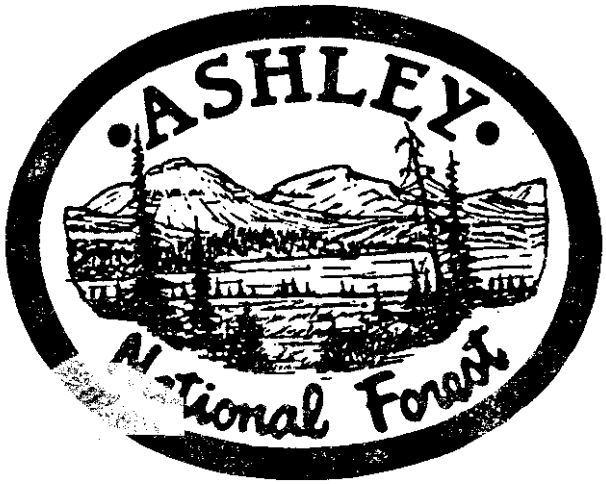
RECORD OF DECISION



for

LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREST SERVICE

RECORD OF DECISION
for
USDA, FOREST SERVICE
ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST

Final Environmental Impact Statement and
Land and Resource Management Plan

Daggett, Duchesne, Summit, Uintah, Utah, and Wasatch Counties in Utah
and Sweetwater County in Wyoming

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RECORD OF DECISION
FOR
USDA-FOREST SERVICE

Final Environmental Impact Statement

ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST
LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Daggett, Duchesne, Summit, Uintah, Utah, and Wasatch Counties in Utah
and Sweetwater County in Wyoming

I. INTRODUCTION

This Record of Decision documents approval of the Land and Resource Management Plan (the Plan) for the Ashley National Forest (the Forest). The Ashley National Forest is located in the Uinta Mountains of northeastern Utah and southwestern Wyoming and includes 1,384,699 acres of National Forest land. The Plan is a program for natural resource management activities and establishes management requirements for implementing these activities. The Plan identifies resource management practices, projected production levels of goods and services, and where various types of resource management activities are expected to occur.

The Plan provides for coordinated multiple-use management of recreation, wilderness, fish and wildlife, range, watershed, timber, and minerals resources, with a resulting sustained yield of goods and services for the benefit of the American people. The Plan also provides broad direction for dealing with applications and permits for public occupancy and use of National Forest System lands and for management of the impacts from mineral activities on the Forest.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) describes a proposed action (the Plan) and alternatives to proposed action. It also describes the environment to be affected and discloses potential environmental consequences of implementing the proposed action and alternatives to the proposed action.

This FEIS and Plan were developed under the implementing regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 1500-1508 (40 CFR 1500-1508); and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 219 (36 CFR 219).

A. In publishing Land and Resource Management Plans, the Forest Service is trying to satisfy two somewhat different requirements:

1. Compliance with the statutory mandate of NFMA to develop and maintain a management system so that an "interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, and other sciences" will be applied to all future decisions, 16 U.S.C, 1604(b), 1604(c), 1604(f), and 1604(g).

2. Linkage with the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resource Planning Act (RPA) Program and Assessment through current modeling techniques to make forecasts of the outputs which could be produced under the Plan and alternatives to the Plan.

Forecasts of outputs that could be produced under the Plan and alternatives are useful in making comparisons among alternatives and the Plan. There is no assurance that the outputs will actually occur at the projected number. This is due to limitations of modeling and projections and because on-the-ground conditions, changes in laws and regulations, national and local economic conditions, and appropriated budget levels all affect the actual outputs. As with management direction, projected outputs can be adjusted through rescheduling of proposed implementation schedules (amendments) or through revision. NFMA has a required revision period of 15 years.

Approval of this Plan marks the turning point from promulgation to implementation of the Plan. This does not mean that all decisions on issues are final. Public involvement will continue as the Plan is implemented. Specific projects and activities will be examined in light of the Plan's direction, and public involvement will be essential. With participation of other federal agencies, state agencies, interest groups, and the general public, Plan implementation and administration can realize systematic integration of resources and their uses.

