

A Summary of the

Iron Honey Resource Area

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Everything changes...

Sometimes we're just too busy to notice the changes occurring around us. Take a good look around as you drive home - Has that car lot always been there? When did that subdivision pop up? And there's another new traffic light - remember when Coeur d'Alene only had one stoplight?

...some things just change slower than others.

The forests surrounding us may not seem to change at all, but that's because our window of time is so short. If we humans lived for centuries instead of decades, we would have a better view of the changes that have occurred to the landscape around us. Two recent studies - one at the Columbia River Basin scale (*Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project Scientific Findings, 1996*) and one at the Coeur d'Alene River Basin scale (*Toward an Ecosystem Approach: An Assessment of the Coeur d'Alene River Basin, 1998*) - provide us with a picture of how our surroundings and opportunities in north Idaho have changed over the last several decades.

The findings of the two studies agree - the resources most at risk in the Coeur d'Alene River Basin are the water, old forests, and those stands of trees that are most at risk to insects, disease, and fire (mostly Douglas-fir, grand fir and western hemlock). The Upper Little North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River was identified as a high priority for restoration. Given this information, we've taken a closer look at the problems and our opportunities to reduce those problems in this area of the Coeur d'Alene River Basin, which we've identified as the Iron Honey Resource Area. The Iron Honey Resource Area is 21,600 acres in size. As an agency, we administer all but 193 acres. There is an 82-acre parcel of private land at the mouth of Iron Creek, with 111 acres of patented mining claims in the Prospector Creek drainage east of Honey Mountain.



An Area Affected by Nature and Man



10,000 years ago, Glacial Lake Missoula covered most of Montana and part of northern Idaho. Volcanic

eruptions, fires, landslides, flooding, geologic uplifts and other disturbances formed the basic character of our watersheds and streams.

200 years ago, Lewis and Clark arrived in northern Idaho, the precursors of missionaries, fur traders and other settlers.

120 years ago, Noah Kellogg's burro uncovered the richest source of silver-lead the world had ever known, reached first by mule trains, then by steamers, stagecoaches, the big wagons, and finally the railroads.

110 years ago, transcontinental railways built in north Idaho allowed white pine - a high quality lumber with a premium price - to be marketed nationwide.



90 years ago, the Fires of 1910 raged across the forests of north Idaho and parts of Montana, destroying mines, homes and communities - including the city of Wallace.



80 years ago, the first signs of blister rust damage were reported in the white pine forests of north Idaho.

50 years ago, the forests of north Idaho were infested by Douglas-fir beetles, killing an estimated 139 million board feet of Douglas-fir trees.

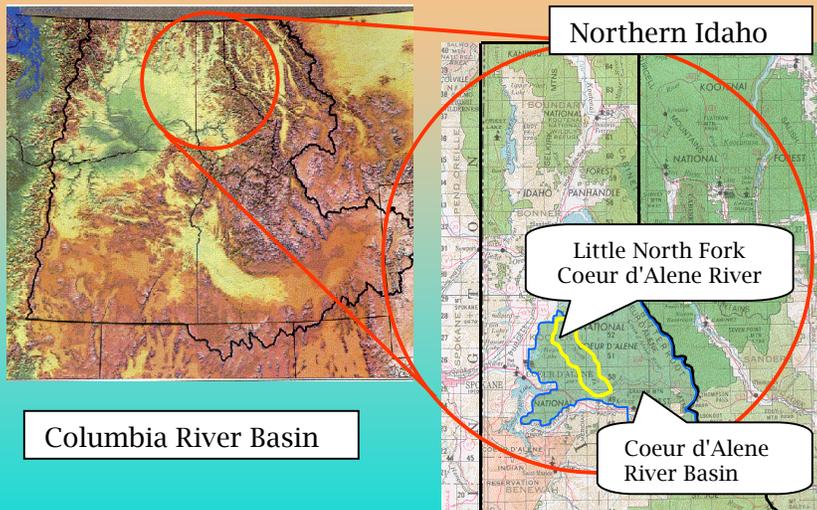


Douglas-fir Bark Beetle

Nothing endures but change.

Heraclitus (540 B.C. - 480 B.C.)

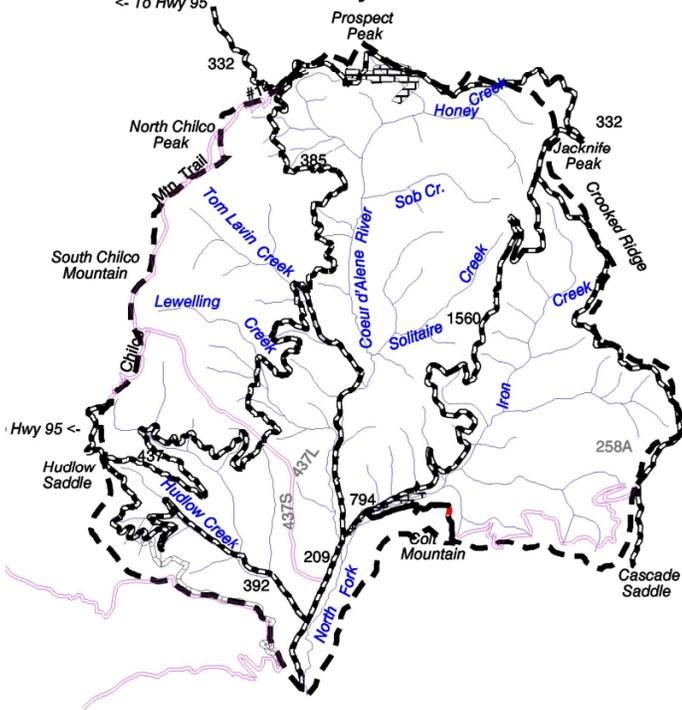
Iron Honey Resource Area Vicinity Map



USDA Forest Service
Northern Region
Idaho Panhandle National Forests

Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District
2502 East Sherman Avenue
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814
(208) 664-2318

Iron Honey Resource Area



Our Progress to Date

In the fall of 1996, we began gathering information about the conditions in the Resource Area, and thinking about what needs to be done to improve the health of the forest and water resources that are so important to fish, wildlife and people. After visiting the area with members of the public, we shared our early findings and asked how they thought the area should be managed. Over the next couple of years, we added more details to these ideas, and took a look at what would occur if we were to set each of the concepts into action. In addition to the proposed activities, our analysis considered the effects of past activities, ongoing activities, and those activities that could reasonably be expected to occur in the future.

