Monongahela National Forest

Administrative Correction 3
May 23, 2008
Changes to Forest Plan text for clarification on pages I-11, II-1, II-4, II-40, III-7, and III-64

Administrative corrections are defined at 36 CFR 219.7(b) and may be made at any time and are not plan amendments or revisions. Administrative corrections include the following:

1) Corrections and updates of data and maps;
2) Corrections of typographical errors or other non-substantive changes;
3) Changes in the monitoring program and monitoring information;
4) Changes in timber management projections or other projections of uses and activities;
5) Other changes in the plan document or set of documents that are not substantive changes in the plan components.

Forest Plan Chapter I, page I-11

Fourth paragraph, last sentence: An analysis file or project file will be available for public review, but it may not always necessary to document the analysis…

Change to: An analysis file or project file will be available for public review, but it may not always **be** necessary to document the analysis…

Rationale for Change: Adds the omitted word "be" to clarify the meaning of the sentence.

Forest Plan Chapter II, page II-1

First paragraph, second sentence: The management direction in this chapter applies to National Forest System (NFS) lands within the proclaimed boundary and purchase units of the Monongahela National Forest.

Change to: The management direction in this **Forest Plan** applies to National Forest System (NFS) lands within the proclaimed boundary and purchase units of the Monongahela National Forest.

Rationale for Change: Clarifies that all direction in the Forest Plan applies only to NFS lands.

Forest Plan Chapter II, page II-4

Fifth paragraph, first sentence: The Forest consults and coordinates with the USDA Northeastern Research Station to…

Change to: The Forest consults and coordinates with the USDA **Northern** Research Station to…

Rationale for Change: Reflects the fact that the Research Station recently changed its name.

Forest Plan Chapter II, page II-40

Desired Conditions, second paragraph: The Vegetation section in this chapter, and in Management Prescriptions 3.0, 4.1, and 6.1 in Chapter III contain desired conditions for species composition…

Change to: The Vegetation section in this chapter, and Management Prescriptions 3.0, 4.1, and 6.1 in Chapter III, contain desired conditions for species composition…

Rationale for Change: Deletes a word and adds a comma to clarify the meaning of the sentence.

Forest Plan Chapter III, page III-7

Third paragraph, second sentence: Motorized recreation opportunities are featured and public motorized vehicle use is generally provided.

Change to: Motorized recreation opportunities are featured and public motorized vehicle use is generally **allowed**.

Rationale for Change: This correction is a clarification. The Forest will not be providing public motorized vehicle use, but use is generally allowed under this prescription.

Forest Plan Chapter III, page III-64

Second paragraph, first sentence: The 4,600-acre Fernow Experimental Forest is located south of Parsons, West Virginia, and is administered by the staff of RWU-NE-4353, Sustaining the Diversity and Productivity of Appalachian Forests, of the Northeastern Research Station.

Change to: The 4,600-acre Fernow Experimental Forest is located south of Parsons, West Virginia, and is administered by the staff of RWU-NE-4353, Sustaining the Diversity and Productivity of Appalachian Forests, of the **Northern** Research Station.

Rationale for Change: This correction reflects the fact that the Research Station recently changed its name.

All of the above corrections are changes in the plan document that are not substantive changes in the plan components (36CFR 219.7(b)(5)). The changes are primarily to clarify or correct the Plan text so that it is more accurate and easier to read and understand.

Corrected pages I-11, II-1, II-4, II-40, III-7, and III-64 are attached.

The Forest may create new roads and trails if needed for site-level projects or to respond to increased demand. The majority of project roads will be Maintenance Level 1 or 2, and they will often be closed to public motorized use after the project.

Site Level Projects

"Implementing the Forest Plan" means developing and implementing site-level management projects in order to reach or move toward the desired conditions established in the Forest Plan.

Project-level compliance with the National Forest Management Act is primarily concerned with consistency with the Plan and the Act's regulations.

Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act involves the appropriate environmental analysis process for a specific proposal, proper documentation, and public disclosure of effects in an environmental assessment, environmental impact statement, or categorical exclusion. When appropriate or applicable, the Forest will perform environmental analysis on site-level projects and activities. An analysis file or project file will be available for public review, but it may not always be necessary to document the analysis in the form of an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Environmental analysis of site-level projects will use as its basis the data and evaluations in the Forest Plan and the EIS for the Forest Plan. Environmental analysis of site-level projects will be linked to the Final EIS accompanying the 2006 Forest Plan.