B. Features of the Plan:

1. Forest Condition

The Plan identifies the desired future condition of the Forest. Goals are presented in Chapter IV of the Plan. Goals are timeless, and they form the principal basis for developing objectives (36 CFR 219.3).

2. Management Objectives

The Plan identifies management objectives necessary for the Forest to achieve its goals. It also describes how resources are to be managed in order to attain these objectives. Objectives are presented in Chapter IV of the Plan. These objectives are depicted as annual levels of goods and services that will ideally be achieved during the 10- to 15-year planning period. Achievement of these objectives is contingent upon many factors, includ-

ing appropriated levels of funding, national and local economic factors, and dynamic natural and physical factors at work on the Forest.

3. Management Requirements

The Plan specifies management requirements that control and govern how activities will be implemented on the Forest. The Plan includes standards and guidelines and management area prescriptions and direction (Chapter IV). Standards and guidelines detail overall management requirements that apply to the entire Forest during Plan implementation. They are applied in addition to management requirements for each management area prescription and direction. The Plan assigns management area prescriptions to specific land ares within the Forest. Mitigation measures to avoid or minimize environmental harm are incorporated as part of management requirements in Forest Direction and Management Area Prescriptions in Chapter IV of the Plan. Mitigation is also discussed in Chapter IV of the FEIS. Plan maps display locations where various management area prescriptions apply.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Plan contains monitoring and evaluation criteria to determine how well objectives, and standards and guidelines have been met, and how well standards and guidelines have been applied. Monitoring procedures are displayed in Chapter V of the Plan.

5. Amendment or Revision

The Plan establishes management direction for the next 10 to 15 years, when it will be revised. Short-term opportunities, problems, or conflicts may arise in managing the Forest that were not anticipated in the Plan. The Plan provides a framework for responding to unanticipated needs and can be adjusted, if needed, through rescheduling or amendment.

II. THE DECISION

This Record of Decision approves the Forest Plan displayed as Alternative J (the Proposed Action) in the FEIS for management of the Ashley National Forest.

In light of known needs and potential impacts, the Plan sets forth a strategy for managing the Forest. This is not a plan for day-to-day internal operations. It does not address administrative matters such as personnel, fleet equipment, internal organizational changes, and does not emphasize all site-specific design decisions nor all specific resource outputs. Rather, the Plan prescribes general management practices for the Ashley National Forest. The intention is to achieve multiple-use goals and objectives with optimum economic efficiency. Work will be done in an environmentally sound manner to produce goods, services, and amenities providing long-term public benefits.

This decision is based upon a review of environmental consequences of alternatives disclosed in the final EIS. Particular attention was given to responsiveness of alternatives to public issues and management concerns identified through developmental phases of the Forest Plan, and more recently restated through public comment on the draft EIS and proposed Forest Plan. Public comments and Forest Service responses are included in Chapter VI of the FEIS and discussed in relation to planning questions in the FEIS, Chapter I.

Major features of the Forest Plan are:

-- Dispersed Recreation - Manage moderate to heavy levels of dispersed recreation projected for the Forest at standard service level. Maintain a variety of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes to provide activities from roaded natural to primitive.

-- Developed Recreation - Manage existing developed sites at full service level. New construction of sites and facilities would begin at a low to moderate level in the first planning period to bring developed site capability up to demand projections.

-- Wilderness - Coordinate management of the High Uintas Wilderness with the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Management direction and monitoring requirements are included in the Ashley National Forest Plan.

-- Wildlife and Fish - Continue management of this resource at program levels similar to past averages. Low to moderate investment in habitat improvements will be scheduled on a continuing basis. In addition to investment levels proposed in the DEIS, a slight increase in investment dollars is proposed for maintenance of existing improvements. Estimated habitat capability for big-game species will exceed State objectives. Management indicator species habitat will remain at levels exceeding existing population levels.

