

III. Preliminary Revision Issues

Based on a review of Forest monitoring, project level public involvement and discussions with interested people and organizations, the following preliminary issues have been identified. This list will be refined and finalized after the scoping comments are analyzed. The issues addressed in this section are the preliminary issues discussed in the Notice of Intent published in April 1997 and used at public scoping meetings.

A. Physical Environment

No preliminary revision issues or concerns have been identified relating to the physical environment.

B. Biological Environment

1. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management

Fish and wildlife resources on the Chugach National Forest contribute significantly to the economic, recreational, and subsistence uses of residents and nonresidents. We plan to address questions such as:

- What is the appropriate level of habitat manipulation for fish and wildlife resources on the Forest?
- What protection measures (standards and guidelines) are appropriate for maintaining viable populations of fish and wildlife and assuring species diversity?
- What protection measures (standards and guidelines) are appropriate for protecting threatened, endangered, or sensitive species on the Forest?

C. Use and Occupation of the Forest

1. Roadless Area Management and Wilderness Recommendations

Currently about 98.8 percent of the Forest or 5,376,400 acres are inventoried as roadless. In 1980, Congress established the Nellie Juan-College Fjord Wilderness Study Area (Section 704 of ANILCA) and directed the Forest Service to make a wilderness recommendation. The 1984 Forest Plan recommended wilderness designation for 1,703,000 acres or 31 percent of the Chugach National Forest and about 81 percent of the Wilderness Study Area. Action has not been taken on the 1984 Forest Plan

Analysis of the Management Situation

recommendations. The entire Congressionally designated Wilderness Study Area, 1,972,200 acres, is currently managed to retain its wilderness values. We plan to address such questions as:

- Should the existing recommendation for wilderness designation be modified?
- What currently roadless areas should retain (be managed for) roadless character.

2. Wild and Scenic River recommendations

The existing Forest Plan did not consider any rivers or streams for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. The Chugach National Forest River Study Team has identified twenty rivers and three glaciers which contain one or more “outstandingly remarkable” features. These rivers are eligible for further consideration in the process for determining which river’s would be recommended for inclusion in the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers. During the revision process, public input may change the list by adding or removing rivers, determining potential river classification as Wild, Scenic or Recreational and in the final suitability determination. We plan to address such questions as:

- Which rivers should be identified for inclusion in the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers and recommended to Congress for designation?
- What measures (standards and guidelines) are appropriate to protect outstandingly remarkable values and free flowing characteristics for recommended rivers?

3. Recreation and tourism

Recreation and tourism settings and opportunities found in the Chugach National Forest play an important role in the quality of life for many Southcentral Alaska residents and visitors. Surveys on visitor preferences, expectations and satisfaction point out that the quality of a recreation experience and setting is equally important as the quantity of experiences available. We plan to address questions such as:

- What amount and kind of outfitter and guiding use is appropriate for different parts of the Forest?
- What is the role of the Forest in development of a Marine Recreation System in Prince William Sound?
- What are appropriate standards and guidelines to apply to the area adjacent to the Seward Highway, a designated Scenic Byway?
- How will development of a road to Whittier affect recreation use in Prince William Sound and what is the Forest’s role in responding to those changes?
- What are the changing recreation uses and values the Forest needs to provide and protect?

4. Travel Management and Access

Many people value the recreation experience afforded by the lack of road access to most of the Forest. Others point out a need for additional public access either by road or trail for recreation use. We plan to address questions such as:

- What standards and guidelines are appropriate for determining use of new roads, trails and boating facilities?
- Where is it appropriate to develop new roads, trails or boat facilities?
- Does the current travel management plan need revision?
- How can different values on winter use of the forest such as skiers, snowmachiners, and helicopters be managed?

Analysis of the Management Situation

D. Natural Resource Production

1. Vegetation management

The existing Forest Plan identified over 94,000 acres as suitable for timber management. The allowable sale quantity (maximum per decade) was set at 8.45 million board feet average per year for the first 10 years and 16.9 million board feet thereafter. There have been many changes both in demand, forest condition and public expectations for the Forest since the 1984 Plan was signed. For example the spread of the Spruce Bark Beetle on the Kenai Peninsula has changed the forest structure, composition and look. Questions the revised Forest Plan will address include:

- Where and how much timber should be harvested from the Chugach National Forest?
- What protection measures (standards and guidelines) are necessary to protect other resource values?
- Is timber harvesting appropriate in Prince William Sound and the Copper River Delta?
- What kinds of vegetation manipulation (prescribed burns, hydroax etc.) are appropriate to achieve desired vegetation for wildlife or other resources?

E. Social and Economic

No preliminary revision issues or concerns have been identified relating to the social or economic environment.