

# ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST FOREST PLAN SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION REPORT (SIR) and DETERMINATION

## I. PURPOSE OF THIS SIR

CEQ NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1509.2(c) and FS NEPA procedures) require supplementation of NEPA documents when there are "significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearings on the proposed action or its impacts."

The purpose of this SIR is to determine if the *Conservation Strategy and Agreement for the Management of Northern Goshawk Habitat in Utah* (Utah Conservation Strategy) represents significant new information or changed conditions bearing on current Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) direction or the effects identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for that LRMP.

## II. INTRODUCTION

NFMA directs the Secretary of Agriculture to issue regulations for the development and revision of forest plans (16 U.S.C. S 1604(g)). These regulations are codified at 36 CFR S219. A forest plan is a dynamic management plan that guides future decisions. It provides multiple-use goals and objectives that constitute the "vision" (or intentions) of the Forest Service regarding the planning unit. The forest plan describes the desired future condition of the Forest, and how progress toward it will be made through the planning period. In addition to providing multiple-use goals and objectives, the plan has some features of a zoning ordinance in that it permits or prohibits activities, and establishes standards and guidelines that regulate them. Thus, standards and guidelines comprise "sideboards" in achieving goals and objectives.

In response to the regulations cited above, the Ashley National Forest in Utah developed a forest plan. The Record of Decision (ROD) to implement this LRMP was signed in October 1986. The six decisions made in the ROD:

- established forestwide multiple-use goals and objectives;
- established forestwide standards;
- established forestwide guidelines;
- delineated management areas and associated management prescriptions;
- identified lands not suited for timber production; and
- established monitoring and evaluation requirements.

These six decisions, in part, addressed requirements at 36 CFR S 219.19 that "wildlife habitat shall be managed to maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species in the planning area." This section further specifies that "habitat must be provided to support, at least, a minimum number of reproductive individuals and that habitat must be well distributed so that those individuals can interact with others in the planning area." *Id.* In order to estimate the effects of each alternative on fish and wildlife populations, certain vertebrate and invertebrate species present in the planning area were identified and selected as management indicator species (MIS) whose "population changes are believed to indicate the effects of management activities." 36 CFR S 219.19(a)(1). The northern goshawk is an MIS for the Ashley National Forest LRMP.

This SIR assesses the need to change (i.e., amend) one or more of the six decision points in the Ashley National Forest LRMP due to new information in the Utah Conservation Strategy (hereafter, the Strategy). This strategy has been developed for use by National Forests in Utah, in part to further ensure satisfaction of requirements at 36 CFR S 219.19 for the northern goshawk. The strategy is based on information and

recommendations found in the *Habitat Assessment and Management Recommendations for the Northern Goshawk (Accipiter gentilis) in Utah* (hereafter, the Assessment; Graham et al. 1998, in press) and *Management recommendations for the northern goshawk in the southwestern United States* (Reynolds et al. 1992).

At 36 CFR S. 219.10(f) it states "The Forest Supervisor may amend the forest plan. Based on an analysis of the objectives, guidelines, and other contents of the forest plan, the forest supervisor shall determine whether a proposed amendment would result in a significant change in the plan. If the change resulting from the proposed amendment is determined to be significant, the Forest Supervisor shall follow the same procedure as that required for development and approval of a forest plan. If the change resulting from the amendment is determined not to be significant for the purposes of the planning process, the Forest Supervisor may implement the amendment following appropriate public notification and satisfactory completion of NEPA procedures."

Therefore, this SIR will compare the six decision points made in the Ashley's LRMP to information in the Utah Conservation Strategy to determine if the Strategy can be implemented under the current forest plan, or if amendments are required.

### *Viability of the Northern Goshawk and the Forest Plan*

36 CFR S 219.19 requires that "wildlife habitat shall be managed to maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species in the planning area." It also specifies that "habitat must be provided to support, at least, a minimum number of reproductive individuals and that habitat must be well distributed so that those individuals can interact with others in the planning area." To meet these requirements for a far ranging, broadly distributed species such as the northern goshawk--where a Population Viability Analysis (PVA), or surrogate analysis, is conducted at scales larger than an individual planning area--it must be clear what role individual planning areas (i.e., forest plan units) play in sustaining population viability at the larger scale. Matching the scale of analysis to the scale of biological processes is key to the success of PVA. Different taxa, and different ecological processes that influence the life histories of those taxa, call for analyses at different scales.

For the goshawk, the planning area managed under an LRMP provides an important piece of the total habitat that ensures maintenance of species representation throughout the area which defines a self-sustaining population (i.e., the aggregation of landscapes within the State of Utah). Habitat found on each forest provides connectivity and travel lanes, contributes to genetic diversity, and increases the number of individuals in the larger population.

Although the Assessment found that current habitat appears to be capable of supporting a viable population of goshawks at the State spatial scale, it recognized that "habitat deficiencies may be present at the local level" because of the coarse scale of the assessment. The Strategy provides administrative units with the necessary background information and analysis procedures to insure that projects proposed in areas involving goshawk habitat, or potential habitat, are properly designed and implemented to meet habitat goals.

Following the guidance in the Strategy will ensure that the administrative unit sustains habitat for the maintenance of species representation throughout the planning area over time, and contributes to sustaining habitat connectivity among National Forests. Connectivity among habitats is a key element to population viability because it allows juveniles to disperse from natal areas and individuals to emigrate to new areas. Connected habitat makes it possible for individuals to recolonize habitats or emigrate to new breeding territories throughout the State when habitat values change locally.

### **III. Relationship between species assessments, conservation strategies, and Forest Plan management direction**

#### *Species Assessments*

*The Habitat Assessment and Management Recommendations for the Northern Goshawk (Accipiter gentilis) in Utah* (Graham et al. 1998, in press) considered goshawk habitat relationships and needs, historic and current range, demographic features and population trends, and limiting factors, and provided an estimate of long-term persistence considering past, present, and anticipated future conditions. To complete the assessment Graham et al. considered a portion of the species range (the State of Utah) to address management concerns. Within this spatial area, all land ownerships were included in the assessment to evaluate the contribution of National Forest System lands to long-term persistence and viability. This assessment included habitat findings not only for the goshawk, but also for its prey and other associated species. These findings provide the foundation for the Strategy.

#### *Conservation Strategies and Agreements*

The *Conservation Strategy and Agreement for the Management of Northern Goshawk Habitat in Utah* (1998) was developed from information in the *Habitat Assessment and Management Recommendations for the Northern Goshawk (Accipiter gentilis) in Utah*. It recommends management approaches to restore or maintain ecological integrity of goshawk habitat; this contributes to species viability. Management recommendations provide the framework for developing management direction in forest plans to meet the needs of the goshawk, its prey, and associated species.

#### *Forest Plan Management Direction*

A forest plan is a dynamic management plan for making future decisions. It has some features of a zoning ordinance in that it permits and prohibits activities, and establishes standards and guidelines ("sideboards") that regulate them.

