

Chapter I

The Forest Plan

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Updates to Chapter I Since 2006

Page I-2, Forest Service Planning Rules; paragraph 2, sentences 2 and 3 – Information was updated to reflect that the 2005 Planning Rule no longer exists, and the Forest Service is developing a new planning rule that would govern how future revisions or amendments to Forest Plans would be completed.

Page I-5, Organization and Structure of the Forest Plan – A reference to the new “Appendix F – Climate Change and the Forest Plan” was added to the end of this section.

Page I-5, Location and Description of the Forest; paragraph 1, sentence 2 – Forest acreage was updated to show that there are now over 921,000 acres due to land acquisitions since 2006.

Page I-6, Location and Description of the Forest; paragraph 2, sentence 1 - Forest acreage was updated to show that there are now over 921,000 acres due to land acquisitions since 2006.

Page I-8, Location and Description of the Forest; paragraph 3: Added the following sentence to the end of the paragraph: “Climate change may also affect land and vegetation productivity, species distribution, and other resources.”

Page I-8, Location and Description of the Forest; paragraph 4, sentence 4 - The corrected mileage includes the State Highway 39/55 portion of the Highland Scenic Highway, which was unintentionally omitted from the original statement.

Page I-8, Location and Description of the Forest; paragraph 4, sentence 5 - The number of wilderness areas was updated to reflect congressional designation of 3 new areas in the 2009 Wild Monongahela Wilderness Act (Public Law 111-11).

Page I-11, Site-level Projects; paragraph 3, sentence 3 – This correction adds the inadvertently omitted word “be” to help clarify the meaning of the sentence.

Page I-12, Forest Plan Amendments; bullet statement 4, last sentence – This change clarifies that corrections may also be used to update, clarify, or correct the Forest Plan.

PURPOSE OF THE FOREST PLAN

The 2006 Monongahela National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (hereafter referred to as “the Forest Plan” or “the 2006 Plan”) guides natural resource management activities on lands administered by the Monongahela National Forest. It describes management direction and practices, resource protection methods and monitoring, desired resource conditions, and the availability and suitability of lands for resource management.

The purpose of the Plan is to provide management direction to ensure sustainable ecosystems and resilient watersheds that are capable of providing a sustainable flow of beneficial goods and services to the public. The Plan is the implementing guide for fulfilling the Forest Service mission “To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.” More specifically, the Plan establishes:

- How the Forest should look and function with successful Plan implementation (Desired Conditions),
- Management actions for achieving the Desired Conditions (Goals and Objectives),
- Required constraints or allowed actions designed to help meet Desired Conditions or to protect resources (Standards),
- Preferred actions used to achieve Goals, Objectives, and Desired Conditions (Guidelines)
- Management direction that is applicable Forest-wide,
- Management prescriptions that provide specific management emphasis and direction to different areas of the Forest,
- A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, and
- Descriptions of lands suitable or not suitable for specific resource activities.

The Forest Plan embodies the provisions of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA), as amended by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and its implementing regulations. The management prescriptions in the Plan are designed to realize goals and objectives for achieving desired conditions; however, future projects to implement those prescriptions will be largely dependent on annual budgets from Congress.

Forest Plan Revision

The original Land and Resource Management Plan for the Monongahela National Forest was released in 1986. The NFMA requires that forest plans are updated or revised every 10-15 years (36 CFR 219.10). This 2006 Forest Plan replaces the 1986 Plan and its amendments, and defines the programmatic framework for multiple-use management of the Forest for the next 10 to 15 years. It is important to note that the 2006 Plan does not in itself implement any specific actions or projects. Rather the 2006 Plan, through its land allocation prescriptions and management direction, sets the stage for the actions needed to be taken, or not, to move toward Forest desired conditions. The 2006 Plan does this by providing:

- The management strategies that should be used to help frame when, where, and why action or inaction is needed to help move toward achievement of desired conditions during this planning period;

- The type of activities that are allowed or not allowed to best address management strategies and related Management Prescription (MP) emphasis and direction;
- The intensity, duration, and limitations on management actions needed to manage risks and threats to resources and the social and economic environment, while maintaining or moving toward achievement of desired conditions.