The following are some examples of project-level decisions that would likely require additional environmental analyses and disclosure as the 2006 Forest Plan is carried out:

- Commercial timber harvest,
- Wildlife improvement projects,
- Prescribed burn projects,
- Watershed improvement or restoration projects, or
- Trail or road construction.

Operational Activities Exempt from the National Environmental Policy Act Procedures

Resource inventories, action plans, and schedules do not require additional environmental analysis and disclosure at the project level. The following are some examples of operational activities that do not constitute site-specific decisions and therefore are exempt from National Environmental Policy Act procedures:

- Developing five-year wildlife or timber action plans,
- Completing fire-situation reports,
- Scheduling maintenance for developed recreation sites or administrative sites,
- Collecting data through inventory or monitoring,
- Preparing land ownership adjustment plans.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes Forest-wide management direction for the Forest that will guide Forest personnel to achieve desired outcomes and conditions for both land stewardship and public service. The management direction in this Forest Plan applies to National Forest System (NFS) lands within the proclaimed boundary and purchase units of the Monongahela National Forest. The Forest-wide Management Direction section provides general direction for all Forest resources and the foundation for more specific direction at the Management Prescription (MP) level in Chapter III.

It is important to note that the Forest Plan direction found in this chapter does not implement any management activities, but rather provides the context for future implementation. When and if project implementation occurs, the Forest will disclose and analyze the proposed activities and their potential effects, using the National Environmental Policy Act process. This process will include public involvement and provide the Forest decision-maker with a range of alternatives and effects from which to choose management options. During project implementation, the Forest may apply additional mitigation measures not described in this Forest Plan to further reduce potential effects from proposed activities where appropriate.

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Law, Regulation, and Policy - As a federal land management agency, the Forest Service must follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. If these laws change or are amended, or if new laws are enacted, the Forest administration will comply with the changes or additions. The same situation applies to executive orders and to agency policy, as expressed in Forest Service Manual (FSM) and Handbook (FSH) directives. This direction is mandatory and does not need to be restated in the Forest Plan. Wherever the laws, regulations, or policies have more stringent requirements than Forest Plan direction, the Forest must and will comply with those requirements. Some of the more well-known federal laws the Forest must follow include:

National Environmental Policy Act (1969)
National Forest Management Act (1976)
Clean Water Act (1948) and Amendments
Clean Air Act (1955) and Amendments
Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act (1960)
Wilderness Act (1964)
National Forest Roads and Trails Act (1964)
National Historic Preservation Act (1966)
Archeological Resources Protection Act (1979)
Endangered Species Act (1973)
Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Act (1974)
Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act (1987)
Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (1977)

Outstanding and Reserved Rights – Laws and regulations, including those noted above, incorporate a number of outstanding or reserved rights, such as the entitlement to access and develop a deeded mineral right. These rights will be honored by the Forest, even though they are not explicitly listed as exceptions to the development restrictions that appear in some of the Forest-wide and Management Prescription standards and guidelines. The Forest cannot usurp these rights unless claimants or property owners are willing to negotiate for just compensation.

Fire - The Forest cooperates with West Virginia Division of Forestry and local fire departments to protect NFS lands and adjacent land ownerships from wildfire.

The National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) - The Forest coordinates with the NRAO on any application for special use permit located within the NRAO Quiet Zone, and on activities within one mile of the NRAO sites that might produce incidental radio emission.

Search and Rescue – The Forest cooperates with state and local authorities, who bear the primary responsibility for search and rescue. In those cases where state and local officials have not had time to organize and act, the Forest Service may initiate search and rescue operations to reduce suffering and to save lives.

Highland Scenic Highway - The Forest cooperates with the Federal Highway Administration, West Virginia Department of Highways, and other agencies in the improvement, operation, and management of the Highland Scenic Highway, including law enforcement and traffic regulation.

Research – The Forest consults and coordinates with the USDA Northern Research Station, universities, and other state and federal agencies to conduct research into Forest management activities and impacts, develop and improve management techniques, and apply the best scientific information and technology to management practices.