These sideboards are intentionally broad to accommodate the needs of the many resources; allow for adaptation to the inherent variety of site-specific conditions on a forest; and accommodate adaptation as better science becomes available or policy changes. Plan direction does not provide detailed descriptions of how goals and objectives are to be achieved at the project level. However, the general path defined by the sideboards is narrow enough to insure ecosystem integrity and resiliency are retained, a sustainable level of products and services is provided, and laws and regulations are not violated while project implementation moves the planning area towards its vision.

The Ashley National Forest must determine if implementation of this conservation strategy

- redefines the forest plan vision, as defined by its goals and objectives; and,
- is consistent with the existing forest plan direction (sideboards).

If implementation is consistent, the Forests must determine whether the stipulations in the Strategy are different than the operational boundaries defined by the sideboards (i.e., standards, guidelines, general direction, management area prescriptions). If they are, operational sideboards must be reconsidered, and the significance of the proposed changes must be assessed (FSH 1909.12 (5.32(3)) based on NFMA planning requirements.

This SIR assesses the ability of the current Ashley National Forest LRMP to implement management recommendations of the Strategy across the planning area.

# ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST

## State-wide Forest Resources

Based on Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data compiled in 1995, the State of Utah encompasses over 54 million acres. Roughly 29 percent of the State (15.7 million acres) is forest land (all ownerships). Forest land is made up of 58 percent (9.2 million acres) pinyon-juniper and juniper woodlands; the remaining 42% (6.5 million acres) is timberland (based on forest type classifications). Timberland refers to those lands that are typically dominated by tree species favored for commercial timber harvest (i.e., "timber species" such as ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and Englemann spruce). This is a land area classification system and is not intended to infer a land use such as timber harvest will occur.

Forested land classed as timberland in the FIA report is most important for goshawk habitat. Though the woodland areas (including pinyon/juniper) have some value as winter foraging habitat, no nesting goshawks have been located in this type. The USDA Forest Service manages 81% of the timberlands in Utah (those lands with forest types or habitat types that may be capable of achieving the high or optimum value habitat described by Graham et al.).

## Ashley National Forest Resources

The Ashley National Forest encompasses 1,372,787 acres in northeastern Utah . Approximately 887,230 acres are classified as forest land, of which 88% (779,348 acres) is timberland and 12% (107,882 acres) is woodland (based on FIA data). The remaining acres are nonforested land, such as meadows, lakes and reservoirs. On a state-wide basis, the Ashley National Forest manages about 13% of all timberlands (the forest category which includes the potential for high value or optimum goshawk habitat). Within these timberlands, there are some areas which cannot produce large, old trees due to poor growing conditions and/or frequent natural disturbance. However, most timberlands have the potential to be at least moderate to high value goshawk habitat.

Though finer resolution data will be used during project-level assessments to identify habitat values, the coarse scale Assessment completed for the state of Utah provides estimates of current habitat values on each National Forest. That assessment indicates that the Ashley forest lands are roughly 10% optimum and 40% high value habitat for goshawks. The remaining 50% of the forest lands are currently rated as moderate to low value habitat for goshawks.

Most optimum and high value habitat occurs at the middle elevations of the Uinta Mountains, in montane forest types such as aspen, lodgepole pine and mixed pine/spruce/fir. Optimum habitat has been mapped on the Roosevelt and Duchesne Ranger Districts, primarily in stands of live lodgepole mixed with aspen. The high value habitat tends to occur in the same forest types as the optimum habitat, and currently exists at mid-elevations throughout the Uinta Mountains. The high value habitat map in the Assessment shows a mid-elevation band nearly encircling the Uinta Mountains, which corresponds to the distribution of known goshawk nests on the Ashley and Wasatch-Cache National Forests.

This mid-elevation band of habitat includes a large area where bark beetle activity has killed a high percentage of the overstory trees. Where these beetle-killed forests have been opened up by windthrow or salvage logging, localized areas of low to moderate value goshawk habitat have been created. Such areas are concentrated on the relatively flat lands located at the eastern end of the Uinta Mountains, primarily on the Vernal and Flaming Gorge Ranger Districts. The specific characteristics which account for the lower

habitat value ratings are small residual forest patch size, lack of large trees, and/or low abundance of certain key prey species.

These same districts have areas of predominately dead (but still standing) trees which are currently rated as high value goshawk habitat. Such areas are expected to decline in value substantially over the next 5-10 years due to continued loss of snags to windthrow. Overall, about 7% of the timberlands on the Ashley currently have at least 80% dead overstories. Additionally, up to 15% of the Ashley's timberlands may currently be at high risk of bark beetle attack (based on FIA data).

Other areas of low to moderate habitat value are associated with low productivity sites, and have little potential for improvement. Habitat values are generally moderate near treeline, due to short summers and relatively low prey availability. Values are moderate to low at many low elevation sites, where timberlands tend to be replaced by pinyon/juniper woodlands and are often mixed with open habitats such as sagebrush/grasslands. The portion of the Ashley which is located south of the town of Duchesne, on the Tavaputs Plateau, is of moderate value at best due to patchy tree distribution and scarcity of preferred prey species.

Snag loss and risk of large-scale wildfire due to accumulated woody debris in forests with high rates of bark beetle activity are short-term agents acting on the Ashley's timberlands. These are natural change agents, and are necessary for retaining the early to mid-seral vegetative communities that Assessment identified as important for the continued existence of goshawks in Utah. However, when bark beetles and fire are severe, they can substantially reduce goshawk habitat value by creating unfavorable forest structures (lacking large trees) over large areas. At the other extreme are forests where little or no disturbance is occurring. This results in a slow trend toward late seral vegetative communities, which are neither as diverse nor as productive as mid-seral communities and therefore tend to support fewer prey for goshawks. This is particularly true on mid-elevation sites, where a variety of trees are capable of growing but where most are out-competed by one or two dominant species over time. Fire exclusion is one way in which forest management has favored late seral forest composition, to the probable detriment of goshawks. Fire exclusion also tends to create large, homogeneous landscapes which will eventually become susceptible to large-scale insect and fire events, and promotes ingrowth of shade-tolerant tree species, creating dense, cluttered forest structures which are not favorable for goshawks.

Management tools such as prescribed fire and mechanical treatment (including selective timber harvest) can be used to strike a balance between these trends in forest conditions. The Assessment noted that "...current management policies provide latitude for improving goshawk habitat if applied within reasonable ecological constraints. For example, partial cutting systems are used to maintain or improve stand characteristics for goshawks and their prey, with overall positive effect on goshawk habitat. In addition, timber harvesting has the potential to convert cover types to earlier seral vegetative communities, which is generally good for goshawks. Thus current management policies provide for a wide range of implementation options, with a correspondingly wide range of possible effects on goshawk habitat. The critical decisions are those being made on individual project level analyses, because this is where managers can use the best available information to insure projects are providing for goshawk habitat needs." Integrating principles of the conservation strategy in both landscape and project planning to promote desired habitat attributes (e.g., large trees and snags) will help ensure that projects are developed in such a way as to maintain existing habitat and restore local deficiencies in habitat quality or quantity.

