

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION OF THE FOREST

Introduction

The future condition of the Forest will reflect the results achieved through implementation of the Forest Plan in meeting management goals and objectives. The desired future condition describes what the Forest should be like given implementation of management direction contained in the Plan.

Management of the Forest during the next decade will contribute toward the long-run picture, but more than four decades will probably pass before the effects of the Plan are evident over the entire Forest. The following remarks describe expected physical and biological setting of the Forest after 10 and 50 years, assuming the direction from this Plan remains constant. (The reader should remember that this Plan will be revised at least every 15 years.)

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION IN 10 YEARS

Overview

During the next 10 years, the Forest will continue its fundamental role in multiple-use management by providing a balanced variety of natural resource based goods and services to the public. The Forest will continue to fill a utilitarian, production-oriented role by providing resources including timber, livestock forage, water, and minerals. The Forest will also fill an expanding amenity stewardship role by valuing and managing aesthetic, recreation, and spiritual aspects of the Forest. Quality land stewardship and trusteeship will continue to be the fundamental underpinning for management of the Forest. The Forest will be recognized for quality programs in elk habitat management, high quality water, expanding fisheries, timber management (including uneven-aged management), and for maintaining the special environments existing in the Blue Mountains.

The Umatilla will continue to feature a mosaic of large grasslands and forested area, containing elements of both natural and human-influenced forest conditions. By the year 2000, parts of the Forest will show change as vegetation management and developmental activities continue. About 60 percent of the Forest will show areas having small to moderate (varying) amounts of noticeable harvest as criteria for big game habitat, visual quality, timber management, forage production, and others are applied. Recently regenerated and young forest stands will be evident in these areas. The incidence of large scale pest outbreaks will have declined and the overall 'health' of the Forest will show improvement. On the remainder of the Forest, including wilderness, unroaded areas, dedicated old growth units, and some riparian areas, natural or near natural conditions will continue. Large areas of grass-tree mosaic and 'stringers' will remain in a natural condition. In addition, natural-appearing areas will be featured along principal travel routes, in recreation use areas, and in riparian areas.

A diversity of recreation opportunities in a variety of forest settings will continue to be provided. Use of the well-maintained recreation sites will continue to occur at high levels. Hunting will continue to be a featured recreation activity and will occur in a variety of settings. Big game populations will be near desired numbers as species respond to favorable forest habitat. Other wildlife dependent on managed forest environments will be evident. Recovering and improving anadromous fish runs will be a feature, particularly on the south end of the Forest. Resident fishing opportunities will be expanding. Although the level of future road development is high, motor vehicle access will be somewhat limited because of the many road closures.

Economic activity will be focused on the timber and fisheries resources and, to a lesser degree, on livestock grazing. Economic activity centered on big game and recreation pursuits will also be important.

RECREATION

Increasing demands for the variety of recreation activities, settings, and experiences will be met as the Forest provides a broad mix of such opportunities. Recreation opportunities will be provided in a variety of management areas, including wilderness, unroaded areas, scenic areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, special interest areas, viewsheds, developed sites, and roaded areas. The Forest will continue to implement the national recreation strategy and will be involved with partnerships to accomplish a variety of recreation, wildlife, and fisheries projects.

Although potential semi-primitive opportunities will be reduced during the decade, through development of some of the roadless areas, available semi-primitive opportunities in the remaining unroaded areas and wildernesses (over 30 percent of the Forest) will accommodate demand. Some increases in user density will occur in these areas, but user conflicts will be minimal. Recreation opportunities in roaded and modified context will continue to be important and abundant on the Forest.

The Forest will maintain its reputation as one of the Blue Mountains' best places to hunt big game. Big game hunting will continue to be the single most important recreation activity on the Forest and will remain at high levels. A wide variety of settings for hunting will be available. Some decreases in road-related hunting will occur as additional road closures are used to improve big game habitat. The quality of hunting will be maintained as habitat management practices are emplaced. Fishing is also expected to rise in response to increases in resident fish populations and improved stream conditions.