Forest Service Planning Rules

Under the 1982 planning rule stated in CFR 219, the Forest Supervisor is required to review conditions of the land every five years to determine if the Forest Plan needs to be revised. If monitoring and evaluation indicate that immediate changes are needed, and these needed changes cannot be handled by amendment, then it would be necessary to revise the Plan.

This Forest Plan revision is being conducted under the 1982 version of the Forest Service planning rule. However, the Forest Service is working on a new planning rule. Subsequent revisions or amendments to the Plan would likely be developed under the new rule.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE FOREST PLAN TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

Organic Administration Act

The Organic Administration Act authorized the creation of what is now the National Forest System. The law established forest reserves “to improve and protect the forests within the boundaries, or for the purpose of securing favorable water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of citizens of the United States.”

Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act

In this Act, Congress affirmed the application of sustainability to the broad range of resources over which the Forest Service has responsibility. This Act confirms the authority to manage the national forests “for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes.”

Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act

The Monongahela Forest Plan was developed and revised within the framework of national and regional Forest Service direction. The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) and its implementing Program set direction and output levels for National Forest System lands. Goods and services are distributed based upon detailed, site-specific information concerning the capability and suitability of National Forest System lands being assigned various management activities and prescriptions at the Forest level. The Plan provides information for the RPA assessment and program updates.

National Forest Management Act

This Act requires that National Forest System land be managed for a variety of uses on a sustained basis to ensure in perpetuity a continued supply of goods and services to the American people. The Act regulations also establish analytical and procedural requirements for developing, revising, and amending forest plans. The Forest Plan embodies the provisions of the NFMA and its regulations on forest planning and implementation.

National Environmental Policy Act

This Act ensures that environmental information is disclosed to public officials and citizens before federal decisions are made and actions are taken. This disclosure helps public officials make decisions based on an understanding of environmental consequences. Essential to this process are accurate scientific analyses, expert agency input, and public involvement, all of which have been part of the revision process. The 2006 Forest Plan has been analyzed, and the potential effects have been disclosed in an accompanying EIS. The Act also requires environmental analysis and disclosure for site-specific management actions that may be implemented under the Plan's direction and guidance.

Endangered Species Act

This Act requires federal agencies to accommodate the conservation of endangered and threatened species in their planning and implementation efforts. The 2006 Plan has specific management direction that addresses the conservation of ESA listed, proposed, and candidate species. Actions that are implemented under the Plan guidance, and that may affect listed species or their habitats, would also be subject to consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which may include conservation recommendations and/or terms and conditions for implementation.

Forest Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

During the Forest Plan revision effort, management alternatives were developed, analyzed, and compared, from which the Regional Forester selected an alternative for implementation. This Forest Plan represents the selected alternative in the Record of Decision that accompanies the Plan and the Final EIS. The planning process and analysis procedures used in developing the selected alternative and Plan are described or referenced in this document, the Final EIS, and the supporting project or planning record.

Subsequent Multi-scale Analyses, Project Assessment and Planning

Management activities on National Forest System lands within the administrative boundary of the Monongahela National Forest will be planned and implemented in a manner that furthers the achievement of the goals and objectives described in this Forest Plan. Forest Plan direction serves as an umbrella for environmental analysis and project planning and implementation.

Subsequent mid-, fine-scale analyses and project planning and implementation will be tiered to this Plan and its companion EIS, as provided for in 40 CFR 1502.20.

Plans for Special Areas

The 4600-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 was formally mandated in 1934 to be made “permanently available for forest research and the demonstration of its results”. As such, the Fernow operates under its own mandate and management plan.

Designated by Congress in 1965, the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area has a separate management plan, which the Forest is planning to revise in the near future. The revision will be tiered to Management Prescription 8.1 in this Forest Plan.