In addition to providing the appropriate quality and quantity of goshawk habitat, the Assessment noted that it was important to ensure that habitat was well-distributed across the forested landscapes in Utah. The purpose of this recommendation was to ensure connectivity between habitat patches. Connectivity exists if individual goshawks using one patch of high value habitat have a reasonable probability of finding and occupying other nearby patches of similar value. This is important to population viability because it

facilitates dispersal and maintains genetic diversity, as well as allowing birds to emigrate from patches of declining value and colonize patches that are improving in value.

In order to address this aspect of the goshawk's habitat needs, it is necessary for each land management entity to identify habitat in adjacent forested lands and take management activities occurring on those adjacent areas into consideration when making decisions that affect goshawks. Based on the Assessment, the Ashley's nearest neighbors with measurable amounts of timberland are the Uinta, Manti-La Sal and Wasatch-Cache National Forests. Of these three, the one with the greatest common boundary and closest available high value habitat is the Wasatch-Cache. Resource specialists from the Ashley and Wasatch-Cache National Forests work together on a daily basis to share information and coordinate management activities along this boundary. In addition, the Ashley has and will continue to coordinate goshawk habitat management with all other National Forests in Utah in order to promote consistent management and track habitat trends at the state scale.

Implementing the intent of the principles and processes in the Strategy to address localized deficiencies in habitat conditions will further ensure that the Ashley National Forest does its part to sustain goshawk habitat in the planning area and maintains connectivity with neighboring habitat areas. The Strategy relied heavily on management recommendations contained in the Assessment, describing actions that should be taken by Utah's National Forests and the Bureau of Land Management to restore and maintain goshawk habitat. These agencies will contribute to sustaining short and long term habitat for goshawks which is important to the statewide viability of the species.

#### **IV. Evaluation of Forest Plan Adequacy for Implementing the Utah Conservation Strategy**

The following table lists Utah Conservation Strategy stipulations and compares them to applicable direction in the Ashley Land and Resource Management Plan.

**a) Comparison of the Utah Conservation Strategy to Current Forest Plan Goals and Objectives.**

| <b>1998 Conservation Strategy</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Ashley National Forest Plan</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <p><i>Goal:</i> (Strategy, Page 6)<br/>Provide habitat capable of sustaining viable populations of goshawk in the state of Utah.</p>                                                                                              | <p><u><i>DFC Statement</i></u> The forest will be managed to maintain vegetative diversity, providing wildlife habitat for a large variety of wildlife species. Special emphasis will be given to habitat such as ...old growth timber. (LRMP, page IV-3)</p> <p><u><i>Goal No. 1.</i></u> Manage fish and wildlife habitat to maintain or improve diversity and productivity. (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u><i>Objective No. 1.</i></u> Develop and implement habitat management plan that will include key ecosystems and maintain habitat for supporting T&amp;E or sensitive plants and animal species and management indicator species . (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u><i>Objective No. 2.</i></u> Develop the species/habitat relationships of fish and wildlife. (LRMP, page IV-29)</p> <p><u><i>Objective No. 3.</i></u> Manage the habitat of all T&amp;E or sensitive plant and animal species to maintain or enhance their status. (LRMP, page IV-30)</p> |
| <p><i>Objective 1:</i> (Strategy, Page 6)<br/>Design a proactive approach to habitat management which will result in the long term conservation and management of habitat for goshawk, its prey and other associated species.</p> | <p><u><i>DFC Statement</i></u> The forest will be managed to maintain vegetative diversity, providing wildlife habitat for a large variety of wildlife species. Special emphasis will be given to habitat such as ...old growth timber. (LRMP, page IV-3)</p> <p><u><i>Goal No. 1.</i></u> Manage fish and wildlife habitat to maintain or improve diversity and productivity. (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u><i>Objective No. 1.</i></u> Develop and implement habitat management plan that will include key ecosystems and maintain habitat for supporting T&amp;E or sensitive plants and animal species and management indicator species . (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u><i>Objective No. 3.</i></u> Manage the habitat of all T&amp;E or sensitive plant and animal species to maintain or enhance their status. (LRMP, page IV-30)</p>                                                                                                                          |
| <p><i>Objective 2:</i> (Strategy, Page 6)<br/>Provide consistency in management of goshawk habitat on National Forest System lands in the state of Utah.</p>                                                                      | <p><u><i>Goal No. 2.</i></u> Involve concerned government agencies, environmental organizations, and special interest groups in wildlife and fisheries management program. (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u><i>Objective No. 1.</i></u> Develop and implement habitat management plans that will include key ecosystems and maintain habitat for supporting T&amp;E or sensitive plants and animal species and management indicator species . (LRMP, page IV-28)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

**b) Comparison of Utah Conservation Strategy Desired Habitat Conditions with Current Forest Plan Direction**

| 1998 Conservation Strategy                                                                                                                                                                                           | Ashley National Forest Plan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |                                      |             |     |                                               |     |       |     |           |     |
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| <p>1) Maintain diversity of forest cover types by providing a strong representation of early seral species (Strategy, page 6).</p>                                                                                   | <p><u>DFC Statement</u> The Forest will be managed to maintain vegetative diversity, providing wildlife habitat for a large variety of wildlife species. (LRMP, page IV-3)</p> <p><u>Goal No. 1.</u> Manage fish and wildlife habitat to maintain or improve diversity and productivity. (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u>Standard and Guideline</u> Complete management plans (riparian, aspen, old-growth). (LRMP, page IV-28)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |                                      |             |     |                                               |     |       |     |           |     |
| <p>2) Maintain habitat connectivity by ensuring that high quality habitat patches are no more than 60 miles apart, preferably less than 20 miles apart (Strategy, page 6).</p>                                       | <p><u>Goal No. 1.</u> Manage fish and wildlife habitat to maintain or improve diversity and productivity. (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u>Objective No. 1.</u> Develop and implement habitat management plans that will include key ecosystems and maintain habitat for supporting T&amp;E or sensitive plants and animal species and management indicator species . (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u>Objective No. 3.</u> Manage the habitat of all T&amp;E or sensitive plant and animal species to maintain or enhance their status. (LRMP, page IV-30)</p> <p><u>Standard and Guideline</u> Leave areas of uncut timber between openings created by clearcuts large enough to meet all resource needs. (LRMP, page IV-35)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |                                      |             |     |                                               |     |       |     |           |     |
| <p>3) Sustain large trees on approximately 40% of the forested landscapes over time, well distributed. Large trees are defined relative to the average for the cover type and site potential (Strategy, page 6).</p> | <p><u>Standard and Guideline</u> Complete management plans (riparian, aspen, old-growth). (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u>Standard and Guideline</u> Designate and protect old growth areas for dependent species. Old growth should be a minimum of 160 contiguous acres and have old growth characteristics. (LRMP, page IV-29)</p> <p><u>Standard and Guideline</u> Retain 5% of area in old growth conditions at all times (and close the old growth area to fuelwood harvesting). (LRMP, page IV-29)</p> <p><u>Forest Land by Age Class</u> (LRMP, page II-10, Table II-3)</p> <table data-bbox="852 1543 1518 1722"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Mature/Old Growth Acres (% of total)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Douglas Fir</td> <td>91%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lodgepole, Engelmann spruce,<br/>Subalpine fir</td> <td>78%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aspen</td> <td>72%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ponderosa</td> <td>76%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>Standard and Guideline</u> Leave areas of uncut timber between openings created by clearcuts large enough to meet all resource needs. (LRMP, page IV-35)</p> |  | Mature/Old Growth Acres (% of total) | Douglas Fir | 91% | Lodgepole, Engelmann spruce,<br>Subalpine fir | 78% | Aspen | 72% | Ponderosa | 76% |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Mature/Old Growth Acres (% of total)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |                                      |             |     |                                               |     |       |     |           |     |
| Douglas Fir                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 91%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |                                      |             |     |                                               |     |       |     |           |     |
| Lodgepole, Engelmann spruce,<br>Subalpine fir                                                                                                                                                                        | 78%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |                                      |             |     |                                               |     |       |     |           |     |
| Aspen                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 72%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |                                      |             |     |                                               |     |       |     |           |     |
| Ponderosa                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 76%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |                                      |             |     |                                               |     |       |     |           |     |

