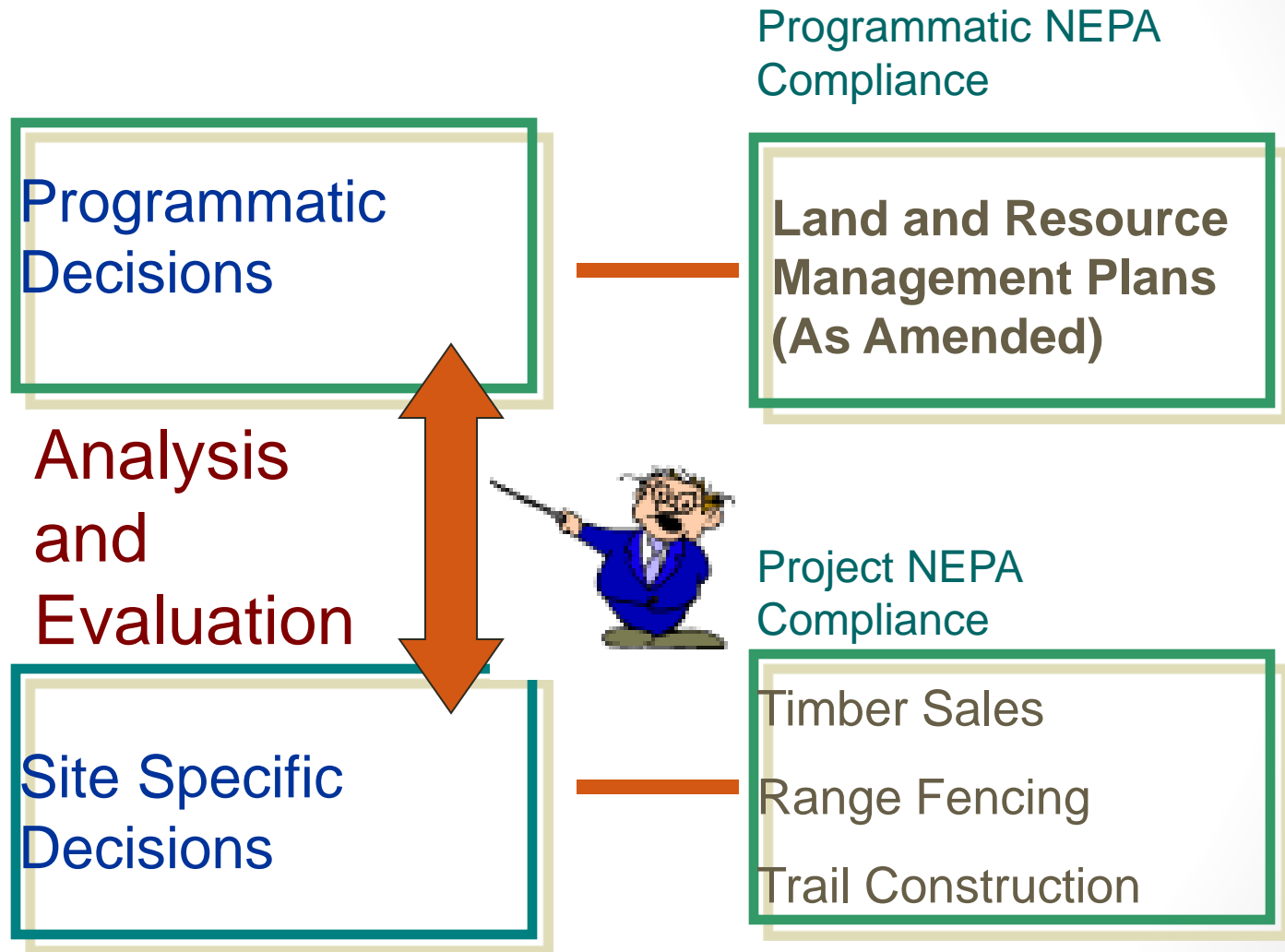


Plan to Project



Getting From Programmatic to Site-Specific NEPA Decisions



Plan-To-Project Analysis

What Does It Do?

It narrows your scope of consideration by:

- Evaluating management direction set in your Management Plans for a particular area.
- Developing reasons to change the existing conditions and the associated actions to accomplish those reasons.

Begin with your Forest Plan – The focus of this process is to implement the Plan on an identified area.

Select an area.

Determine desired condition based upon Forest Plan management direction.

Determine existing condition on the ground.

Identify needs for changing the existing condition.

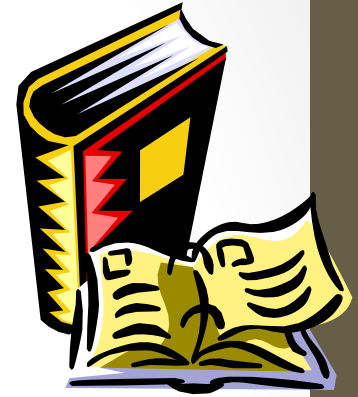
Identify possible activities to meet the need.

Determine consistency.

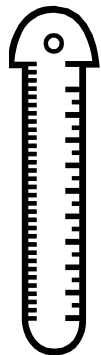
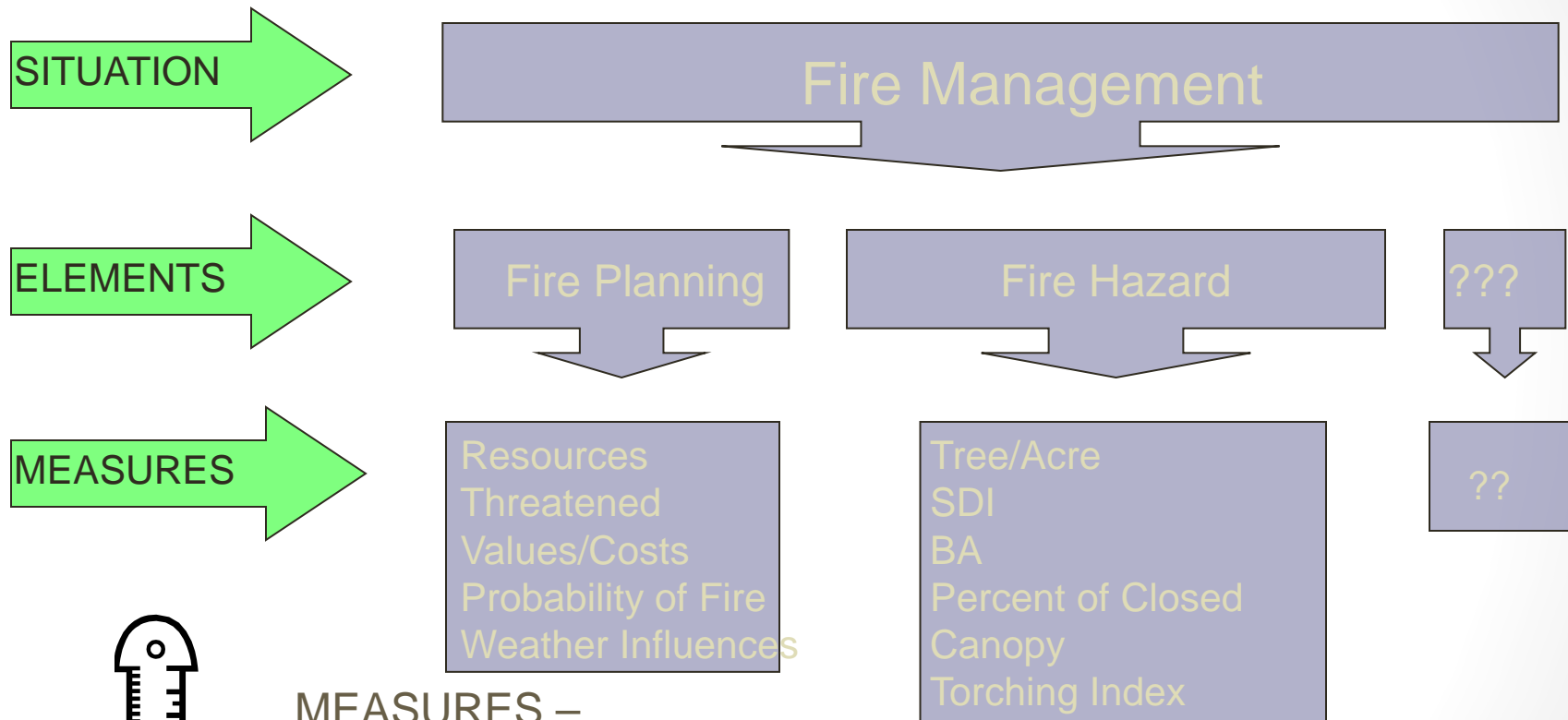


Sources of Desired Condition

- Forest-wide Goals and Objectives
- Forest-wide standards and guidelines
- Management Area Direction
- Forest Plan Record of Decision and Environmental Impact Statement



Situations, Elements, & Measures



What tool will you use to measure the element?

