



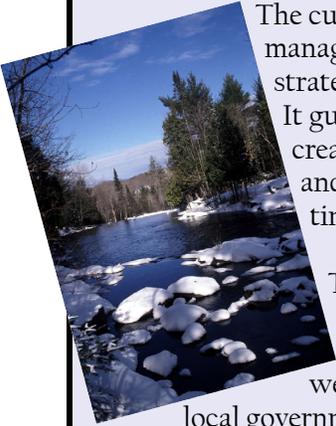
Forest Plan Revision News

Volume 3, Issue 1

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Message from the Forest Supervisor

I am pleased to announce the release of the draft revised Forest Plan for the Ottawa National Forest. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has also been prepared and is available for your review.



The current Forest Plan was completed in 1986. The revised Forest Plan, when final, will guide the management of the Ottawa National Forest for the next 10-15 years. The revised Forest Plan is strategic and places an emphasis on ecological, social, and economic sustainability over the long-run. It guides Forest managers to work with the forest to conserve important plant and animal species, create and maintain healthy ecosystems, and provide a variety of products that local communities and many forest users consider important. Among these products are recreation opportunities, timber products, and clean air and water.

The four alternatives presented in these draft documents reflect, to the best of our ability, a balance of the wide variety of comments, issues, and concerns raised by the public at our Forest Plan revision public meetings held in 2003 and 2004, and through the many letters and e-mails we have received over the past two years. In addition, we have consulted with and heard from local governments, the State, and local tribes on the issues addressed in these drafts.

I urge you to take some time to review the proposed Revised Forest Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement and to attend open houses which are scheduled for April 2005. Once these documents are made available to the public, a 90-day comment period will also begin. I hope the vital interaction between us will continue over the 90-day comment period and into the future as we finalize the Ottawa Forest Plan.

Bob Lueckel

Forest Management Alternatives

The Ottawa National Forest considered four, separate management alternatives during our analysis. Each of these alternatives examined opportunities to improve the "fit" of our long-term management with the capability of the forest to address public comments. Alternatives looked at ways to improve the habitat value of the forest for different species. Use of the Forest for recreation purposes was a part of each alternative, especially the approach for designating trails for ATV use. Each alternative examined different timber production levels linked to forest vegetation goals. Specialists also looked at ways to improve the economic efficiency of our management.

While many of the components of forest management change from alternative to alternative, some issues remain consistent, including: watershed protection, non-native invasive species, special interest areas and management indicator species.

The following pages provide additional information about each of these alternatives.

Alternatives for Forest Management

	<i>Alternative 1</i>	<i>Alternative 2</i>	<i>Alternative 3</i>	<i>Alternative 4</i>
Vegetative Management				
<i>Long-Term Vegetative Management Goals (acres)</i>	Vegetation Goals Aspen: 120,000 Pine: 34,000 Jack Pine: 9,000 Balsam Fir: 6,000	Vegetation Goals Aspen: 92,000 Pine: 53,000 Jack Pine: 8,000 Balsam Fir: 10,000	Vegetation Goals Aspen: 102,000 Pine: 53,000 Jack Pine: 8,000 Balsam Fir: 10,000	Vegetation Goals Aspen: 111,000 Pine: 51,000 Jack Pine: 10,000 Balsam Fir: 10,000
<i>Long-Term Hardwood Management Goals (acres)</i>	Even-aged: 74,000 Uneven-aged: 130,000 Total: 204,000 % Uneven-aged: 64%	Even-aged: 40,000 Uneven-aged: 215,000 Total: 255,000 % Uneven-aged: 84%	Even-aged: 45,000 Uneven-aged: 189,000 Total: 234,000 % Uneven-aged: 81%	Even-aged: 51,000 Uneven-aged: 163,000 Total: 214,000 % Uneven-aged: 76%
<i>Potential Timber Offer (MMBF)</i>	1st Decade: 95.6 2nd Decade: 107.4	1st Decade: 92.6 2nd Decade: 121.0	1st Decade: 90.1 2nd Decade: 132.1	1st Decade: 92.6 2nd Decade: 125.3
ATV Management				
<i>Designated Trail System</i>	Designated Trail System Allowed	25-75 miles Connect existing trails	25-75 miles Plus additional road opportunities	25-75 miles Plus additional road opportunities
<i>Forest Roads</i> OML1-Roads closed to highway vehicle traffic. OML2-Need high-clearance vehicle. OML3-Open for highway vehicle traffic.	OML 1 and 2 roads open for ATV use—2,950 miles	Forest Roads considered open for use only as part of a designated trail system	“Open” OML 2 and 3 roads considered designated for ATV use—up to 890 miles	Open and closed OML 1, 2 and 3 roads considered designated for ATV use—up to 3,370 miles
<i>Cross-country</i>	Open for use	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open
Other Forest Plan Revision Issues				
<i>Research Natural Areas</i>	Recommend establishment of the Sturgeon River Gorge Research Natural Area			
<i>Non-Native Invasive Species</i>	Limited direction	Treat non-native invasive species infestations; maintain list of species of concern; treatment based on prioritization; conduct inventories; provide public education		
<i>Canada Lynx</i>	Goals for providing diversity of habitats	Provide a base level of habitat for foraging and denning.		
<i>Management Indicator Species</i>	4 MIS: American marten, ruffed grouse, cutleaf toothwort, and mayfly/stonefly/caddisfly suite			
<i>Riparian Management</i>	Minimal Plan Direction	Include standards and guidelines that enhance protections and guide management decisions in riparian areas		
<i>Special Interest Areas (SIA)</i>	No SIA designations	Designate the Trap Hills as a Special Interest Area along with six other SIAs		
<i>Wilderness</i>	Three designated wildernesses and no new wilderness recommendations to Congress.			

