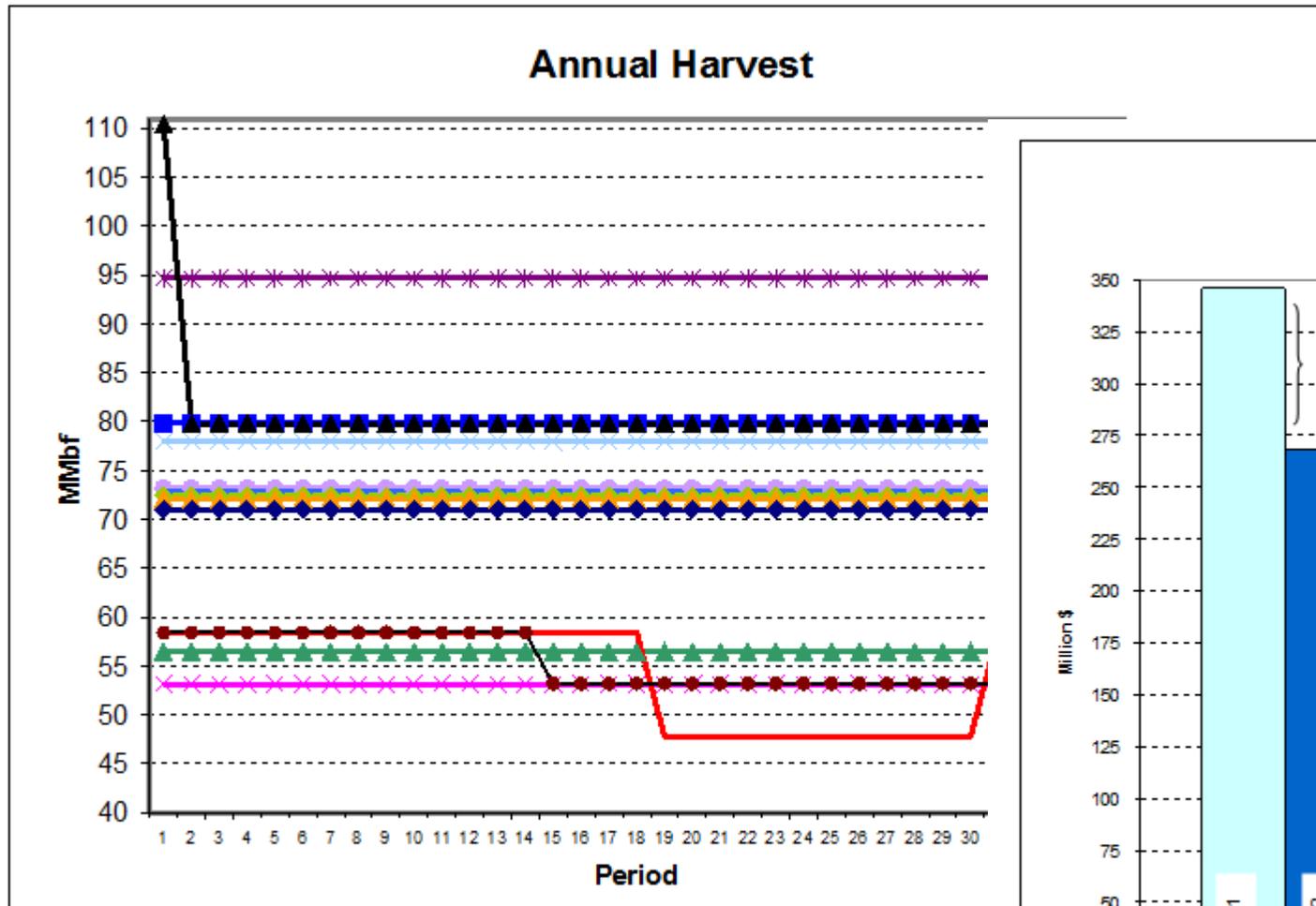