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| <p>4) Provide other habitats as described by Reynold et al. 1992 for prey and other associated species (i.e.- snags, down woody, cover, etc.; Strategy, page 6).</p> | <p><u>Goal No. 1.</u> Manage fish and wildlife habitat to maintain or improve diversity and productivity. (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u>Objective No. 1.</u> Develop and implement habitat management plan that will include key ecosystems and maintain habitat for supporting T&amp;E or sensitive plants and animal species and management indicator species . (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u>Objective No. 3.</u> Manage the habitat of all T&amp;E or sensitive plant and animal species to maintain or enhance their status. (LRMP, page IV-30)</p> <p><u>Standard and Guideline</u> Maintain down materials for wildlife habitat: 2 to 4 tons per acre or 30% of slash created by clearcuts. (LRMP, page IV-36)</p> <p><u>Standard and Guideline</u> Maintain adequate downed material and standing snags for wildlife habitat as identified below:<br/> Aspen: 70% of maximum population potential or 1.3 snags/acre.<br/> Douglas fir: 50% of maximum population potential or 1 snag/acre.<br/> Lodgepole pine: 40% of maximum population potential or .7 snag/acre (spruce, alpine fir).<br/> Ponderosa pine: 80% of maximum population potential or 2.7 snags/acre.<br/> Riparian: any species, 70% of maximum population potential or 1.3 snags/acre. (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> |
| <p>5) A variety of structural stages as recommended by Reynolds et al. 1992 are present (Strategy, page 6).</p>                                                      | <p><u>DFC Statement</u> Timber stands will change from predominately mature and overmature to younger age classes. Approximately half of those acres stocked with the mature and overmature stands will be converted by the end of the fifth decade...(LRMP, page IV-3)</p> <p><u>DFC Statement</u> The forest will be managed to maintain vegetative diversity, providing wildlife habitat for a large variety of wildlife species. Special emphasis will be given to habitat such as ...old growth timber. (LRMP, page IV-3)</p> <p><u>Objective No. 3.</u> Manage the habitat of all T&amp;E or sensitive plant and animal species to maintain or enhance their status. (LRMP, page IV-30)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

**c) Comparison of the Utah Conservation Strategy Project Stipulations with Current Forest Plan Management Direction, Standards and Guidelines.**

| 1998 Conservation Strategy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Ashley National Forest Plan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |              |         |  |            |         |        |     |                  |    |        |        |            |  |  |  |                |        |         |         |               |         |         |      |            |         |         |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| <p><u>Down logs and tons of woody debris per acre</u> (Strategy, page 7):</p> <p>---Ponderosa Pine - at least 3 large downed logs per acre (greater than or equal to 12 inch diameter mid-point, greater than or equal to 8 feet long); 5-7 tons of woody debris per acre.</p> <p>---Mixed species and spruce-fir - at least 5 large downed logs per acre (greater than or equal to 12 inch diameter mid-point, greater than or equal to 8 feet long); 10-15 tons of woody debris per acre.</p>                                                                                                                                                                     | <p><u>Standard and Guideline</u> Maintain down materials for wildlife habitat: 2 to 4 tons per acre or 30% of slash created by clearcuts. (LRMP, page IV-36)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |              |         |  |            |         |        |     |                  |    |        |        |            |  |  |  |                |        |         |         |               |         |         |      |            |         |         |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p><u>Snags/acre</u> (Strategy, page 7):</p> <p>---Ponderosa pine - at least 2 large snags per acre (greater than or equal to 18 inch dbh, greater than or equal to 30 feet tall) .</p> <p>---Mixed species and spruce-fir - at least 3 large snags (greater than or equal to 18 inch dbh, greater than or equal to 30 feet tall) .</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p><u>Standard and Guideline</u> Maintain adequate downed material and standing snags for wildlife habitat as identified below:</p> <p>Aspen: 70% of maximum population potential or 1.3 snags/acre.</p> <p>Douglas fir: 50% of maximum population potential or 1 snag/acre.</p> <p>Lodgepole pine: 40% of maximum population potential or .7 snag/acre (spruce, alpine fir).</p> <p>Ponderosa pine: 80% of maximum population potential or 2.7 snags/acre.</p> <p>Riparian: any species, 70% of maximum population potential or 1.3 snags/acre. (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> |              |         |  |            |         |        |     |                  |    |        |        |            |  |  |  |                |        |         |         |               |         |         |      |            |         |         |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p><u>Canopy Cover</u> (Strategy, page 8):</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="162 1081 779 1323"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="3">Canopy Cover</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Nest stand</th> <th>mid-age</th> <th>mature</th> <th>old</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>all forest types</td> <td>NA</td> <td>50-70%</td> <td>50-70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Home Range</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ponderosa Pine</td> <td>40-60%</td> <td>40-50+%</td> <td>40-50+%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed species</td> <td>40-60+%</td> <td>50-60+%</td> <td>60+%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spruce-fir</td> <td>40-60+%</td> <td>60-70+%</td> <td>60-70+%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Canopy Cover |         |  | Nest stand | mid-age | mature | old | all forest types | NA | 50-70% | 50-70% | Home Range |  |  |  | Ponderosa Pine | 40-60% | 40-50+% | 40-50+% | Mixed species | 40-60+% | 50-60+% | 60+% | Spruce-fir | 40-60+% | 60-70+% | 60-70+% | <p><u>Goal No. 1.</u> Manage fish and wildlife habitat to maintain or improve diversity and productivity. (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u>Objective No. 1.</u> Develop and implement habitat management plan that will include key ecosystems and maintain habitat for supporting T&amp;E or sensitive plants and animal species and management indicator species . (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u>Objective No. 3.</u> Manage the habitat of all T&amp;E or sensitive plant and animal species to maintain or enhance their status. (LRMP, page IV-30)</p> <p><i>Note: The Ashley Forest Plan does not specifically address canopy cover, however, the AMS does specifically refer to available and potential habitat for goshawk on the Ashley, including a recommendation for at least 30% crown closure. (AMS, Volume 11, page III-15, also page III-11).</i></p> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Canopy Cover                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |         |  |            |         |        |     |                  |    |        |        |            |  |  |  |                |        |         |         |               |         |         |      |            |         |         |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Nest stand                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | mid-age                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | mature       | old     |  |            |         |        |     |                  |    |        |        |            |  |  |  |                |        |         |         |               |         |         |      |            |         |         |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| all forest types                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | NA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 50-70%       | 50-70%  |  |            |         |        |     |                  |    |        |        |            |  |  |  |                |        |         |         |               |         |         |      |            |         |         |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Home Range                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |              |         |  |            |         |        |     |                  |    |        |        |            |  |  |  |                |        |         |         |               |         |         |      |            |         |         |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Ponderosa Pine                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 40-60%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 40-50+%      | 40-50+% |  |            |         |        |     |                  |    |        |        |            |  |  |  |                |        |         |         |               |         |         |      |            |         |         |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Mixed species                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 40-60+%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 50-60+%      | 60+%    |  |            |         |        |     |                  |    |        |        |            |  |  |  |                |        |         |         |               |         |         |      |            |         |         |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Spruce-fir                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 40-60+%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 60-70+%      | 60-70+% |  |            |         |        |     |                  |    |        |        |            |  |  |  |                |        |         |         |               |         |         |      |            |         |         |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