We documented what we learned in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), then asked the public and other agencies to take a look at it and let us know what course of action they'd like to see occur. Based on what we heard and have learned since, we've prepared a Final EIS that thoroughly describes the parts and pieces of the Iron Honey Resource Area, the options for management, and our predictions as to the consequences of our actions, whether we intensively manage the area or walk away.

If you've ever reviewed an environmental impact statement, you know you'll never find one on the best-seller list - and with good reason - they're long, complex, and for the most part, boring! With all the legal requirements for such studies, there is little chance they will ever be considered light reading. The documents do, however, provide the information needed to decide a course of action for the area. This summary provides a glimpse of the information provided in the Final EIS, and **using this book symbol**, points the way to specific sections of the document that may make your review a little easier.



What You'll Find In This Summary

Our progress to date.....	Page 2
The role of the public	Page 2
A glimpse of the past.....	Page 3
How our process is guided	Page 4
What do we want to accomplish here?	Page 4
How can we meet these objectives?	Page 4
More about the "pulse" approach.....	Page 5
Protecting the values of the area	Page 6
A summary comparison of the alternatives	Page 6
Objective 1 - Water quality and habitat	Page 7
Objective 2 - Forest health and vigor	Page 9
Objective 3 - Large and old forest.....	Page 9
Objective 4 - Risk of wildfire.....	Page 10
Other issues that concern us -	
Wildlife	Page 11
Recreation and Scenery	Page 11
How much is this going to cost?	Page 12
Other opportunities	Page 13
When would activities take place?	Page 13
Monitoring our activities.....	Page 13
Meet the Iron Honey Project Team	Page 14
What are the decisions to be made, and	
who will make them?	Page 16
When will the decisions be made?.....	Page 16
What's the best way to find the information	
you need in the Final EIS?	Page 16
Supporting information	Page 18
For more information.....	Page 18

The Role of the Public

The public has served as a source of information to us, helping to identify current uses, problem areas, and ideas for managing the area. They have also been a sounding board, reviewing our work and providing comments and suggested changes.

Once we determined the basic features of our project area (such as the specific drainages we would be looking at and the current condition of the resources), we invited members of the public to join us on a field trip to the area to discuss conditions and management options for the area. Those who took us up on the offer included Chip Corsi and Brian Helmich (Idaho Fish and Game), Earl Frizzell and Eric Schubert (North Idaho Fly Casters), Shireene Hale (Panhandle Health District No. 1), and Esther McDonald and Mike White (Panhandle Trail Riders Association).

On our October 4, 1997 field trip, we visited four sites. The first was in the Sob Creek drainage, where we walked up Road 1525 to view the remains of an old log flume and discuss the history of the area and the effects of past management on the watershed. About 100 yards further up the road, a 30-year old clearcut has been regenerated and now has a stand of young trees growing. We talked about the current health of forests in the area, timber management needs, and the importance and character of our old-growth stands.

The second site was up the Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene River, off Road 1532 in the Iron Creek drainage. We looked at a stable, well-functioning section of the river and discussed the features that made it healthy. At the third site, about three-quarters of a mile up Iron Creek, we viewed an area where people hill climb with 4-wheel drives, motorcycles and other ATV's. We talked about how popular motorized recreation has become, and the effects on natural resources.

The fourth and final site visited on the field trip was also up Iron Creek, where the stream has overflowed its banks and cut a new channel through an old road bed. We discussed problems related to stream crossings and the need for large wood in the stream to slow the flow of water, as well as other issues related to stream health.

In October, 1998, we conducted another tour of the resource area, this time with Suzanne Audet of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We visited several sites to look at forest vegetation patterns, structure, and fragmentation of timber stands in the Iron and Honey Creek drainages. We explored ideas to improve both fish and wildlife habitat. We also discussed potential funding sources for getting the necessary road rehabilitation and other restoration work done.

We shared our field trip discussions with the rest of the interested public through a letter, and invited them to share their observations and concerns. Although several people indicated an interest in the project, only 3 comment letters were received (from Richard Parkin of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Jeff Juel of the Ecology Center, and Mike Mihelich of Kootenai Environmental Alliance). We used their comments and the recommendations and comments generated during our field trips to develop our initial proposal and alternative strategies for management of the Iron Honey Resource Area. Because some of these strategies could result in significant environmental impacts, we determined we needed to complete an environmental impact statement (EIS).

It took us a year and a half to complete the analysis and documentation. We issued the Draft EIS in April 2000. After 45 days of review, we had received 10 letters offering comments on the project. These letters came from John Bentley and Mike Mihelich (Kootenai Environmental Alliance), Diane Riley and June Bergquist (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality), Sara Denniston (Idaho Rivers United and Idaho Conservation League), Greg Tourtlotte (Idaho Fish and Game), Jeff Juel (Ecology Center and Alliance for the Wild Rockies), Troy Tvrdy (Idaho Panhandle Chapter of Trout Unlimited), and Richard Parkin (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency). Some of these comments led to the development of Alternative 8. Other comments were used to improve our analysis and documentation.