The trail system will be expanded Existing trails will be retained and reconstructed, and new trails will be added. The expanded and upgraded trail system will contribute toward meeting long standing needs, distributing use, increasing capacity, and accommodating new uses. The Blue Mountain Trail System will be completed.

Off-highway vehicle use will be accommodated through development of loop trails, closed road systems, and staging areas. Conflicts between OHV use and big game will require some adjustments in OHV seasons of use and locations. Winter sports, growing in popularity, also will be accommodated, with the Tollgate area remaining a major winter activities focal area. Other all season roads will provide for an expanded sno-park system.

Special Areas

A variety of special management areas will be featured attractions as part of the diversity of recreation opportunities. Parts of the Grande Ronde, Wenaha, and North Fork John Day rivers, presently classified Wild and Scenic Rivers, will accommodate increased use; the two scenic areas (Grande Ronde and Vinegar Hill-Indian Rock) are major attractions which will also receive increased use. The variety of special interest areas on the Forest (historical, botanical, geological, and cultural sites) is being developed as planned, and will contribute toward educational and other recreational experiences. The Forest Scenic Byway will also be a featured attraction.

The many 'special places' including hunter camps and certain roadless areas such as Spangler, Walla Walla River, and Hells Half Acre will also receive protection and management for recreation, visual, and aesthetic values.

Developed Recreation

The Forest developed sites, including campgrounds, picnic areas, boating sites, ski areas, and others, shall continue to provide a variety of recreation facilities. The sites will be maintained in clean, neat, safe, and useable condition. However, increasing use at developed sites near water will occur, and capacities will be reached or exceeded for several sites. Some additions to facilities have been provided, plans completed, and action initiated to respond to the growing future demand.

Visual Resources

Visual resource quality will continue to be emphasized across the Forest through application of visual management practices. During the next decade, the Forest will continue to maintain, enhance, rehabilitate, and perpetuate scenic and aesthetic qualities in key areas throughout the Forest. The wildernesses (about 20 percent of the Forest) will be managed to preservation standard, allowing only natural ecological changes to occur. Nearly 26 percent of the Forest, or about 391,000 acres, will be managed to provide near natural settings emphasizing visual quality, including areas along state highways, key Forest travel routes, major water-related viewsheds, developed recreation sites, and unroaded areas.

Where visual quality is a concern and vegetation management is to be used, uneven-aged management will be the method practiced most often. Vegetation management will change forest conditions to incorporate more open stands; vegetation will be characterized by large trees interspersed with patches of smaller trees, other vegetation, and small openings. In the remaining area of the Forest, outside wildernesses, vegetation will appear as a managed forest with the mosaic and variety of harvest patterns varying in size, shape, and arrangement.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

During the next 10 years, the Forest will continue to identify, evaluate, preserve, protect, and enhance its cultural resources. A professionally-designed, systematic inventory will be conducted prior to initiation of Forest projects. The accumulated data from inventories will facilitate comparisons of cultural properties, provide a basis for evaluations of significance, and contribute to informed decisions when resource conflicts exist. The Forest will be working closely with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) through the consultation memorandum of agreement, affected Native American Indians, and other interested parties in the development of the program.

Most of the inventory will continue to be in support of the timber sale program. Of the tentatively suitable timberland on the Forest, an estimated 87 percent or 700,000 acres will have completed cultural resource inventories. Approximately 5 percent of these acres will require further investigations because of known site distributions or high cultural resource sensitivity. Where substantial inventory needs remain on the Forest, (such as in wildernesses) the areas will be inventoried, initially through special projects based on a sampling strategy. As the need for project related inventory declines, efforts to inventory nonproject acres will increase based on the available funding.

Site-specific management strategies will be developed over the next decade for properties determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. These management strategies will specify overall objectives and a program of work to accomplish objectives.

Data recovery operations will be carried out where conflicts occur between the onsite management of archeological resources and other resource needs. The purpose of data recovery is to document archeological information. Data recovery projects may contribute significantly to current archeological research by redefining research goals and by developing a regional context in which to evaluate and manage other similar or associated sites.