Existing Condition

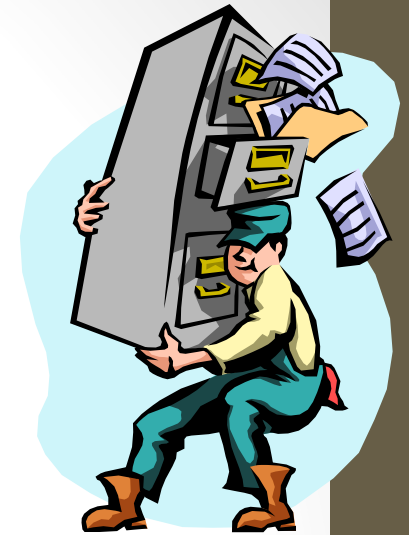
What does the Responsible Official need to know to make the decision?

Information Needs

What situations and elements are we interested in?

Take a snapshot of the condition

State the existing condition using the identified measure



Sources

Field Trips

File Cabinets

Data Base and GIS Layers

Affected Environment

Chapters from previous
NEPA documents

Results of non-NEPA
analyses, such as EAWS,
IRAs

Developing the Needs Model

Opportunity or Problem is Perceived

Need for Change Formula

Desired Condition - Existing Condition = $\frac{\text{Need for a changed}}{\text{Existing Condition (noun)}}$

Examples

LESS access

LESS road miles per
square mile

MORE forage

MORE Safety

LESS fuel loading

To Seize Opportunity, Fix Problem, Or
Maintain Current Condition

Existing Condition + Proposal to Take Action (verb) =

MOVES TOWARDS

Desired Condition

Examples

To Cut



To Burn

To Construct

To Authorize

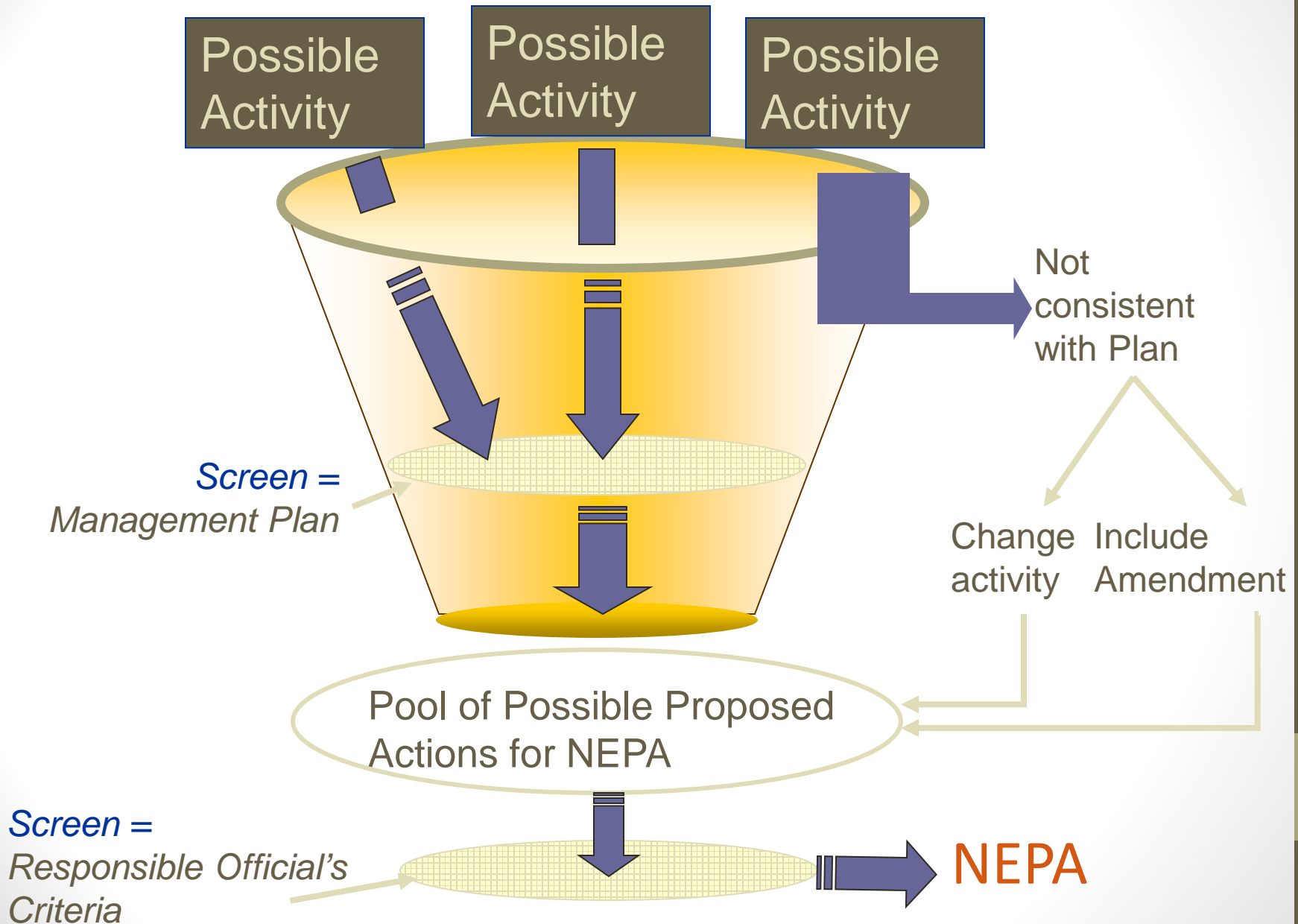
To Maintain

To Restore

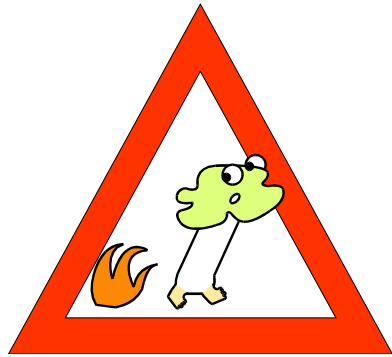
To Manage

To Provide

Consistency Check



North Creek Exercise



Become oriented to the North Creek area
Review the Dixie Forest Plan and
Amendments

Identify needs for change for Fire Hazard

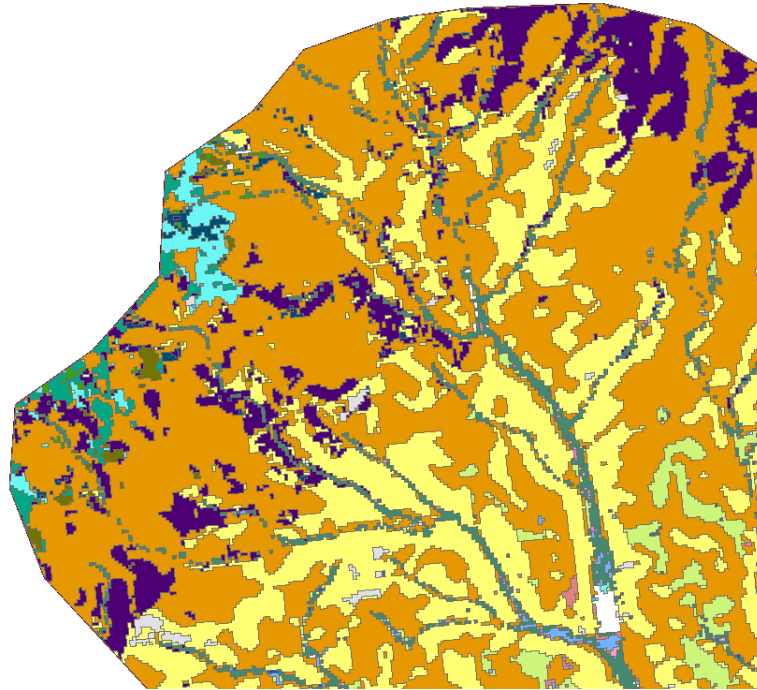
List 2 or more possible activities

Apply Public Involvement Framework

Vegetation Associations Acres

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Barren..... | 50 |
| Blackbrush/Mormon Tea..... | 25 |
| PJ Woodland..... | 2,780 |
| Aspen/Mixed Conifer/Shrub (High).... | 125 |
| Aspen/Mixed Conifer/Shrub (Low)..... | 100 |
| Big Sagebrush..... | 75 |
| Mountain Mahogany/Woodland..... | 45 |
| Greasewood..... | 55 |
| Salt Desert Shrub..... | 60 |
| Sagebrush Steppe (Low)..... | 125 |
| Sagebrush Steppe (High)..... | 155 |
| Aspen/Woodland..... | 355 |
| Gambel oak/Shrublands..... | 255 |
| Foothills/Shrubland..... | 125 |
| Riparian..... | 650 |
| Dry Mixed Conifer..... | 1,000 |
| Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer..... | 770 |
| Ponderosa Pine/Woodland..... | 5,250 |