For further discussion of the how we used comments from the public, and copies of their letters, please refer to Appendix A (Public Involvement in Issue Identification and Alternative Development and Modification)

A Glimpse of the Past

Early miners and settlers arrived in the Coeur d'Alene River Basin about 1870. The forests were largely made up of white pine, western larch, and ponderosa pine, all sturdy, long-lived trees species that could withstand natural levels of insects and diseases, and the fires that occasionally burned through the area.



Near the turn of the century, loggers built splash dams and flumes to remove timber from the hillsides. This made removing the timber easier, but was damaging to streams.

Because this area escaped the worst of the fires in the late 1800's and early 1900's, there was an abundance of large white pine that attracted the logging industry. It was in the early 1900's that we first began to see white pine blister rust in this area. Blister rust is a fungal disease that appears as cankers on the branches or trunks of the trees, weakening and eventually killing the tree. Efforts were made to control the disease, but because our forests are so widespread and on such steep ground, we were not very successful, and the battle against blister rust continues.

In the 1930's and 1940's, a logging railroad extended into the Iron and Honey Creek watersheds, allowing the valuable timber to be marketed nationwide.



Starting in the 1950's, roads were built throughout the area to haul out the timber using trucks. The roads opened up the forest and (since they were often built in the valley bottoms)

resulted in further damage to the streams. At many locations, culverts were installed so the road could cross the stream. These culverts created a barrier to fish that would normally have migrated upstream to spawn.

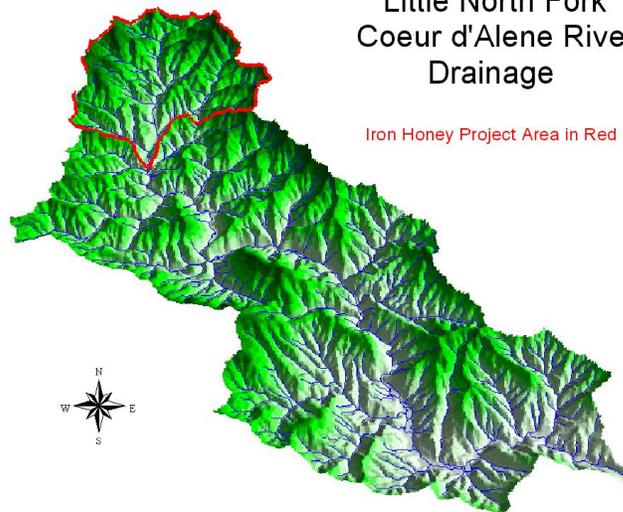
With plenty of deer, elk, and other game animals, hunters have long found success in the area. Roads and trails leading to streams and shady campsites have enticed visitors to the forests. In recent decades, more affordable ATV's and snowmobiles have made the area a popular destination year round.



For more information about the area in general, please refer to Chapter I - 1.1 Purpose and Need, Chapter II -

Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Drainage

Iron Honey Project Area in Red





How our process is guided

Any time we propose land management activities, we are guided through the analysis, public involvement, and documentation process from several different directions. This guidance is largely based on science, legal requirements and forest policy, and public desires.

Scientific guidance is provided through agency and forest policy, including the Natural Resources Agenda, Land and Resource Management (Forest) Plan, and Forest Service Road Management and Transportation System Rule; as well as studies such as the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, Northern Region Overview, and Geographic Assessment for the Coeur d'Alene River Basin. There are a multitude of legal requirements that apply to our management of the forests and associated resources – including the Organic Act of 1897, Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, National Forest Management Act of 1976, and others. We work with the public to identify the features of the forests that are important to them, and their expectations for the management of our forests.



For a description of process direction, please refer to Chapter II, section 2.2 – Policy Direction and Legal Guidance.

What do we want to accomplish here?

There are four key things we want to get done in the Iron Honey Resource Area:

- 1. Improve water quality and the habitat provided by streams and their surrounding area.**
- 2. Replace the more vulnerable tree species with those that are better able to resist insects and diseases, droughts, and fires, such as white pine, western larch, and ponderosa pine.**
- 3. Provide a better mix of forest ages, increasing the amount of large and old forest, and connecting the blocks of old growth with corridors of large, mature trees.**
- 4. Reduce the risk of wildfires that are so large and intense that they cause more damage than good.**



For further discussion of our objectives, please refer to Chapter I – 1.1.4 Objectives of the Proposal

How can we meet these objectives?

Working with the public and other agencies, we initially came up with 7 possible scenarios for managing the Iron Honey Resource Area, later developing an additional alternative based on public recommendations. Comparing a range of alternatives (from no change in management to intensive management) will help determine which activities, if any, are appropriate to occur in the watersheds of the Iron Honey Resource Area.

These alternatives are described briefly below, with a summary comparison of activities provided in the table on page 4.



For a description of how the public's comments helped shape the alternatives, please refer to Appendix A – Public Involvement in Issue Identification & Alternative Development and Modification

Under **Alternative 1** (the No-Action Alternative), we would virtually walk away from the area for the time being in terms of forest management – none of the proposed activities would be implemented, and management would continue at the same level as in the past. For example, road management and maintenance would continue as guided by the District's Travel Plan. Groomed snowmobile routes would remain as they are.



Unfortunately, the trend in declining forest and watershed health would also continue, making this the least beneficial of all alternatives. This is discussed further under each of the “Objectives” addressed in this summary. Future projects, such as forest management, watershed restoration, or wildlife habitat improvement, could be proposed in the area.

