



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service
Wallowa-Whitman
National Forest

P. O. Box 907
Baker City, OR 97814

Reply to: 2350

Date: January 8, 1993

Dear Forest Plan Reviewer:

Enclosed is a Decision Notice which announces our sixth Forest Plan amendment. This amendment adds additional direction to the plan dealing with the management of the Imnaha Wild and Scenic River.

When Congress designated the Imnaha Wild and Scenic River under the Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988, it directed the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a management plan for the river. The Forest Plan provided interim direction for this river until the management plan could be completed.

The Imnaha Wild and Scenic River Management Plan and its Environmental Assessment have been completed. This amendment replaces the interim direction with the Imnaha Wild and Scenic River Management Plan. This plan provides for the protection and enhancement of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the river, free-flow, and water quality.

The Environmental Assessment upon which this decision is based, is available here at the Forest Supervisor's Office. If you have questions or would like to receive a copy of the Management Plan or Environmental Assessment, please contact Marty Gardner at this office or phone (503) 523-6391.

Sincerely,

R. M. RICHMOND
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure



DECISION NOTICE
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE
IMNAHA WILD AND SCENIC RIVER
MANAGEMENT PLAN

Forest Plan Amendment No. 6

USDA Forest Service
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
Hells Canyon National Recreation Area and
Eagle Cap Ranger District

Wallowa County, Oregon

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Imnaha Wild and Scenic River Management Plan on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is available for the public review at the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor's Office in Baker City, Oregon. The EA analyzes alternatives to managing the Imnaha Wild and Scenic River in accordance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The selected alternative described below amends the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan).

DECISION

As Forest Supervisor for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, it is my decision to implement Alternative D of the EA for the Imnaha Wild and Scenic River Management Plan. Alternative D prescribes the following activities:

- Adopts a management plan for managing the Imnaha Wild and Scenic River so as to protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values.
- Modifies the Management Area boundary for MA-7 surrounding the Imnaha River

It is also my decision to recommend this boundary change to the Regional Forester as the final boundary for the Imnaha Wild and Scenic River corridor in accordance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

My decision also includes the following changes to the Forest Plan to further clarify the management of the Imnaha Wild and Scenic River.

On page 4-73 under the column "Established River/Stream," delete the words "South Fork Imnaha River."

On page 4-73 under the column "Established River/Stream," insert after Imnaha River the phrase "(Including the South Fork Imnaha River)."

On page 4-73 under the column "Segment," change "From its headwaters to its confluence with the North Fork Imnaha River" to "The south Fork Imnaha River from its headwaters to its confluence with the Imnaha River."

On page 4-73 under the column "Miles" concerning the Imnaha River, change 6.0, 58.0, 4.0, and 9.0 to 6.4, 62.7, 4.3, and 9.7, respectively.

On page 4-75 after item "22." add a new heading: "23. Imnaha Wild and Scenic River." Followed by "The Imnaha Wild and Scenic River will be managed according to the Imnaha Wild and Scenic River Management Plan (October 1992) on file at Forest Headquarters."

ALTERNATIVES

I considered three other alternatives before selecting Alternative D.

- Alternative A (No Action) consisted of managing the river corridor under the interim direction, interim boundary of a quarter mile either side of the river. Alternative A did not provide any direction for managing the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (OR values) or providing guidance of private landowners.
- Alternative B consisted of emphasizing the management of the Scenic, Recreation, and Traditional Value/Lifestyle Adaptation OR values.
- Alternative C consisted of emphasizing the management of the Fisheries, Wildlife, Scenic, Historic/Prehistoric, and Vegetation/Botanical OR values.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

I selected Alternative D because it prescribes the best mix of activities to achieve the project objectives and attain the desired condition.

Of the four alternatives, Alternative D provides for the best opportunity to protect and enhance all of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values, protect free flow, and protect water quality while minimizing the impacts to private landowners.

SCOPING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public has been involved throughout the process. Initially, approximately 12 public meetings were held to discuss issues and concerns. A citizens group consisting of 12 people from a variety of interest was established that the ID Team and River Planners met with to discuss issues. Later, ten additional public meetings were held to review the alternatives, draft EA, and discuss concerns. Letters were also sent to acquire additional information from public and private landowners and to inform the public on the progress of the management plan.