Existing Forest Plan, Permits, Contracts, and Other Uses

The 2006 Forest Plan replaces the 1986 Forest Plan. All permits, contracts, and instruments for use or occupancy of the Forest must conform to the 2006 Plan’s direction. However, because some existing permits and leases are already committed, they will remain in effect until they can be adjusted to accommodate direction in the 2006 Forest Plan. The Record of Decision for the 2006 Forest Plan provides the Responsible Official’s direction concerning transition of the permits, contracts, and other uses to reflect direction of this Forest Plan.

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE FOREST PLAN

The Forest Plan, as administered by the Forest Supervisor, provides direction for managing the Monongahela National Forest. The Plan contains the goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines needed to achieve the desired conditions for Forest resources and programs. The Forest Plan is organized into the chapters and appendices described below. Subsections for the chapters and appendices are listed in the Table of Contents.

Chapter I – Introduction

Discusses the general purpose of the Forest Plan, the relationship of the Plan to other documents, and Plan organization and implementation. Includes an integrated description of the Forest.

Chapter II – Forest-wide Management Direction

Presents management direction for the Forest as a whole, including Forest-wide desired conditions, goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines.

Chapter III – Management Prescriptions

Describes the resources of each Management Prescription, and provides area-specific direction for the management of those resources. Denotes suitability of lands for specific activities/uses.

Chapter IV – Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Presents a plan for monitoring and evaluating the effects of management practices, and describes how the Plan will be amended or revised in the future.

Chapter V - Glossary

Includes definitions of key terms, and commonly used acronyms.

Appendix A – Vegetation Management Practices

Describes forest types, harvest methods, and silvicultural treatments the Forest uses.

Appendix B – Old Growth

Describes existing old growth, defines old-growth characteristics, and identifies the distribution of potential old growth areas on the Forest.

Appendix C – Analysis of the Management Situation Summary

Describes the Need For Change in management direction for selected resources, the current condition of those resources, and how the Plan addresses the Need For Change.

Appendix D – Management Indicator Species

Describes the revised list of MIS on the Forest and the disposition of MIS from the 1986 Plan.

Appendix E – Communication Sites

Describes the communication and electronic sites on the Forest and designates their users.

Appendix F – Climate Change and the Forest Plan

Describes how Forest Plan prescriptions, direction, and monitoring respond to climate change.

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE FOREST

The Monongahela National Forest is located in east central West Virginia (see Figure I-1), in portions of Barbour, Grant, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Preston, Randolph, Tucker, and Webster Counties. The Forest has over 921,000 acres within the Allegheny Mountains of the Appalachian System. The Supervisor's Office is located in Elkins, West Virginia, and the Forest is divided into four Ranger Districts: Cheat-Potomac, Greenbrier, Gauley, and Marlinton-White Sulphur Springs. District offices are in Parsons, Petersburg, Bartow, Richwood, Marlinton, and White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. The Forest is an administrative unit of the Eastern Region (Region 9) of the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Regional Forester's office is in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Forest is regarded as a special place by many who visit or live nearby. American Indians lived here for thousands of years, at first hunting and gathering and then later in agricultural-based villages. Three hundred years ago, the Allegheny Mountains represented the American frontier to European settlers eager for a fresh start in a new land. These mountains and their resources provided the lumber and coal to house and fuel a growing nation teeming with immigration and opportunity. However, logging methods used during the late 1800s and early

1900s left the mountains with bare slopes and flammable slash. Wildfires burned across these lands and sometimes into uncut forests. In the early 1900s, the barren hillsides could no longer stop rainwater from flowing unchecked into creeks and streams, and flooding communities as far away as Pennsylvania. In 1915, the Federal Government began to purchase these cutover lands with the intent of reforesting them to prevent floods. When the Monongahela National Forest was created by Congress in 1920, much of the land was devoid of forest. Since then, time and resource management, such as tree planting and fire protection, have helped the land to recover.

Now the Monongahela encompasses more than 921,000 acres of federal ownership in 10 counties of the Potomac Highlands region of West Virginia. It is the largest expanse of public land in the State, and fourth largest National Forest in the 20 northeastern states. It is located in proximity to major population centers of the region, including Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh. Despite being heavily affected by humans over the last two hundred years, the Forest retains a sense of seclusion and solitude. Rugged topography, expansive forest, fast-moving mountain streams, and small communities interspersed with pastoral farmland combine to create a sense of stepping back in time.