WILDERNESS

Wilderness Management Plans will be implemented for each wilderness. As defined in the plans, measures to substantially increase the amount of primitive recreation opportunity will be undertaken and completed. Indicators and standards tailored to each wilderness and baseline data will be established to determine limits of acceptable change (LAC). An effective education program will result in most visitors becoming knowledgeable of wilderness ethics and practicing 'leave no trace' techniques. All hunting camps and temporary structures (tent frames) will be dismantled and campsites cleaned. Validity examinations will be made for all wilderness mining claims, and plans of operation will be put into effect for valid claims to minimize impact on the

wilderness resource. All unnecessary Government-owned structures are to be removed. Fire will play a role in management of wilderness vegetation.

WILDLIFE

The Forest will continue to provide and manage effective and well-distributed habitats for a wide variety of vertebrate wildlife species. Forest species dependent on younger stands, edges, and openings will do well. Populations of others, including Forest indicator species, will remain relatively high, although some decrease will occur as timber harvest reduces habitat. Wildlife management will be directed toward key habitats including mature and old growth tree stands, dead (snags) and down trees, riparian, and other unique habitats.

Habitat for species associated with mature tree and old growth stands will be provided through dedicated forested units, managed lodgepole stands, riparian areas, and unroaded areas distributed throughout the Forest. About 91,100 acres, (about 6 percent of the Forest outside of wilderness) will be managed directly to provide for old growth/mature tree habitat. Decreases in other old growth/mature tree habitat will occur through the life of the Plan due to timber harvest activities.

Habitat for species using dead (snags) and down trees will be provided throughout the Forest. Snags, plus trees for replacement snags, will be left in areas where timber harvest is occurring, either as individual snags or in small clusters. Amounts will vary by management area, ranging from 40 to 100 percent of potential populations of using wildlife species. On a Forest-wide basis, outside wilderness, snag levels will begin to approach the anticipated use level of about 65 percent of maximum potential population. Dead logs and slash will be left on the ground for species utilizing such habitat.

Riparian areas will continue to provide a diversity of habitat conditions. Unique habitats, such as cliffs, talus, and wet areas, will receive protection. Planned habitat improvement projects will result in about 10,000 acres and 75 structures of improvements annually. Most of the planned, nonstructural wildlife improvement work will involve prescribed burning on big game winter ranges to enhance forage and other vegetative conditions.

BIG GAME

Since management of big game summer and winter ranges is emphasized throughout most of the forest, big game habitat potential will be maintained Forest-wide. Focus of management will be on habitat components of cover, forage, and roads, and on management of winter ranges, riparian areas, and other important big game areas. Changes should result as predicted: Satisfactory cover will decrease slightly, marginal cover will increase slightly, forage quantity and quality will improve, and about half the roads will be closed. In addition, winter ranges will be maintained and improved through cover management, improved security, and forage enhancement. As a result of management during the next decade, potential big game populations will be within 5 percent of the state management objective and winter range management will assist in keeping elk and deer on the Forest. Deer populations will be recovering from the low levels of the late 1980's. The Umatilla will continue to be known for its big game.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES

All management activities recognize and will be responsive to the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. Potential roost sites will be inventoried and protected adjacent to recognized feeding areas. Two potential bald eagle nesting sites are targeted for the Grande Ronde River as part of the Recovery Plan objectives. Peregrine habitat will also be surveyed and/or protected in accordance with recovery plans.

Surveys for threatened, endangered, and sensitive plants will essentially be completed (within the next 15 years), lists will be revised, and management plans will protect and enhance

identified plants. Federal and regional lists (T&E) will continue to change. Surveys will probably document large numbers of some plants and will result in those species being removed from the lists; other species will probably be located for the first time and will be added. The number of botanical areas on the Forest can be expected to increase slightly as new unique areas are found during sensitive plant surveys.

RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS

Ninety percent of the ecosystem representatives for the Research Natural Areas in the Blue Mountains will have been found. All proposed RNA candidates on the Forest will have been established and specific management direction provided. Management of each area will proceed according to direction.

RIPARIAN/FISH

Ten years from now, significant increases in the production of both anadromous and resident fish will have occurred on the Forest. Anadromous fish increases will be the highest and most noticeable, primarily as a result of actions taken through coordination between the Forest and the Northwest Power Planning Council (in its Fish and Wildlife Program), the Bonneville Power Administration, the U S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Washington Department of Fisheries.