Alternative 2 proposed a combination of timber harvest, fuels treatment, and watershed restoration activities. This alternative would promote white pine and western larch forests on about 1,100 acres to more closely resemble their historical condition, using only the “shelterwood” harvest treatment and focusing on the Iron Creek drainage. On page 9, we discuss how the shelterwood type harvest can help us to meet our forest health objectives.

Alternative 3 would clearcut harvest (on about 290 acres) in 5 to 10-acre openings, and thin stands of western larch on about 140 acres. Under this alternative we would treat a relatively small portion of the watershed, but would re-enter the area at regular intervals to do more of the same treatment in the coming years.

Alternative 4 proposed using fire (without timber harvest or watershed restoration) across large areas to mimic large, intense fires like those that burned occurred historically. We dropped Alternative 4 from further study early on in the process because it wouldn't accomplish the objectives, would result in more impact than benefits, and was not a sound financial investment.

The large-scale use of fire in this area would likely cause a hefty increase in water flows and sediment in the streams, since there would be little vegetation left to slow the runoff from hillsides. In addition, commercially valuable timber would be consumed by the fire. If we were to help restore white pine, we would have to plant white pine seedlines, which would take a good deal of money –

since there would be no funding generated through the sale of timber, we would be dependent on appropriated funding or grants which, as discussed for Alternative 6 below, has not traditionally been enough to accomplish the work that needs to be done.



For a brief discussion of the other alternatives we considered but eliminated from further study, please refer to Chapter II, section 2.3.4 and Appendix A (Alternatives Considered But Eliminated)

Alternative 5 is the most aggressive of the alternatives. Timber harvest (including clearcut, shelterwood harvest, and commercial thinning) and fire would be used over a large portion of the Iron and Solitaire Creek watersheds (approximately 4,340 acres) within a period of about 5 years, but then we would stay out of the project area for at least 30 to 40 years (this is referred to as a “pulse” approach). Further discussion of the pulse approach is provided later on this page.

Alternative 6 was developed in response to comments from Mike Mihelich (Kootenai Environmental Alliance) and Sara Denniston (Idaho Rivers United and Idaho Conservation League), who recommended focusing only on watershed restoration activities, with no commercial timber harvest or activities to reduce forest fuels. We would selectively remove individual trees across approximately 380 acres to provide large pieces of wood to put into certain streams as part of the watershed restoration work. Since there is no commercial timber harvest to generate money, the restoration work would have to be funded through appropriated funding or grants. In the past, we’ve received considerably less funding than we needed for watershed restoration work, so it is unlikely that all of the restoration activities we would like to do under Alternative 6 could be done.



Alternative 7 is very similar to Alternative 2, except that where Alternative 2 would depend entirely on shelterwood harvests to mimic extensive fires that occurred in the area historically, Alternative 7 would also use clearcutting and commercial thinning (a total of approximately 1,280 harvest acres). The use of clearcutting in 5 to 10 acres patches is intended to mimic the mixed severity fires that create small openings more amenable to natural regeneration of white pine and western larch. These small openings would be located in stands where root disease is a major problem and in lodgepole pine stands where growth has stagnated.

The commercial thinning is intended to mimic the low intensity fires that kill small diameter trees that are not fire resistant (such as Douglas-fir and hemlock), clearing out the understory and providing better growing conditions for fire-resistant white pine and western larch.



For a brief discussion of harvest methods, please refer to Appendix E - Specific Unit Information

Greg Tourtlotte (Idaho Fish and Game) and Troy Tvrdy (Idaho Panhandle Chapter of Trout Unlimited) liked the watershed restoration of Alternative 6, but realized there wouldn’t likely be enough funding to get the work done. As a compromise, we took most of the watershed restoration of Alternative 6 and some of the timber harvest and fuels reduction activities from Alternative 2. The objective of this newly-developed **Alternative 8** is to restore the forest to more closely resemble the historical conditions within both the Iron Creek and Solitaire Creek watersheds and the face drainages of the Upper Little North Fork Coeur d’Alene River, while financing a good portion of watershed restoration. As under Alternative 2, all of the commercial harvest (1,900 acres) would be done using the shelterwood method. As under Alternative 6, selective harvest would occur on about 230 acres so that we would have the large wood pieces we need to put into streams to improve fish habitat.



More about the “pulse” approach

Alternatives 2, 5 and 8 all incorporate - to some degree - a “pulse” approach to forest management. Yount and Niemi (1990) used the terms “press” and “pulse” to describe forest disturbances. A press situation involves a series of disturbances to the forest, such as intensive timber harvest, road construction, or prescribed burning, occurring at short intervals over time. This type of approach doesn’t allow the ecosystem to return to its original (historic) condition between each disturbance.

A pulse situation is when disturbances occur over a relatively short period of time, but at lengthy intervals, allowing the ecosystem to recover between each disturbance. For this proposal, we defined a “short” period of time as about 5 years, with a 30 to 40-year interval before we would enter the area for intensive timber harvest, road construction, or prescribed burning. Ideally, the interval would be at least several decades.

Some people have expressed doubt that we would not enter the area for 30 to 40 years. It’s true that we have no administrative or managerial tool available to guarantee that drainages where a pulse harvest occurs would not be entered for commercial harvest in the future. However, that is the intention of the current District Ranger and staff, with the support of the Forest Supervisor’s Office.

There is the opportunity for such a tool to be made available to us in the near future, during revision of the Forest’s Land Management Plan. It is our goal that the revised Forest Plan will provide us with the authority to identify certain areas of the Forest where the recovery of an area can be studied over a number of decades.

Should one of these three pulse alternatives be selected for implementation and until such a tool is available to us, we will have to rely upon the integrity and determination of our current resource specialists and decision makers in perpetuating the approach.