-- Threatened and Endangered Species - For project activities proposed, consider the effects, if any, on the T&E species. Coordination will continue with the Fish and Wildlife Service and with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources on protection and recovery of habitat for these species.

-- Range - Continue utilization of forage by domestic livestock at or near present levels. While capability may actually increase, particularly if transitory range can be utilized, current trend is for less demand. The proposal includes a low level of investment in range improvements, both structural and nonstructural. This investment in improvements will help maintain current use levels while maintaining or improving range conditions.

-- Timber - Hold Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) at 21 million board feet (MMBF) for the planning period. Included in this volume is fuelwood and other products being harvested from the timber base. While most of the volume harvested will be dead lodgepole and Ponderosa pine, there will continue to be some green trees harvested. This ASQ (21 MMBF) is somewhat below the "allowable cut" in the Ashley National

Forest Timber Management Plan approved in 1978. Scheduled harvest on slopes over 40 percent (by cable logging) has been deleted during the planning period. Aspen is not harvested as a commercial product during the planning period.

-- Soil and Water - The proposal includes rehabilitation of needed soil and watershed areas. This program is set at a level that should allow complete rehabilitation of "backlog" areas shortly after the year 2000. Water yields will increase as a result of vegetative manipulation. This increase is somewhat lower than projected for Alternative B in the DEIS.

-- Minerals and Energy - The minerals section has been rewritten to display a variation in the alternatives based on assignment of differing management prescriptions. Minerals exploration and development stipulations have been added to the standards and guidelines. These are the same standards and special stipulations that have been agreed to by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and all Utah National Forests. In addition, Management Area G will include a standard and guideline recommending "no lease" issuance or reissuance.

-- Research Natural Areas (RNA's) - The Research Natural Areas listing in the FEIS has been updated and includes RNA's in all alternatives.

-- Protection - Potential hazard created by mountain pine beetle is recognized. The Forest will begin prescribed burning to reduce fuel loading and obtain site preparation for natural regeneration of timber stands. This program is scheduled to begin in 1986 at a rate of 500 acres per year.

-- Road Construction and Reconstruction - Methodology for estimating road construction and reconstruction mileage has been revised. Mileage planned for construction and reconstruction in Alternative J averages 6.8 miles per year during the planning period.

-- Vegetative Manipulation - An estimated 22,000 acres of lodgepole pine stands on the Ashley NF need some type of site preparation to obtain natural regeneration. This acreage includes stands of stagnated small diameter (under 3") trees, existing partially cut stands within sufficient growing stock to make a mature timber stand within reasonable time frames, and large pole (over 6") stands with heavy beetle-kill (over 75 percent) which will not recover sufficiently to produce sawlog-size products. The proposal is to accomplish 11,000 acres of needed site preparation during the planning period. Site preparation will utilize all available methods and be keyed directly to management objectives such as wildlife habitat improvement, visual quality rehabilitation, fuels loading breakup, and timber stand regeneration.

Any commercial volume removed as a part of site preparation projects will be counted as part of the allowable sale quantity (ASQ). The NEPA process will be used to display the site-specific and cumulative effects of this program.

-- Undeveloped Lands - Approximately 275,000(+) acres are likely to remain undeveloped at the end of the planning period. As directed in 36 CFR 219.17, lands remaining undeveloped at the end of the first planning period shall be reevaluated for their wilderness potential during Plan revision. Unforeseen occurrences such as discovery of economically viable mineral deposits or catastrophic natural events such as fire or insect or disease infestation could result in entry to these undeveloped lands. A map is included in the FEIS that shows areas remaining undeveloped at the end of the planning period.

ORV criteria have been developed for inclusion in standards and guidelines in Chapter IV of the Plan. These criteria will be used as direction for annual review and revision, as necessary, of the Forest Travel Plan.

Four areas have been added to Management Area G, Undeveloped Dispersed Recreation. These are: Fish Creek, Uinta River above U-Bar Ranch, Lakeshore Basin, and Weyman Park.