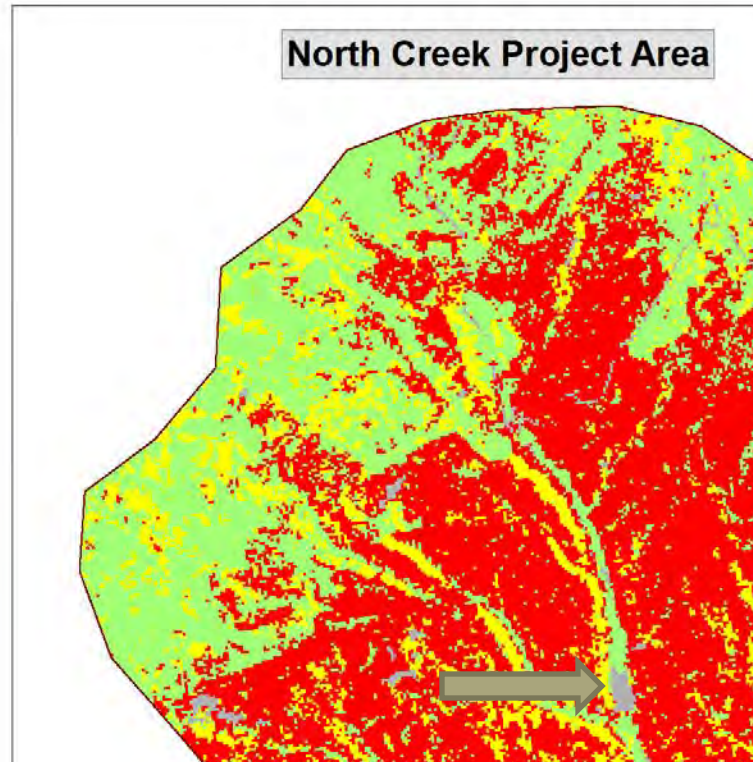
North Creek Project Area



Preliminary FlamMap Outputs

Acres

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| No Fire..... | 250 |
| Surface Fire..... | 3,695 |
| Passive Crown Fire..... | 1,050 |
| Active Crown fire..... | 7,005 |



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Dixie
National
Forest

Land and Resource Management Plan

for the

DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST

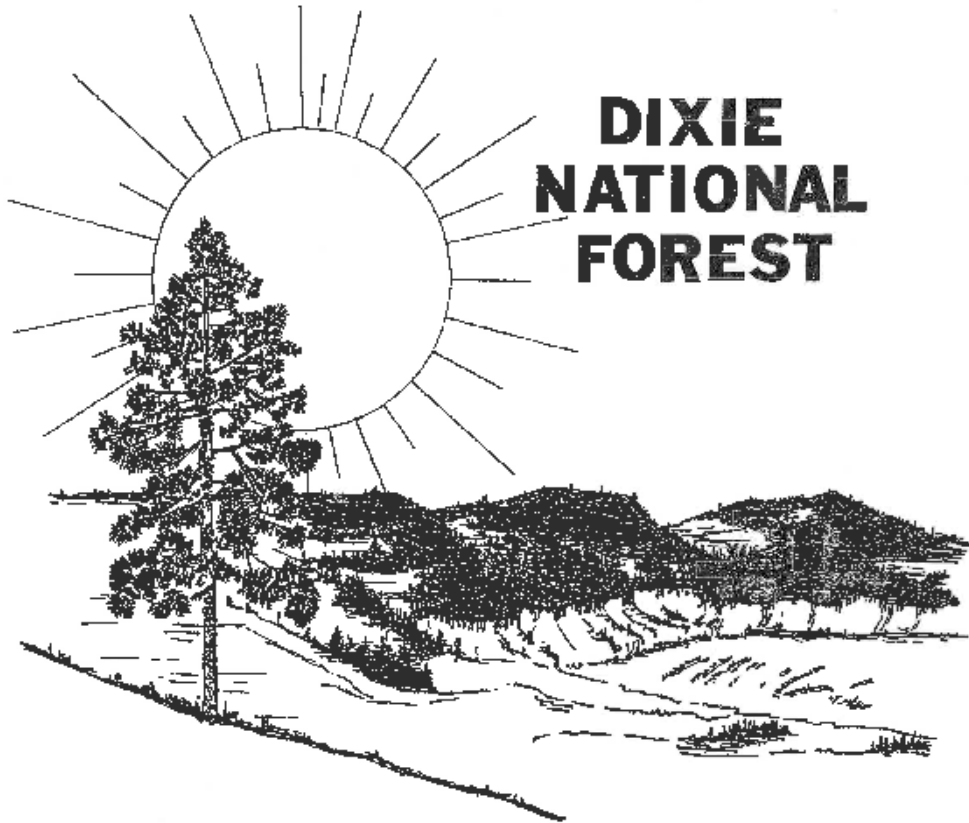


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e. Window Areas

Six areas on National Forest land have been evaluated and designated as windows (these planning "window areas" are critical segments of terrain through which energy transportation and utility rights-of-way could pass in traversing the Forest).

These planning window areas are:

- New Castle, Utah to Veyo, Utah (Pine Valley Ranger District)
- Three Creeks (Cedar City Ranger District; two separate segments).
- Hilldale Canyon-Ahlstrom Hollow (Powell Ranger District)
- Johns Valley and Upper Valley (Powell and Escalante Ranger Districts)
- Main Canyon to Widtsoe, Utah (Escalante Ranger District)
- Escalante, Utah to Antimony, Utah via Davis Flat Junction (Escalante Ranger District)

f. Exclusion Areas

These areas on the National Forest have been identified as Exclusion areas. (These areas have statutory prohibition to rights-of-way for linear facilities on corridor/window designations.

These exclusion areas are:

- Pine Valley Mountain Wilderness (Pine Valley Ranger District)
- Ashdown Gorge Wilderness (Cedar City Ranger District)
- Box-Death Hollow Wilderness (Escalante Ranger District)

g. Avoidance Areas

Areas have been identified on the National Forest where environmental, statutory and/or technological effects from energy transportation and utilities would be difficult or impossible to mitigate. These areas include all Bixie National Forest lands not identified in the discussion above.

4. PROTECTION

a. Fire and Fuel Management

From 1971 through 1979, the Forest averages 81 fires per year, approximately 20% of which were man-caused. The total area burned during this period was 8,917 acres.

In the June 5, 1984, Federal Register the Forest Service invited public comments on a proposed policy change to permit prescribed fires ignited by trained professionals to be used in wilderness areas. The purpose is to reduce the risk from wildfire and its consequences and to permit lightning-caused fire to more nearly play their natural ecological roles within wilderness. There are no approved Fire Management Areas on the Forest.

The Forest has completed a Level II Fire Analysis to document its most cost efficient fire management program. It considered the kind, number, location, timing, cost, and efficiency of fire management forces and activities at

alternative budget levels under current management direction. The Analysis includes forces and resources available through Inter-Agency Cooperative Agreements, as well as resources available within the Forest Service through other Forests and Regions.

The hazard of wildfire on the Forest is increased significantly by the presence of summer homes, residence areas, and real estate developments on private land adjacent to the Forest, refuse dumps located near the Forest, seismic surveys involving the use of explosives, the public use of the Forest for recreation, and activities associated with logging and thinning.

At special risk from these hazards are large areas of thinning existent on the Forest; recreation and aesthetic values, including values associated with National Parks and Monuments adjacent to the Forest; Forest capital investments, and the large number of summer homes and residences scattered on private holdings throughout the Forest.

b. Forest and Rangeland Pest Management

The principal insects and diseases affecting the the Dixie National Forest timber stands are mountain pine beetle, Douglas-fir beetle, Engelmann spruce beetle, western spruce budworm, dwarf mistletoe, and root rots. Labops, grasshoppers, and Mormon crickets are the principal insects affecting forage on the Forest. Pocket gophers and the porcupine are animals of significance affecting the timber resource.

Mountain pine beetle has caused extensive mortality in overmature, overstocked stands of ponderosa pine for several decades. Epidemic levels of the beetle, recorded since the 1930's have continued to cycle throughout the Forest, removing many of the larger diameter trees and up to 70 percent of the volume in infested stands. The most recent infestations began in the early 1970's, but accelerated in 1976 through the present. Infestations are continuing in the Goeppacher and Grimes Creek areas of the Escalante Ranger District and are intensifying on other areas of the Escalante and Teasdale Districts. Mountain pine beetle will continue to have a significant impact in the future on overstocked and unmanaged stands of ponderosa pine.

A serious epidemic of Engelmann spruce beetle occurred on Boulder Top and part of the Aquarius Plateau in the 1920's. Another outbreak of Engelmann spruce beetle in 1948 caused severe mortality through 1963 despite control efforts. The most recent outbreak started in 1968 and was controlled in 1969 after logging 3 MMBF of infested timber. Spruce beetle populations have been at endemic levels since 1970.

