

Chapter I Purpose and need

Purpose and need

The Purpose and Need is to incorporate management direction into land management plans that conserves and promotes recovery of Canada lynx, by reducing or eliminating adverse effects from land management activities on national forest system lands, while preserving the overall multiple-use direction in existing plans.

Background

Canada lynx habitat can be found in Colorado, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming (see Figure 1-2). In the western United States, lynx habitat is found primarily on federal lands.

Lynx inhabit moist coniferous forests that experience cold, snowy winters and provide a prey base of snowshoe hare. Lynx habitat is primarily found on moist sites that support subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce and lodgepole pine forests. In extreme northern Idaho and northwestern Montana, cedar-hemlock forests also are considered lynx habitat.

Lynx habitat is generally found at mid to upper elevations. The lower elevation ranges from 3,500 feet in the northern to 7,000 feet in the southern portions of the

Northern Rockies lynx planning area (see Figure 1-1, the planning area map).

On July 8, 1998, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) proposed to list Canada lynx as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) responded to the declining status of lynx in 1998 by establishing a team of international experts in lynx ecology to collect and summarize scientific data. This resulted in the publication *Ecology and Conservation of Lynx in the United States* (Ruggiero et al. 2000a).

Based on this information, an interagency team of government biologists developed the *Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy* (Ruediger et al. 2000) (LCAS). The LCAS recommended conservation measures for federal lands in the contiguous United States. The

Background

conservation measures focus on managing vegetation within the historic range of variability, maintaining dense understory conditions for prey, minimizing snow compaction, and identifying and maintaining connectivity within and between habitat areas.

In December 1999, the FS and BLM prepared a *Biological Assessment* (BA) (Hickenbottom et al. 1999) of 57 national forest land and resource management plans and 56 BLM land use plans; these were the units with lynx habitat in them. The assessment found the existing plans were likely to adversely affect lynx because they did not contain direction to conserve lynx.

In February 2000, five FS Regional Foresters and four FWS Regional Directors signed a *Lynx Conservation Agreement* (USDA FS, USDI FWS 2000) to promote the conservation of lynx and its habitat.

federal land to private land.) The agreements say any changes in long-term management direction will be made by amending or revising the existing plans.

In April of 2000, the FWS listed lynx as a threatened species (USDI FWS 2000b; Appendix O). In its Listing Decision, the FWS said,

“ We conclude that the single factor threatening the contiguous United States distinct population segment of lynx is the lack of guidance for conservation of lynx and snowshoe hare habitat in National Forest Land and Resource Plans and BLM Land Use Plans.”

Formal consultation on existing plans required by ESA was completed on October 25, 2000, when the FWS issued its *Biological Opinion* (USDI FWS 2000a). In the Biological Opinion, the FWS said existing plans as applied together with the conservation agreements, were not likely

The FWS listed lynx as threatened, effective April 24, 2000.

The FWS had concluded that the chief threat to lynx in the contiguous United States was the lack of guidance in federal plans.

The conservation agreement requires the agency to review and consider the recommendations in the LCAS before making any decisions about projects in lynx habitat. The FS also agreed not to authorize projects, except for 3rd party projects, likely to adversely affect lynx until a decision is made about changing existing plans. (An example of a 3rd party project would be an individual or company requesting road access across

to jeopardize the continued existence of lynx.

In March 2001, the FS and BLM developed schedules to amend or revise their existing plans - see Appendix D.

In September 2001, the FS and BLM initiated the Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment, a proposal to incorporate management direction into the existing plans for 22 units in the northern Rockies.

Background

In December 2006, the BLM elected to not be a cooperating agency in this planning process. BLM will incorporate management direction for lynx into the resource management plans through their regular update schedule. The proposal is now limited to the 18 national forest units in the Northern Rockies (see Figure 1-1).

In July 2003, the FWS issued a *Notice of Remanded Determination of Status for the contiguous United States Population of Lynx* (USDI FWS 2003; Appendix P). In it, the FWS reaffirmed its decision to list the lynx as threatened, rather than endangered.

In January 2004, the FS and BLM issued the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment.