Activities, many of which are interdependent, may be affected by funding levels provided by Congress. The Plan will be implemented by way of various site-specific projects, such as building a road, developing a campground, or selling timber. If funding is changed in any given year, projects scheduled for that year may have to be altered or rescheduled. However, goals, management priorities, and land-activity assignments described in the Plan will not change unless the Plan is revised or amended. If funding changes significantly over several years in a way that would alter basic management objectives, the Plan itself may have to be amended [36 CFR 219.10(e) (1982)]. NOTE: Significance will be determined in the context of particular circumstances.

During implementation, when various projects are designed, more site-specific analysis may be required. These analyses may take the form of Environmental Assessments [40 CFR 1508.9 (1982)], Environmental Impact Statements [40 CFR 1508.11 (1982)], or categorical exclusions [40 CFR 1508.4 (1982)]. The Forest Supervisor may amend the Plan in accordance with 36 CFR 219.10(f). Any resulting documents will be tiered to the FEIS, pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.28 (1982).

III. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Ten management alternatives were developed in response to requirements of NEPA, NFMA, public input, and resource analysis. These alternatives are presented in detail in Chapter II of the FEIS. They are:

Alternative A, Current Direction Required (No Action) - This alternative represents current management of the Forest based on existing policies, targets, standards, and guidelines. It would be a continuation of the current program.

Alternative B, Coordinated Resource - This was displayed as the preferred alternative in the DEIS. It was designed to salvage and utilize beetle-killed lodgepole and Ponderosa pine by accelerating timber harvest; to increase heavy maintenance in developed recreation

sites; and to maintain a low to moderate wildlife and range improvement program.

Alternative C, Market Opportunities - This alternative would emphasize production of commodities such as timber, livestock forage, and developed recreation.

Alternative D, Nonmarket Opportunities - This is sometimes referred to as an "amenity emphasis alternative." Emphasis would be on outputs such as water quality, dispersed recreation, and wildlife. Vegetative management practices such as timber harvest designed to increase water yield were applied in this alternative.

Alternative E, 1980 RPA Program - This alternative was designed to meet the 1980 RPA output targets.

Alternative F, Current Budget - Sometimes confused with the Current Program Alternative (A), these alternatives differ because Alternative F was designed to determine the level of goods and services that could be produced at present budget levels, and Alternative A was designed to determine cost of producing at current levels.

Alternative G, Reduced Budget - This alternative was designed to display effects of reducing budget levels by 25 percent from the past 10-year average.

Alternative H, Livestock/Timber - This alternative was designed to determine feasibility and cost of meeting high output targets for timber and grazing.

Alternative I, Accelerated Timber Harvest - This alternative would accelerate salvage and utilization of mountain pine beetle-killed timber to a higher level than Alternative B.

Alternative J, Balanced Resource Management (Preferred) - This alternative was developed as a result of public response and recognition of changing conditions on the Forest and nationally.

IV. RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION

No single factor determined the decision. Rather, all factors were considered and weighed. Based upon consideration of environmental, social, and economic factors, the approved Plan sets a course of action that maximizes net public benefits and is consistent with principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

Significant criteria which formed the basis for decisions in the Plan are described in this section. These criteria relate to many laws and regulations and respond directly to public involvement and to issues, concerns, and opportunities identified for the Forest.

A. Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities, and Areas of Significant Public Interest

Issues, concerns, and opportunities (ICO's) identified during the planning process cover a full range of resources and management subjects. Points of view as to what constitutes ICO resolution were equally diverse. Because of this, ICO's were formulated into questions that allowed each alternative to address each ICO, posively or negatively; with each alternative having specific benefits and costs. Analysis of each alternative was based on management goals of optimizing net public benefits while providing a continuous flow of goods and services and maintaining or improving environmental conditions. The proposed action was identified as the management mix that best met these criteria.