Inventories of most of the streams and lakes on the Forest will have been completed. This knowledge will allow the Forest managers to predict more accurately the effects of management of the various resources on fish and to minimize any negative impacts. Inventories also will be the basis for habitat rehabilitation and enhancement. By the end of the period, a sustained habitat improvement program, based on plans developed in coordination with other agencies (and upon stream and lake inventories) will be well along its way to completion. Fisheries habitat capability will improve Forest-wide as a result of management emphasis and activities. Stream temperatures will be maintained or improved, instream diversity increased, sediment production decreased, and stream channel stability maintained. Trends in improving vegetative, soil, and other conditions on Forest riparian areas will continue. Overall riparian condition will be better than the present riparian status and will play an important role in meeting long-term goals to increase anadromous fisheries.

The number of rainbow trout on the Forest (an indicator of the number of all other resident fish) will have increased as a result of habitat improvements. The opportunity to catch fish will have increased even more, based on the increased number of legal-sized fish, better access from roads, and more fishable areas in the form of larger, deeper, and more complex pools. As a result of riparian management and fish habitat improvement, anadromous fish production will increase dramatically, including native fishery, during this period. The Forest Service will have enhanced most of the higher priority and cost efficient on-Forest habitat. The Forest will be contributing to the Northwest Power Planning Council's goal of doubling the fish runs by the year 2000.

A share of the increase will be dependent on and tied to improvements in downstream survival (between the Forest and ocean) and effective harvest controls.

RANGE

Management

In the first 10 years, forage will continue to increase in quality and quantity as a result of timber harvest, wildlife and range improvement projects, and range management actions. An increase of 6 percent in permitted livestock use will be realized through timber harvest area transitory forage. Increased use of clearcuts by livestock will occur.

Revision of outdated range allotment management plans will be completed; all others will be kept current. Allotment plans will continue to implement improved management systems on about 76 percent of the Forest and continue the trends toward improved rangeland and riparian conditions that have come about in the last 25-30 years. The structural and nonstructural improvements needed to achieve improved conditions and planned use will be added. Key big game winter ranges will be re-analyzed to determine total forage production and to assure that the allocation of that forage between big game and livestock is correct.

Noxious Weeds and Poisonous Plants

Although not desired by Forest managers, noxious weed populations will continue to expand. Canada thistle population levels will probably remain constant with the level of timber harvest activity, and may not be treated except in isolated cases where severe infestations on National Forest System lands might infect adjacent private lands. Other species, once well established, will have become virtually impossible to eliminate. If the use of chemicals for control is not allowed early in this time period, infestations of several species (especially knapweed, yellow starthistle, and ragwort) could become extensive and severe.

TIMBER

Timber and wood fiber production will continue to be a principal Forest activity. In the long run, management of the Forest trees and stands will be directed toward, and tied together with, accomplishment of multiple-use objectives, including production of wood fiber, and maintaining and enhancing visual quality, forage production, recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and fish production.

On areas emphasizing multiple-use values coordinated with timber resource management, forest development and growth will be directed toward meeting a variety of criteria, such as producing marginal and satisfactory cover for big game, protecting fishery values, maintaining near natural visual conditions, and reducing pest losses. Such areas (about 55 percent of the Forest) include Management Areas A3, A4, A5, A10, C2, C3, C4, C5, C7, E2, and F4. Forest yield will vary from low to relatively high levels in these areas. All principal forest management techniques will be available and used. Even-aged management systems will often be employed; uneven-aged management will be emphasized in viewsheds, riparian areas, and winter ranges, and used in many other site-specific situations. In these management areas, prompt forest regeneration and rapid tree growth at desired stocking levels will also be important to meeting other resource objectives.

Clearcuts, shelterwoods, selection, modified even-aged practices; other forest harvests, plantations, thinnings, and roads will be more evident. About 30 percent of the previously roadless areas will be developed through timber harvest. Harvest units will replace areas of unbroken forest canopy. Some reduction in large trees and increase in regeneration areas will also be evident where partial cutting has occurred during the past 10-30 years. Cleanup of dead lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir bark beetle killed stands will be completed, and regeneration of these forest stands started.