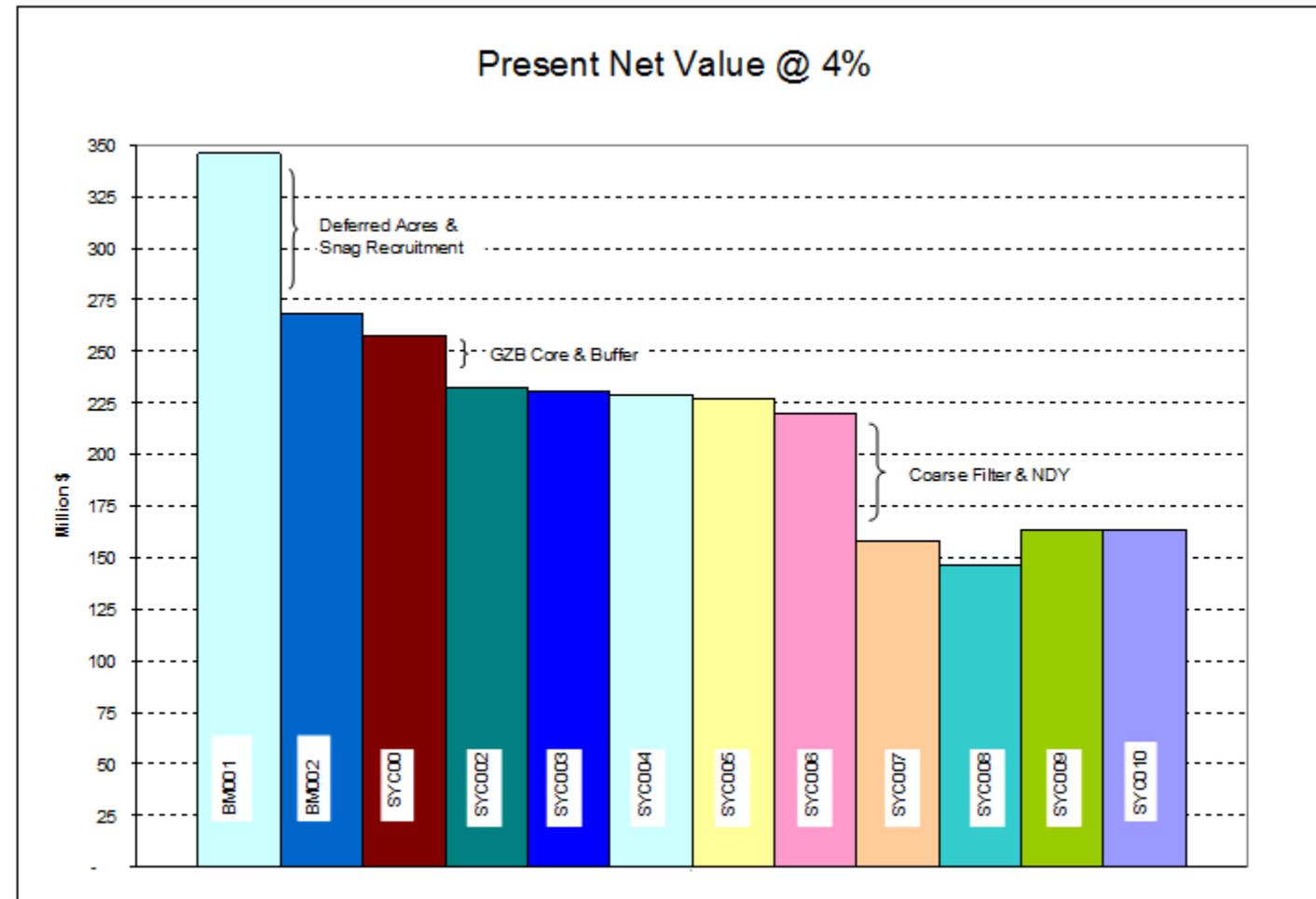Incremental Planning Process