Each of the alternatives was addressed in the ICO's in a slightly different way. The importance and validity of the ICO's guided the planning process. Chapter II of the FEIS is structured to respond to each of the ICO's by alternative (for a detailed description of the ICO's, see Appendix A of EIS).

Management of resources was addressed according to output priorities in each alternative and the resource base available for management consideration.

A major reason for selecting an alternative is based on how well that alternative responds to public issues and management concerns. Since many issues and concerns conflict, it is not possible for an alternative to address all issues and concerns in a positive manner. Also, resolution of an issue or a concern is perceived differently by different people. Major issues of public concern, as expressed by various respondents to the DEIS, are included in the discussion below. (For those readers interested in directly reviewing comments on these issues, see the FEIS, Chapter VI.)

1. Many respondents considered timber harvest level proposed for Alternative B, the DEIS preferred alternative, to be too high;

2. Below-cost sales were of major concern to many DEIS respondents;

3. A number of the DEIS respondents wanted more restrictions on minerals exploration and development, wanted more control placed on minerals activities, or wanted more explicit information on where and what could be done to reduce mineral impacts;

4. A number of DEIS respondents stated the opinion that the DEIS did not meet NEPA and/or NFMA requirements because they thought the range of alternatives was insufficient;

5. Several respondents expressed a desire for some level of roadless area protection during the planning period (despite release of nonwilderness roadless areas in the Utah Wilderness Act of 1984);

6. The amount of road construction and reconstruction was a major concern to many respondents;

7. A number of the respondents identified a need for stronger control, management, and restriction of ORV's;

8. Several site-specific areas received expressions of concern as needing extra consideration and/or treatment.

B. Factors Used in Evaluating the Selected Alternative

Based upon issues, planning criteria, and constraints, the following factors were considered relevant to the decision concerning the selected alternative. These are:

- ICO's
- maintenance of environmental quality
- maintenance or increase of the Forest's contribution to the local economy
- economic efficiency
- attempt to meet Regional Guide targets
- attempt to stay within one and one-half times the average budget for the past 10 years.

Using these factors, an evaluation of advantages among alternatives was conducted. This evaluation followed a fundamental rule of decisionmaking; i.e., decisions should be based on the importance of advantages. Advantages are the positive differences between alternatives. The concept of "differences" is important in that it incorporates the idea that "similarities" should have no effect on the decision--the decisionmaker is indifferent toward alternatives to the extent they are alike, but instead concentrates on differences between them.

C. Comparison of Selected Alternative to Environmentally Preferable Alternative

All alternatives analyzed in detail are considered to be environmentally acceptable. While there are activities that are ground disturbing in all alternatives, in the short term, these impacts can be mitigated to acceptable levels.

Alternative F, Current Budget, is identified as the environmentally preferable alternative. This alternative is considered environmentally preferable because it has the lowest amount of short-term grounddisturbing activities such as timber harvesting and road construction. A reduced level of these types of activities is reflected by decreased sediment delivery to live streams and slight increases over time in numbers of big-game animals.

Determination of the environmentally preferable alternative is based on short-term impacts or effects. Long-term effects of mountain pine beetle epidemic and over 100,000 acres of dead standing timber are more difficult to project. Past experience has shown that typical

pine beetle epidemic in lodgepole is followed at an interval of approximately 20 to 30 years by major conflagrations that occur after most beetle-killed trees have fallen and created extremely high fuel loadings. Resulting major fires typically have serious impacts on soil productivity, often resulting in increased sediment delivery to live streams; extend time frames for visual quality rehabilitation; create a massive monoculture which becomes susceptible to the next cycle of beetle activity; reduce habitat diversity for wildlife species, are extremely expensive to control, and endanger human lives and facilities.