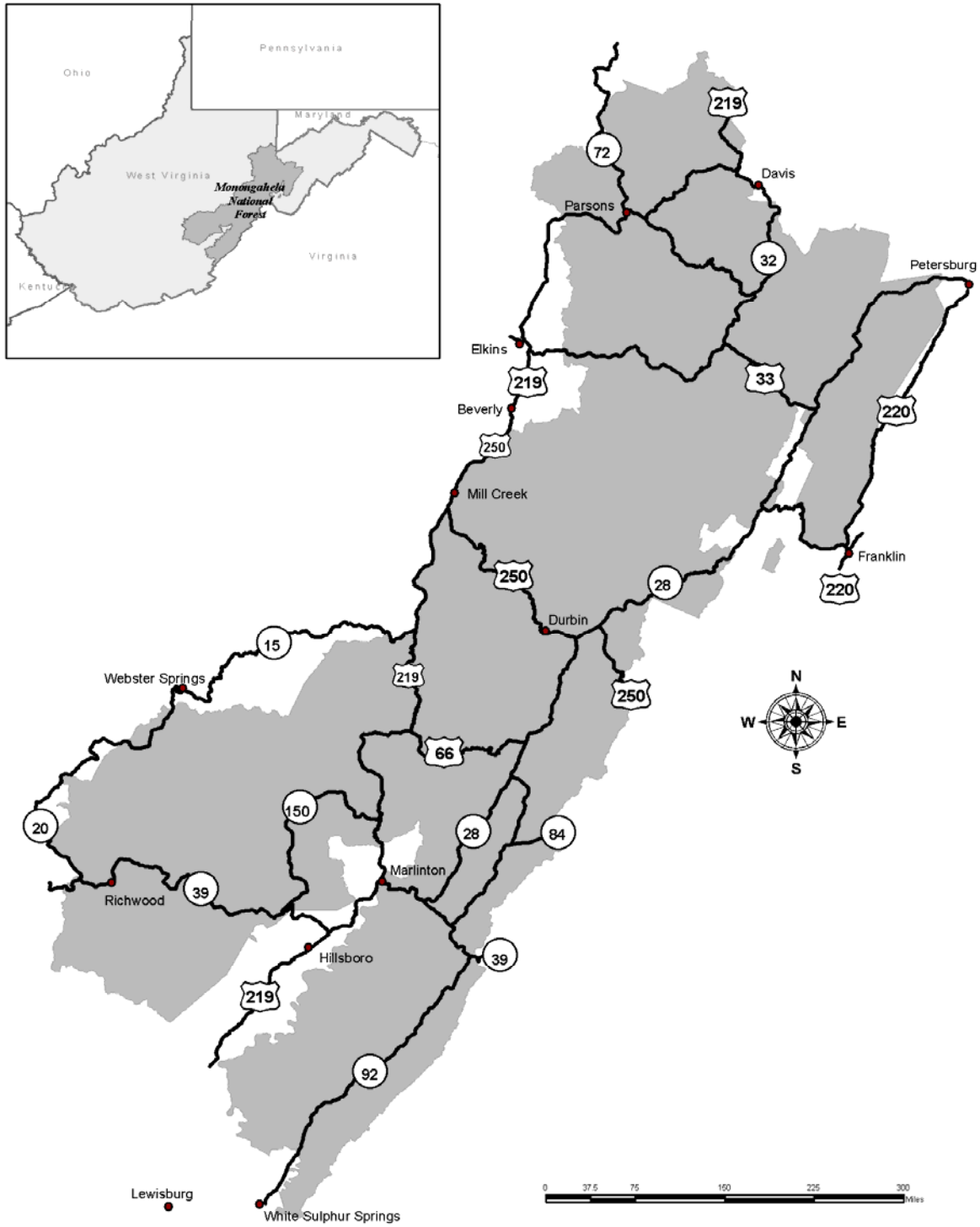
Due in large part to its geographic location in the Mid-Atlantic Region and its mountainous terrain, the Monongahela National Forest is one of the most ecologically diverse forests in the National Forest System. As prevailing weather patterns approach from the west, clouds are lifted up across the Forest and over the Allegheny Front of the Appalachian Mountains. As a result, the west side of the Forest receives around 60 inches of precipitation annually, while the east side, in the rain shadow of the mountains, may get less than half that amount. This difference contributes to the broad range of plant and animal communities within the Forest. Containing only about 6 percent of the land in West Virginia, the Monongahela is home to 13 percent of the rare plant and animal species in the State.