Montana: Calculation after decisions
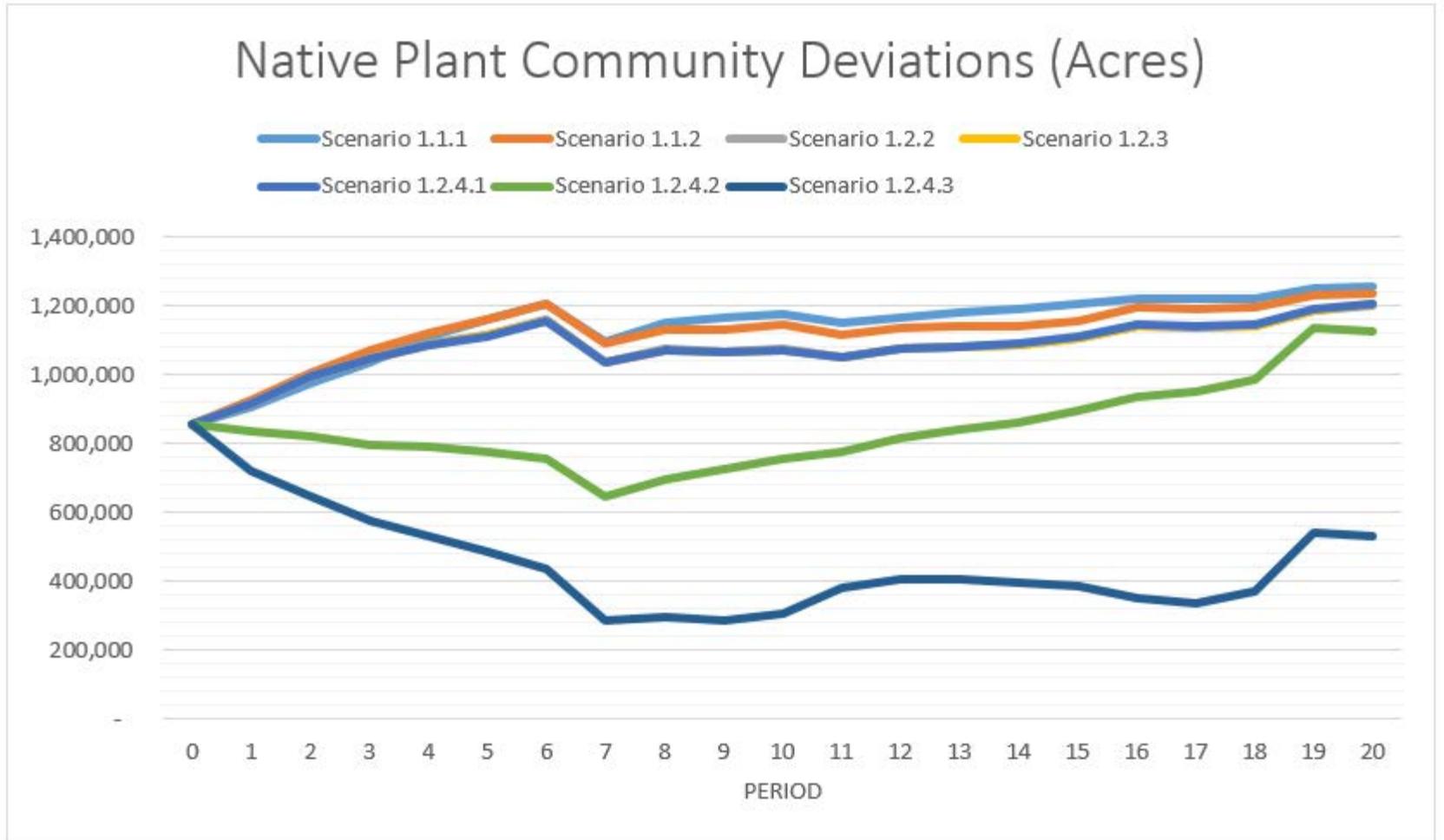

Figure 4-2

Minnesota
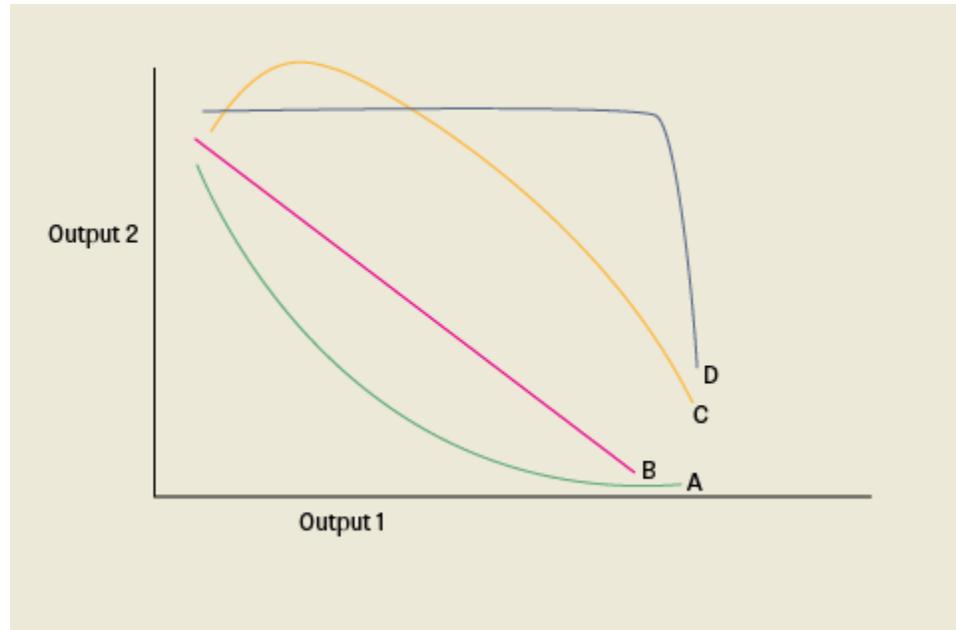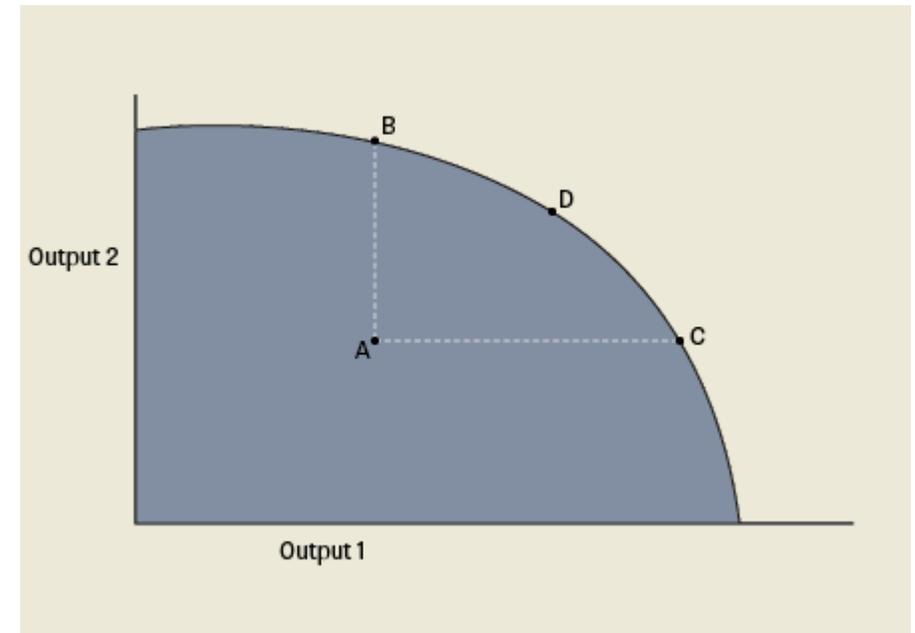

Figure 32. Scenario 1 - Native Plant Community Acreage Deviations

Forest planning analysis

- What do the tradeoffs between resources look like?

- Are alternatives efficient?

The HCP will benefit from having forest plan alternatives

- The forest plan and the HCP will be developed concurrently
- Ultimately, the provisions of the HCP will be negotiated with the Feds.
- If there is only one forest plan (incremental approach), then federal negotiators will be in a stronger position.
- Having viable alternatives (alternative-based approach) will allow ODF to demonstrate what the decision could be if the negotiators ask for too much.

ODF history with the incremental approach

- Mid -1990s – 2000:

  - ODF and BOF make incremental decisions for a new plan (SBM, buffers, etc.)

  - Industry stakeholders want to know what the tradeoffs were

  - MB&G evaluates SBM v. standard silviculture

  - BOF is interested in the <u>idea of analysis of alternatives</u>, and directs ODF to generate forest plan alternatives

  - ODF builds a planning model (Sessions Model) and prepares many alternatives for review

  - BOF adopts Alt 1C2 as the basis for the new SFLMP.

Summary comparison

	Alternative-based	Incremental
Time & Effort	Higher	Lower
Information for decision makers	Higher	Lower
Public involvement	Higher	Lower
Public trust	Higher	Lower
Potential for mistake/oversight	Lower	Higher
Potential for controversy	???	???
Demonstrates/facilitates balance	Higher	Lower

Questions