Following is a tabular comparison of the various outputs, benefits, and costs of the environmentally preferred and the proposed action alternatives:

AVERAGE ANNUAL OUTPUTS FOR THE FIRST PLANNING PERIOD

Output or Activity	Unit of Measure	Proposed Action (Alt. J)	Env. Pref. Alt. (Alt. F)	Difference
Wilderness Use	MRVD	223	223	0
Developed Recreation	MRVD	809	749	60
Dispersed Recreation	MRVD	531	491	40
Wildlife and Fish	MWFUD	264	251	13
Livestock Use	MAUM	81	63	18
Allowable Sale Quan.	MMBF	21	4	17
Water	MAcFt	960	966	-6
Sediment	MTons	32	31	1
Roads C/RC	Miles	6.8	0.8	6.0
Total Forest Budget	M$ (1982)	7,000	4,800	2,200
Present Net Value*	MM$ (1982)	518	482	36

* PNV @ 4% for projected 150-year time frame.

The above comparison of the alternatives shows that the proposed action, Alternative J, provides more recreation use, provides more livestock use capability, and higher timber harvest levels, and has a greater present net value than Alternative F. The decrease in water yield between the two alternatives is a result of where timber harvesting takes place. Alternative J does project greater water yields for later years than Alternative F. The above increases in outputs are accomplished at the cost of a very slight increase in sediment delivery to live streams, an increase in road miles constructed or reconstructed, and an increase in budgets.

Implementing either of the two alternatives would involve tradeoffs. The increased budget and the slight increase in sediment in Alternative J are tradeoffs for increased recreation capability, maintenance of some stability in the timber industry and grazing segments of the local economy, and much greater long-term PNV.

An additional benefit of Alternative J over Alternative F is action taken to actively regenerate decimated lodgepole and Ponderosa pine stands through site preparation and salvaging beetle-killed timber. This action should begin to rehabilitate visual quality, rehabilitate and/or increase wildlife habitat diversity, regenerate new timber stands, and begin to break into the cycle of beetle kill/burn/regenerate/stagnate and back to beetle kill. The ability to use timber sales, site preparation activities, and prescribed burns in Alternative J to break up large expanses of fuels should also help to reduce severity and size of potential fires.

D. Alternatives with Higher Present Net Value (PNV)

The following is a tabular display of the alternatives ranked according to the highest present net value (PNV). The units are in millions of 1982 dollars discounted at 4%.

Alternative	Present Net Value	Present Value Costs	Present Value Benefits
I - Accelerated Harvest	539.0	353.9	892.9
D - Nonmarket	534.8	259.0	793.8
H - Live Timber Emphasis	534.0	313.7	847.7
A - Current Program	528.9	237.0	765.9
E - 1980 RPA	521.8	307.6	829.4
J - Preferred	517.2	285.7	803.2
B - Coordinated Resources	503.6	315.5	819.1
C - Market Opportunity	497.0	347.1	844.1
F - Current Budget	482.3	163.2	645.5
G - Reduced Budget	478.5	178.8	657.3

E. Comparison of the Selected Alternative with Alternatives with Higher Present Net Value

The proposed action is judged to have a greater net public benefit than either Alternative F or those alternatives with greater PNV. Net public benefit is defined as the combination of all priced and nonpriced goods and services produced minus the cost of providing those goods and services. Net public benefits include such items as quality of environment, visual quality, wildlife habitat diversity, vegetative diversity, and a number of other intangible attributes. Specifically:

Alternative J provides greater opportunity for recreation activities than either the environmentally preferred alternative or the higher PNV alternatives during the planning period. This increase in capability is accomplished at a slight decrease in investment costs for Alternative J.

Wildlife habitat improvement is carried forward in a moderate level program that will provide for both structural and nonstructural improvements. An additional investment is incorporated for maintenance of existing wildlife structural improvements. In addition to direct wildlife habitat improvement program, application of interdisciplinary skills to activities such as timber sales can not only

mitigate adverse impacts but can also be used to improve habitat diversity as an added benefit.