ISSUES

Several issues were identified during the scoping process. Four significant issues were identified by the interdisciplinary team for analysis in the EA:

- Private land rights
- Motorized vehicle use
- Commodity Resources
- Imnaha River Road

Management of each of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values were also addressed as issues. The Outstandingly Remarkable Values are Scenic, Recreation, Wildlife, Fisheries, Historic/Prehistoric, Traditional Values/Lifestyle Adaptation, and Vegetation/Botanical.

MONITORING

Monitoring will be in accordance with the existing monitoring plan outlined in the Forest Plan. This includes the monitoring for the protection and enhancement of the OR values, free flow, and water quality.

An additional monitoring program for water quality was also established with the management plan. This calls for monitoring specific water quality elements at six locations along the river.

SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED DISCLOSURES

There are no unavoidable, adverse effects associated with implementing Alternative D that are not already identified in the Final EIS for the Forest Plan.

There are no short-term uses proposed in the project. Promoting long-term health and productivity of the Forest's ecosystems in a project objective.

There are no irreversible or irretrievable losses from implementing Alternative D that are not already identified in the Final EIS for the Forest Plan.

There are no unusual energy requirements associated with implementing Alternative D.

There are no specific projects planned within wetlands or floodplains. Wetlands and floodplains do exist within the river corridor.

The management plan will cause no adverse effects on any Threatened or Endangered species or critical habitat; prime farmland, rangeland, or forest land; cultural resources; or civil rights, women, and minorities not already identified in the Final EIS for the Forest Plan.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on the site-specific environmental analysis documented in the Environmental Assessment, I have determined that the Wild and Scenic Imnaha River Management Plan and Forest Plan Amendment #6 are not major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared. The direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts discussed in the EA have been disclosed within the appropriate context and will have little intensity. My determination is based on the incorporation of mitigation measures and monitoring requirements associated with Alternative D and the following factors from Title 40 CFR 1508.27:

1. The beneficial and adverse environmental effects described in the EA for Alternative D were considered independently to determine if the project would significantly affect the human environment. No significant impacts were identified.
2. Public response to the project has indicated that the project is not likely to cause effects that are highly controversial. Refer to Chapter I of the EA for a description of the public scoping process.
3. The project causes no highly uncertain effects and no effects that involve unique or unknown risks.
7. There will be no significant cumulative effect from implementing the plan in conjunction with past, present, and foreseeable future actions.
8. The plan will not adversely affect any sites or features listed or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or any significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
9. The effects of the plan on threatened and endangered species were analyzed. There will be no risk of adversely affecting these species with the plan as described in the EA. The plan will have no adverse effect on critical habitats. Over time, the plan is expected to have positive effect to threatened and endangered species.

10. The plan is consistent with all known Federal, State, and local laws. Regulations related to the National Forest Management Act and the Endangered Species Act have been incorporated into the project. Environmental Protection Agency herbicide application requirements will be followed.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS

I have determined that this amendment is not significant in relation to the National Forest Management Act of 1976. Adoption of this amendment will not significantly alter Forest Plan or CMP goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, or management direction. Indeed, this amendment will enable managers to better meet the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and existing Forest Plan and CMP goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and management direction.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

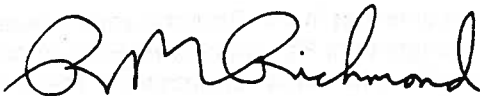
Implementation of this decision shall not occur within 30 days following publication of the legal notice of the decision in the Baker City Herald.

APPEAL RIGHTS

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 217. Any Notice of Appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217.9 (Content of a Notice of Appeal) and must be filed with John Lowe, Regional Forester, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, Oregon 97208 within 45 days of the date legal notice of this decision appears in the Baker City Herald.

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information regarding the Wild and Scenic Imnaha River Management Plan, contact Marty Gardner at the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor's Office, P.O. Box 907, Baker City, Oregon 97814 or at (503) 523-6391.



R. M. RICHMOND
Forest Supervisor
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

January 5, 1993
Date