Because of its great diversity, the Forest is an important area for scientific research. The Fernow Experimental Forest, located on NFS lands south of Parsons, conducts long-term ecological and silvicultural research. In addition, the Forest has four candidate Research Natural Areas, 17 Botanical Areas, a Geological Area, and 5 Genetic Areas that have been set aside primarily for scientific interest and study.

The Forest contains the northern-most populations of certain southern species, and the southern-most populations of some northern species. The highest elevations in the Mountain State are on the Monongahela, including Spruce Knob, the apex at 4,863 feet. Cold soil temperatures, stands of red spruce, and populations of snowshoe hare—all more typical of northern boreal forests—occur across the Forest at higher elevations. Lower elevations contain coves with rich deep soils typical of the southern Appalachians; stands of mixed northern hardwoods typical of the northern Appalachians; and dry-site stands of oak and white pine. Prickly pear cactus grows on the eastern slopes of the Forest, along with rare species like shale barren rock cress.

Many of the 70+ species of trees found on the Monongahela are valuable for commercial wood products as well as wildlife habitat. Especially valuable are black cherry, sugar maple, and red oak. Most of the Forest is contiguously forested, containing 70-100 year-old stands that provide habitat for interior-dwelling species.

Figure I-1. Location Map – Monongahela National Forest



The geology of the Forest provides the setting for 40-50 natural gas wells, which are a regionally important and a valuable natural gas resource. It is expected that future leasing and development will continue to discover and produce natural gas for public use. In addition, there is a natural gas storage field located beneath the Forest that serves an important role in making natural gas available to eastern U.S. population centers in times of high demand.

Headwaters of six major river systems are within the Forest boundary, and water is an important resource for both on-Forest and off-Forest users. The steep slopes of the Monongahela give rise to nearly 600 miles of coldwater streams that become the Tygarts Valley, Potomac, Cheat, Greenbrier, Elk, and Gauley Rivers. More than 90 percent of the high-quality trout waters in West Virginia are said to be within the Forest boundary.

The Forest receives some of the highest acid deposition rates in the country because of its location downwind from coal-fired power plants the Ohio River Valley. This deposition has raised management concerns relating to loss of aquatic species from stream acidification, and to changes in soil chemistry, which could impact the productivity of Forest soils. Climate change may also affect land and vegetation productivity, species distribution, and other resources.

The Monongahela contains an estimated 52 percent of the publicly available recreation land in West Virginia and draws users from local areas, across the State, and surrounding States. Recreation opportunities range from hiking on over 800 miles of trails, angling in high-quality trout streams or on small warm-water impoundments, hunting, nature watching, camping in both primitive and developed settings, visiting historical and cultural sites, rock climbing, caving, and driving for pleasure. Mountain biking occurs on Forest roads, many trails, and on former railroad grades. Auto touring attractions include the 43-mile Highland Scenic Highway, and spectacular fall leaf color. The national importance of the recreation resource has been recognized with Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area, eight Wildernesses, three Scenic Areas, a National Scenic Highway, a National Recreation Trail, and two visitor centers.

Economic contributions to the local and national economy from the Monongahela include receipts, fees, and employment opportunities from timber harvest, mineral development, livestock grazing, recreation, and special uses, and the availability of products such as firewood and medicinal plants. One of the other important economic contributions to the local economy is to serve as the backdrop for local businesses, tourism, and guiding services, and as an added attraction for those coming to ski or golf in the area.