Alternative J provides for continuation of livestock grazing at or slightly above recent use averages. The range improvement program will allow continuation of this use level without heavy dependency upon transitory forage. Recent trends in grazing use show a decrease in demand. If this trend continues, animal unit months displayed in the FEIS and Plan become more like capacity projects than use projections. Level of capacity projected for Alternative J is lower than that displayed for Alternative I by 2,000 AUM's per year and 18,000 AUM's higher than shown for Alternative F.

Alternative J shows a projected water yield that is less than both Alternative F and higher PNV alternatives. This is a result of where and when activities such as timber sales are scheduled. Alternative J would surpass Alternative F by the second decade but would remain at a lower volume than Alternative I throughout the entire planning horizon. Water yield increases at lower rates would provide a buffer or safety margin for the critical water quality factor. Both quality and quantity are important public issues for the Ashley National Forest.

The proposed action, Alternative J, provides for an allowable sale quantity (ASQ) of 21 million board feet annually. Alternative I had an ASQ of approximately 40 million board feet annually and the environmentally preferred alternative, Alternative F, had an ASQ of approximately 4 million board feet.

Construction and reconstruction of system roads are reduced from a projected total of 15.8 miles per year in Alternative I to 6.8 miles per year in Alternative J. Projected total is 0.8 miles per year for Alternative F. These major changes or differences in road construction mileage are accomplished with a savings in dollar costs and environmental impacts when Alternative J is compared to Alternative I. Differences between Alternatives J and P are a direct result of higher timber harvest level in Alternative J.

Overall, production of high, sometimes maximum, levels of commodities in Alternative I is balanced in favor of environmental concerns, budget savings, and meeting public issues at higher levels of responsiveness. Alternative F benefits of low budget and low environmental impact (short-term) are balanced for long-term concerns for total Forest productivity, continued commodity output programs, and some contributor to local economic and social stability in Alternative J. This last factor is not of primary importance since the Forest is not considered to be a major contribution to the local economy. However, with current unemployment rates in the 12 percent category, the Forest contribution to the economy assumes a much greater importance.

Below-cost sales is an issue of national prominence as well as one that has been raised by a number of respondents to the DEIS. The problem of below-cost sales is aggravated on the Ashley NF by the large volume of beetle-killed lodgepole and Ponderosa pine included in the ASQ. The need to salvage and utilize this dead volume and to

break up extensive fuels and resulting fire potential is a major reason to continue harvesting even at less than full cost recovery. Providing some employment in a high unemployment area, rehabilitating visual quality objectives, regenerating timber stands on an average of 5 to 10 years sooner, and providing fuelwood for personal home use are all additional incentives to maintain the timber sale program. However, the Forest has embarked on some practices to reduce costs of Forest Service activities in timber sales. One major item that will be tested early in the planning period is the practice of making timber sales for low value and dead species on an area basis instead of an a volume basis. Additional practices such as reducing road construction standards have already been implemented. The Forest will continue to identify and assess methods of decreasing timber sale costs. It will also work to increase less tangible benefits that can be achieved in properly designed timber sales, such as those to wildlife, watershed, and aesthetic values.

Economic efficiency in managing National Forests has become a question of widespread concern. Development of the Ashley National Forest Plan was accomplished using the FORPLAN linear programming model. The objective function, or controlling requirement, in the use of this model, was to maximize present net value. All alternatives displayed in the FEIS are based on this beginning premise. All alternatives showed a positive present net value when all benefits and costs were discounted at both 4 and 7.12 percent for the 150-year time span (projected planning horizon).

V. MITIGATION AND MONITORING

Management constraints were imposed on each alternative to ensure long-term productivity of the land and compliance with threshold soil and water requirements. These requirements are standards and guidelines which apply to all management prescriptions within each alternative. Standards and guidelines act as mitigation measures to ensure that sustained yields of renewable resources are maintained.

In the case of the mineral resource, once the resource has been extracted, it is gone except where secondary recovery becomes feasible. Conservation of these resources might be defined as a planned rate of removal along with proper site rehabilitation. Mitigating measures involved in location, development, and removal of such nonrenewable resources are expressed as occupancy stipulations in mining plans, project-level environmental documents, and in management area direction in the Plan.

