

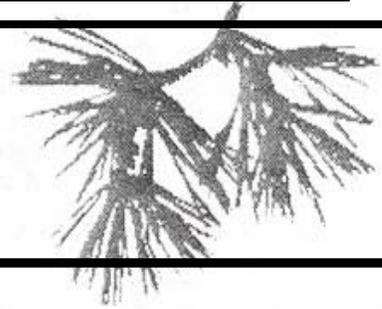
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# Ottawa National Forest

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## Forest Plan Revision Need for Change



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### Forest Hosts Public Meetings

The Ottawa National Forest hosted 7 public meetings across the Forest during late January and early February. Nearly 130 people took time out of their schedules to attend these informational meetings and talk with Forest Service representatives. The goals of the meetings were to share information regarding the current Plan, lay out the schedule for completion and receive comments from the public. In addition to these public meetings, consultation with Tribal governments and local agencies were also initiated. Additional public meetings and continuation of governmental consultations will be an integral part of Forest Plan revision efforts.

### What We Heard

The Forest received nearly 370 comment forms, letters and postcards from individuals, State and County government agencies and other organizations. Comments received covered the full range of public values as they relate to the multiple use of the Forest. Many comments were in conflict with others. Some of the comments received would not require a change to the current Forest Plan, while other comments were outside the scope of the Forest Plan and the authority of the Ottawa National Forest. Whatever the comment, we were extremely pleased with the number and quality of comments received. (Synopsis attached.)

### What's Next?

As a result of your input, a Forest Interdisciplinary (ID) Team will analyze the comments to determine:

- what the issues are;
- which issues need further analysis; and,
- which issues move forward to the next stage.

The Forest is making every effort to ensure that our revised Plan is realistic, readily implementable and within our organizational capacity. An effort to make the process efficient and timely, as discussed at the public meetings, means we need to focus on those issues that are most critical and compelling.

The Notice of Intent, which will be published in September 2003, will identify those issues that we propose to focus on throughout the Revision process. Additional public meetings will be scheduled once this document is published in the Federal Register, and a formal response period will begin.

## Overview of Public Comments

Key Comment	Suggestions
<b>Recreation</b> Snowmobile Trails, Access, Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Establish permanent, motorized trails and trail corridors for snowmobiles (could be used by ATV's/ORV's in the summer)</li> <li>○ Snowmobiles are a benefit to the local economy and should be provided for</li> <li>○ Trail system should be accomplished through easements</li> <li>○ Enforcement of regulations/rules regarding snowmobile travel</li> <li>○ Need to address noise/air pollution before expanding trail system</li> <li>○ Restrict snowmobile trails</li> </ul>
<b>Recreation</b> ATV Trails, Access, Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create an off-road trail system for motorized use and access</li> <li>○ Connect current trail system</li> <li>○ Open all Level 3 roads to ATV use</li> <li>○ Use old roads to create trails</li> <li>○ Restrictions need to be adopted to control type of off-road use</li> <li>○ All areas on Forest should be closed unless posted open</li> <li>○ Look at increased use of trails and increase of high-impact users (ATV's, ORV's, snowmobiles, mountain bikes) since adoption of plan</li> <li>○ Eliminate and prevent ATV corridors within Wild &amp; Scenic River corridors</li> </ul>
<b>Recreation</b> Wilderness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create additional wilderness areas across the Forest</li> <li>○ Designate Trap Hills as a wilderness area</li> <li>○ Stronger protection of back country values</li> <li>○ Preserve remote areas</li> </ul>
<b>Recreation</b> Wild & Scenic Rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More protective guidelines need to be established for MA 8.1 and MA 8.2</li> <li>○ Establish canoe and kayak access sites in corridors</li> <li>○ Eliminate logging near W&amp;SR corridors</li> <li>○ Begin work on W&amp;S Study River planning</li> </ul>

Key Comment	Suggestions
<b>Recreation</b> Other/Misc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Weigh the uses that detract or degrade the environment against the value of sensitive uses sacrificed</li> <li>○ Facilitate dispersed use vs. concentrated, congested use</li> <li>○ Eliminate jet skis</li> <li>○ Expand recreation opportunities for the handicapped and elderly</li> <li>○ Promote tourism in the National Forests as an economic benefit to local communities</li> </ul>