In May of 2005 the FS and FWS signed a new *Canada Lynx Conservation Agreement* (USDA FS, USDI FWS 2005) to replace the 2000 conservation agreement, which had expired. The 2005 agreement was only good until December 31, 2006 and only applied to National Forest System land mapped as occupied lynx habitat, and was only in force until the forest plans were amended or revised to conserve lynx.

The agreement said the agency agrees to review and consider the recommendations in the LCAS prior to making any new decision to undertake actions in occupied lynx habitat.

The FS also agreed not to authorize projects likely to adversely affect lynx (except for projects or authorizations required by law or which are necessary to protect or reduce risk to human health or safety) until a decision is made about changing existing plans.

The agreement also said the agencies will work together to identify occupied habitat. In May 2006 the agencies defined occupied habitat on national forests in the northern and southern Rocky Mountains and the Cascade Range (Forest Service Region 1, 2, 4 and 6) (USDA FS, USDI FWS 2006). All lynx habitat on an entire national forest is considered "occupied" by lynx when:

1. There are at least two verified lynx observations or records since 1999 on the national forest unless they are verified to be transient individuals; or
2. There is evidence of lynx reproduction on national forest.

Based on these considerations nine national forest units within the planning area are considered occupied; four units contain a mix of occupied and unoccupied habitat (the isolated mountain ranges on these units are unoccupied), and six units are not occupied – see Table 1-1 and Figure 1-1.

Note, in October 2006, a new *Canada Lynx Conservation Agreement* (USDA FS, USDI FWS 2006) was signed and is in effect until December 31, 2010 or until all National Forests with occupied lynx habitat have been amended or revised. This agreement is the same as the one approved in 2005, but covers a longer period.

In September 2005, the FWS issued a *Recovery Plan Outline for the Contiguous United States Distinct Population Segment of Lynx* (USDI FWS 2005a). The document serves as an interim strategy to guide recovery efforts and inform the critical habitat designation process until a draft recovery plan is completed. Formal

recovery planning is likely to begin in early 2007.

The recovery outline categorizes lynx habitat and occurrence as 1) core areas, 2) secondary areas, and 3) peripheral areas.

Core areas have the strongest long-term evidence of lynx persistence. Lynx have consistently been found in these areas and there is recent (within the past 20 years) evidence of reproduction. Five national forests have been identified as core areas and another six forests contain both core areas and secondary areas – see Table 1-1.

Secondary areas have fewer and more sporadic current and historical records of lynx, and as a result historical abundance has been relatively low. Reproduction has not been documented. Eleven national forests have been classified as secondary areas – see Table 1-1.

Peripheral areas contain few verified historical or recent records of lynx; records are sporadic and are usually associated with periods when there were unprecedented population highs in Canada. The Ashley and Bighorn National Forests have been classified as peripheral habitat, as well as the Pryor Mountains on the Custer NF and the Highwood and Snowy Mountains on the Lewis and Clark NF.

The recovery outline identifies four preliminary objectives for calculating progress toward the goal of delisting lynx. The objectives are:

1. Retain adequate habitat of sufficient quality to support the long-term persistence of lynx populations within each of the identified core areas.

2. Ensure sufficient habitat is available to accommodate the long-term persistence of immigration and emigration between each core area and adjacent populations in Canada or secondary areas in the United States.
3. Ensure habitat in secondary areas remains available for continued occupancy by lynx.
4. Ensure threats have been addressed so that lynx populations will persist in the contiguous United States for at least the next 100 years.

On November 9, 2006 the FWS issued the *Designation of Critical Habitat for the Contiguous United States Distinct Population Segment of Lynx* (USDI, FWS 2006). The FWS designated three areas as critical habitat for the lynx. These areas are: 1) Voyageurs National Park in northeastern Minnesota; 2) Glacier National Park in North-western Montana; and 3) North Cascades National Park in North-central Washington. No National Forest System land was designated as critical habitat because these lands were found to already provide special management and/or protection for lynx.