DEFINITIONS

There five types of direction used for the Forest resource programs—desired conditions, goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines—are described in detail, below.

Desired Conditions are descriptions of how Forest resources should look and function to provide diverse and sustainable habitats, settings, goods, and services. Taken together, the desired conditions should present an integrated vision of a properly functioning Forest that supports a broad range of biological diversity and social and economic opportunity.

Goals are statements that help describe desired conditions, or how to achieve those conditions. Goals are designed to maintain conditions if they are currently within their desired range, or move conditions toward their desired range if they are currently outside that range. Goals are normally expressed in general terms that are timeless, and there are no specific dates by which they must be achieved. Goal statements form the basis from which objectives are developed.

Objectives are concise time-specific statements of actions or results designed to help achieve goals. Objectives form the basis for project-level actions or proposals to help achieve Forest goals. Like goals, objectives are designed to maintain conditions if they are currently within their desired range, or move conditions toward their desired range if they are currently outside that range. The timeframe for accomplishing objectives, unless otherwise stated, is generally considered to be the planning period, or the next 10 to 15 years. More specific dates are not typically used because accomplishment can be delayed by funding, litigation, environmental changes, and other influences beyond the Forest's control.

Timber Resources

Forest Service Manual and Handbook direction for timber management is in the FSM 2400 - Timber Management, and in Forest Service Handbooks: 2409.13 - Timber Resource Planning Handbook, 2409.13a - Timber Permanent Plot Handbook, 2409.15 - Timber Sale Administration Handbook, 2409.17 - Silvicultural Practices Handbook, 2509.18 - Soil Management Handbook, 2609.13 - Wildlife and Fisheries Program Management Handbook, and 2509.22 – Soil and Water Conservation Practices Handbook. Sale implementation direction can also be found in Timber Sale Contract Provisions and procurement contracts.

DESIRED CONDITIONS

Suited timberlands provide sustainable and predictable levels of forest products. Forest products include, but are not limited to, fuelwood, post and poles, and sawlogs. The Forest provides a dependable source of large-diameter, high-quality sawtimber. Commercial timber harvest is a viable tool for accomplishing vegetation management objectives.

The Vegetation section in this chapter, and Management Prescriptions 3.0, 4.1, and 6.1 in Chapter III, contain desired conditions for species composition, tree age classes, snags, and coarse woody debris for a variety of vegetation groups.

Management Direction for Timber Resources		
Type	**Number**	**Direction Description**
Timber Resource Management Planning		
Goal	TR01	Manage vegetation to provide a sustained yield of timber, contribute to local and regional economies, achieve desired age class distributions, and benefit other resources.
Goal	TR02	Use appropriate harvest technologies to ensure cost efficiency and demonstrate prudent forest management, while addressing environmental concerns and preserving ecosystem integrity.
Objective	TR03	Make available 25 to 105 million cubic feet of timber for the decade, which will contribute to Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ).
Objective	TR04	Provide timber harvest, and related reforestation and timber stand improvement activities, to contribute toward the attainment of desired vegetation conditions. On suitable timber lands, harvest timber, other than by salvage, on an estimated 20,000 to 36,000 acres over the next 10 years.
Standard	TR05	Whole-tree yarding shall be prohibited where site-specific soil inventories determine the need for on-site nutrient retention. Whole-tree yarding may be allowed elsewhere based on site-specific management objectives.
Standard	TR06	No more than 20 percent of NFS lands within each prescription area unit shall receive regeneration harvest over a 10-year period.
Guideline	TR07	Stands less than 10 acres in size should only be created to meet resource objectives other than timber production. Existing stands less than 10 acres should be maintained in the corporate database until such time that it is feasible to incorporate them with one or more adjoining stands.
Commercial Timber Sales		

Management activities result in relatively high levels of sustainable timber and mast production. Age class distribution ranges from early to late successional stands, but the predominant age classes are represented by mid and mid-late successional stands (see table above). Roughly 3 to 8 percent of the prescription area units are in maintained or natural openings, including beaver meadows, shrub and brush fields, savannahs, grazing allotments, seeded log landings and logging roads, mine reclamations, utility corridors, and natural disturbance gaps.