<b>Vegetative Mgmt</b> Old Growth Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Limit old growth forests to a very small area</li> <li>○ Terminate old growth designations</li> <li>○ Provide for more acres and diversity of old growth types</li> <li>○ Address risks associated with old growth designations; e.g., wildfire danger, diminishing forest health, loss of stumpage revenue</li> <li>○ Preserve enough roadless, old growth tracts of size to offer tomorrow's increased population a natural experience</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetative Mgmt</b> Aspen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Loss of aspen needs to be addressed; falling short of 1986 Plan numbers</li> <li>○ Provide for various stages of aspen growth</li> <li>○ More intensive management of aspen through clearcutting and regeneration</li> <li>○ Manage aspen in riparian zones as a big tree species to promote quality riparian habitat</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetative Mgmt</b> Clearcutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increase clearcutting to benefit wildlife, specifically grouse, woodcock, turkey, white-tail deer</li> <li>○ Eliminate clearcutting</li> <li>○ Upon completion of clearcutting, areas should become motorless areas</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetative Mgmt</b> ASQ/Harvest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Manage forests as a resource with economic benefits to local communities.</li> <li>○ Review ASQ to determine if it is still appropriate</li> <li>○ Increase ASQ level to a level that reflects the demand for timber</li> <li>○ Harvest forest products at the most efficient and productive time in their life cycle</li> <li>○ Evaluate a no commercial logging alternative</li> <li>○ Lower the current ASQ</li> <li>○ No harvesting in W&amp;SR corridors (visual and environmental concerns)</li> <li>○ Create a plan for handling diseases in over-mature forests; unless forests are harvested, we are creating potential for large disease outbreaks, blow downs, etc.</li> <li>○ Ensure we return to the ASQ goals of the Forest Plan</li> </ul>

Key Comment	Suggestions
Vegetative Mgmt Silvicultural Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support the practice of preserving the few existing white and red pine stands, as well as oak and hemlock and some mature whit ash within MA I.1</li> <li>○ Renewal of aspen and oak stands</li> <li>○ Provide for early successional habitat including aspen</li> <li>○ Maintain/increase red oak</li> <li>○ Use “small ranger sales,” “timber improvement stand sales” to clean up our forests. Cut out poor trees, dead trees, trees with dead tops</li> <li>○ Concern over loss of cedar swamps necessary for wildlife</li> </ul>
Botany Invasive Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide for direction to control, prevent the spread of noxious weeds. Prevention of new introductions should be a priority</li> </ul>
Wildlife/Fisheries Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Manage jack pine on a 50-year rotation for Kirtland Warbler habitat</li> <li>○ Maintain diverse and productive eco-systems rather than a “patch work” of single species management “farms” to benefit rare, threatened and endangered species</li> <li>○ Promote natural, self-sustaining fish populations through sound riparian and watershed management practices</li> <li>○ Install Artificial Nesting Platforms to promote reproduction of loons</li> <li>○ Measures should be established for MA I.1 to retain relatively inaccessible, remote areas of habitat for gray wolf denning and rendezvous sites</li> </ul>
Wildlife/Fisheries Other/Misc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Address monitoring and education regarding the cougar (a state endangered species)</li> <li>○ Provide educational opportunities regarding the wolf to aid in survival and come back of the gray wolf</li> <li>○ Eliminate baiting within NFS to decrease CWD</li> <li>○ Wildlife plan should be expanded to include broader spectrum of non-game species</li> <li>○ Maintain current remote habitat areas and consider expansion where appropriate</li> </ul>
Soil, Water & Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revise logging practices to protect wetlands</li> <li>○ Oppose jet skis on NFS lakes (noise, water and air pollution concerns)</li> </ul>

Key Comment	Suggestions
Land Special Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Update MA's with utility corridors to address ongoing maintenance activities</li> <li>○ Create an MA specifically for pipelines and other utilities</li> <li>○ Create management direction for commercial hunting and baiting station guides</li> <li>○ Oppose the construction of communication towers on NFS lands</li> </ul>
Land Acquisitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Acquisitions within and adjacent to the forest make the Forest more valuable, useable and efficient to manage</li> <li>○ Too much land held in the government limits dollars to the area (PILT payments do not make up the difference)</li> <li>○ No more land purchases</li> <li>○ Contact counties where potential land acquisitions may take place</li> </ul>
Transportation Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Open all roads (and trails) to all users during their appropriate season</li> <li>○ Continue to maintain and build roads as necessary for access for recreation, vegetative projects, fire, and mineral exploration</li> <li>○ Speed up the permitting process for construction of temporary roads</li> <li>○ Limit the amount of roads built; environmental impacts, spread of invasive species, clean water need to be factored in</li> <li>○ Road closures have detrimental effects on recreation opportunities and ultimately the local communities' economy</li> </ul>
Transportation Road System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Concerns over logging/truck damage to roads; e.g., erodible soils, stream and river sedimentation, etc.</li> <li>○ Assess road system and plan to reduce road density</li> <li>○ Include the Trap Hills in the roadless inventory</li> </ul>

Key Comment	Suggestions
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Manage the forest as a resource, which provides economic benefits to the local area</li> <li>○ Management areas (MAs) should be bounded by ecological classifications</li> <li>○ Make the Forest Plan easier to read and use</li> <li>○ Multiple use should be incorporated into plans</li> <li>○ Coordinate efforts with the MDNR where appropriate and possible (i.e., MDNR Old Growth and Biodiversity Stewardship Planning Process)</li> <li>○ MA's which restrict access/use have detrimental effects to the economy of the western Upper Peninsula</li> <li>○ Manage 6.1 semi-primitive areas appropriately; enforce to maintain remoteness</li> <li>○ Protect and manage for visual quality as well as economic benefits</li> <li>○ Create a new MA which provides for recreation opportunities only → no timber production</li> <li>○ Enforce rules/regulations for ATV's, ORV's, snowmobiles, etc.</li> </ul>