Critical habitat is defined in the ESA. It is a specific geographic area(s) that contain features essential for the conservation of threatened or endangered species and that may require special management and protection. Critical habitat may include an area that is not currently occupied by the species but that will be needed for its recovery. To be included in a critical habitat designation, the habitat within the area occupied by the species at the time of listing must have features “essential to the conservation of the species”.

Table I-1. Application of occupied/unoccupied habitat, and draft recovery area to units in the planning area

Unit	<u>Occupied/Unoccupied Based on Conservation Agreement</u>		<u>Recovery Outline Categories</u>		
	Occupied	Unoccupied	Core	Secondary	Peripheral
Flathead	X		X		
Kootenai	X		X		
Lolo	X		X		
Helena*	X	X	X	X	
Idaho Panhandle #	X		X	X	
Targhee	X		X	X	
Custer*	X	X	X	X	X
Gallatin*	X	X	X	X	
Bridger-Teton	X		X		
Shoshone	X		X		
Lewis and Clark*	X	X	X	X	X
Clearwater	X			X	
Nez Perce		X		X	
Salmon-Challis		X		X	
Beaverhead- Deerlodge		X		X	
Bitterroot		X		X	
Ashley		X			X
Bighorn		X			X

Only the NE corner of the Idaho Panhandle NF is identified as core habitat

* The isolated mountain ranges on the Custer, Helena, Gallatin and Lewis and Clark NFs are unoccupied; see Figure 1-1 and Appendix C.

** The Pryor Mountains on the Custer and Highwood and Snowy Mountains on the Lewis and Clark NF are considered peripheral habitat.

References: USDA FS, USDI FWS 2006a; USDI FWS 2005a

Need for management direction

The LCAS identified risks to lynx and lynx habitat. The 1999 BA found many of the risk factors were not addressed in existing plans. Plan direction is needed to guide project-level decisions in order to avoid or reduce adverse effects from management activities and to maintain or improve Canada lynx habitat. Developing plan direction that will reduce or eliminate the risks identified in the LCAS is part of the Purpose and Need of this proposal.

Risk factors affecting lynx productivity were discussed in detail in the LCAS (Ruediger et al. 2000, pp. 2-2 to 2-15), and include particular activities related to:

- ♦ Timber management
- ♦ Wildland fire management
- ♦ Livestock grazing
- ♦ Recreational uses
- ♦ Forest backcountry roads and trails
- ♦ Other human developments

Lynx require certain habitat elements to persist in a given area, including foraging and denning habitat. *Foraging habitat* supports lynx primary prey, snowshoe hare, year-round. *Winter snowshoe hare habitat* occurs where many young trees or shrubs grow tall enough to protrude above the snow. This can happen in young regenerating forests that grow up after a disturbance, or in older forests with

a substantial understory of shrubs and young trees. *Denning habitat* is found in areas with large amounts of woody debris, either down logs or root wads (LCAS, pp. 1-2 to 1-10).

Activities such as timber harvest, fire suppression and livestock grazing, can affect the amount, distribution, and condition of lynx denning and winter snowshoe hare habitat (LCAS, pp. 2-2 to 2-6, 2-13 to 2-14).

Other predators may affect lynx. Lynx have a competitive advantage in places where deep, soft snow tends to exclude other predators in mid-winter, the time when prey is most limiting (Ruggiero, 2000, pp. 83 to 100).

Activities that result in providing access to other predators are also a potential risk to lynx. Such activities include certain types of winter recreation, the winter use of forest roads and trails, and other human developments (LCAS, pp. 2-6 to 2-13, 2-14 to 2-15).

Risk factors affecting mortality were discussed in detail in the LCAS (pp. 2-15 to 2-17), and include particular activities related to:

- ♦ Trapping
- ♦ Shooting
- ♦ Predator control

Many of the risk factors to lynx had not been identified at the time the existing plans were developed – the purpose and need is to conserve lynx by addressing these risk factors as they apply to National Forest System lands, by adding to or changing management direction.