Protecting the natural or unique values in the area

As we developed these alternatives, we designed specific features that would protect natural resources in the Iron Honey Resource Area. Each alternative includes features designed to protect water and fisheries, soils, rare plants air quality, wildlife habitat, and heritage resources.

In addition, there are features designed to improve management of our trees and forests, including old growth. Other features would help reduce the spread of noxious weeds as we implement activities. A long-term plan for the area's transportation system is also included.



For a description of features designed to protect our natural resources, please refer to Chapter II - 2.6.9 Features Common to All Action Alternatives, and 2.6.10 Mitigation.

At this point in time, we would like to implement Alternative 8 because it would better meet our objectives with less impact to our forests, water, wildlife, and other resources than would occur if one of the other alternatives were selected.

In the following discussions, Alternative 8 is compared to the No-Action Alternative (Alternative 1) and the watershed restoration-only alternative (Alternative 6). The remainder of the alternatives provide a combination of harvest, prescribed burning, and watershed restoration activities similar to Alternative 8, but to varying levels. For a full comparison of alternatives, please refer to Chapter II of the Final EIS.

Focusing on our four key objectives, the following information briefly describes our concerns and those identified by the public. We discuss what activities are needed to accomplish these objectives, and what changes would occur in the Iron Honey Resource Area if our Preferred Alternative 8 were implemented as proposed.

Please remember, this is simply a summary of the information found in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Refer to the Final EIS for complete discussions, specific data, and references supporting our information. Suggestions for finding information related to the issues that most concern you are provided towards the end of this summary.

Summary Comparison of Activities Under Each Alternative

Feature	Alt. 1 No Action	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 5	Alt. 6	Alt. 7	Alt. 8 Our Preferred
Watershed recovery treatments							
Miles of Level 1 road obliteration	0	37	7	27	118	36	54
Miles of Level 2 road obliteration	0	10	1	11	26	11	19
Miles of Level 2 riparian road obliteration	0	2	0	1	3	2	3
Miles of roadbed recontoured	0	49	8	39	147	49	76
# of channel crossings removed	0	117	10	76	335	113	176
# of culverts upgraded	0	7	45	51	38	30	21
Miles of stream stabilization work	0	0	0	3	5	0	5
Proposed harvest (acres)							
Clearcut w/ Reserve Trees	0	0	190	680	0	40	0
Commercial Thinning	0	0	140	140	0	140	0
Shelterwood Harvest	0	1,100	0	3,520	0	1,100	1,900
Selective (for instream use)	0	0	0	0	380	0	230
Total acres of harvest proposed	0	1,100	330	4,340	380	1,280	2,130
Yarding systems (acres)							
Skyline	0	900	130	3,800	0	920	1,690
Tractor	0	200	70	400	380	220	440
Helicopter	0	0	140	140	0	140	0
Estimated timber harvest volume*							
Cunits (hundreds of cubic feet)	0	29,60	8,100	98,700	0	33,600	57,400
Million board feet (MMBF)	0	0	3.4	45.7	0	16.2	27.0
		14.8					
Proposed Road Work (Miles)							
Permanent road construction	0	0.2	0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Temporary road construction	0	0.5	0.3	14	0.5	0.5	4.0
Road reconstruction	0	23	28	58	0	37	30
Additional acres of allocated recruitment old growth		1,380	0	800	1,380	800	1,380
Fuel treatment (underburning)		1,100	192	4,200	0	1,140	1,340

Objective 1 Improve water quality and the habitat provided by streams and their surrounding area.

We all want to protect the quality of the Upper Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene River and other streams in the Iron Honey Resource Area. We recognize that these streams have been damaged by past activities, including logging and mining. In addition, many of the roads in the area have eroded because they were too close to streams, or the culverts have washed out because they were too small for the amount of water that is flowing through them. The following photograph (although not a site located within the Iron Honey Resource Area) is a good example of a situation where the stream has worn away the road.

Both Ed Lider (Fisheries Scientist at the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District) and Ted Geier (Hydrologist at the District) believe that the long-term health of the Iron Creek drainage can be greatly improved by removing stream crossings and roads near streams that are causing problems. This belief was supported by comments we received from the public

For example, the lower section of Roads 794 and 1532 are located in and across the Iron Creek riparian area, with several stream crossings (culverts). Under our Preferred Alternative 8, these sections of Road 794 and Road 1532 would be obliterated.

Because these roads are used year-round by the public and are part of the District's groomed snowmobile trail system, we identified replacement routes. Roads 1560 and 1550 would be opened to create a route between Horse Heaven and Crooked Ridge Road 258 that would replace the Rablens Fork route (the upper end of Road 794) to Crooked Ridge.

Road 2346 (Colt Mountain Road) would be upgraded and



linked through to Argument Saddle and Road 1532. This new route would allow the removal of the Moose Creek section of Road 1532 while still maintaining direct access to Argument Saddle from Horse Heaven. These were considered to be the best replacement routes because they are nearby, don't have culverts that could cause problems, and are located up on the hillside, away from the streams. We would need to widen the replacement routes (from the current 14-foot width to a 16-foot width) to allow safe passage of the snow groomer.

Under the Preferred Alternative 8, a total of 76 miles of road would be obliterated. There are two levels of road obliteration, as described below.

Level I Obliteration -The first 200 feet or so of road is dug up so full-sized motor vehicles can't use the road, then it's blocked with a gate or other barrier. Culverts that are likely to fail are removed, all stream crossings are recontoured or reshaped, and the former roadbed is seeded for stabilization. In some cases, trees may be planted in the former roadbed. The road is still accessible by walking or with horses, and may still be open to motorcycles or ATV's.



Level II Obliteration - All of the stream crossings are removed and the entire road prism is reshaped; logs and rocks are piled on the former roadbed, and trees are planted as needed.