Where timber and wood fiber are of principal concern (about 6 percent of the Forest, under Management Area E1), forest development and growth performance will be keyed to producing relatively high levels of periodic (annual) yields. Emphasis will continue to be on conversion of existing mature and overmature stands to faster growing, more vigorous ones. Even-aged management will be the primary system employed, including clearcutting, shelterwood, and modified methods. Emphasis will be placed on obtaining more rapid regeneration, more natural reproduction, and faster-growing stands approaching yield-table predictions.

A variety of management techniques will be used to achieve long-term desired conditions emphasizing forest growth, productivity, health, and diversity. Practices include: 1) Species composition and stocking level control emphasizing seral species; 2) animal, insect, and

disease protection, 3) regeneration of stands which are not meeting growth expectations: and 4) utilization of genetically improved stock. Utilization of wood fiber will be high.

Competition for wood fiber provided by the Forest will continue to be high. During the decade, the allowable sale quantity (ASQ) of 124 MMBF, of which about 24 MMBF will be ponderosa pine, and a total sale quantity (sawlogs, chippable, and fuelwood) of 159 MMBF per year will be offered for sale annually. Species composition and log sizes of sale offerings will be similar to that available on the Forest currently. Although demand for ponderosa pine will remain high, white fir and other species will be increasingly used. Firewood will still be available and meet demand, but will be less accessible and consist of higher amounts of cull and slash material. Timber and wood fiber production will continue to be very important to the economy of the area.

WATER/SOIL

Water provided by the Forest will be an increasingly important resource as demand and competition for it expands. The Forest will remain a key source of surface water for local stream systems. Ten years from now, the water arising on Forest watersheds will be undiminished in quantity and quality. In many stream reaches on the south end of the Forest, water temperature regimes will improve due to measures taken to promote recovery or enhancement of riparian vegetation. Water quality will also improve in the Clear Creek watershed due to treatment of acid drainage from abandoned mines. The Forest management objective to provide clean, clear, free flowing surface water will be met.

Timing of low and high flows and average annual water yields will remain about the same for the variety of users. Any significant changes in total streamflow or timing of high and low flow are expected to result primarily from naturally occurring events and conditions. Management activities through the decade will continue to provide high levels of protection to streams, streambanks, riparian areas, and wetlands. The Mill Creek and Walla Walla watersheds will receive high levels of protection through the decade.

About 40 percent or more of the Forest soils will remain in a natural, undisturbed condition. Another portion will be affected for the first time by ground disturbance, while the remainder will be affected through repeated activity. A small percentage of the Forest soil in roads, trails, rock pits, and other allocations will be in a nonproductive state. Another small percentage will undergo treatment to restore lost productivity due to past management activities. However, the majority of Forest soils will be in about the same productive condition as today. Forest-wide, goals and objectives related to soils will be met through continued efforts at utilizing soil damage prevention and mitigation techniques.

MINERALS AND ENERGY

Interest in the locatable mineral potential of eastern Oregon remains high, and claiming activity will increase in favorable areas outside wilderness. The number of claims inside the wilderness will continue to decline. Mining for gold will continue to be active. Physical and biological impacts will be minimized but the short term effects on water quality will continue to be a concern.

An up-to-date mineral resource inventory and evaluation will be completed to supplement knowledge of locatable minerals. With this information, the Forest will be in a better position to manage proactively for locatable mineral resource activities.

Oil and gas leasing activity will fluctuate with energy prices, but interest in the Forest will remain relatively high. Interest in the lignite deposit in the Grande Ronde River Area for eventual development will increase. Geophysical surveys and exploration drilling for oil and gas in the Columbia Basin area will provide better information as to where oil and gas resources are likely to be found. Any significant discoveries will bring new leasing activity to the area. Consequently, continued exploration will better define potential targets, and poorly located

speculative leases will be dropped. Based upon newly acquired data, the remaining leases will concentrate on areas with a high potential for the occurrence of energy minerals. The Forest will then be in a better position to plan for development of the resource.

