

**DECISION NOTICE  
AND  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE  
NORTH POWDER WILD AND SCENIC RIVER  
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Forest Plan Amendment No. 18**

**USDA Forest Service  
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest  
Baker Ranger District  
Baker County, Oregon**

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the North Powder Wild and Scenic River Management Plan on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is available for public review at the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor's Office in Baker City, Oregon. The EA analyzes alternatives for managing the North Powder 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 E of the EA for the North Powder Wild and Scenic River Management Plan. Alternative E protects and enhances the Outstandingly Remarkable (OR) Values, improves resource protection for issues associated with transportation system use (hydrology and wildlife), maintains existing motorized recreation opportunities in the upper corridor, and prescribes the following activities:

1. Adopts a management plan for the North Powder Wild and Scenic River to protect the Outstanding Remarkable (OR) values.
2. Modifies the Management Area boundary for MA-7 surrounding the North Powder River to better protect and enhance the OR values. It is also my decision to recommend this boundary change to the Regional Forester as the final boundary for the North Powder Wild and Scenic River corridor in accordance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
3. Provides a detailed monitoring plan to ensure the intent of the Act and management plan are being met.
4. Closes the river corridor to fuelwood gathering.
5. Withdraws 200 acres of MA 1 Timber Production and MA 3A Timber/Wildlife Summer Range in the river corridor from the suitable timber base.
6. Maintains North Powder Road as a four-wheel driveway.
7. Provides for improved road and trail maintenance and drainage.
8. Provides for rehabilitation, relocation, or reconstruction of roads, trails, trailheads, and dispersed sites to protect soil and water resources.

9. Closes drainage to all off-road and off-trail motorized vehicle use (except snowmobiles over snow).
10. Closes and rehabilitates the one-mile North Fork Spur road.
11. Places a seasonal closure on all motorized use in the river corridor from May 1 to July 1 to protect elk calving areas and to better protect soil and water resources.

My decision also includes the following change to the Forest Plan to further clarify the management of the North Powder Wild and Scenic River.

On page 4-75, add a new heading: "**#28. North Powder Wild and Scenic River.**" Followed by: **The North Powder Wild and Scenic River corridor within National Forest Lands, will be managed according to the North Powder Wild and Scenic River Management Plan on file at Forest Headquarters.**

## ALTERNATIVES

I considered five other alternatives before selecting Alternative E.

- Alternative A (No Action) consisted of managing the river corridor in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines of Management Area 7 in the Forest Plan and with other Forest wide Standards and Guidelines and Forest Service manual and policy direction. The river corridor boundary would be a quarter mile either side of the river as specified by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. Alternative A provided little direction for managing the corridor to protect and enhance the OR Values.
- Alternative B addresses resource protection while providing non-motorized recreation opportunities in a predominately natural riverine setting. The Scenic OR value would be emphasized by prohibiting all motorized use above Twin Mountain Creek. This alternative also provides for items 2 through 10 as listed in Alternative E, but was not selected due to its elimination of motorized recreation opportunities in the upper corridor and impact on the Recreation OR Values.
- Alternative C addresses resource protection and recreation issues while providing non-motorized recreation opportunities in a predominately natural riverine setting. The Scenic OR Value would be emphasized by prohibiting four-wheel drive use between the Twin Mountain Creek and the Summit Lake Trailhead and all motorized use between the Summit Lake and Lost Lake Trailheads. This alternative also provides for items 2 through 9 as listed in Alternative E, but was not selected due to its reduction in motorized recreation opportunities in the upper corridor and impact on the Recreation OR Values.
- Alternative D addresses resource protection and recreation issues while addressing issues associated with transportation system use and maintenance (hydrology). It provides non-motorized recreation opportunities in a predominately natural riverine setting. The Scenic OR Value would be emphasized by prohibiting all motorized use above the Summit Lake Trailhead. This alternative also provides for items 2 through 9 as listed in Alternative E, but was not selected due to its reduction in motorized recreation opportunities in the upper corridor and impact on the Recreation OR Values.
- Alternative F provides the highest level of recreation use possible and expands motorized recreation opportunities while protecting and enhancing OR Values. The Recreation OR Value would be emphasized by: 1) providing an additional two miles of motorized trails in the upper river corridor, and 2) reconstructing and improving the North Powder Road and North Fork spur road to provide better access for two-wheel drive high clearance vehicles to the Summit Lake Trailhead. This alternative also provides for items 2 through 9 as listed in Alternative E, but was not selected since the potential adverse resource impacts due to increased use and additional motorized use areas could not be completely mitigated.