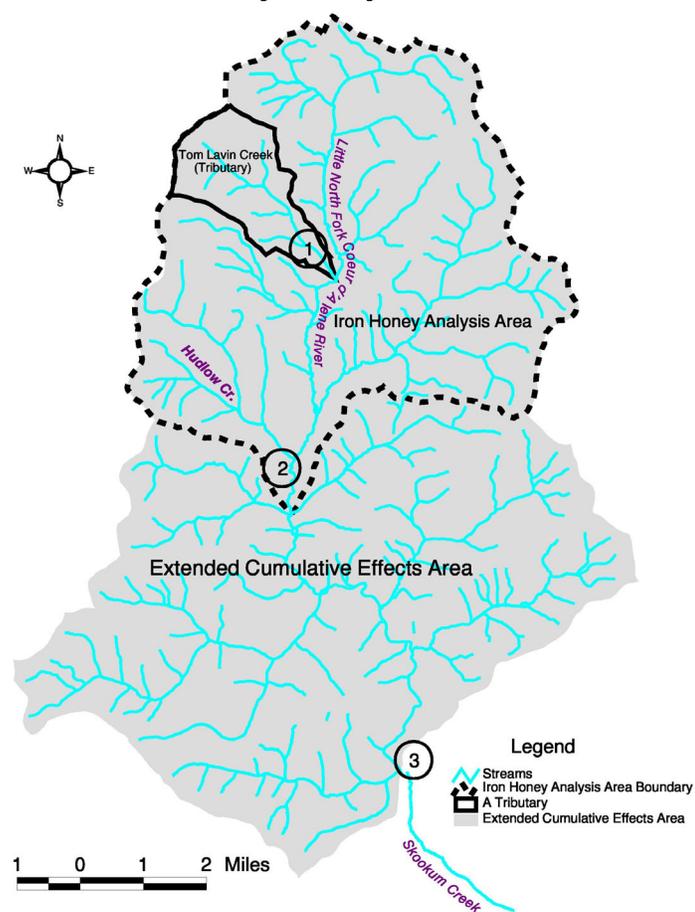


There are a number of key indicators to measure changes in water quality and fish habitat. Some are activities that would occur during watershed restoration (already displayed in the Summary Comparison of Activities Table on page 6), and some are actual changes in watershed and stream conditions, such as the amount of:

- *sediment in the stream*
- *sediment being delivered to the stream annually (through erosion of streambanks or road crossings, for example), and*
- *water in the stream (peak flows)*

Effects to water and fish habitat were measured at three scales, as displayed in the map below - (1) individual watersheds (such as Tom Lavin Creek), (2) the entire resource area (measured for the total Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene River above Hudlow Creek), and (3) an extended cumulative effects area, measured for the Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene River above Skookum Creek.

Iron Honey Analysis Scales



During our analysis, we used existing data and computer models to predict the changes in these conditions if the proposed alternatives were implemented. Here, we compare the Preferred Alternative 8 to the No-Action Alternative 1 and the Watershed Restoration-Only Alternative 6.

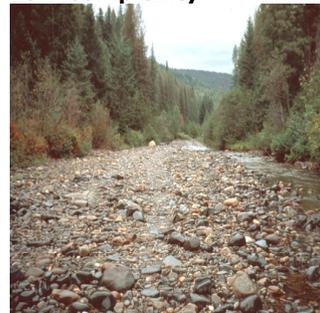
At each of the three analysis points, there is the potential for slight increases in sediment over what would

occur if we were to implement the No-Action Alternative (Alternative 1) or the watershed restoration-only alternative (Alternative 6). These are not considered to be significant increase levels - even though the potential exists for an increase in sediment or delay in watershed recovery, the increase would not be measurable in the stream. For example, if you dumped a cup of dirt into a stream, you know the sediment has increased; yet it would not be measurable at a gauging station or by using a sampler. There would also be an increase in peak flow for the total Little North Fork (above Hudlow Creek) and the Coeur d'Alene River (above Skookum) over Alternatives 1 and 6 (both of these would also result in slight increases over the current conditions). Again, this increase would be so slight as to not be measurable at a gauging station.

As a result of the watershed restoration activities under Preferred Alternative 8, fish passage would be increased by about 2 miles, compared to zero miles under the No-Action Alternative and 2.5 miles under Alternative 6. To improve the fish habitat, we would place large logs and rootwads into stream reaches that don't currently provide enough cover or complexity. The wood needed to do this would come from individually selected trees harvested across approximately 230 acres.

Alternative 6 would provide the most benefit to water and fish resources in the near future, since only aquatic restoration activities would occur, with no commercial timber harvest. However, looking at the long term and the entire ecosystem, this Alternative 6 would only perpetuate the forest health problems (described under Objective 2), affecting wildlife habitat, plant habitat, and eventually water resources. In addition, funding is unlikely to be available to accomplish many of the restoration activities under Alternative 6 (further discussion of this funding dilemma is provided later in this summary).

Low Complexity



High Complexity



Even though the watershed has been damaged by past activities and even with the proposed timber harvest and other activities, it would be better to implement the proposed activities than to just walk away. "The watershed is in such poor condition that we have nothing to lose and everything to gain by getting the restoration work done," said Fisheries Biologist Ed Lider. "The long-term benefits of restoration outweigh the short-term effects of the management activities."

