

Resource Commitments

This section contains effects disclosures that are required by federal law, regulation, or policy, and that generally apply to all the preceding resource area effects sections in this chapter.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE EFFECTS

Forest Plan revision and Forest Plans do not produce unavoidable adverse effects because they do not directly implement any management activities that would result in such effects. The Forest Plans do, however, establish management emphasis and direction for implementation of activities that may occur on National Forest System lands in the planning period. If and when those activities occur, the application of Forest-wide and Management Prescription standards and guidelines would limit the extent and duration of any resulting environmental effects. However, some unavoidable effects could still occur. These potential effects are described by resource area throughout Chapter 3 of the EIS, primarily under Effects Common To All Alternatives.

SHORT-TERM USES VERSUS LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Short-term uses are those expected to occur for the planning period (10-15 years), including recreation use, timber harvest, and prescribed burning. Although these uses are not directly implemented by the Forest Plans, the potential for these uses are described in Forest Plan goals and objectives, both at the Forest-wide and Management Prescription levels (see Chapters II and III in the Forest Plan).

Long-term productivity refers to the capability of the land to provide resource outputs for a period of time beyond the planning period. Minimum management requirements, established by regulation (36 CFR 219.27), provide for maintenance of long-term productivity of the land. These management requirements would have to be met under any alternative. They ensure that the long-term productivity of the land is not impaired by short-term uses.

Monitoring and evaluation, as described in the 2006 Forest Plan (Chapter IV), apply to all alternatives. A primary purpose of monitoring is to ensure that long-term productivity of the land is maintained or improved. If monitoring and evaluation show that Forest Plan standards and guidelines are inadequate to protect long-term productivity of the land, then the Plan will be adjusted (through amendment or revision) to provide for more protection or fewer impacts during project implementation.

Although all alternatives are designed to maintain long-term productivity, there are differences among the alternatives in the long-term availability or condition of resources. There may also be differences among alternatives in long-term expenditures necessary to maintain or achieve desired conditions. The differences are discussed throughout the various sections of Chapter 3.

IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources are defined in Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Environmental Policy and Procedures (9/21/92).

Irreversible commitments of resources are the consumption or destruction of nonrenewable resources, such as minerals or cultural resources, or the degradation of resources such as soil productivity, which can be renewed only over long periods of time.

Irretrievable commitments of resources are opportunities foregone; they represent tradeoffs in the use and management of Forest resources. Irretrievable commitments of resources include expenditure of funds, loss of production, or restrictions on resource use. When one alternative produces less of a natural resource (such as timber volume) or offers fewer opportunities for use (such as motorized recreation) than another alternative, the difference represents an irretrievable commitment of resources.

The decisions made in forest plan revision do not represent actual irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources. This is because forest planning identifies what kinds and levels of activities are appropriate in different parts of the Forest; it does not make project decisions. The decision to irreversibly or irretrievably commit resources occurs at: (1) the time the Forest Service makes a project decision, such as approving a new trail or timber sale; (2) the time Congress acts on a recommendation to establish a new Wilderness or to include a stream segment in the Wild and Scenic River System; or (3) the time the Regional Forester designates a special area such as a Research Natural Area.

ENERGY REQUIREMENTS AND CONSERVATION POTENTIAL

Energy is consumed in the administration of natural resources on the Forest. The main activities that consume energy are timber harvest, restoration activities including mechanical vegetation treatments and prescribed fire, recreation use, road construction and reconstruction, range use, and administrative activities of the Forest Service and other regulatory agencies. Energy consumption is expected to vary only slightly by alternative. Alternatives with higher potential for timber harvest and/or road construction, reconstruction and obliteration are expected to have somewhat higher levels of energy use. Based on that assumption, Alternative 4 would likely have the highest energy use, followed in descending order by Alternatives 1, 2, 2M, and 3.

Several opportunities exist under all alternatives to provide for energy conservation or conversion from less plentiful fuels to more plentiful fuels. For example, car-pooling and combining trips saves fuels and wear and tear on the Forest fleet. The use of electronic communication devices for sharing information rather than scheduling meetings at one location saves energy spent on travel. Improving energy efficiency of government buildings can conserve energy. More energy-efficient equipment for all activities like timber harvesting, road construction and reconstruction, or road maintenance can be required. More energy-efficient management methods can be explored and implemented as well.

PRIME FARMLAND, RANGELAND, AND FORESTLAND

Prime farmland, rangeland, or forestland have been identified on the Forest. Forest Plan revision does not implement any management activities that would directly affect these lands, although future implementation of the Plan could have effects. There are no specific federal restrictions on managing prime rangeland and forestland for their intended use, which is growing forage and timber, respectively. There are soil-related concerns with managing on prime farmlands, and the Forest therefore identifies proposed projects that would occur on prime farmlands and consults with the National Resources Conservation Service to ensure that unacceptable adverse effects do not occur.

EFFECTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Effects on the human environment are documented throughout Chapter 3 of this EIS. Further documentation can be found in the project record. Effects related to Environmental Justice are found in the Social and Economic Environment section of Chapter 3.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

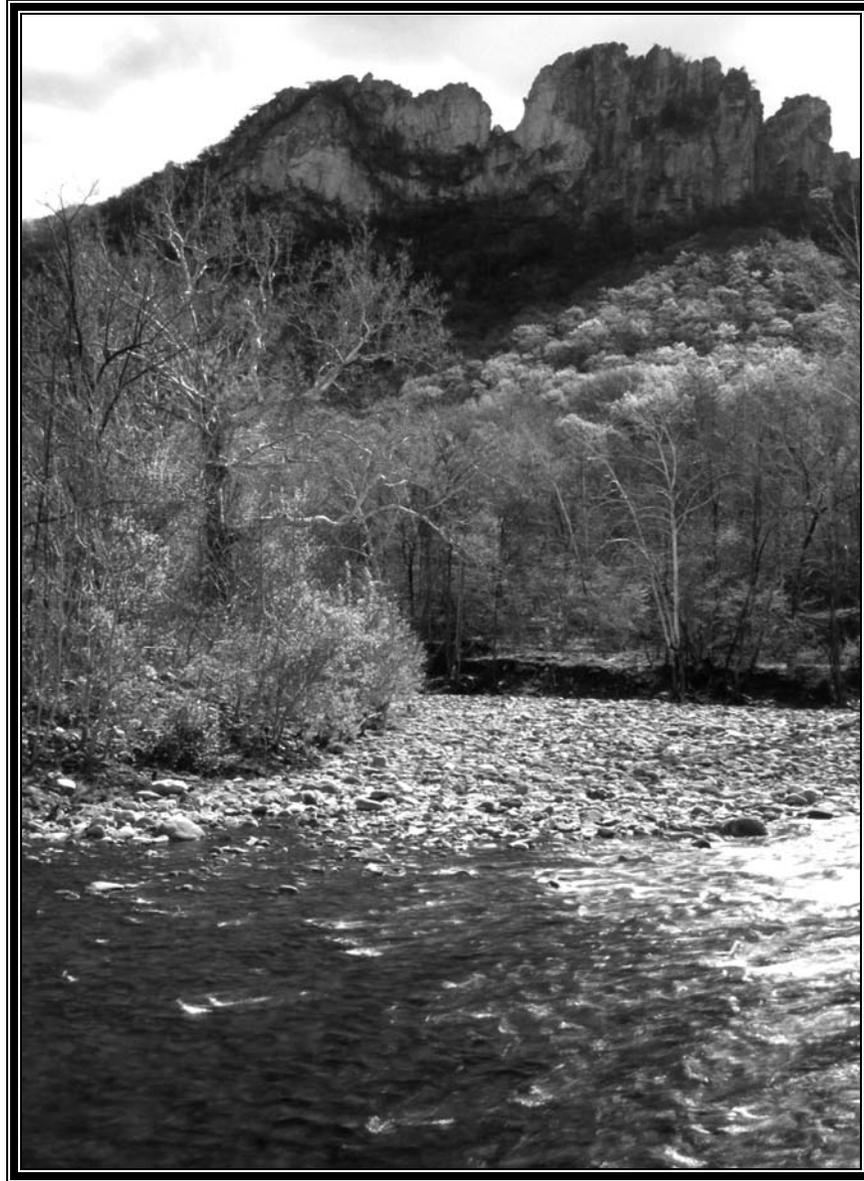
Potential effects to species listed under the Endangered Species Act can be found in Chapter 3 of this EIS (Threatened and Endangered Species section) and in the Biological Assessment that was completed for Forest Plan Revision. Management direction to protect these species, or to provide for their habitats, can be found primarily in Chapter II of the Forest Plan (Threatened and Endangered Species section).

WETLANDS AND FLOODPLAINS

There are numerous amounts of wetlands and floodplains spread throughout the planning area, with estimates of 6,000 miles of perennial and intermittent streams, their associated floodplains, 700 acres of reservoirs, and uncounted wetlands, seeps, and bogs. Forest Plan revision and the Forest Plan do not directly implement any management activities that would result in loss of wetland or floodplains. Revised Forest-wide management direction provides a broad spectrum of standards and guidelines designed to protect soil, water, riparian, and aquatic resources. The goals and intent of Executive Orders 11988 (Floodplain Management) and 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) would be met through compliance with this direction.

CONFLICTS WITH OTHER AGENCY OR GOVERNMENT GOALS OR OBJECTIVES

Contact, review, and public involvement with other federal and state agencies has indicated no irresolvable conflicts between this Forest Plan revision effort and the goals and objectives of other governmental entities.



Seneca Creek and Seneca Rocks