| <p><u>Stand structure and Large trees (Strategy, page 8):</u></p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">Nest Areas</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>g/f/s</th> <th>seed/sap</th> <th>young</th> <th>mid</th> <th>mature</th> <th>old</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ponderosa Pine</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>100%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed Conifer</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>100%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spruce-fir</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>100%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aspen</td> <td></td> <td colspan="5">none stated</td> </tr> </tbody> </table><br><table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">Home Range</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>g/f/s</th> <th>seed/sap</th> <th>young</th> <th>mid</th> <th>mature</th> <th>old</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ponderosa Pine</td> <td>10%</td> <td>10%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed Conifer</td> <td>10%</td> <td>10%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spruce-fir</td> <td>10%</td> <td>10%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aspen</td> <td></td> <td colspan="5">none stated</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Nest Areas            |                       |                  |               |            |      |                |               | g/f/s         | seed/sap      | young      | mid           | mature                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | old | Ponderosa Pine | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% | 100% | Mixed Conifer | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% | 100% | Spruce-fir | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% | 100% | Aspen |  | none stated |  |  |  |  | Home Range |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | g/f/s | seed/sap | young | mid | mature | old | Ponderosa Pine | 10% | 10% | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% | Mixed Conifer | 10% | 10% | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% | Spruce-fir | 10% | 10% | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% | Aspen |  | none stated |  |  |  |  | <p><i>DFC Statement</i> Timber stands will change from predominately mature and overmature to younger age classes. Approximately half of those acres stocked with the mature and overmature stands will be converted by the end of the fifth decade...(LRMP, page IV-3)</p> <p><i>DFC Statement</i> The forest will be managed to maintain vegetative diversity, providing wildlife habitat for a large variety of wildlife species. Special emphasis will be given to habitat such as ...old growth timber. (LRMP, page IV-3)</p> <p><i>Objective No. 3.</i> Manage the habitat of all T&amp;E or sensitive plant and animal species to maintain or enhance their status. (LRMP, page IV-30)</p> <p><i>Note: The Ashley Forest Plan does not specifically identify desired age classes by species, however, it includes descriptions of the existing mix of age classes in forested areas. (LRMP, page II-10).</i></p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------|------------|------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------|----|----|----|----|------|------|---------------|----|----|----|----|------|------|------------|----|----|----|----|------|------|-------|--|-------------|--|--|--|--|------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|-------|----------|-------|-----|--------|-----|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|--|-------------|--|--|--|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nest Areas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                       |                       |                  |               |            |      |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | g/f/s                 | seed/sap              | young            | mid           | mature     | old  |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Ponderosa Pine                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 0%                    | 0%                    | 0%               | 0%            | 100%       | 100% |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Mixed Conifer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 0%                    | 0%                    | 0%               | 0%            | 100%       | 100% |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Spruce-fir                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 0%                    | 0%                    | 0%               | 0%            | 100%       | 100% |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Aspen                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                       | none stated           |                  |               |            |      |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Home Range                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                       |                       |                  |               |            |      |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | g/f/s                 | seed/sap              | young            | mid           | mature     | old  |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Ponderosa Pine                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 10%                   | 10%                   | 20%              | 20%           | 20%        | 20%  |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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| Aspen                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                       | none stated           |                  |               |            |      |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><u>Years to mid-age/old forest (VSS 6)</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Nest Areas</td> <td>mid-age to old forest</td> </tr> <tr> <td>all forest types</td> <td>200-300 years</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Home Range</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ponderosa Pine</td> <td>200-250 years</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed species</td> <td>200-300 years</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spruce-fir</td> <td>200-300 years</td> </tr> </table>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Nest Areas            | mid-age to old forest | all forest types | 200-300 years | Home Range |      | Ponderosa Pine | 200-250 years | Mixed species | 200-300 years | Spruce-fir | 200-300 years | <p><i>AMS Summary:</i> Final harvest ages used in modeling ranged from 80 to 100 years for aspen and from 110 to 140 years for the other species groups (LRMP, page II-11).</p> <p><i>Note: The above rotation lengths refer to stands that are to be harvested. Many timberlands would not be harvested in the planning timeframe used for the LRMP, and could achieve much older ages. The Ashley LRMP does not identify desired age classes by species on a forest-wide basis.</i></p> |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Nest Areas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | mid-age to old forest |                       |                  |               |            |      |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| all forest types                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 200-300 years         |                       |                  |               |            |      |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Home Range                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                       |                       |                  |               |            |      |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Ponderosa Pine                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 200-250 years         |                       |                  |               |            |      |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Mixed species                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 200-300 years         |                       |                  |               |            |      |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Spruce-fir                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 200-300 years         |                       |                  |               |            |      |                |               |               |               |            |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                |    |    |    |    |      |      |               |    |    |    |    |      |      |            |    |    |    |    |      |      |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |       |          |       |     |        |     |                |     |     |     |     |     |     |               |     |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |  |             |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

**d) Comparison of Utah Conservation Strategy requirements with Current Forest Plan Management Areas and Prescriptions**

There is nothing in the Utah Conservation Strategy which directs the establishment of specific management areas or specific management prescriptions. All requirements in the Utah Conservation Strategy would be covered by forestwide direction, standards and guidelines.