Douglas-fir beetle has historically caused mortality in mature and overmature stands of Douglas-fir. The most significant outbreak occurred from 1954 to 1963, though small localized infestations have occurred since 1963. At present, beetle populations are at endemic levels.

Thousands of acres of spruce-fir have extensive mortality caused by a bark beetle/root rot complex. Significant mortality began in 1976 and has since accelerated. The causal agents appear to be a combination of root rots predisposing trees to the western balsam bark beetle. This mortality is expected to continue with progressive expansion of present root rot mortality

- c. Begin monitoring traffic on priority collector and arterial roads by 1988 and have a full scale traffic monitoring program operational by the year 1990.
- d. Complete Forest-wide detailed transportation analysis consistent with the resource needs and financial constraints by 1990.
- e. Complete reconstruction of the basic collector and arterial road system by the year 2010. Upgrade maintenance to a minimum level of "3" as reconstruction is completed.
- f. Develop an active fuelwood access program by the year 1988.

10. Protection

Goal No. 45. Develop a well planned and executed fire protection and fire use program that is cost efficient and responsive to land and resource management goals and objectives.

Objectives

- a. There will be only one Fire Management Action Plan for the Forest. Specific Action and Manning Plans and Annual Mobilization and Operation Plans are chapters within the Action Plan.
- b. Include provisions in all permits and use authorizations for fire prevention and suppression.
- c. Cooperative fire protection will be emphasized to provide for joint fire protection through offset agreements, and combined fire forces.

Goal No. 46. Through cost effective analysis, develop an active fire prevention program with cooperating agencies that is directed towards specific areas and causes based on probability of occurrence, damages expected, and program costs.

Objective

Develop a cooperative fire prevention plan for the area by the 1987 fire season and update annually.

Goal No. 47. Maintain fire suppression capabilities which allow an appropriate suppression response to all wildfires.

Objectives

- a. Provide preplanned fire suppression action on all wildfires which is cost effective and protects life and property.

b. Each wildfire ignition will receive an appropriate response (confinement, containment or control). Suppression intensity and extent will be based on resource values, costs, burning conditions, safety, protection of private property, fire organization commitment and a current National Fire Management Analysis.

Goal No. 48. Establish and maintain fuel mosaics which result in an acceptable hazard and spread potential of wildfire, allow an appropriate wildfire suppression, and coordination to other resource programs and objectives.

Objectives

- a. Use prescribed fire when cost effective to achieve vegetative manipulation objectives such as for other resources including timber, range, and wildlife.
- b. Utilization (fuelwood) will be stressed as the primary method of fuel reduction with follow-up disposal by other means as needed.
- c. Continuous fuel types, especially in areas where activity created fuels have been added to natural fuels, will be broken up into blocks of forty acres or less by use of roads, constructed fuel breaks or fuel reduction corridors.
- d. Vegetative modification projects should be designed to break-up continuous fuel types and serve as fuelbreaks.

Goal No. 49. Provide adequate law enforcement to protect National Forest resources and property.

Objectives

- a. Inform the public of laws and regulations by:
 - Posting all recreational sites and areas of concentrated use.
 - News releases to the media.
 - Personal contacts with individuals and groups.
 - Other notices and signs.
- b. Keep law enforcement people visible by:
 - Recreation patrolmen in uniform.
 - Identified vehicles.
 - Proper identification.
- c. Cooperate with other law enforcement agencies.
- d. Adequately train all law enforcement personnel.
- e. Maintain a special agent assigned to the zone.
- f. Have at least one trained law enforcement officer (Level II) on each Ranger District and one Level IV on Forest.
- g. Determine workload by reporting all known violations.

9. Facilities

Buildings and Administrative Sites - The number of buildings will be managed according to the facility master plan. Maintenance will stress health, safety, and energy items. The structural integrity will be preserved to continue the function of the facility. Major maintenance and reconstruction will be accomplished as funds are programmed using priority, value and budgetary systems.

Transportation - A safe, functional, and environmentally sound transportation system will be developed. Road construction will be coordinated with other resource activities. The basic arterial collector system, will be constructed or reconstructed to meet the Road Management Plan. Annual construction through 1990 will include 2 miles of public works, 28 miles of timber, development road, and 5 miles of oil and gas development. Traffic may be restricted on roads not constructed to an all-weather standard. The Road Management Plan will identify road closures.

Substandard local roads will be rebuilt to standard or abandoned as determined in the road management program. Annual local road construction and reconstruction will average 40 miles for developed recreation and timber sales. About 3 miles of local roads will be constructed annually by the oil and gas industry to accommodate their access needs. Campground roads will be maintained to Level 4 or 5. Maintenance levels for other local roads will be determined in the road management program.

About seven substandard bridges will be replaced by 2000. An accelerated program of maintenance and repair will be completed between 1989 and 1997. All stream crossing structures and fords will be evaluated for replacement with structures that will not impede fish passage or generate sediment.

10. Protection

Appropriate suppression response will be taken on all wildfires.

Prescribed fire from planned ignitions will be used for fuels treatment and resource improvement. In the three Wilderness areas, unplanned ignitions will be used to maintain natural ecosystems. Manipulation of vegetation will provide adequate fuels reduction.

Law Enforcement

Increasing public use of the Forest will increase law enforcement problems. Cooperative law enforcement agreements with state and local law enforcement agencies will be continued.

E. FOREST-WIDE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

This section describes the management direction and standards and guideline which are applicable forest-wide and apply on all management areas, except where the specific direction in a management area supercedes. The purpose of this section is to avoid duplicating the forest-wide direction and Standards and Guidelines in each area. The Standards and Guidelines contained in this plan incorporate the planning guidance and requirements of the Regional Guide for the Intermountain Region.

This section and the section following (Management Area Direction) provide specific direction for day to day management of the National Forest. In practice, the land manager would use the Forest map and this section to find management direction. When the map indicates a management area is involved the specific direction contained in the management prescription (next section) also applies.

Fire Planning and
Suppression
(P01)

1. Plan and provide a level of protection from wildfire that will meet management objectives for the area, considering the following:
 - A. The values of the resources that are threatened by fire,
 - B. The probability of fire occurrence,
 - C. The fuels that fires will probably occur in,
 - D. The weather conditions that will probably influence fires that occur,
 - E. The costs of fire protection programs (FFP and PFP),
 - F. The social, economic, political, cultural, environmental, life and property concerns, and
 - G. Management objectives for the area. Use the National Fire Management Analysis Process (NFMAAP).

Escaped Fire Suppression
(P09)

1. Take suppression action on all escaped fires considering the following:
 - A. The values of the resources threatened by the fire (both positive and negative),
 - B. Management objectives for the threatened area(s),
 - C. The fuels that the fire may burn in,
 - D. The current and projected weather conditions that will influence fire behavior,
 - E. Natural barriers and fuel breaks,
 - F. Social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental concerns,
 - G. Public safety,
 - H. Firefighter safety, and
 - I. Costs of alternative suppression strategies. Use the Escaped Fire Situation Analysis (EFSA) to make this determination.

Fuel Treatment
(P11 thru 14)

1. Maintain fuel conditions which permit fire suppression forces to meet fire protection objectives for the area.

1. Reduce or otherwise treat all fuels so the potential fireline intensity of an area will not exceed 100 BTU's/line/ft (D.I.-68) on 90 percent of the days during the regular fire season,

OR

Break up continuous fuel concentrations exceeding the above standard into manageable units with fuel breaks or fire lanes,

OR

Provide additional protection for areas exceeding the above standards when such protection will not be required for more than five years.

MANAGEMENT AREA 7A
WOOD PRODUCTION AND UTILIZATION

Characteristics

This management area consists of the major forested areas on the Forest. At lower elevations ponderosa pine is dominant. Mixed conifer species occupy mid elevation while the spruce-fir type is dominant at the highest elevation.

Desired Future Conditions

This management area contains most of the commercial timber on the Forest and is the most highly productive for growing timber.

The basic long-range objectives of timber management for this area are:

1. Create and maintain nearly equal areas in seedlings and saplings, pole timber, immature sawtimber and mature sawtimber.
2. Create and maintain stand conditions that will minimize growth loss and mortality from insects and diseases.
3. Convert slow growing stands of mature sawtimber (beyond culmination of mean annual increment for the product size objective) to young, thrifty stands of desirable species.

These basic objectives, if implemented, will contribute toward the goal of reaching 90 percent of optimum timber growth rates at long-term sustained yield by 2030. The harvest schedule offered by the Preferred Alternative precludes attainment of this goal by 2030 because of the severe departure from the current base sale schedule that would be required. Substantial progress, however, is expected.