Our management philosophy is based on the belief that public land in the Appalachians is scarce and precious. As surrounding population centers expand, the Monongahela National Forest will become increasingly rare and valuable as a place of ecological, historic, cultural, and economic importance in the region. We believe we should manage the Forest for its special features, and in ways desired by today's public and future generations.

Changes, including increased development, are expected to continue on private lands around the Forest, and these changes will likely create more demand for, and impacts on, Forest resources. To meet this challenge, the Forest will protect or restore soil and water resources, use vegetation management to sustain healthy forests and diverse wildlife habitat, contribute to the recovery of

listed and rare species, maintain scenic quality and variety, and provide a range of recreation settings and opportunities, including the uncommon areas of extensive backcountry.

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION AND PRESCRIPTIONS

The 1986 Monongahela National Forest Plan emphasized the production of goods and services tied to the accomplishment of multiple-use objectives, including the production of wood fiber, maintaining or enhancing visual quality, providing recreation opportunities, and protecting and improving fish and wildlife habitat. The 2006 Plan strives to achieve desired outcomes for restoration or maintenance of vegetation and watershed conditions, including terrestrial, riparian, and aquatic habitats. Goods and services tied to accomplishment of multiple-use objectives will be the product of management actions designed to meet these desired outcomes.

Land management on the Forest is driven by the goals and objectives listed in Chapter II of the Plan. The Responsible Official, in consultation with the Revision Team, reviewed the goals and objectives in the 1986 Plan and found many to be still appropriate, and many that needed to be changed or strengthened. Similarly, some Plan standards and guidelines were also modified or deleted during revision.

Table I-1 summarizes the changes in management prescription allocations made in the Plan. The Monongahela National Forest 1986 Forest Plan allocations, as amended (i.e., Alternative 1 in the supporting EIS), are compared to similar allocations used in the 2006 Plan. Chapter III of the 2006 Forest Plan describes these allocations and their purpose in greater detail.

Table I-1. Comparison of 1986 Forest Plan Management Prescriptions and 2006 Forest Plan Management Prescriptions, In Acres and Percent of Forest

1986 Plan as Amended Management Prescriptions	Acres	%*	2006 Plan Management Prescriptions	Acres	%
1.1 – Mineral Development	0	0	1.1 – No longer exists	0	0
2.0 – Uneven-aged Management	13,700	1.5	2.0 – No longer exists	0	0
3.0 – Even-aged Management	137,000	15.0	3.0 – Age Class Diversity	196,900	21.5
4.0 – Conifer Management	400	0	4.0 – No longer exists	0	0
4.1 – Did not exist in 1986	0	0	4.1 – Spruce Restoration	155,700	17.0
5.0 – Designated Wilderness	78,700	8.6	5.0 – Designated Wilderness	78,700	8.6
5.1 – Recommended Wilderness	0	0	5.1 – Recommended Wilderness	27,300	3.0
6.1 – Wildlife Habitat Emphasis	284,400	31.0	6.1 – Wildlife Habitat Emphasis	286,600	31.3
6.2 – Backcountry Recreation	124,500	13.6	6.2 – Backcountry Recreation	97,500	10.6
6.3 – Indiana Bat Habitat	136,100	14.9	6.3 – No longer exists	0	0
7.0 – Developed Recreation	1,100	0.1	7.0 – No longer exists	0	0
8.0 – Special Areas	130,500	14.2	8.0 – Special Areas	73,600	8.0

*Percentages for the 1986 Plan do not total 100 because of some lands that have no prescription.

IMPLEMENTING THE FOREST PLAN

The National Forest Management Act requires that “permits, contracts and other instruments for use and occupancy” of National Forest System lands be “consistent” with the Forest Plan [16 U.S.C. 1640(i)]. In the context of a 2006 Plan, the National Forest Management Act specifically conditions this requirement in three ways:

1. These documents must be revised only “when necessary;”
2. These documents must be revised as “soon as practicable;”
3. Any revisions are “subject to valid existing rights.”

