



USDA Forest Service
Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests

Proposed Management Categories & Subcategories

The purpose of management categories is to provide a basis for displaying management intent on national forests lands within the Blue Mountains. For the Revised Forest Plans, five major management categories are being proposed to display management direction. The five categories range along a continuum from little use by humans to extensive human use. Management categories provide a way to broadly describe areas where goals and desired conditions are similar. These categories may be further divided into subcategories if appropriate based on discussions during the collaborative workshops and other comments.

CATEGORY 1 – In Category 1, ecological processes such as fire, insects, and disease are allowed to operate relatively free from the influence of humans. A predominately diverse, native vegetation results from natural succession and disturbance processes, while non-native vegetation is rare. People who use Category 1 areas must be self-reliant and should expect little contact with others. Few, if any man-made facilities and structural improvements are present. Travel is non-mechanized.

Subcategories include: Wilderness Areas
Recommended Wilderness Areas

CATEGORY 2 – These areas provide for conservation of representative or particularly rare and narrowly distributed ecological settings or components. They help ensure conservation of ecosystems or ecosystem components that may provide important functions ensuring the overall sustainability of larger landscapes. Human influences on the ecological processes are limited but are sometimes evident. Type of human use varies, but generally is not intensive. Some of these areas help provide an important role under an adaptive management philosophy by providing “natural” reference areas. These areas are often formally designated.

Subcategories include: Wild & Scenic Rivers
Research Natural Areas
National Recreation Areas
Special Interest Areas (botanical, historic, geologic)
National Scenic Areas
Scenic Byways

CATEGORY 3 – Ecological values are in balance with human occupancy and consideration is given to both. Resource management activities may occur, but natural ecological processes and resulting patterns will normally predominate. Ecosystems are allowed to function naturally, while resource use may change over time to accommodate ecological factors. Although these areas are characterized by predominantly natural-appearing landscapes, an array of management tools may be used to restore or maintain relatively natural patterns of ecological progress. This will result in some evidence of human activities. People using these areas expect to experience some isolation from the sights and sounds of others in a setting that offers some challenge and risk. Restrictions on motorized travel may vary from area-to-area and from season-to-season.

Subcategories include: Backcountry unroaded
Nonmotorized and limited motorized
Municipal watersheds
Designated forest habitats (late successional stands)
Aquatic habitat (anadromous and resident fish)
Key wildlife habitat (such as: winter range, calving areas, bald eagle, lynx)
Undeveloped recreation
Semi primitive

CATEGORY 4 – These areas are ecosystems which are managed to meet a variety of ecological and human needs. They are often characterized by a substantially modified natural environment. A wide variety of structure and composition is present; some showing the effects of past management activities; others affected by predominantly natural forces such as fire, insects, and diseases. Ecological conditions are maintained, while emphasizing selected biological structures and compositions considering the range of natural variability and sustainability. These lands often display high levels of investment, use, and activity; density of facilities; and evidence of vegetative manipulation. Users expect to see other people and evidence of human activities. Facilities supporting the various resource uses and motorized transportation is common.

In some ecosystems, intensive management may be necessary to restore the systems to their desired condition. Typical management activities may include: prescribed fire, timber harvest, planting, precommercial thinning, noxious weed treatments, road work, or in-stream restoration treatments. These lands appear similar to “natural” landscapes if left to function under natural disturbance processes.

Subcategories include:
General forest and forage emphasis
General forest emphasis
General grazing emphasis

CATEGORY 5 – Ecological conditions and processes are likely to be permanently altered by human activities beyond the level needed to maintain natural-appearing landscapes and ecological processes. These areas are generally small in scale. Areas such as mines or other concentrated uses are included in this category. Human activities are generally commercial in nature and directly or indirectly provide jobs and income. Motorized transportation is common.

Subcategories include:
Ski areas
Administrative sites
Power corridors
Developed campgrounds
Recreation residences
Mineral production areas
Highway rights-of-way
Irrigation ditches
Communication sites