Ponderosa Pine Type

Areas of ponderosa pine will be managed almost exclusively through shelterwood methods. Sapling and pole stands will be precommercially thinned to leave between 120 and 150 trees per acre depending on site productivity. Stands of immature sawtimber will receive improvement harvests (intermediate cutting or commercial thinning) once or twice during the 110 to 130 year rotation on a 20 to 40 year entry period. Seed cutting will be done primarily to provide site protection for planted seedlings. These activities will be implemented on a schedule to provide a reasonable balance of acres in each of the age classes in the shortest time possible as constrained in the management area prescription. This balance should be achieved by 2030 with close to 90 percent of the optimum growth rate for most sites realized. Conditions favorable for significant insect and disease losses will be minimized. Small scattered areas of relatively inaccessible ponderosa pine on slopes over 40 percent will likely remain in an unmanaged condition.

Mixed Conifer Type

Species diversity will be lessened over time, as large areas of mistletoe infected Douglas-fir are regenerated. The aspen component of this type is currently in a remnant condition and will not be regenerated by design. Douglas-fir will be the main species planted with some mixture of ponderosa pine on south and west aspects. White fir will decrease in numbers because it likely will not be planted and will not regenerate naturally with removal of seed sources in harvests where Douglas-fir is favored for crop trees. An accelerated regeneration program will be necessary in much of this type. Conversion of the old growth and unevenaged conditions to young, thrifty, even-age stands will help to lessen the current western spruce budworm infestation. Although a balance of acres in each age class may be delayed because of accelerated regeneration, much of this type should reach 90 percent of optimum growth rates by 2030. Most of this type will be managed through shelterwood methods. Significant areas on slopes over 40 percent and isolated areas may remain in an unevenaged condition, depending on sawlog demand and the forest budget. Insects and diseases should be at endemic levels in managed areas of this type by 2030.

Spruce-fir Type

Management objectives will be directed toward improving three basic situations: tomentosis root rot, low value species (subalpine fir and aspen) and conversion of old growth to young, thrifty stands. The extent of root rot is not known, but it is a potentially serious problem on portions of the Forest. Possible solutions to the root rot problem include removal of stumps of infected trees or growing a crop of aspen before Engelmann spruce is regenerated. A mosaic of clearcuts regenerated immediately to spruce and some to aspen will probably result in areas where the problems are severe enough to require treatment.

Where root rot is not a problem, old growth overstories will be removed, usually on a two-stage schedule. These stands will either be regenerated in conjunction with the final overstory removal or become stands of thrifty immature sawtimber and/or advanced regeneration, depending on what is present in the understory. Creation and maintenance of evenaged stands will be the general objective where possible. Site conditions and mitigation for other resource values will cause some stands to remain in an unevenaged or multi-staged condition.

As in the mixed conifer type, species diversity will be reduced over time as the remnant interspersed aspen and subalpine fir become a smaller part of the species mixture.

Aspen Type

Where aspen occurs in pure stands of manageable size, aspen will generally be perpetuated by prescribed clearcutting and natural regeneration. Some small decadent stands incapable of sprouting may be regenerated to conifers. Where aspen stands are not conducive to management for commercial wood products or during periods of low demand for aspen products, wildlife habitat or visual quality objectives will be used to develop prescribed treatments. Demand for aspen wood products has been sporadic at best and this factor will have the most influence on management of the larger stands and attainment of 90 percent of optimum growth rates and a balance of age classes by 2030.

Size

This management area contains 270,400 acres. Fifty one thousand seven hundred seven acres are unsuitable for timber harvest.

Management Area Direction

Management emphasis is on wood-fiber production and utilization of large roundwood of a size and quality suitable for sawtimber. The harvest method by Forest cover type is clearcutting in aspen, and Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, and shelterwood in ponderosa pine and mixed conifers.

The area generally will have a mosaic of fully stocked stands that follow natural patterns and avoid straight lines and geometric shapes. Management activities are not evident or remain visually subordinate along Forest arterial and collector roads and primary trails. In other portions of the area, management activities may dominate in foreground and middleground, but harmonize and blend with the natural setting.

Roaded-natural recreation opportunities are provided along Forest arterial and collector roads. Semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunities are provided on those local roads and trails that remain open, semi-primitive nonmotorized opportunities are provided on those that are closed.

Practices

Management Direction

Standards and Guidelines

Silvicultural Prescription

1. Management Forest cover types using the following harvest methods:
 - Clearcut in aspen, and when appropriate in Engelmann Spruce-subalpine fir.
 - Shelterwood in Pipo, mixed conifer, and Engelmann Spruce-subalpine fir.
 - Clearcut (Patch) in dwarf mistletoe in infected Pipo and Psmeg.
 - Or as specified in silvicultural Rx.
 - Exercise special care when dealing with high elevation species
2. Clearcuts may be applied to dwarf mistletoe infested stands of any forest cover type.
3. Apply intermediate treatments to maintain growing stock level standards as specified in the silvicultural Rx.
4. Utilize firewood material using both commercial and noncommercial methods.
5. For management purpose, cut-over area is considered an opening until such time as:
 - Forage and/or browse production drops below 40% of potential.
 - Deer and Elk Cover reaches 60% of potential.
 - Minimum stocking standards by forest cover type and site are met.
 - Area appears as a young forest rather than restocked opening.

A. When the visual objective of area is modification or maximum modification the regenerated stand shall meet or exceed all of the following characteristics before a cut-over area is no longer considered an opening.

| Forest Cover Type | Minimum Stocking Level | Tree Stand Height (ft.) |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Pipo | 150 | 6 |
| MC | 150 | 6 |
| Pien/Abla | 150 | 6 |
| Potr | 300 | 6 |

Practice

Management Direction

Standard and Guideline

| Forest Cover Type | Crown Closure (%) | Distri- bution |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Pipo | 30 | 60% |
| MC | 30 | 60% |
| Pien/Abla | 30 | 60% |
| Aspen | 30 | 60% |



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Intermountain
Region

March 2003



Utah

Northern Goshawk Project

Decision Notice

Finding of No Significant Impact

Finding of Non-Significant Amendment

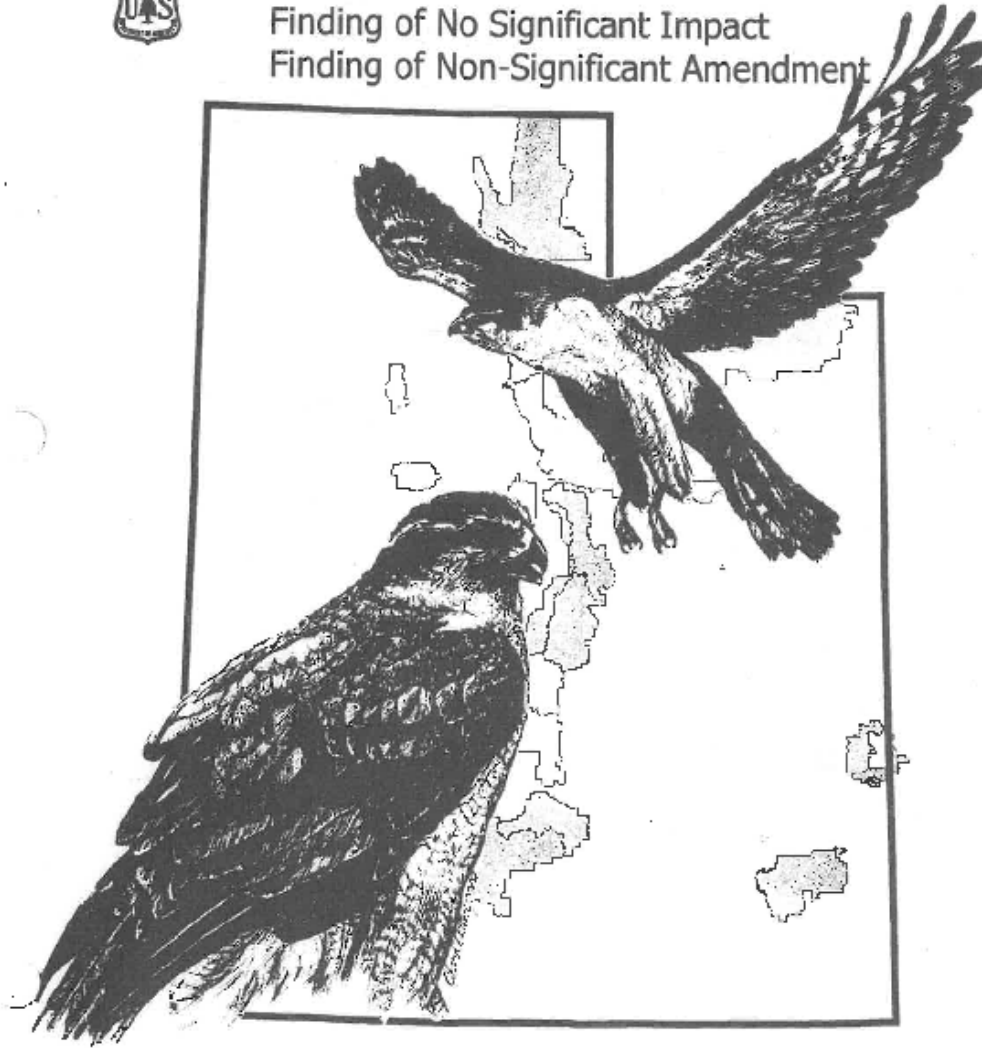


Fig. IV-33a, continuing with IV-33b, 33c, etc., for as many pages as required to accommodate this STANDARDS and GUIDELINES text:

| Mgmt Activity | GENERAL DIRECTION | STANDARDS and GUIDELINES |
|---------------|--|---|
| | 3. <i>Manage habitat for viable populations of all existing vertebrate species</i> | A. <i>(Guideline)</i> Management actions should be designed to encourage conditions that are within the historic range of variation (HRV) as defined by Regional or local properly functioning condition (PFC) assessments. PFC operates within the range of HRV where extreme events are not desired. Actions should remain within the variability of size, intensity, and frequency of native disturbance regimes characteristic of the subject landscape and ecological processes. |
| | | B. <i>(Guideline)</i> Within disturbed ecosystems, management actions should be designed to be consistent with restoration objectives. |
| | | C. <i>(Guideline)</i> Utilize native plant species from locally adapted seed sources in management activities when and where practical. Non-native plant species have the potential to cause systems to move outside of historic range of variation (HRV), therefore the use of non-native species should be justified to indicate how their use is important to maintain or restore a cover type to functioning conditions. |

- D. Guideline – Provide for a full range of seral stages, by forest cover type, that achieve a mosaic of habitat conditions.
- E. Guideline – Planned vegetation treatments (excluding unplanned and wildfire) in the mature and/or old structural groups that is at or below desired percentages (40% conifer, 30% aspen) should be designed to maintain or enhance the characteristics of these structural stages.
- F. Guideline – When initiating vegetation management in forest cover types leave the following minimum number and size of snags.

| Cover Type | Minimum Snags | Preferred size |
|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Pipo | 2 | 18 Inch 30 feet tall |
| MC/Spruce-Fir | 3 | Same as above |
| Aspen | 2 | 8 Inch 15 feet Tall |
| Lodgepole and Aspen/Lodgepole | 3 | Same as above |

- G. Guideline – Rx’s should be designed to retain minimum amount and size of downed logs and woody debris.

| Cover Type | Minimum Down Logs | Preferred size | Tons/Acre |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Pipo | 3 | 12 Inch 8 feet | 5 |
| MC/Spruce-Fir | 5 | Same as above | 10 |
| Aspen | 5 | 6 Inch 8 feet | 3 |
| Lodgepole and Aspen/Lodgepole | 5 | 8 Inch 8 feet | 5 |

- H. Guideline – Groups are made up of multiple clumps of trees. Groups should be of size and distribution in a landscape that is consistent with disturbance patterns defined in Regional or local assessments. Clumps typically have 2 to 9 trees in the VSS 4, 5, and 6 size class with interlocking crowns.
- M. Standard – When an active nest has been identified, 2 alternate nest areas and 3 replacement nest areas need to be identified.
- N. Guideline – Each nest area should be approximately 30 acres (total of 180 acres) in size.

- S. Guideline – Identify PFA which encompasses the active, alternate, and replacement nest areas and additional habitat needed to raise fledglings. The PFA should be roughly 420 acres in size excluding nest areas.

- T. Guideline - Forest vegetation work within PFAs should be designed to maintain or improve habitat features as discussed for goshawk home range.
 - a) Openings created as a result of treatment should not exceed 2 acres in Pipo and 1 acre for Spruce/Fir.
 - b) Management activities restricted during nest period (03/01 to 09/30).
 - c) Plan the transportation system to minimize disturbance in PFAs.

DECISION NOTICE,

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT, and FINDING OF NON-SIGNIFICANT AMENDMENT

for the

UTAH FIRE AMENDMENT PROJECT

USDA FOREST SERVICE Intermountain Region

Ashley, Dixie, Fishlake, Manti-La Sal, Uinta, and Wasatch-Cache National Forests

Utah Counties: Beaver, Box Elder, Cache, Carbon, Daggett, Davis, Duchesne, Emery, Garfield, Grand, Iron, Juab, Kane, Millard, Morgan, Piute, Rich, Salt Lake, San Juan, Sanpete, Sevier, Summit, Tooele, Uintah, Utah, Wasatch, Washington, Wayne, and Weber
Wyoming Counties: Sweetwater and Uinta
Colorado Counties: Mesa and Montrose

1. Background

New information concerning fire ecology and fire management has been developed in recent years, and fire management policies at the national level have changed. In 1998, the forest supervisors of the six National Forests in Utah (Ashley, Dixie, Fishlake, Manti-La Sal, Uinta, Wasatch-Cache) agreed fire management direction in the existing Land and Resource Management Plans (forest plans) needed to change. They decided to work together to develop consistent direction for the six forest plans.

An environmental assessment (EA) was prepared and then distributed for public comment. The EA summarizes the analysis completed for a proposed change in programmatic management direction for the six National Forests in Utah, relative to fire management. The chosen action alternative would amend the forest plans for each National Forest by adding management direction in the form of a goal and standards and guidelines to be applied to future fire management activities. The affected lands are located primarily in Utah, with small portions in Wyoming and Colorado (EA, section 1.3).

The amendment language provides management direction that addresses suppression of unwanted wildland fire in areas with important social and economic values and reduction of hazardous fuels as well as identifies where prescribed fire and wildland fire use are authorized. The forest plan amendments will provide fire management direction that is consistent with National Policy. The new fire management direction will provide additional tools to help land managers achieve the desired future conditions described in the existing forest plans.

2. Decision

After careful review of the public comments and analyses disclosed in the EA, project file, and the original Forest Plan environmental impact statements the Forest Supervisor of each National Forest made the following decision.

- The Ashley, Fishlake, Dixie, Manti-La Sal, Uinta, and Wasatch-Cache National Forests select Alternative B.
- Wildland fire use is not authorized in sensitive watersheds on the Manti-La Sal, Uinta, and Wasatch-Cache National Forests. Sensitive watersheds, as displayed in the EA, Figure 3-1, page 3-34, will be included in the list of locations where wildland fire use is prohibited as shown in the guideline for Wildland Fire Use (EA, section 2.5, page 2-9). Where a sensitive watershed overlaps with congressionally designated wilderness wildland fire use is authorized as a resource management tool.

Existing direction for fire management will be modified or deleted if inconsistent with this decision. The EA, appendix A.7 displays the changes to each Forest Plan, by forest. This decision will remain in effect until each forest plan is revised, estimated to be within the next four years (EA, section 1.3). This decision does not change the desired future conditions, objectives, and land allocations of the six forest plans. This decision does not change the management direction for other resource areas other than fire management.

3. Reasons for Decision

The following factors were considered in making the decision:

The unprecedented fire season we experienced in the West last summer illustrates the potential danger that large, unwanted wildland fires now pose to people, property, and ecosystems. The situation that exploded in last year's hot, dry summer has been building for a long time. Over the last 20 to 30 years, unwanted wildland fires have grown in size, intensity, and frequency. We are now experiencing the consequences of over a half-century of well-intentioned but short-sighted fire suppression policies that helped produce a dangerous excess of fuels. It is time to change direction.

The effects disclosed for no action in the EA present an unacceptable future risk to our rangelands, forests, and adjacent communities. We believe our decision offers a reasonable and responsible approach to address these important potential consequences.

We fully understand the potential risks use of fire presents to our communities and that smoke generated from fire will be a nuisance for many and a burden for others. We will coordinate closely with communities potentially impacted by fire and smoke to address their important concerns and will also coordinate closely with State and Federal managers to assure State and Federal standards are addressed.

The EA also showed us that if we do nothing potential future impacts of uncharacteristically large wildland fires and smoke generated by these future events could be much worse compared to deliberately and carefully reducing hazardous fuels across our National Forests using a variety of fuel reduction methods.

DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST

FOREST-WIDE DIRECTION

| EXISTING DIRECTION | ALTERNATIVE B DIRECTION |
|---|--|
| <p>Forest-wide Goals and Objectives (pages IV-12 to IV-13)</p> <p>Goal No. 45 Develop a well planned and executed fire protection and fire use program that is cost efficient and responsive to land and resource management goals and objectives.</p> <p><u>Objectives</u></p> <p>a. There will be only one Fire Management Action Plan for the Forest. Specific Action and Staffing Plans and Annual Mobilization and Operation Plan are chapters within the Action Plan.</p> <p>b. Include provisions in all permits and use authorizations for fire prevention and suppression.</p> <p>c. Cooperative fire protection will be emphasized to provide for joint fire protection through offset agreements, and combined fire forces.</p> | <p>Forest-wide Goals and Objectives (pages IV-12 to IV-13)</p> <p>Goal No. 45 Develop a well planned and executed fire protection and fire use program that is cost efficient and responsive to land and resource management goals and objectives.</p> <p><u>Objectives</u></p> <p>a. There will be only one Fire Management Plan (FMP) for the Forest. Specific Action and Staffing Plans and Annual Mobilization and Operation Plan are chapters within the FMP.</p> <p>b. Include provisions in all permits and use authorizations for fire prevention and suppression.</p> <p>c. Cooperative fire protection will be emphasized to provide for joint fire protection through offset agreements, and combined fire forces.</p> |
| <p>Goal No. 46 Through cost effective analysis, develop an active fire prevention program with cooperating agencies that is directed towards specific areas and causes based on probability of occurrence, damages expected, and program costs.</p> <p><u>Objectives</u></p> <p>Develop a cooperative fire prevention plan for the area by the 1987 fire season and update annually.</p> | <p>Goal No. 46 Through cost effective analysis, develop an active fire prevention program with cooperating agencies that is directed towards specific areas and causes based on probability of occurrence, damages expected, and program costs.</p> <p><u>Objectives</u></p> <p>Develop a cooperative fire prevention plan for the Forest and update it annually.</p> |
| <p>Goal No. 47 Maintain fire suppression capabilities which allow an appropriate suppression response to all wildfires.</p> <p><u>Objectives</u></p> <p>a. Provide preplanned fire suppression action on all wildfires which is cost effective and protects life and property.</p> <p>b. Each wildfire ignition will receive an appropriate response (containment, containment or control). Suppression intensity and extent will be based on resource values, costs, burning conditions, safety, protection of private property, fire organization commitment and a current National Fire Management Analysis.</p> | <p>Goal No. 47 Maintain fire suppression capabilities which allow an appropriate management response to all wildfires.</p> |

| EXISTING DIRECTION | ALTERNATIVE B DIRECTION |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
|--------------------|-------------------------|

Goal No. 4B Establish and maintain fuel masses which result in an acceptable hazard and spread potential of wildfire, allow an appropriate wildfire suppression, and coordination to other resource programs and objectives.

Objectives

- a. Use prescribed fire when cost effective to achieve vegetative manipulation objectives such as for other resources including timber, range, and wildlife.
- b. Utilization (fuelwood) will be stressed as the primary method of fuel reduction with follow-up disposal by other means as needed.
- c. Continuous fuel types, especially in areas where activity fuels have been added to natural fuels will be broken up into blocks of forty acres or less by use of roads, constructed fuel breaks or fuel reduction corridors.
- d. Vegetative modification projects should be designed to break-up continuous fuel types and serve as fuelbreaks.

Goal No. 4B Ecosystems are restored and maintained, consistent with land uses and historic fire regimes, through wildland fire use and prescribed fire.

FOREST-WIDE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (P IV-25 TO IV-55)

| EXISTING DIRECTION | ALTERNATIVE B DIRECTION |
|---|--|
| <p>Wilderness Area Management (page IV-32)</p> <p>16. Suppress man-caused wildfires.</p> <p>17. Maintain fire dependent ecosystems using prescribed fires ignited naturally. Reclaim areas disturbed as part of fire control activities to meet the visual quality objective of retention.</p> | |
| <p>Fire Planning and Suppression (page IV-54)</p> <p>1. Plan and provide a level of protection from wildfire that will meet management objectives for the area, considering the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The values of the resources that are threatened by fire. B. The probability of fire occurrence. C. The fuelbed that fires will probably occur in. D. The weather conditions that will probably influence fires that occur. E. The costs of fire protection programs (FFP and FFF) F. The social, economic, political, cultural, environmental, life and property concerns, and <p>3. Management objectives for the area. Use the National Fire Management Analysis Process (NFMAS).</p> | <p>Wildland Fire Suppression (Page IV-54)</p> <p>Standard - Human life (firefighter and public safety) is the highest priority during a fire. Once firefighters have been assigned to a fire, their safety becomes the highest priority. Property and natural/cultural resources are lower priorities.</p> <p>Guideline - When assigning protection priorities to property and natural/cultural resources, decisions will be based on relative values to be protected, commensurate with fire management costs.</p> <p>Standard - Human-caused fires (either accidental or arson) and unwanted wildland fires and will be suppressed. Natural ignitions will be suppressed in areas not covered by an approved fire management plan.</p> |
| <p>Escaped Fire Suppression (page IV-54)</p> <p>1. Take suppression action on all escaped fires considering the follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The values of the resources threatened by the fire (both | <p>Guideline - The full range of suppression tactics is authorized forestwide, consistent with forest and management area emphasis and direction.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>positive and negative).</p> <p>B. Management objectives for the threatened area(s).</p> <p>C. The fuels the fire may burn in.</p> <p>D. The current and projected weather conditions that will influence fire behavior.</p> <p>E. Natural barriers and fuel breaks.</p> <p>F. Social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental concerns.</p> <p>G. Public safety.</p> <p>H. Firefighter safety, and</p> <p>I. Costs of alternative suppression strategies. Use the Escaped Fire Situation Analysis (EFSA) to make this determination.</p> | <p>Fuels (Page IV-54) Guideline - Reduce hazardous fuels. The full range of fuel reduction methods is authorized, consistent with forest and management area emphasis and direction.</p> <p>Prescribed Fire (Page IV-54) Guideline - Prescribed fire is appropriate forestwide. (Use prescribed fire in wilderness only to meet wilderness management objectives.)</p> |
| <p>Fuel Treatment (page IV-64)</p> <p>1. Maintain fuel conditions which permit fire suppression forces to meet fire protection objectives for the area.</p> <p>A. Reduce or otherwise treat all fuels so the potential fireline intensity of an area will not exceed 400 BTU's/sect (BT-68) on 90 percent of the days during the regular fire season.</p> <p>OR Break up continuous fuel concentrations exceeding the above standard into manageable units with fuel breaks or fire lines. OR Provide additional protection for areas exceeding the above standards when such protection will not be required for more than five years.</p> <p>Vegetation Treated by Burning (page IV-65)</p> <p>1. Use prescribed fire to accomplish resource management objectives, such as reducing fuel load buildup, wildlife habitat improvement, etc.</p> <p>A. Prescribed burning on National Forest System lands will be planned in accordance with existing direction and Forest direction must be consistent with Federal and State laws.</p> <p>2. Limit use of prescribed fire on areas in or adjacent to riparian areas to protect riparian and aquatic values.</p> | <p>Wildland Fire Use (Page IV-64) Guideline - Wildland fire use is authorized forestwide except in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * administrative sites * developed recreation sites * summer home sites * designated communication sites * oil and gas facilities * mining facilities * above-ground utility corridors * high-use travel corridors <p>The management response for these locations and conditions will be suppression if they are threatened.</p> <p>In areas authorized for wildland fire use, the full range of management responses, from full suppression to monitoring, may be used.</p> |

MANAGEMENT AREA DIRECTION

| EXISTING DIRECTION | ALTERNATIVE B DIRECTION |
|---|---|
| <p>Management Area 1A - Developed Recreation Sites (Page IV-59)</p> | <p>Management Area 1A - Developed Recreation Sites (Page IV-59)</p> <p>Wildland Fire Use Guideline - Wildland fire use is not authorized. The management response for these locations will be suppression.</p> |
| <p>Management Area 1B - Winter Sports Sites (Page IV-62)</p> | <p>Management Area 1B - Winter Sports Sites (Page IV-62)</p> <p>Wildland Fire Use Guideline - Wildland fire use is not authorized. The management response for these locations will be suppression.</p> |
| <p>Management Area 4B - Wildlife Habitat MIS Species (page IV-87)</p> <p>Fuel Treatment 1. Maintain fuel conditions which permit fire suppression and prescribed fire to maintain habitat needed for selecter species or species population levels.</p> <p>Optimum vegetation stages for wildlife habitat are described in wildl's section of this plan.</p> | <p>Management Area 4B - Wildlife Habitat MIS Species (page IV-87)</p> |
| <p>Management Area 4D - Aspen Management (page IV-98)</p> <p>Fuel Treatment 1. Emphasize prescribed burning where feasible to regenerate aspen to benefit wildlife.</p> <p>A. Allow aspen regeneration to occur naturally.</p> <p>2. Protect wildlife trees during fuelwood cutting and prescribed burning as needed to meet snag density guidelines.</p> | <p>Management Area 4D - Aspen Management (page IV-98)</p> |

EXISTING CONDITION FOR MANAGEMENT AREA 7A, DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST

See the Dixie National Forest Plan, Chapter 4; Forest wide Standards and Guidelines, and management area direction for MA 7A. Also, District analysis teams have gathered the site-specific information below on current conditions in preparation for a plan to project analysis.