Tools and Techniques

The Forest will reach its desired conditions for vegetation through natural ecological processes and by using a diverse range of management tools and techniques.

To the extent practical, timber management will be used to emulate naturally occurring disturbances (fire and windstorms, for instance). These management practices will include both even-aged and uneven-aged techniques. Clearcutting with reserve trees will continue to be used on the Forest when it is the optimal method to meet the objectives and requirements of the Forest Plan. The Forest will also use shelterwood, group selection, individual tree selection harvesting, and other harvest treatments to create or maintain multi-aged and uneven-aged stands.

Prescribed fire will be used alone or with silvicultural treatments to mimic the effects of natural fire. Management-ignited fire will help maintain, enhance, and restore natural ecological processes on the Forest. Wildland fires will continue to be suppressed to protect Forest resources and investments, as well as nearby private property. Minimum impact tactics can be used in sensitive areas to reduce the potential for adverse effects from fire suppression activities.

The Forest will promote re-growth of harvested or other disturbed forests with a variety of regeneration practices. These practices include regenerating forests through tree planting, seeding, and natural regeneration. Many areas will naturally change through forest succession.

The Forest will also reach its desired conditions for human uses by utilizing a diverse range of management tools and techniques. Environmentally sustainable management practices will provide commodity and non-commodity resources to contribute to the social and economic stability of local communities. Practices to achieve this include prescribed fire, timber harvest, and traditional gathering activities.

The Forest will provide recreation opportunities in a multiple-use setting by using management tools such as the Scenery Management System and the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum.

Ecological functions of watersheds and riparian areas will be enhanced or restored through techniques such as reconstructing or improving road and trail crossings, decommissioning unneeded roads, or through using silvicultural treatments or fire to enhance shade, coarse woody debris recruitment, or bank stability in riparian areas.

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.

Budgets

Annual Forest budget proposals are based on the actions required to achieve the goals, desired conditions and objectives of the Forest Plan. These actions must be funded by Forest budgets that are approved on an annual basis by Congress. The National Forest System appropriation from Congress provides funds for stewardship and management of each national forest across the country. These appropriated funds are critical for translating the goals, desired conditions and objectives stated in the Forest Plan to on-the-ground results.

Upon receipt of the final budget, the Forest annually prepares an implementation budget. This budget is a result of program development, annual work planning, and monitoring processes. These processes supplement the Forest Plan and make the annual adjustments and changes needed to reflect current priorities within the overall management direction contained in the Plan. Therefore, the funding distribution between program components and the intensity or level of activities in those programs is a reflection of the Plan, as well as the will of Congress. The final determining factor in carrying out the intent of the Forest Plan is the level of funding, which dictates the rate and priorities of Plan implementation.

Forest Plan Amendments

Most proposed activities will be consistent with direction in the Forest Plan. When management actions are found to be inconsistent with Plan direction, or site-specific analysis shows an error in the Plan, the Plan or the proposal will be adjusted according to the analysis. Adjusting the Plan may require an amendment. The Forest Supervisor would determine whether proposed amendments to the Forest Plan are significant or non-significant.

The need to amend management direction or prescriptions may result from:

- Changes in physical, biological, social, or economic conditions.
- Recommendations of an interdisciplinary team based on the results of monitoring and evaluation.
- Determination by the Forest Supervisor that existing or proposed projects, permits, contracts, cooperative agreements, or other instruments authorizing occupancy and use are appropriate, but not consistent with elements of the Forest Plan management direction.
- Errors in planning found during implementation. Conflicts may be identified between different sections of management direction. For instance there could be discrepancies in the selected alternative map and the narrative description of the selected alternative. The Forest Plan does not prioritize management direction; therefore a discrepancy would need to be resolved by determining the management intent using a variety of information, such as the planning record, EIS, and the 2006 Forest Plan. Minor technical errors, clarifications, or updates may be changed or added to the Forest Plan via errata or administrative corrections without having to do a Plan amendment or revision.
- Legislative or Directive changes.