- ♦ Highways
- ♦ Predation by other species

These factors can directly cause lynx deaths. Trapping of lynx is no longer allowed in the planning area. Incidental or illegal shooting can occur, but is regulated by state agencies. Predator control activities are conducted by USDA Wildlife Services. These risk factors are not addressed in this Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) because decisions about them are outside the authority of the FS.

Highways are a known source of direct mortality (LCAS, pp. 2-16 to 2-17).

Anything that increases the presence of predators also may contribute to indirect mortality (LCAS, p. 2-16).

Risk factors affecting movement were discussed in detail in the LCAS (pp. 2-17 to 2-19), and include particular activities related to:

- ♦ Highways and associated development
- ♦ Private land development

Lynx are known to disperse over wide areas. Highways and the developments associated with them may impede lynx movement (LCAS, p. 2-17). The FS has only limited authority to address highways, and no authority to control what happens on private land.

The FWS decision to list lynx as threatened was based on a subset of these risks, which threaten the lynx population as a whole. Threats to lynx populations influenced by national forest land management include certain timber harvest regimes and fire suppression, as

well as the lack of guidance to address these threats in existing plans. Lynx conservation and recovery requires that the plans address these threats.

Since the LCAS was issued the FWS published a Clarification of Findings in the Federal Register (Appendix P). This Clarification of Findings is commonly referred to as the Remand Notice.

In the Remand Notice the FWS states, “We found no evidence that some activities, such as forest roads, pose a threat to lynx. Some of the activities suggested, such as mining and grazing, were not specifically addressed [in the Remand Notice] because we have no information to indicate they pose threats to lynx” (p. 40083).

Later they state, “Because no evidence has been provided that packed snowtrails facilitate competition to a level that negatively affects lynx, we do not consider packed snowtrails to be a threat to lynx at this time” (p. 40098).

In regards to timber harvest the FWS state, “Timber harvesting can be beneficial, benign, or detrimental to lynx depending on harvest methods, spatial and temporal specifications, and the inherent vegetation potential of the site. Forest practices in lynx habitat that result in or retain a dense understory provide good snowshoe hare habitat that in turn provides good foraging habitat for lynx” (p. 40083). These findings by FWS shed a different light on what management direction is needed to maintain or improve Canada lynx habitat.

Proposed action

The FWS's *Lynx Biological Opinion (USDI FWS 2000a)* concluded:

...if Plans are amended or revised incorporating conservation measures in the LCAS or the equivalent thereof...the Plans would likely not jeopardize the continued existence of lynx.

In keeping with the 2000 Biological Opinion, the FS proposes to incorporate management direction into the land and resource management plans for 18 NFs in Idaho, Montana, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming (collectively the “*existing plans*”). The management direction would provide for the conservation and recovery of Canada lynx. To respond more quickly and consistently, management direction is considered for the planning area as a whole, rather than addressing each plan individually. The new management direction seeks to preserve the overall multiple-use direction in existing plans by avoiding making significant changes to the plans. Adjustments to individual plans may be considered as they are revised during the next several years.

The FS is the lead agency responsible for preparing this proposal. The original Proposed Action was based on conservation measures recommended in

the LCAS as a way to achieve lynx conservation. Measures from the LCAS were reorganized and rearranged to make it easier to include them in the existing plans. Every effort was made to preserve the intent of the measures in the LCAS.

The original Proposed Action is now called Alternative B and has changed somewhat from how it was described in the fall of 2001 when the agencies asked for public comments on the scope of the proposal. It was rewritten in the DEIS to provide clearer management direction by organizing it better and eliminating duplication. Throughout this document, references to the Proposed Action mean Alternative B, the Proposed Action as described in the DEIS and in Chapter 2 of this document. Appendix A is a comparison of the LCAS with the scoping version of the proposed action; the DEIS Proposed Action, Alternative B; and the FEIS preferred alternative, Alternative F.

The Proposed Action would add or modify management direction in existing plans and would consist of one or more of the following:

- ♦ *Goals*, which are general descriptions of desired results;
- ♦ *Objectives*, which are descriptions of desired resource conditions;

Alternative B, the Proposed Action, has changed from how it was described during scoping. It was rewritten to provide clearer management direction by organizing it better and eliminating duplication.