**e) Comparison of Utah Conservation Strategy requirements with Current Forest Plan determination of lands not suited for timber production.**

| 1998 Conservation Strategy                                                                                                                                                             | Ashley National Forest Plan                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nothing stated in the strategy would affect this decision point. The strategy does not preclude the use of mechanical treatments to manipulate vegetation to meet resource objectives. | Table II-3 (LRMP, Page II-11)<br><br>Unsuitable forest land ..... 345.0 M-Acres<br>Total suitable forest land ..... 491.8 M-Acres |

**f) Comparison of Utah Conservation Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements with Current Forest Plan Requirements**

## **Strategy** (Strategy, Pages 9 thru 11)

### *Habitat Monitoring*

The Strategy incorporates two types of monitoring: 1) tracking changes in goshawk habitat over time; and 2) evaluating implementation, and effectiveness of the Strategy in maintaining or improving goshawk habitat. Both types of monitoring will occur to some degree at each planning scale (project, Forest, and statewide).

#### 1. Tracking changes in goshawk habitat over time

This type of monitoring will occur on State and federal lands, statewide. Each Forest will monitor its forested landscapes for the attributes described in the desired habitat condition (DHC) statements provided earlier (early seral tree species, habitat connectivity, large trees, stand level characteristics such as snags and down woody debris, and a variety of vegetative structural stages). At the forest level this is accomplished by identifying changes in habitat caused by management activities or natural events. When conditions are trending away from DHCs, appropriate corrective actions will be developed and implemented. Results of forest-level monitoring will also be aggregated to a central repository at the state level in order to monitor quality and connectivity of statewide habitat. Statewide assessments will also be completed during programmatic planning activities such as Land and Resource Management Plan revisions.

#### 2. Implementation and effectiveness monitoring

Monitoring will be conducted to verify that projects are properly implementing the Strategy, and that they are effective in creating desired habitat conditions for the goshawk and its prey. Monitoring will be part of the design of every project affecting goshawk habitat. Time periods and indicators for monitoring will vary depending upon the purpose of the project; they will be documented in individual project records. At the Forest and statewide levels, monitoring will track the net change in availability and connectivity of high-value goshawk habitat. Monitoring will be reviewed annually at the state level to determine if the Strategy is being successfully implemented or if changes are needed.

An additional indication of the Strategy's effectiveness is provided by territory occupancy (see next section).

### *Population Monitoring*

Concurrent with habitat monitoring, Forests will monitor goshawk territory occupancy. Data will be collected and analyzed at the Forest level and shared with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources for aggregation to larger scales, including the State. A territory is considered occupied if evidence of goshawk use is present. Nesting does not need to occur for a territory to be occupied. Each agency will be responsible for maintaining and updating its respective population databases, and coordinating findings annually.

This is the minimum level of population monitoring required under the Strategy. Such information will help ensure that there is reproductive potential, in the form of adult birds present on every management unit. Occupancy data are strongly influenced by the level of survey, monitoring effort, and observer training and experience. Therefore, when conducting population monitoring, managers should be prepared to invest sufficient field effort to obtain reliable results.

However, occupancy data have limitations which should be considered during interpretation. Because it does not indicate if reproduction is actually occurring, occupancy is not sensitive to the early stages of habitat decline and may not detect population sinks (areas where goshawks are either nesting unsuccessfully

or failing to initiate nesting). Whenever possible, occupancy data should be supplemented with nest productivity data in order to provide additional information on habitat quality.

#### Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures for Territory Occupancy

Population monitoring will be conducted annually using a random sample of at least 20 territories, or 50% of all known territories, whichever is greater. If fewer than 20 territories are known, monitor all of them. Once a territory is identified, it always remains in the pool of known territories. New territories will be included in the sample as they are located and could be analyzed separately.

If monitoring reveals three consecutive years of a 20% or greater decline in territory occupancy, further evaluation must occur to determine the cause and appropriate corrective action. This evaluation would be conducted by an interagency team. Corrective actions will be determined in part based on the scale at which the populations are declining.

There must be a strong commitment to monitoring both habitat and populations. Failure to make this commitment could result in underestimation of territory occupancy, which could unnecessarily limit management activities. Furthermore, it will result in insufficient information to make necessary management changes.

#### Management Responses to Suspected Occupancy Declines

Declining occupancy at the landscape level requires review; it does not necessarily mean that population viability is at risk. If declines at the landscape level occur, only those activities that would benefit habitat for the goshawk at the landscape area should be implemented. If that is not possible in the landscape, habitat should be developed or maintained in adjacent areas.

Declining occupancy in multiple landscapes is serious. Such declines suggest a widespread or systematic problem that could relate to management strategies rather than individual projects. Such declines indicate a need to evaluate conditions over a multiple landscape scale and develop corrective or compensatory strategies.

Declining occupancy at the forest level could affect findings in project-level Biological Evaluations (BEs) and require review of the Habitat Strategy, Forest or Resource Management Plan direction, and standards and guidelines. Forests should identify the most likely cause of the decline and determine actions to reverse the decline in trend. The Habitat Strategy would only be modified if review indicated that the existing strategy had been fully implemented, and yet habitat was still implicated in the decline. When occupancy is declining at the forest level, projects should be specifically designed to enhance habitat rather than to mitigate or be neutral in their effects to goshawks.

*Ashley National Forest Plan, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (pages V-6, and 10)*

| ACTIVITIES, EFFECTS AND RESOURCES TO BE MEASURED                                                                                         | MONITORING METHOD                                           | PRECISION/RELIABILITY | MEASUREMENT FREQUENCY | REPORTING PERIOD | VARIATION WHICH WOULD CAUSE FURTHER EVALUATION AND/OR CHANGE IN MANAGEMENT DIRECTION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MIS:<br>Goshawk                                                                                                                          | Timber stand data, EAs, Wildlife Habitat Relationship Model | M/M                   | 10 years              | 10 years         | <p>Any reduction in acreage below 5% of total old growth conditions.</p> <p><i>Note: the Ashley Forest Plan relies on habitat monitoring to accomplish population viability objectives, based on AMS estimates of the amount of habitat needed to sustain populations for which no reliable estimates of existing population size were available at the time the LRMP was prepared (AMS, Vol. II, page III-12). This monitoring plan is complemented by the LRMP standard and guideline requiring inventories of all MIS and sensitive species be conducted to "determine their occurrence, abundance, distribution, habitat requirements, and population trends." (LRMP, page IV-29 and 31).</i></p> |
| Check compliance of timber sale program to assure that estimates of effects to other resources (such as...wildlife...) were appropriate. | Sale reviews, EAs, sale contracts, permits                  | M / M                 | Annual                | Annual           | Sale reviews question validity of estimates of effects.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