Maintaining VQO's, viable populations of wildlife management indicator species, cover/forage ratios, nondeclining even-flow of timber resources, and State water quality standards, are all examples of standards and guidelines which act as mitigation measures prescribed in Chapter IV of the Plan.

Each resource has a minimum management requirement level that acts as a base upon which alternative management programs were developed. Management commitments below the minimum management level were not considered as options.

Stated as standards and guidelines, mitigating measures are intended to be adopted and enforced in all project-level activities. Mitigation measures are discussed in Chapter IV of the Plan for renewable resources. As long-term effects of planned management prescriptions on the various management areas are assessed and new research results and technology become available, some adjustments may be made to update prescribed standards and guidelines.

An aggressive implementation, monitoring, and evaluation program has been outlined in Chapter V of the Plan. The purpose of the program is to facilitate implementation of the Plan in an orderly manner while maintaining environmental safeguards.

Monitoring will help determine whether prescriptions are being properly applied to management areas, provide for an evaluation of appropriateness of management direction, and track condition trends of Forest resources. Evaluation data will be used to update resource inventories, fine-tune mitigation measures, and determine need for amending or revising the Plan. The monitoring plan outlines data sources and monitoring techniques by resource element, establishes frequency of measurements, and details conditions which would initiate further evaluations.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

The Plan will be implemented 30 days after Notice of Availability of the Plan, EIS, and Record of Decision appears in the Federal Register. Time needed to bring activities into compliance with the Plan will vary depending on types of projects.

The Forest Supervisor will assure that (1) annual program proposals and projects are consistent with the Plan; (2) program budget proposals and objectives are consistent with management direction specified in the Plan; and (3) implementation is in compliance with the Regional Guide and goals and objectives in 36 CFR 219.10(e), 36 CFR 219.11(d), and 36 CFR 219.27.

Implementation is guided by management requirements contained in Forest Goals and Objectives, Direction, Standards and Guides, and Management Area Prescriptions found in Chapter IV of the Plan. These management requirements were developed through an interdisciplinary effort and contain measures necessary to mitigate or eliminate long-term adverse effects. Any unavoidable adverse environmental effects, such as disruptive effects of vegetation manipulation on recreation or livestock grazing, will be temporary and will involve only a small percentage of the Forest at any one time. Practical mitigation measures have been adopted and are included in Chapter IV of the Plan.

Proposals to use National Forest System lands will be reviewed for consistency with the Plan. Management direction contained in Chapter IV of the Plan will be used to analyze any proposal. Permits, contracts, and other instruments for occupancy and use of National Forest System lands will be consistent with management direction in Chapter IV. This is required by 16 USC 1604(i) and 36 CFR 219.10(e).

VII. RIGHT TO ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 211.18. Notice of appeal must be made in writing and submitted to:

J. S. Tixier, Regional Forester
Intermountain Region
USDA, Forest Service
324 25th Street
Ogden, Utah 84401

Appeal notice must be submitted within 45 days from the date of this decision. A statement of reasons to support the appeal and any request for oral presentation must be filed within the prescribed 45-day period.

J. S. TIXIER
Regional Forester

OCT 3 1986
Date

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Intermountain Region
324 25th Street
Ogden, UT 84401

Reply to: 1920

Date: NOV 05 1986

Dear Forest User:

Enclosed is an errata sheet to correct a sentence contained in the Record of Decision for the Ashley National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan approved on October 8. This is an editorial correction in order to make the Record of Decision agree with the Forest Plan.

Sincerely,

J. S. TIXIER
Regional Forester

Enclosure

ERRATA CORRECTION FOR:

Record of Decision
for the
Ashley National Forest
Land and Resource Management Plan

Page 5, Minerals and Energy paragraph, last sentence, change:

-- recommending "no lease" issuance or reissuance.

to

-- recommending no surface occupancy.