The area provides a diversity of habitats for wildlife species, a diverse visual landscape, and considerable human activity resulting from a variety of uses.

A system of roads and trails provides access within the area for public recreation and for administrative and management purposes, including transportation of forest products. Motorized recreation opportunities are featured and public motorized vehicle use is generally allowed. Road densities vary considerably but average within 1.0 to 2.0 miles per square mile. Open road densities average 0.5 to 1.0 miles per square mile.

Roads and trails provide abundant opportunities for motorized recreation, including driving for pleasure, forest product gathering, hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing. All of the area is managed for a Roaded Natural ROS setting. High scenic integrity is maintained along visually sensitive viewpoints and travel ways.

Management Direction for 3.0 – Vegetation Diversity Emphasis		
Type	**Number**	**Direction Description**
1900 - Vegetation		
Goal	3001	Enhance diversity of forest vegetative cover through the dispersion of a variety of species, types, and ages.
Objective	3002	Over the next 10 years regenerate the following amounts of forest vegetation to begin moving toward desired age class conditions for these forest types: Northern hardwoods: 1,000-2,000 acres Mixed cove hardwoods: 8,000-12,000 acres Mixed oak: 3,000-4,000 acres
2200 – Range		
Standard	3003	Management of open areas within allotments shall be primarily for livestock grazing. Intensive management for livestock grazing may occur.
2310 – Recreation System Planning		
Goal	3004	Feature roaded natural ROS class recreation opportunities.
2350 - General Forest Environment Areas		
Standard	3005	Selected areas, trails, or roads may be closed, where appropriate, to motorized vehicles during specific periods to protect resources, provide for public safety, or reduce user conflict. The intent, however, is to provide for public motorized use.
2410 - Timber Resource Management Planning		
Standard	3006	There is no limit on the timing or proportion of the prescription area to be entered for timber practices during an entry cycle.
Guideline	3007	Management with uneven-aged silviculture systems should be based on visual quality, timber products, economics, and site and species capabilities.
Guideline	3008	The following maximum diameter at breast height (dbh) sizes should be used as

Management Prescription 8.5 – Fernow Experimental Forest

Management Emphasis

This prescription emphasizes management of the Fernow Experimental Forest for research activities. The Fernow was formally mandated in 1934 to be made "permanently available for forest research and the demonstration of its results". The land management goal is to facilitate scientific research of central Appalachian forest ecosystems in order to improve their management. Therefore, maintaining the ability to conduct manipulative research is a primary objective on the Fernow Experimental Forest.

Area Description

The 4,600-acre Fernow Experimental Forest is located south of Parsons, West Virginia, and is administered by the staff of RWU-NE-4353, Sustaining the Diversity and Productivity of Appalachian Forests, of the Northeastern Research Station. The Fernow encompasses most of the Elklick Run drainage basin and the Stonelick Run drainage basin. The Fernow is well-roaded, but basically undeveloped, with no access to electrical power. An estimated 58% of the Fernow area has privately owned mineral rights. The area includes Big Springs Cave, a winter hibernacula for Indiana bats, and throughout the forest, many populations of running buffalo clover. Both are federally endangered species.

The ecological land type of the Fernow Experimental Forest is referred to as the Allegheny Mountains Section of the Central Appalachian Broadleaf Forest (M221B) in the Forest Service National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units. The landtype association is designated as Allegheny Front Side Slopes (Ba10) and vegetation is classified as mixed mesophytic. Elevations range from 1750 to 3650 feet above sea level, and slopes ranging from 20 to 50 percent cover most of the area. There are no current or planned range allotments within the area.

The Loop Road Research Area is also assigned to this Management Prescription; however it is not within the boundary of the Fernow Experimental Forest. This 800-acre area on the Greenbrier Ranger District on Middle Mountain is managed by the Experimental Forest staff for conducting research studies related to the management of Appalachian timber types, specifically growth and yield studies of managed and unmanaged stands.

Desired Conditions

The Fernow Experimental Forest supports an active research program that includes both long-term and short-term experiments, and research that is manipulative as well as observational in nature. The research program addresses research needs of a wide variety of clients. Ongoing, long-term research is continued and opportunities for new research are available.