Proposed action

- ♦ *Standards*, which are management requirements designed to meet the objectives; and
- ♦ *Guidelines*, management actions normally taken to meet the objectives.

The existing plans contain general resource management direction. Plans do not compel management activities to occur. Whether goals and objectives are achieved depends on agency budgets and competing priorities. Standards may prohibit some management activities from occurring; however, standards can be changed through subsequent plan amendment or revision. Guidelines are recommendations, and following them is discretionary; however, documentation of reasons for not following them may be required. (The term “guideline” is not defined in the 1982 planning regulations, and the term “standard” is not used in the 2005 planning regulations.)

This proposal is limited in scope. It is not intended to and does not encompass all the issues or resource needs that may be considered when plans are revised. The proposal adds only those goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines relating to specific lynx habitat risk factors. The proposal would not change the land-use allocations in existing plans.

The proposed action applies only to lynx habitat in lynx analysis units (LAUs) (for a discussion of LAUs see the *Lynx* section in Chapter 3), and to lynx linkage areas.

The proposal does not make a decision about what lynx habitat is or where

linkage-area boundaries are, or how they are identified.

Lynx habitat and linkage areas used in this analysis are based on the best current inventory information available at this scale – see Figure 1-1 displaying lynx habitat and linkage areas. This information has been compiled under the guidance of the Interagency Lynx and Wolverine Steering Committee. See Appendix B for a description of how the maps used for the analysis was prepared; see the *List of Preparers* for a description of the Committee and its role.

The Proposed Action considers information from a number of sources including the following:

- ♦ *Ecology and Conservation of Lynx in the United States* (Ruggiero et al. 2000a)
- ♦ *LCAS, Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy* (Ruediger et al. 2000)
- ♦ *FWS’s Final Listing Rule, Federal Register*, Vol. 65, No. 58, 16051-16086 (USDI FWS 2000b; Appendix O)
- ♦ *FS and BLM’s BA, Biological Assessment of the Effects of National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans and Bureau of Land Management Land Use Plans on Canada Lynx* (Hickenbottom et al. 1999)
- ♦ *FWS’s Lynx Biological Opinion* (USDI FWS 2000a)

These documents present a summary of scientific knowledge on issues relevant to lynx conservation, and are available on-line at:

www.fs.fed.us/r1/planning/lynx.html.

Administrative units

The LCAS identifies five geographic areas that provide habitat for lynx in the United States – see Figure 1-2 on the following page. Each geographic area has unique ecosystems and management histories. This proposal would apply to National Forest System lands located within the Northern Rocky Mountains Geographic Area. This geographic area encompasses lands in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Eighteen national forests in FS Regions 1, 2, and 4 are included in this FEIS– see Table 1-2.

The federal lands affected by this proposal include lynx habitat and linkage areas inside these units, and are referred to as the planning area. The number of plans affected by this proposal is different from the number of units affected, because some units have been consolidated. Units and plans affected by this proposal are:

Table 1-2. Administrative units and plans included in this analysis

Forest Service		
Idaho national forest units	FS region	Land and resource management plan
Clearwater	1	Clearwater forest plan
Idaho Panhandle	1	Idaho Panhandle forest plan
Nez Perce	1	Nez Perce forest plan
Salmon-Challis	4	Salmon forest plan
	4	Challis forest plan
Caribou-Targhee	4	Targhee forest plan
Montana national forest units	FS region	
Beaverhead-Deerlodge	1	Beaverhead forest plan
	1	Deerlodge forest plan
Bitterroot	1	Bitterroot forest plan
Custer	1	Custer forest plan
Flathead	1	Flathead forest plan
Gallatin	1	Gallatin forest plan
Helena	1	Helena forest plan
Kootenai	1	Kootenai forest plan
Lewis and Clark	1	Lewis and Clark forest plan
Lolo	1	Lolo forest plan
Utah national forest units	FS region	
Ashley	4	Ashley forest plan
Wyoming national forest units	FS region	
Bighorn	2	Bighorn forest plan
Bridger-Teton	4	Bridger-Teton forest plan
Shoshone	2	Shoshone forest plan