**g) Comparison of Utah Conservation Strategy recommended management activities/actions that should be implemented to maintain or improve habitat for goshawk with Current Forest Plan Direction**

| 1998 Conservation Strategy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Ashley National Forest Plan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>There are a variety of management activities that could be employed to achieve DHC. These activities should be coordinated at site specific level by local land managers. However, there is a guideline that almost always applies:</p> <p>-Protect active nests and their post-fledgling area (PFA) from disturbance during critical phases on reproduction. The recommended seasonal restriction from the Reynolds et al. 1992 is March 1 through September 30. Seasonal restrictions may vary from this recommendation when site specific information justifies it.</p> <p>(Strategy, page 11)</p> | <p><u>Goal No. 1.</u> Manage fish and wildlife habitat to maintain or improve diversity and productivity. (LRMP, page IV-28)</p> <p><u>Objective No. 3.</u> Manage the habitat of all T&amp;E or sensitive plant and animal species to maintain or enhance their status. (LRMP, page IV-30)</p> <p><u>Standard and Guideline</u> Harvest and silvicultural treatments will be located and timed to maintain or enhance wildlife habitat.... (LRMP, page IV-36)</p> |

**V. Summary and Conclusions**

Implementation of the Utah Conservation Strategy provides reasonable assurance that each National Forest will contribute to the maintenance of high value, connected goshawk habitat throughout the State of Utah sufficient to promote species viability. The question evaluated by this SIR is the need to amend the existing forest plans in order to implement the Utah Conservation Strategy across the planning area. Section IV of this report compares the recommendations of the Strategy with the six decisions of the forest plans.

The following conclusions are reached as a result of the comparisons:

**1. Do forest-wide goals and objectives in the current plan embody the spirit and intent of the goals and objectives found in the Utah Conservation Strategy, and to what extent do they compliment or conflict with each other in achieving sustainable goshawk habitat?**

A comparison of the goals and objectives in both documents shows a strong intent to maintain sufficient habitat to insure viability of the northern goshawk. Because the goshawk is a classified (Region 4 sensitive) species the current forest plan requires maintenance or enhancement of its status through habitat improvement. In addition, the status of the goshawk as a management indicator species in the Ashley National Forest Plan requires that sufficient habitat be maintained to protect the viability of the species. This is also the specific intent of the Utah Conservation Strategy, demonstrating good alignment between the two documents.

There is no need for additional goals and objectives in the current forest plan to insure that the Ashley National Forest contributes to the maintenance of high value, connected goshawk habitat throughout the State of Utah. However, during forest plan revision efforts, terminology will be updated and clarity in goal and objective statements concerning goshawk, MIS species, and sensitive species will be improved. Forest plan revision is projected to be completed in 2001.

**2. To what extent do the forest-wide standards in the current forest plan encourage, prohibit or have a neutral effect on implementation of the Utah Conservation Strategy?**

**and**

**3. To what extent do the forest-wide guidelines in the current forest plan encourage, prohibit or have a neutral effect on implementation of the Utah Conservation Strategy?**

The Ashley LRMP does not differentiate between standards and guidelines (S+Gs). Therefore they will be discussed together.

The current S+Gs clearly show intent to maintain or enhance habitat conditions and population status for the goshawk. Nothing in the current S+Gs would prohibit implementation of the Strategy's desired habitat conditions. However, they are stated in much more general terms and often allow a broader range of habitat conditions than are recommended in the Strategy. Specific cases in which the Strategy is more restrictive than the LRMP are as follows:

1. Both documents emphasize the importance of vegetative diversity. Only the Strategy identifies early seral vegetative communities as a key source of that diversity.
2. The Strategy identifies connectivity as an important habitat characteristic and provides a way of estimating it. The LRMP provides for measurement and maintenance of key habitats, but does not specifically mention connectivity.
3. The Strategy recommends keeping large trees on 40% of forested landscapes. The LRMP does not specify a desired percentage of large trees. However, the LRMP does predict that 50% of the acres currently occupied by mature and overmature stand of timber will be converted to younger age classes. By extrapolation from existing conditions (LRMP, page II-10, Table II-3), that would leave from 36% to 45% of the timberlands in mature/overmature condition at the end of the 50 year planning window. The percentage varies with forest type, but on average the LRMP projection would meet this Strategy recommendation.
4. The Strategy defines desired percentages of various vegetative structural stages, based on forest type. The LRMP recommends creating a mixture of age and size classes on forest lands, but does not identify specific desired percentages for each structural stage and forest type.
5. The Strategy defines desired tons and size classes for down woody debris by forest type. The LRMP provides a minimum tonnage figure, common to all forest types, which is lower than any figure in the Strategy. The LRMP does not specify desired lengths or diameters for woody debris.
6. The Strategy gives desired numbers of snags per acre and average snag diameters by forest type. The LRMP also gives desired numbers of snags per forest type, but does not specify desired average diameters. In some cases, the LRMP calls for more snags per acre; in other cases, the Strategy gives a higher number. The LRMP does not provide any guidelines for snags in mixed conifer or spruce/fir forests. The Strategy provides guidelines for both of those forest types.
7. The Strategy defines desired levels of canopy closure by forest type. The LRMP does not have guidelines pertaining to canopy closure. The AMS does indicate that canopy closure should be at least 30% in order to support goshawks. However, the Strategy calls for 40% or more in all forest types.

8. The Strategy estimates that it will take 200+ years to achieve many of the desired forest characteristics. The LRMP based its timber management models on rotation lengths of 80-100 years for aspen, and 110-140 years for most conifers. No desired age was identified for forest lands not being considered for harvest. (Note: Ages provided in the Strategy are estimates of the time needed to develop certain stand structures and characteristics. These characteristics are the desired habitat conditions; age is only an indicator. Actual time required to develop desired forest characteristics will depend site quality, growing conditions, competition, disease, insect activity, and fire events).

Therefore, although current standards and guidelines do not prohibit implementation of the Strategy's recommendations, there are many areas where the LRMP either does not provide specific direction regarding desired habitat conditions or allows a broader range of habitat conditions than the Strategy does.

#### **4. To what extent do current forest plan management areas and prescriptions permit or prohibit implementation of the Utah Conservation Strategy?**

There is nothing in the Utah Conservation Strategy which directs the establishment of specific management areas or specific management prescriptions. Management of habitat for Forest Plan MIS species, such as the goshawk, is provided through current forest plan direction which applies to all management areas, and is an inherent part of their associated prescriptions. This current forest-wide direction states that we will "Manage fish and wildlife habitat to maintain or improve diversity and productivity," and "Manage the habitat of all T&E or sensitive plant and animal species to maintain or enhance their status", which is accomplished through the management of habitat for an MIS species. Management of habitat to maintain viable populations is founded in federal regulation (CFR 219.19). Therefore, this requirement must be accomplished and would supercede other forest-wide or management area standards and guidelines which may prescribe a conflicting requirement. What this means is that the current forest plan prescribes the management of habitat for the goshawk sufficient to maintain viable populations, other direction or standards notwithstanding. Meeting this requirement under the current plan is assured through the project NEPA decision and associated Biological Evaluations.