MANAGEMENT AREA 7A

VEGETATION

Existing conditions for the area are much like other conditions in similar mountain ranges in the Intermountain west. Years of fire suppression, cattle grazing, and weather factors have contributed to an unnatural build-up of fuels. Dead fuel loading ranges from 2-20 tons per acre, with most of the area in the high end of the range. Duff layers on the ground are 2-5 inches thick. Some areas average as many as 1400 trees per acre, with most of the stands averaging 500-700 trees per acre. Extensive fuel ladders along with insect defoliation allow wildland fire to move to the tops of the trees, causing high-intensity, stand replacing wildfires (e.g., the 2000 fire south and west of Fish Creek). Wildland fire ignition sources exist in this area from humans and lightning.

The most common tree in the analysis area is ponderosa pine, with some Douglas fir, white fir, and limber pine. Gambel's oak is evident in the understory, as are big sagebrush and other shrubs. Aspen trees are present in some areas, but are being replaced by conifers.

Table 1: Current analysis area acreages.

| Description | Acres | Basal Area | TPA | Snags/Acre | CWD Tons/Ac |
|--------------------|--------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Ponderosa pine | 5,250 | 120 | 200 - 350 | 1 | 2 |
| Dry Mixed Conifer | 1000 | 160 | 300 - 500 | 2 | 15 |
| Mesic (Wet) MC | 770 | 180 | 400 - 600 | 2 | 25 |
| Pinyon and juniper | 2,780 | 100 | 150 - 250 | NA | NA |
| Aspen/Woodland | 580 | 100 | 250 - 350 | 3 | 5 |
| Total | 10,000 | — | — | — | — |

Table 2: Ponderosa pine age class distribution and density (acres and % of total)

| Seed/sap (VSS - 1) | Young (VSS-2) | Mid-aged (VSS - 3&4) | Mature (VSS - 5) | Old-growth (VSS-6) |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 0 | 1,004 Ac - 19% | 3,012 Ac - 57% | 1,001 - 19% | 233 Ac - 4% |

Assessments within and adjacent to the project area indicate that the Historical Range of Natural Variability within the ponderosa pine is 20 to 40 presettlement trees per acre. The stands were all-aged with an estimated 60 percent of the trees less than 14 inches dbh. It appears that the groups ranged between 2 and 15 trees/group with the size of the groups ranging from .1 to .3

acres in size. Interspaces or openings comprised between 60 and 80 percent of any given acre with the treed zones comprising 20 to 40 percent.

WILDLIFE

There is one Goshawk territory established in the analysis area. This territory consists of stands with heavy dead and live fuel accumulations that are at risk for crown fire (Table – 1). Such a crown fire could easily spread with the prevailing wind into the adjacent Goshawk territories or Mexican Spotted Owl PACs.

Turkey, elk, and mule deer are listed as a Management Indicator Species (MIS) in the Forest Plan. This analysis area supports large populations of turkey. Forage production is declining in the area. Available forbs and grasses do not meet current demand from turkey flocks. The abundance of trees is out-competing the grasses and forbs for sunlight, moisture, and soil nutrients.

TRANSPORTATION

Roads

Paved Roads – There are no paved roads within the project area.

Dirt Roads – Roads 1, 2, and 3 are narrow one-lane native-surface (dirt) Forest Service roads that provide access to recreation attractions and other portions of the analysis area.

Roads Analysis Process – The Ranger District has just completed a Roads Analysis Process for the management area. It found that all numbered roads on the quad map are needed components of the Forest's road system, although some segments need repair since they are contributing to water quality degradation in Sauk Creek.

RECREATION

North Creek Dam and Campground – This is the most popular local campground in the area, receiving heavy usage almost yearlong from locals and from Black Rock. There is fear from users that if a catastrophic fire occurred there would be no way out. Ann Francis, the local off-road tourism operator has created several unauthorized roads.

PRIVATE LAND

The town of Black Rock is completely surrounded by the Dixie National Forest. The AT&SF provides a rail link between Black Rock and other communities and is vital for both passenger service and moving the highly prized mineral unobtainium to local markets. No other private inholdings exist.

SOCIAL SITUATION

Black Rock is a small town adjacent to the project area with 250 full time residents with strong rural values. Lots tend to be 5-10 acres with mostly Ponderosa pine with an understory of oak and big sagebrush. Very little has been done to reduce fuels within the town. The economy has seen resurgence with opening of the unobtainium mine though it does not employ as many people as the former logging mill, which closed 10-years ago. Because of the moderate climate retirees are beginning to move into the new Forestview Subdivision, bringing in more local revenue. Tourism is on the increase from Frostbite Falls, 50 miles to the Northeast. However, a wind-driven fire roared through the area southwest of town, scorching 2,000 acres, just stopping at the edge of Sauk Creek. Residents are now more in favor of fuels reduction treatments, partly for their safety, and because tourism dropped substantially the summer of the fire.

Need for Change Worksheet #1A

Location: North Creek

Acres: Ponderosa Pine 5,250

What situation do you want to improve: Wildlife Habitat

| Desired Conditions for this situation | Manage habitat for viable populations of all existing vertebrate species |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Existing Condition | Years of fire suppression and logging has caused a dramatic increase in trees densities and a shift from all/uneven-aged stage structure to more even age with lack of VSS-1 and VSS-6 seral stages. Canopy covers are in excess of 80 percent which has resulted in an almost complete loss of understory forage production and a decline in habitat conditions for most vertebrate species. |
| Element | Goshawk habitat |
| Measure | Amount of area in opening versus areas with canopies Understory forage production in openings Acres restored to HRV VSS classes |
| Desired Value | 60 to 80 percent in openings 800 to 1200 pounds of understory production in openings Low end 30 to 60 trees (HRV) to a high of 60 to 120 trees per acre VSS 1 & 2, 20%: VSS 3 & 4, 40%: VSS 5, 20%: VSS 6, 20% |
| Existing Value | Less than 20% Less than 100 pounds/acre on average 200 to 300 TPA VSS 1 & 2, 19%: VSS 3 & 4, 57%: VSS – 5, 19%: VSS – 6, 4% |
| Need for Change | Reduce canopy covers from current 80% to a range between 20 and 40% Increase forage production from mean of less than 100 lbs/ac to 800 lbs/ac or better. Diminish TPA to a range between 30 to 60 trees (HRV) to a high of 60 to 120 TPA Balance VSS classes to achieve all/uneven age stand structure |
| Consistency Maybe | Possible Management Practices Implement a evidence based restoration mark on 90% or 4275 acres within the ponderosa pine type. |

NEED FOR CHANGE WORKSHEET #1

Location: _____

What situation do you want to improve? _____

| | |
|---|--|
| Desired Condition <i>What is the Forest Plan goal or objective for the situation?</i> | |
| Existing Condition <i>What is today's condition you want to improve?</i> | |
| Element <i>What part of the situation do you want to focus on?</i> | |
| Measure <i>What measure will you use to show progress toward Desired Condition?</i> | |
| Desired Value <i>What is the desired value for the measure?</i> | |
| Existing Value <i>What is the existing value for the measure?</i> | |
| Need for change <i>What is the gap between desired and existing values? State the need for resolving that difference.</i> | |
| Possible Activities <i>What can you do to address your need for change?</i> | Consistency? <i>Consistent with Forest Plan?</i> |

NEED FOR CHANGE WORKSHEET #2

Location: _____

What situation do you want to improve? _____

| | |
|---|--|
| Desired Condition <i>What is the Forest Plan goal or objective for the situation?</i> | |
| Existing Condition <i>What is today's condition you want to improve?</i> | |
| Element <i>What part of the situation do you want to focus on?</i> | |
| Measure <i>What measure will you use to show progress toward Desired Condition?</i> | |
| Desired Value <i>What is the desired value for the measure?</i> | |
| Existing Value <i>What is the existing value for the measure?</i> | |
| Need for change <i>What is the gap between desired and existing values? State the need for resolving that difference.</i> | |
| Possible Activities <i>What can you do to address your need for change?</i> | Consistency? <i>Consistent with Forest Plan?</i> |
| | |

DISTRICT RANGER SELECTION OF ACTIVITIES

This just in...

The Forest Supervisor has just informed the District Ranger that the Regional Office will fund a new top priority in the District's program of work next fiscal year:

| Need: | Activity: |
|---|---|
| <p>There is a need for reducing the fuels loading in the WUI Zone around Black Rocks perimeter to prevent a catastrophic wildfire from entering the town, and to provide fire fighters a defensive zone for fighting fires.</p> <p>The citizens of Black Rock have an active letter-writing campaign to the mayor and governor supporting this type of project.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thin 2,000 acres in the WUI zone around Black Rock to a BA of 40.• Pile slash.• Harvest fuelwood.• Burn piles over next 3 years.• Broadcast burn 500 acres per year for 4 years during best weather conditions. |

Spencer Tracy

Spencer Tracy
District Ranger

Date