The public's interest in common variety mineral commodities will continue at about the present level; the demand for Forest Service road construction and reconstruction for access to these minerals will remain at about current levels. The resource will continue to be inventoried to identify sources needed for specific projects.

Withdrawals

All existing withdrawals will have been reviewed as required by FLPMA, and unneeded withdrawals will have been revoked. Unpatented mining claims located within wilderness areas will either have been abandoned, or operating plans will have been submitted and valid existing rights will have been determined. As a result, more complete knowledge about mining activities can be anticipated within areas designated as wilderness.

LANDS

About 88 percent of the Forest property lines will be surveyed, marked, and posted to Forest Service standards, and will be on a maintenance schedule.

Cost sharing on all major, jointly-shared roads will have been completed. New work sharing will be limited to reconstruction and occasional construction of short segments of spur roads. Termination easements on agreement roads will be necessary due to land exchange. Road access through private lands will also be adequate to provide public use of all major areas on the Forest

Land Exchange

All current land exchanges will have been completed. Other changes in ownership will occur as efforts continue to consolidate national forest ownership. Land exchange interest and opportunities will still exist with Forest major cost-share partners and other major industrial and agricultural landowners.

Utility Corridors Special Uses

Existing corridors are anticipated to meet regional needs through the next 10 years. The proposed corridor from Blalock Mountain to Troy, Oregon, will not be needed during this period. A rapid increase in electronic site activity is anticipated. Existing mountaintop sites will be sufficient to meet the 10-year demands. Most other special uses currently on the Forest will continue through the period.

Encroachment and Title Claims

Current cases requiring litigation will be resolved. The current backlog of cases, including mining claim occupancy, will not be resolved. New cases will be resolved promptly using a variety of methods, depending on the circumstances of each case. One Small Tract Act case per year is anticipated.

TRANSPORTATION

Roads

During the first decade, planned local roads needed to support the timber management program will be constructed. The Forest road system will continue to be operated to meet Forest goals, a process which will include an active program of road closures to meet elk habitat requirements, dispersed recreation needs, and soil, water, and economic criteria, as described in District access management plans. Most local roads will be closed to motorized use. Even though additional roads are constructed, the density of open roads will decline below current levels to

an average of about 2.0 miles per square mile, Forest-wide. The miles of roads suitable for passenger cars will increase slightly as roads reach their objective level of maintenance. All of the arterial and about half the collector roads will be managed for passenger cars: the remainder will be managed for high clearance vehicles. Desired conditions for trails are described under the Recreation section.

Other Facilities

All facilities will be maintained at their user level which includes consideration of user safety, continuity of service, function, operation costs, protection of investment, and appearance.

PROTECTION

Fire

Overall, wildfire activity will remain at about current levels and intense, large fires will occur at about the same level as today. However, the continued use of fire suppression strategies will result in a more cost-effective fire management program.

Use of prescribed fire will expand in project activities of all types and in reduction of natural fuels. Fire will be allowed to play a more natural role in the wildernesses. The general fuel hazard level will slowly be reduced through the combination of management activities. The fuels management program will help reduce the risk of large, intense fires.

Pest Management

By the end of the decade, current large scale spruce budworm and Douglas-fir bark beetle infestations, will have 'run their course.'" Integrated pest management strategies in all activities will be practiced. But, the Forest will remain susceptible to large-scale insect outbreaks due to such factors as the number of acres of mature and older forest, past fire suppression, past harvest practices, and younger immature stands. Silviculture techniques, prescribed burning, and other practices will be employed to help prevent such large-scale infestations and reduce diseases. The overall 'health' of the Forest will slowly improve.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST STRATEGY

Opportunities for the Forest to help enhance the vitality of surrounding communities will occur through a Regional initiative called the Pacific Northwest Strategy. It is envisioned that the Pacific Northwest Strategy will be a new focus of operation for many people, one that empowers Forest Service people and local citizens to look and work beyond the traditional boundaries. At the same time, it reaffirms and emphasizes working with other government agencies, local businesses, and the communities themselves in a spirit of interdependency and cooperation that has always existed at the local ranger district level. As the strategy becomes an integral part of doing business, its central focus will be to foster and enhance communication, cooperation, and partnerships.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION IN 50 YEARS

By 2040, actions initiated and carried out under the Forest Plan will become readily apparent. The following section describes the results of management and conditions of the Forest in 50 years, provided the demand for Forest resources and the management described in the Forest Plan continues.