## REASONS FOR THE DECISION

I selected Alternative E because it best achieves project objectives and attains the desired future condition.

Of the six alternatives, Alternative E provides for the best opportunity to emphasize water quality, wildlife, soils, hydrology, and to protect free flow, while still protecting and enhancing the Recreation and Scenic Outstandingly Remarkable Values.

Alternative E best implements my decision to maintain existing recreation uses and experiences to the extent that the river's Outstandingly Remarkable Values are protected, yet still provides for motorized public access to the area.

By expanding the wild and scenic river boundary to include an additional 120 acres along the headwaters of The North Powder River, trail use and hydrologic impacts could be better mitigated, thus providing better long-term protection of natural ecosystems, biodiversity, and fisheries in the area.

## SCOPING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public has been involved throughout the process. Initially, approximately 12 public meetings were held throughout northeastern Oregon to discuss issues and 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. Three significant issues were identified by the interdisciplinary team for analysis in the EA:

- Recreation: What types of recreation facilities and opportunities will be provided, and what level of use will be accommodated within the corridor, in light of the requirement to protect and enhance water quality and Outstandingly Remarkable (OR) Values?
- Scenery: How to best protect and perpetuate the natural-appearing landscape over time to ensure protection and enhancement of water quality and OR Values?
- Transportation: What type of transportation system should be provided within the corridor and surrounding drainage, and what type of uses should be allowed that will be most compatible with the requirements to protect and enhance water quality and OR Values?

Management of each of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values were also addressed as issues. The Outstandingly Remarkable Values are Recreation and Scenery.

## MONITORING

Monitoring will be in accordance with the monitoring plan outlined in the North Powder Wild and Scenic River Management Plan and with the existing direction specified in the Forest Plan. This includes the monitoring for the protection and enhancement of the OR values, free flow, and water quality.

## SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED DISCLOSURES

There are no unavoidable, adverse effects associated with implementing Alternative E 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 is a project objective.

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

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

Wetlands and floodplains do exist within the river corridor. There are no major projects planned within the wetlands or floodplains. Some rehabilitation of trailheads, dispersed sites, roads, and trails would occur within the floodplains to prevent soil erosion and protect resource values. A site specific Environmental Analysis would be completed before any of these activities could take place.

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 North Powder River Wild and Scenic River Management Plan and Forest Plan Amendment #18 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 E and the following factors from Title 40 CFR 1508.27:

1. The beneficial and adverse environmental effects described in the EA for Alternative E 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.
4. There will be no significant adverse cumulative effects from implementing the plan in conjunction with past, present, and foreseeable future actions.
5. 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.
6. The effects of the plan on Threatened and Endangered species were analyzed in a Biological Evaluation (BE). There will be no risk of adversely affecting these species with the plan as described in the EA. The plan will have no adverse effects on Threatened and Endangered species habitat. Over time, the plan is expected to have positive effects on Threatened and Endangered species.
7. 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 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 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 North Powder Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, contact Steve Davis at the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor's Office, P.O. Box 907, Baker City, Oregon 97814 or at (503) 523-1316.