#### **5. Would implementation of the Utah Conservation Strategy affect the decision made in the Forest Plan for lands not suited for timber production?**

The requirement to identify and make decisions for lands not suited for timber production is found in CFR 219.14 (Timber resource land suitability). This requirement has been addressed in the Ashley National Forest Plan (LRMP, page II-11).

To assess if the Utah Conservation Strategy would affect the decision made in the forest plan for lands not suited for timber production, the four factors which affect suitability found at CFR 219.14 were assessed:

Factors which affect suitability include:

1. The land is not forest land as defined by the CFR.  
*The Strategy does not change forest land to non-forest land.*
2. Technology is not available to assure timber production without irreversible resource damage.  
*The Strategy does not require actions that cause irreversible resource damage.*
3. There is not reasonable assurance that such lands can be adequately restocked.  
*The Strategy does not require actions that affect the ability to restock lands.*

4. The land has withdrawn from timber production by act an Act of Congress, the Secretary of Agriculture or the Chief of the Forest Service.

*The Strategy does not withdraw lands from timber production.*

Implementation of the Utah Conservation Strategy would not change the decision concerning lands classified as not suited for timber production in the Ashley LRMP.

## **6. Are current forest plan monitoring and evaluation requirements sufficient if the Utah Conservation Strategy is implemented?**

The Strategy identifies the need to monitor and evaluate habitat, as well as population trends. It prescribes general methodology to accomplish the monitoring and actions if deficiencies are found. The Ashley LRMP also identifies required monitoring and evaluation procedures for elements which affect goshawk habitat and numbers (particularly old growth habitat). To address population trends, the LRMP has a standard and guideline requiring monitoring of the distribution, abundance and population trend of all sensitive and MIS species. The LRMP also describes a percentage of habitat decline which would trigger further evaluations, or the need to change management direction.

While both the Strategy and the LRMP require monitoring, the Strategy specifies that population trends and viability determinations will be made at the State rather than the Forest level. It reinforces the importance of population surveys at the forest level so that each Forest's contribution to maintaining state wide habitat can be identified. This is not contrary to the existing monitoring requirements in the LRMP, which use both habitat and population monitoring as indicators of population viability, but is more specific about what should be measured and how often the data should be evaluated.

The Strategy outlines management response to suspected population declines at the landscape, multiple landscape and forest level. The LRMP states that we will evaluate when a habitat decline is observed, but it does not describe management response to habitat declines at different landscape levels. Furthermore, the LRMP requires that population trends will be monitored and that management should be designed to maintain or enhance sensitive species status, but does not specify what degree of population decline should trigger a management response.

## **VI. Determination of need to amend current Forest Plan**

Based on the above comparisons, summaries and conclusions I have determined that implementation of the Conservation Strategy and Agreement for the Management of Northern Goshawk Habitat in Utah is consistent with the six decisions made in the existing Ashley LRMP, and with the goals and objectives of the LRMP. However, the Strategy provides additional operational sideboards and monitoring requirements not found in the LRMP. This information is best incorporated in the LRMP at the standard and guideline level. A Forest Plan amendment should be completed to address differences between the Strategy and LRMP which are identified under Questions 2, 3 and 6 (above).

### *Significance of proposed forest plan amendments*

#### *1) Timing*

Implementation of the Strategy at the project level is consistent with current LRMP direction for reasons previously described. However, Strategy recommendations change some operational sideboards and monitoring requirements. The LRMP should be amended as soon as it is practical from a personnel and budget perspective.

## *2) Location and Scale*

The proposed amendment would affect all forested acres within the planning area. This scale of affected area (planning area) considered over an entire planning horizon (50+ years) suggests a significant effect. However, the type of assessment needed to determine these effects is best handled during forest plan revision (projected to be completed in 2001). In the interim, an amendment which incorporates additional operational sideboards found in the Strategy will ensure that the 36 CFR S 219.19 requirement to maintain viable populations of all native and desired non-native vertebrate species is met.

## *3) Goals, Objectives and Outputs*

Based on discussion above there is no need to change Plan's goals and objectives. Updating terminology and clarifying of existing goals and objectives will occur during forest plan revision.

Of the outputs and services provided for under the current forest plan, the only one that was identified as a potential concern prior to forest plan revision was forest ASQ. There is no indication that other outputs and services provided for under the current plan (i.e., recreation, range forage, other wildlife habitat, etc.) would be noticeably affected by the proposed interim amendment prior to forest plan revision. Also, ASQ is a ceiling, not a requirement, in the Forest Plan.

Recently the Ashley National Forest has begun selling smaller diameter trees, in response to a growing market demand for products such as furniture, landscaping fences, and decorative architecture. This means that timber harvest does not necessarily mean removal of the largest trees from the landscape. In addition, selective harvest strategies designed to maintain a mature forest structure rather than clear cutting can provide wood products to the public without conflicting with the Strategy. This may mean that outputs projected in the LRMP will be generated through a different silvicultural prescription than originally envisioned, in order to retain the desired mix of forest structures and tree species, but it does not mean that the quantity of outputs will necessarily be reduced.

We believe the proposed interim amendment would not result in a measurable change in outputs and services over the remainder of this planning period. Effects to outputs over the longer planning horizon (50+ years) are most appropriately evaluated, and adjustments made, during the revision process, when all resource factors are considered concurrently. Revision of the LRMP is projected to be completed in 2001.

## *4) Management Prescriptions*

There is nothing in the Utah Conservation Strategy that directs establishment of specific management areas or specific management prescriptions. Management of habitat for MIS such as the goshawk is provided through forestwide direction that applies to all management areas; it is an inherent part of their associated prescriptions.

## **CONCLUSION**

An amendment to the current Ashley National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan will be completed to address the additional operational sideboards identified in this SIR. Based on the finding that this amendment would not have a significant effect on the Forest Plan outputs and services prior to forest plan revision and that use of the Strategy at the project level is consistent with current Forest Plan goals and objectives, use of the strategy at the project level should continue during the amendment process. The amendment process is projected to be completed during the summer of 1999. This amendment will be incorporated into current forest plan direction, as well as into direction in the revised forest plan projected to be completed by 2001.

This assessment will be aggregated with the assessments of the other five National Forests in Utah, and delivered to the Regional Forester. The Regional Forester will review the findings of each Forest assessment to determine what immediate interim amendments to the Regional Guide and/or forest plans are warranted. Because the Strategy may affect current direction in all Forest plans in Utah, the process for completing interim amendments will be handled at the Regional level instead of by each individual Forest. The interim amendments will preserve options for the future that will be considered during the Forest Plan revision process conducted by all Forests in Utah over the next 2 to 4 years.

/s/ Bert Kulesza

DATE: 10/30/98

**BERT KULESZA**

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