Alternatives for Forest Management



The Ottawa used an interdisciplinary approach when developing the alternatives. Each alternative responds to the variety of public comments and principal issues by providing different emphasis areas for applying Forest Plan management area direction. Although the alternatives do not vary in forest-wide direction, they vary in acreage allocated to each management area. All alternatives adhere to the concepts of multiple use and ecosystem management.

Alternative 1. This alternative moves the Forest toward the desired conditions, goals, and objectives in the 1986 Forest Plan. It will maintain or improve the habitat for a wide variety of game and non-game species, provide diverse recreation opportunities and a mix of forest timber products. Much of the Forest is open to ATV use, including cross-country travel. Some changes to standards and guidelines may be necessary to make policy consistent with pending national policy.

Alternative 2. Under Alternative 2, the Ottawa is managed as a core part of the largest contiguous block of northern hardwoods in the Lake States. Vegetation goals address many forest conditions, but emphasize late successional forest conditions, with older and larger trees, and more interior forest conditions. Early successional forests exist in moderate amounts.

Vegetation management would replicate disturbance factors typical of ecosystems of the western Upper Peninsula. These factors include individual or small-scale tree blowdown and replacement along with relatively infrequent whole stand replacing wind events. Hardwood selection harvest replicates these small windfalls by creating small gaps in the canopy. Aspen acreage is closer to a natural carrying capacity of the Forest's wind, fire, and disease conditions.

Access for ATVs would be on a modest system of designated trails and road routes.

Alternative 3. Like Alternative 2, this alternative proposes to manage the Ottawa as a core part of the largest contiguous block of northern hardwoods, but provides a greater diversity of forested types and conditions. Vegetative conditions reflect the capability of the forest to provide variety in tree species composition, timber products, wildlife habitat, and overall species richness. Hardwood, conifer, and aspen forests would exist in moderate amounts.

Access for ATVs would be on designated roads open to vehicular traffic and trails only. The majority of designation would occur on operational maintenance level (OML) 2 and 3 roads. Any road closed to vehicular traffic would also be closed to ATV use unless designated as part of a trail.

Alternative 4. This alternative emphasizes early successional forests and younger tree species composition and structure within a diverse forest setting. It promotes wildlife habitats favorable to many species, such as ruffed grouse and white-tail deer. This alternative is similar to vegetative management conditions on the Ottawa over much of the last century. Access for ATVs would be considered on designated trails, on designated open roads, and on roads closed to vehicular traffic. Designations could occur on OML 1, 2 and 3 roads.

Our Preferred Alternative

Our preferred Alternative for the future management of the Ottawa National Forest is Alternative 3, because it clearly indicates the “direction of change” we feel the Forest needs to make compared to the 1986 Plan and it provides a balance of goods, services, and values for the public. Some of the criteria we used to help us decide which alternative was best for the Forest include:

- 1. Uniqueness of the Ottawa in Relation to Other Public and Private Lands.** The Ottawa National Forest is recognized for its unique ecological, cultural, geological, botanical and historic features. The Forest provides habitat for a variety of wildlife and rare plant communities. The remote setting of the Forest is valued by many for outdoor recreation. The wild and natural features of the Ottawa provide a scenic beauty that is appreciated by visitors to the area and local residents alike.
- 2. Social Vitality.** Visitors to the Ottawa National Forest participate in a variety of activities across the forest. Some of the most popular activities include:

snowmobiling, visiting wilderness, viewing wildlife and birds, fishing, hunting, driving for pleasure, and simply relaxing. Demands for public land recreation opportunities have increased over the years and are expected to continue to increase. Our ability to continue to provide these opportunities is dependent upon our being able to manage use in a way that maintains forest health and ecosystem capabilities.