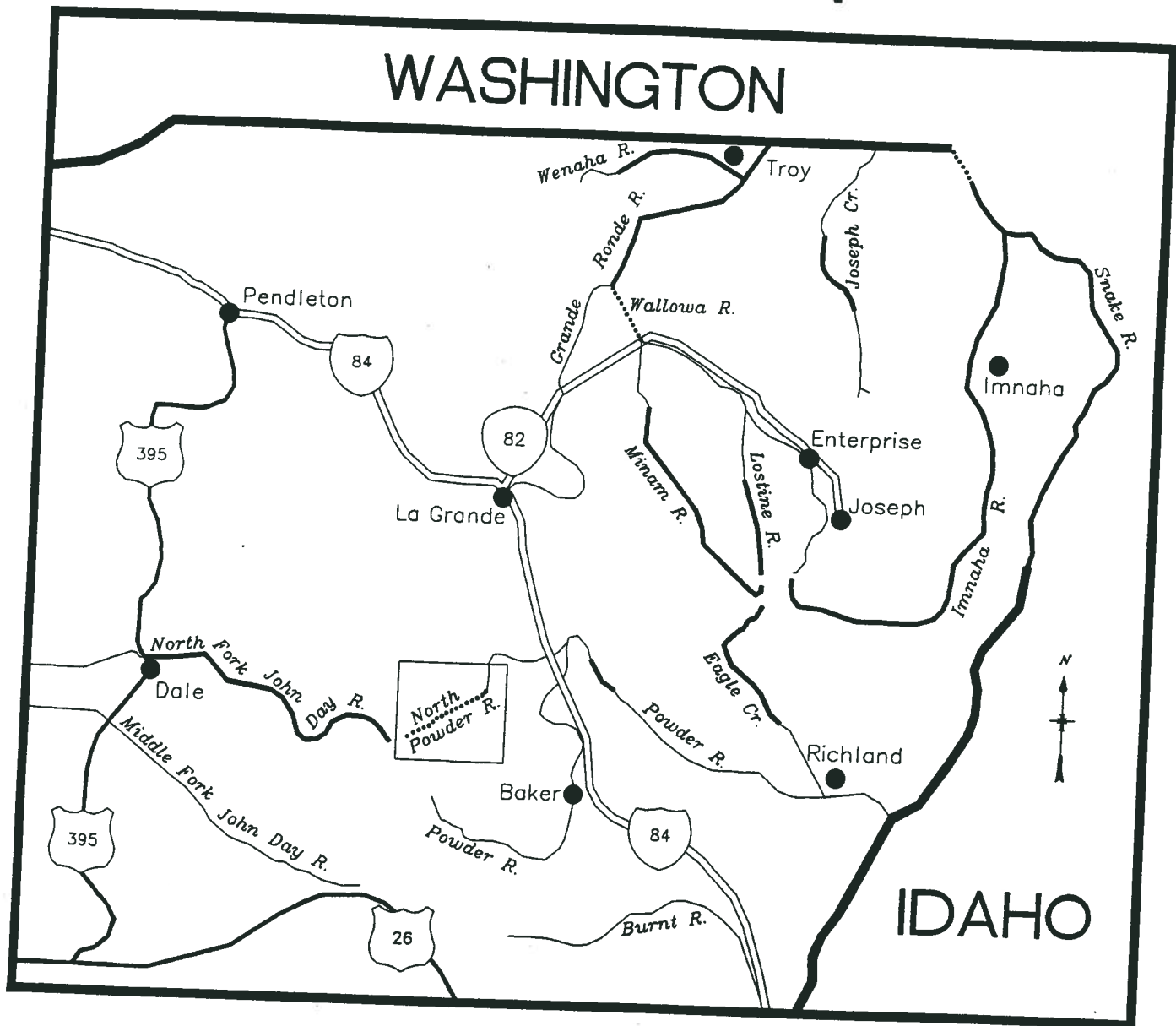


R. M. RICHMOND  
Forest Supervisor  
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

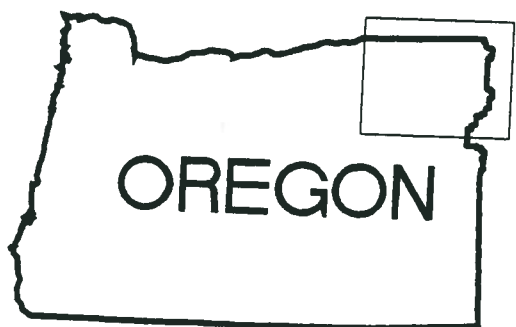
July 13, 1995  
DATE










# Vicinity Map



## National Wild and Scenic Rivers of Northeast Oregon



-  Interstate Highway
-  U.S. Highway
-  Oregon State Highway
-  River
-  Wild and Scenic River Area
-  Congressionally Designated Wild and Scenic Study River
-  Forest Plan Designated Wild and Scenic Study River