Wilderness, scenic areas, dispersed recreation areas, old growth, research natural areas, and a few other forest areas undisturbed by timber management will remain substantially unaltered, except for subtle vegetational changes. Forest stands in these areas will be older, some showing signs of climax conditions, but many will exhibit more open, subclimax conditions due to 50 years of prescribed burning. Where recreation use is permitted, "wear areas" will be evident. The amount of recreation use will be near the upper limits of capacity, but efforts to

teach a strong land ethic to visitors will keep impacts within limits of acceptable change. Direct methods of regulating behavior will become commonplace and accepted.

Lower elevation rangelands (big game winter range, nontimber areas, and 'stringers') will also be much the same as today. Areas of historic heavy use will have essentially recovered and will be productive. Forest stringers will show evidence of expansion. Use by big game and livestock will remain high.

On about one-third of the Forest, timber stands will have a noticeably managed appearance. Conversion of the older forest to younger, thriftier stands will have occurred on most of the suitable acres. The overall appearance will be a mosaic pattern of even-aged management areas with varying unit and tree sizes, uneven-aged management areas with small groups and clumps of trees of varying sizes, and interspersed tree stands of old growth, riparian, and unlogged natures. Production of wood products will have been continuous through time. Overall, 'green' material production will begin to increase at the planned level, and cull and dead material supplies will begin to decline. Smaller trees will contribute an increasing share of the total yields.

As a result of timber management activities, forage production will be abundant and will have reached an equilibrium level of high output. The road system will be essentially complete and under management; only minor reconstruction projects will occur except where construction is needed to accommodate mineral activities. Many roads will be closed to motorized use but will be available for recreational uses.

Where timber management occurs, the general forest appearance will reflect the multiple-use emphasis which include production and maintenance of wood fiber, wildlife habitat, visual resource, and other values. Differences will be characterized by unit size and spacing, tree sizes and stand densities, and vegetative composition. Across the Forest, diversity will remain high in forest vegetation species and stand and plant community conditions.

Where other values are emphasized, the Forest will present a diversity of conditions. Natural appearing stands featuring large trees intermixed with younger trees and other vegetation will be found in managed viewsheds, many riparian areas, winter ranges, and many other areas. Management areas emphasizing wildlife criteria will show contrasting unit size and shape, denser stands, layered canopies in older stands, and higher levels of dead and down trees. Where wood fiber production is emphasized, the Forest will approach a regulated, more uniform condition in terms of tree sizes on a given unit. Stand ages will vary from 0 to 250 years. In summary, forested areas under vegetation management will show the appearance of human activity, more so than at present.

Although the extent of area impacted by management activity will be expanded, in general, soil conditions will be similar to current conditions. Some additional areas will be adversely impacted despite prevention and mitigation measures. The Forest will continue to provide clear, cool water. Quality water will be even more precious than at present; demand will be high from all users. However, available supply from the Forest will remain essentially unchanged.

Riparian areas and stream habitat will be in excellent condition as a result of long-term protection and management, and fish enhancement work. The trends in riparian areas toward quality fish and wildlife habitat, and populations reaching potential levels will be realized. The years of riparian protection and fish habitat improvement will pay off by increasing anadromous fish production by five times over current levels (highest levels since the 1950's) and by bringing resident fish to peak production levels. The Forest will be in the mode of rebuilding improvements initially constructed under direction of the Plan.

Various species of wildlife will continue to be important on the Forest. Old growth habitat in dedicated and managed units and other areas will remain at planned levels, sustained through time, and continue to meet needs for diversity, aesthetics, and wildlife. Dead and down tree

habitat amounts will also continue to meet dependent wildlife needs. Forest-wide, some decline in indicator species populations dependent on old growth and dead/down trees will occur as forest management activities reduce the total amount of key habitat. However, moderate population levels of indicator species dependent on these habitats will be maintained. Annual habitat improvement work will assist in maintaining populations. The biological capacity for species dependent on young tree conditions will increase dramatically. High levels of wildlife populations related to younger, seral forest conditions will be produced.