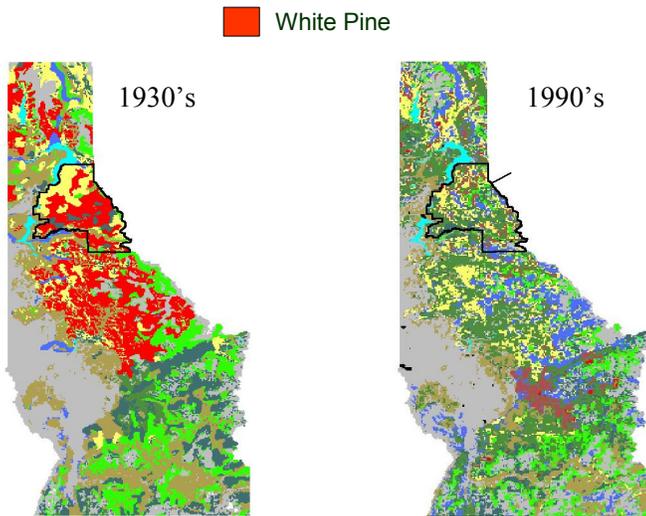


For a description of existing streams and fish habitat, and the changes that would occur under each alternative, please refer to Chapter III - 3.2 Aquatics, Appendix C - Aquatic Resources Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, and Appendix D - Watershed Characteristics, Condition Indicators, and Dominant Watershed Disturbances

Objective 2 Replace the more vulnerable tree species for those that are better able to resist insects and diseases, such as white pine, western larch, and ponderosa pine.

The forests in the Iron Honey Resource Area are not as healthy as they once were or should be, due to the effects of white pine blister rust, past harvest activities, and fire exclusion. Our current strategy against blister rust is a two-pronged approach. Since natural white pine has a very low level of resistance to the blister rust disease, our first line of defense is to plant selected rust-resistant seedlings to speed up the development of rust-resistance in white pine stands. Secondly, we are working to maintain a population of naturally regenerating and genetically diverse white pine that can develop a resistance to blister rust through natural selection. Even in areas where we harvest trees, we strive to maintain a naturally regenerating white pine population that has a high probability of retaining the available rust-resistant genes.

Partial harvest of highly valued white pine and suppression of forest fires allowed Douglas-fir, western hemlock and grand fir to grow into the understories of our forests. This created much thicker forests over larger areas, and makes it more likely that a fire in this area would burn hotter and more intensely, potentially killing trees, scorching soils and damaging streams. Western white pine and western larch are preferable species because they are more resistant to drought, insects, disease and fire than are species such as grand fir, hemlock, and Douglas-fir.



Courtesy of Theresa Jain Doctoral Dissertation WWP in CDA Basin 2001

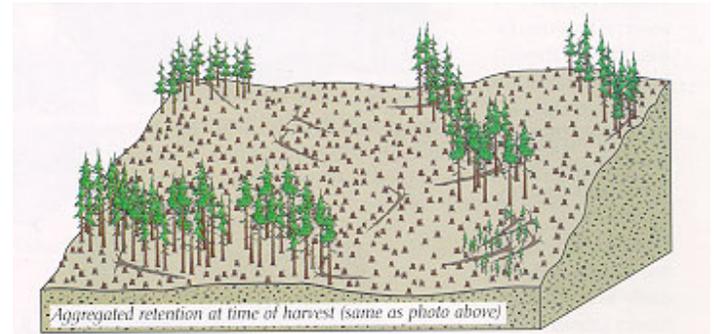
Under the Preferred Alternative 8, we would reduce (through harvest) the more disease-prone species like Douglas-fir and grand fir (by about 8%) to reduce competition for light, moisture and nutrients. We would then plant white pine and western larch in an effort to restore these species to their historical levels within the project area (increasing white pine by 6% and western larch by 2%).

Under Alternative 8, 89% of the harvest would occur using the shelterwood harvest method. By encompassing large areas in the harvest units (ranging in size from 46 to 327 acres), the shelterwood harvest method is intended to

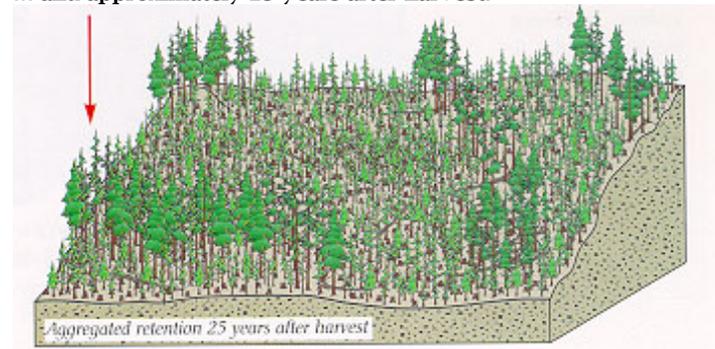
mimic the effects of the large stand-replacing fires that occurred in the area historically and provide healthy, resilient stands across the landscape in the future.

If no timber harvest activities occur in the Iron Honey Resource Area (as under Alternatives 1 and 6), the health of Douglas-fir, grand fir and hemlock stands (which cover about 81% of the area) would continue to decline, with trees dying from root disease, bark beetles and stem decays.

Artist's view of a shelterwood cut immediately after harvest...



... and approximately 25 years after harvest.



For a discussion of forest conditions and activities that would help transition our forests to species that more closely resemble historical situation, please refer to Chapter II - 2.6 Alternative Descriptions, and Chapter III - 3.3 Forest Vegetation.

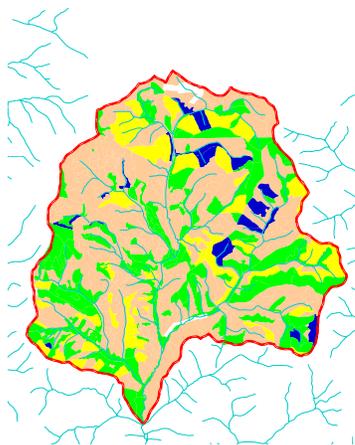
Objective 3 Provide a better mix of forest ages, increasing the amount of large and old forest, and connecting the blocks of old growth with corridors of large, mature trees.