- 3. Economic Vitality.** The Ottawa National Forest plays an important role in the regional economy. Of strong interest to area residents, business, and local governments is the ability of the Forest to provide timber products to area markets. In addition, local counties receive 25% of all revenues generated on the Forest for their roads and schools.
- 4. Ecosystem Resiliency/Sustainability.** A healthy forest has multiple benefits. Soil and water quality, diversity of forest vegetative communities, ecological capabilities and forest vitality help us to provide a sustainable amount of goods and services to the public.

Public Meeting Schedule

Want to learn more about the Proposed Forest Plan? Do you have comments to share? The Forest will be hosting 6 public meetings this April.

Please join us for a short presentation on the Forest Plan, followed by an Open House where Forest specialists will be on-hand to answer your questions.

For additional information, please contact the Ottawa at 906-932-1330.

Date	Time	Location
April 12	6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (EST)	Ontonagon High School Ontonagon, MI
April 14	6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (CST)	Iron River City Hall Iron River, MI
April 16	1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (EST)	Ewen-Trout Creek School Ewen, MI
April 19	6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (CST)	Ottawa Visitor Center Watersmeet, MI
April 20	6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (EST)	Best Western Inn Baraga, MI
April 21	6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (CST)	Gogebic Community College Ironwood, MI

Management Area Comparison by Alternative

MA	Management Area Emphasis	Acres			
		Alt #1	Alt #2	Alt #3	Alt #4
1.1	Emphasizes early successional ecosystem community types (plant and animal) in a roaded natural motorized recreation environment.	82,500	0	0	0
1.1a	Similar to MA 1.1, but with greater emphasis on aspen forest type.	0	51,000	59,900	68,600
2.1	Emphasizes northern hardwoods (50-70% desired vegetative composition) ecosystem using uneven-aged management to produce quality hardwood timber products and associated wildlife in a roaded natural motorized recreation environment.	376,000	170,400	330,300	429,400
2.2	Emphasizes late successional northern hardwood (60-70% desired vegetative composition) forest types within a roaded natural motorized recreation environment. Greater emphasis on uneven-aged hardwood management than in MA 2.1.	0	294,500	117,800	0
3.1	Emphasizes a mix of northern hardwoods, softwoods, and aspen vegetative types in a roaded natural motorized recreational environment through even-aged management.	61,400	0	0	0
3.1a	Similar to MA 3.1, but equal emphasis on hardwood and aspen forest types.	0	79,800	87,700	97,800
3.2	Emphasizes a wide variety of vegetative conditions including moderate amounts of early, middle and late successional community types, all within a roaded natural motorized recreation environment.	141,600	0	0	0
4.1	Emphasizes long-lived conifers and associated wildlife habitat in a roaded natural motorized recreation environment through even-aged management.	62,400	0	0	0
4.1a	Similar to MA 4.1, provides for an even mix of aspen and conifer types with emphasis on hardwoods.	0	135,800	128,900	114,000
4.2	Emphasizes short-lived conifers while maintaining habitat for associated wildlife in a roaded natural motorized recreation environment through even-aged management.	15,000	0	0	0
4.2a	Similar to MA 4.2, greater provision for permanent openings.	0	5,800	12,700	27,500
5.1	McCormick Wilderness	15,800	15,800	15,800	15,800
5.2	Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness	15,300	15,300	15,300	15,300
5.3	Sylvania Wilderness	15,400	15,400	15,400	15,400
6.1	Emphasizes semi-primitive, non-motorized recreation in a northern hardwoods ecosystem with moderate harvesting of other vegetation types through uneven-aged management.	64,600	57,400	57,400	57,400
6.2	Emphasizes semi-primitive, motorized recreation environment. Maintains high amounts of northern hardwoods, with some aspen.	52,900	52,400	52,400	52,400
7.1	Black River Recreation Area	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
8.1	Designated Wild & Scenic Rivers	64,900	64,900	64,900	64,900
8.2	Sylvania Perimeter Area and McCormick Entrance Area	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400
8.3	Special Interest Areas	0	10,600	10,600	10,600
9.2	Emphasizes land and resource conditions that will provide for the interim protection and management of congressionally authorized study river corridors.	8,900	8,900	8,900	8,900
9.3	Minimum management requiring protection and maintenance of environmental values and the health and safety of the public.	7,100	5,800	5,800	5,800

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This newsletter has been produced by the Ottawa National Forest Planning Team to update you on the Forest Plan Revision process.

As we move into the alternative development phase of the revision process, we will continue to accept comments. Comments may be provided:

- **By Mail:** Ottawa National Forest, Attn: Forest Planning, E6248 US Hwy. 2, Ironwood, MI 49938
- **By E-Mail:** r9_ottawa_revision@fs.fed.us
- **In Person:** Supervisor's Office, E6248 US Hwy. 2, Ironwood, Michigan. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (CST)
- **By Phone:** 906-932-1330

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