The Umatilla will continue to be known for its big game. Populations of elk will remain high, although forest cover and forage will have been changing and evolving through time across the Forest. Management of timber (cover), forage, and roads will continue to produce quality big game habitat. Big game winter range habitat condition will be excellent, as satisfactory cover is managed and quality forage is produced through prescribed burning. The impact of elk and deer populations on private lands will have declined to low levels because of increased forage and habitat security on the Forest. Road closures will remain high to maintain the quality of habitat and provide security for elk and deer.

Livestock grazing will be maintained at moderate levels and will harvest part of the increased forage developed through timber harvest. Forage allocations will continue to provide for big game and livestock needs. Upgraded allotment plans will continue the process of implementing improved grazing systems; rangeland improvements identified in plans will be installed and maintained. Overall, rangeland conditions and riparian areas will be substantially improved. Noxious weeds will be present on the Forest, but the spread will be controlled.

Demand for mineral and energy sources will be increasing and the Forest will respond to this demand. Improved knowledge about the mineral potential will result from extensive Forest inventories. Marginal and newly discovered coal, geothermal, oil, and gas resources will receive attention. The Forest will be in a position for proactive management of mineral and energy resources, including use of improved management and reclamation techniques. Development of the Forest potential will have been initiated. Withdrawals will continue to be periodically reviewed for their need and potential for operation.

Much of the lands activity will be completed (or nearly so), including land lines, area boundaries, rights-of-way, and ownership adjustments. New communications systems will replace many ground based facilities, but existing and proposed electronic sites will be used to capacity. Existing and proposed utility corridors will be fully utilized. Access through private lands will provide public use of roads, trails, and areas on the Forest.

Changing forest conditions will continue to influence recreation activities, settings, and experience opportunities. At the same time, demand will increase significantly for most of the various recreation opportunities. The Forest will continue to provide a range and diversity of recreation opportunities similar to that provided today. The supply of roaded and modified environments will increase more than 20 percent, and at the same time, the level of natural to near natural settings will be retained. Most recreation use will occur in the amply supplied forest environments influenced by vegetation management and road development. The Forest will continue to meet demand for primitive and semi-primitive opportunities found in wilderness, unroaded, and other areas. However, frequency of encounters in these areas will be noticeably increased. The many special opportunities will continue to be feature attractions, available through wild rivers, scenic areas, botanical, geologic, and historic areas, scenic byways, and other interpreted cultural resource properties.

Hunting will continue to be a featured activity, and use will be about the same as it is currently despite changes in big game populations. Fish use will continue to increase substantially; sport fishing for salmon and steelhead will be another featured attraction. An expanded and well maintained trail system will provide increased opportunities for a variety of motorized and

nonmotorized uses. An integrated trail network system tied to larger systems will traverse the Blue Mountains.

Developed recreation sites and facilities will meet needs, and will be fully utilized. Additional campsites will be added at water-related sites on the Forest, use of older sites will remain high and many facilities will be replaced and remodeled. Visual resources will continue to be emphasized across the Forest; the appearance of natural and near natural conditions will be created and maintained through vegetation management including uneven-aged timber management in sensitive viewsheds.

Wildernesses will be returning to a more pristine condition through use and management of fire. Some visitor impacts will be noticeable along heavily traveled routes and in popular hunting campsites, but will be within established standards for limits of acceptable change. Visitor use will be near the maximum level, but well informed visitors will have a high land ethic and will not unnecessarily degrade the area. Some specific campsites will be hardened to withstand the use. Direct controls to disperse the number of visitors and impacts during the hunting season will be necessary. Locatable minerals will be removed from valid mining claims and the sites restored to a natural-appearing condition. All land inholdings within the wildernesses will have been acquired and will be managed as a part of the wilderness system.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST STRATEGY

Each community will have capitalized on its uniqueness and involved its citizens in the development of a desired future. The activities associated with the Pacific Northwest Strategy will continue to support the goals and plans of resource-dependent communities.