Administrative units

Figure I-2. US lynx geographic areas



Administrative units

Not all the FS and none of the BLM units inside the Northern Rockies geographic area are included in the FEIS. Existing plans for eleven national forests in the geographic area would not be changed by this proposal. These include:

- ♦ In Region 4, the Payette, Boise, Sawtooth, Caribou, Wasatch-Cache, and Unita NFs, which have completed revising their plans. Information from this proposal has been used in developing those plans.
- ♦ In Region 6, the Colville, Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman, Malheur, and Ochoco NFs. They will address lynx through separate planning efforts.

From the beginning the BLM units in Montana, Wyoming, and most of Utah, were not part of this proposal. They have or will address lynx as needed in separate processes. The BLM units included in the

DEIS were limited to those in Idaho and northwest Utah.

The BLM in Idaho has recently started revising and replacing their existing plans, and anticipates that all out-of-date plans will be replaced and address lynx habitat needs within the next few years. Due to these changed circumstances the BLM has withdrawn as a cooperating agency from the FEIS.

The revision schedule in Appendix D shows the tentative timetable for Forest Service planning efforts. Of the forest plans that would be affected by this decision most will probably be revised within the next few years. The Targhee and Bighorn NFs already revised their plans; in 1999 and 2005 respectively. Once this decision is in place, individual plans may be amended or revised as needed to respond to new information or local conditions.

Scope

“*Scope*” is defined in 40 CFR 1508.25 as the range of actions, alternatives and impacts to be considered in an environmental analysis. The Proposed Action and its alternatives consist of a goal, objectives, standards and guidelines. The FEIS addresses their effects.

To determine the scope of an environmental impact statement, agencies consider three kinds of alternatives, three kinds of impacts and three kinds of actions.

Alternatives considered

The analysis evaluates three types of alternatives:

- ♦ The no-action alternative, Alternative A;
- ♦ The Proposed Action, Alternative B; and
- ♦ Other reasonable courses of action, Alternatives C, D, E, and F.

Alternatives C, D, E, and F also include measures that address primary issues.

Impacts considered

Three kinds of environmental impacts are possible, direct, indirect and cumulative.

Direct effects are those that occur at the same time and place as the action. There are no direct environmental consequences of the proposal. The proposal is programmatic in nature, consisting of direction that would be applied to future management activities. It does not prescribe site-specific activities on the

ground, and therefore would have no direct environmental effects. Direct effects would be disclosed later at the project level, when site-specific decisions are made.

This analysis evaluates the *indirect* and *cumulative effects* of the Proposed Action and alternatives. An indirect effect is one caused by the action, but occurs later in time or further removed in distance, but is still reasonably foreseeable (40 CFR 1508.8). Cumulative effects are environmental consequences that result for the incremental impact of an action added to other past, present, and reasonable foreseeable action. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant action taking place over a period of time (40 CFR 1508.7).

Actions considered

Connected actions

Connected actions are closely related actions that:

- ♦ Automatically trigger other actions;
- ♦ Cannot or will not proceed unless other actions are taken previously or simultaneously; or
- ♦ Are interdependent parts of a larger action and depend on that larger action for their justification.

The Proposed Action includes the management direction needed to fulfill the identified Purpose and Need.

Other planning efforts are underway to address lynx management in other places, such as the proposal for national forests in the Southern Rockies geographic area (USDA FS 2000a), and BLM's separate planning efforts. These actions are not considered connected because:

- ♦ Each plan can stand on its own;
- ♦ The areas have different ecosystems and management histories; and
- ♦ The decisions can be made independently under the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) for FS and Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) for BLM.

Cumulative actions

Cumulative actions are those which, when viewed with past, other present and reasonably foreseeable actions, may have cumulatively significant impacts and should be discussed in the same environmental analysis.

Other programmatic actions on BLM, FS, other federal, tribal, state, and private lands have been evaluated where information is available to determine the cumulative effects. This analysis is described in Chapter 3 and Appendix L.

Similar actions

Similar actions are those that have similar timing or are geographically close to the Proposed Action. These actions may be considered in the same environmental analysis as the Proposed Action and its alternatives.

The Southern Rockies Lynx Amendment effort is underway in Colorado, as are BLM's planning efforts in the states of Idaho, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming.

Those efforts are not included with this one because of differing ecosystems, management histories, and regulations.

Legal background

The following laws and regulations apply to all the resources analyzed. Others apply only to a specific resource area, and are described in Chapter 3 in the section about that resource.

Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act

The Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act says the national forests are established and shall be administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed and wildlife and fish purposes.

NFMA

The National Forest Management Act and 36 CFR 219 provides direction to the FS about developing, maintaining and revising land and resource management plans. NFMA says plans must provide a sustained yield of goods and services and provide for multiple uses, in a way that will both maximize long-term net public benefits and be environmentally sound.

ESA

The ESA and 50 CFR 402 apply to federal lands and direct federal agencies to use their authorities to carry out conservation programs for listed species. ESA directs federal agencies to make sure their actions are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened or endangered species, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. Under ESA, Canada lynx is listed as a threatened species, and is the focus of this proposed management direction.

Decision framework

This FEIS has been prepared to evaluate the effects of the Proposed Action, and to look at alternative ways of achieving the Purpose and Need, while responding to the *primary issues* described in Chapter 2.

The responsible officials will decide whether or not to incorporate direction for lynx conservation and recovery, and if so what that direction would contain and where it will apply. The responsible officials may approve one alternative or a combination of measures from different alternatives.

Once approved in the Record of Decision, the goal, objectives, standards, and guidelines of the chosen alternative would be incorporated, under the 1982 planning regulations, into the existing Forest Plans. If a conflict exists between the management direction in the chosen alternative and an existing plan, the more restrictive direction would apply.

If a decision is made to incorporate management direction into the existing plans by adopting these lynx conservation

measures, it would not be an irreversible decision. Forest Plan decisions can be modified again or revised, subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and ESA consultation.

Responsible officials

Kathleen McAllister, Deputy Regional Forester for the Northern Region, has been directing the preparation of the FEIS. The responsible officials are:

- ♦ Kathleen McAllister, Acting Regional Forester, Northern Region, Region 1, PO Box 7669, Missoula, Montana 59807;
- ♦ Rick D. Cables, Regional Forester, Rocky Mountain Region, Region 2, PO Box 25127, Lakewood CO, 80225;
- ♦ Jack G. Troyer, Regional Forester, Intermountain Region, Region 4, Federal Building, 324 25th Street, Ogden, UT 84401.

How information is presented

FEIS Volume 1

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 explains and describes the *Purpose and Need* for the proposal and the scope of the decision.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 presents *primary issues and management concerns* identified during scoping and in comments to the DEIS. Then it describes and compares in detail alternatives to the Proposed Action that respond to the primary issues and management concerns. Chapter 2 also describes management direction considered, and other concerns that did not lead to alternatives.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 presents the *affected environment* and the *environmental effects* of the alternatives considered in detail.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 includes a list of who prepared this document and a list of agencies and groups contacted.

Supporting information

Supporting information, including a glossary of terms and a bibliography of references, follow Chapter 4.

Appendixes

The appendixes contain more detailed information used in the effects analysis and are frequently referenced in the text. For the FEIS Appendixes O and P were added. Appendix O is the original Canada lynx listing decision issued by FWS on March 24, 2000 (USDI FWS 2000). Appendix P is the *Remanded Determination of Status for the Contiguous United States Distinct Population for Canada Lynx*, issued by FWS on July 3, 2003 (USDI FWS 2003).

FEIS Volume 2

This volume contains our Responses to the Comments that we received from the public and other agencies on the DEIS.

The project record

The Project Record is referenced throughout this document. It includes the information used for analysis and made available to the responsible officials.

Upon request, information from this file can be provided or made available for review. Contact the Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment at the Regional Forester's Office, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, Montana 59807. Much of the information is available on-line at www.fs.fed.us/r1/planning/lynx.html.