Stands within the Iron Honey Resource Area that meet specific old growth criteria (a total of 459 acres) have been identified for management as old growth. The relatively low percentage of old growth in the area is due primarily to past harvest of white pine and losses to white pine blister rust. The existing old growth is primarily hemlock.

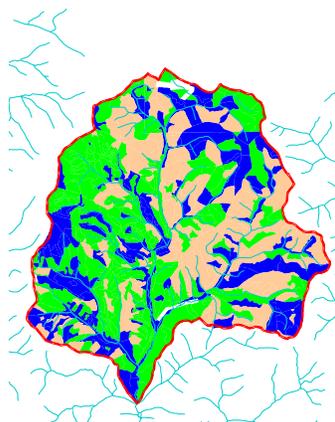
Some wildlife in the Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene River drainage would benefit from increasing the size of old growth blocks by setting aside additional stands that will eventually exhibit the characteristics of old growth, specifically managing stands to develop large cedar, western larch and white pine. Under the No-Action Alternative, no additional recruitment old growth would be

identified at this time. Under Alternatives 6 or 8, we would identify an additional 1,380 acres of trees to be managed for their old-growth characteristics in the future. By doing that, the amount of mature and old forest would be expected to increase over time, as displayed in the graphics below.

Age classes in the Iron Honey Resource Area now...



...and as they could appear in the year 2050.



For a discussion of forest conditions and activities that would help transition the age of our forests to more closely resemble historical situation, please refer to Chapter II - 2.6 Alternative Descriptions, and Chapter III - 3.3 Forest Vegetation.

Objective 4 Reduce the risk of wildfires that are so large and intense that they cause more damage than good.

Although this does not seem as critical as our other three objectives, we continue to be concerned about the hazards associated with the amount of dead trees, branches and brush in the Iron Honey Resource Area, as in other areas of the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District. All of these materials literally add "fuel to the fire." Historically, in normal years, fires may have burned whole stands of trees so intensely that the trees were killed (called "stand-replacing" fires), mixed with larger areas where the fire burned along the ground and in the lower branches of the trees (the "understory") before being stopped by summer rains.

In particularly dry years when fire starts were followed by high winds, high intensity fires could cover tens of thousands of acres. The fires of 1889 and 1910 are examples of stand-replacing fires. These fires often killed most trees within the fire perimeter, leaving islands of trees in riparian areas or where recent low intensity fires had removed dead limbs and brush from the understory.

The watersheds that make up the Iron Honey Resource Area escaped the worst of the fires that occurred in North Idaho at the turn of the century. Following the devastating wildfires of 1910, all land management agencies worked hard to provide the training, equipment, and manpower necessary to protect our forests from fire. In North Idaho, we have been very successful, which gave a measure of security to those living in and around the forests, and to those of us managing the forests. We haven't had a major stand-replacing fire in the Coeur d'Alene River Basin since 1931. However, science has now proven how important it is to have moderate and low-intensity fires burn through the forests on a regular basis.



Suppressing virtually all fires has resulted in forests overloaded with dead wood and brush so thick that it is impossible to walk through them in many areas. This accumulation of dead trees, branches and brush increases both the risk of wildfire and the potential for a severe, intense fire. This risk is increased by the ongoing drought in our area - during the past year, we've received only 66% of the average rainfall (based on rainfall averages for the past 85 years).

Our goal is not to prevent all wildfires, but to reduce the number of small fires that become large, and to restore forests to a healthy condition that will help to minimize uncharacteristically intense forest fires.

Under the Preferred Alternative 8, we would reduce the amount of dead trees, branches and brush on 1,340 acres of the forest floor by using controlled fire to underburn - that is, to burn along the ground and into the lower branches of the trees. In the event of a wildfire, this would help keep the fire burning along the ground rather than in the canopy, reducing the fire intensity and therefore the firebrands that spark new fires. We would be able to better control the fires through the equipment and personnel typically available to us each fire season.



Reducing the amount of fuel doesn't mean removing all of the dead branches and brush. It's important to leave a certain amount of larger dead trees and branches in these areas to eventually decay and provide essential nutrients to the soil.

Implementing the timber harvest and prescribed burning activities would, although only to a small extent, reduce the risk of severe fires in the treatment areas. While Alternatives 1 and 6 would have no immediate effect, the amount of fuels available would increase over time as forest stands continue to mature and decay. Limbs and

the tops of dead trees would fall to the ground, contributing to the fuels.

Because forests on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District have already been damaged by insects and storm damage, these changes would occur more quickly than in a healthy forest. When a forest fire ignites, the flame lengths would be greater than in a healthy stand, and the fire would spread faster.



For a discussion of conditions that contribute to fire risk and the activities that would help reduce the risk of fire damage to soils and other resources, please refer to Chapter II - 2.6 Alternative Descriptions, and Chapter III - 3.4 Soil Productivity and 3.5 Fire/Fuels.

Other Issues That Concern Us

In addition to those issues we've already discussed in relation to our four objectives (water and fish, forest vegetation, old growth, soils and fire risk), public comments reflected our concerns about the possible effects to wildlife, recreation and scenery.

Wildlife

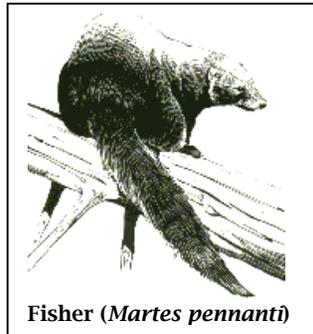


The Iron Honey Resource Area provides food and shelter for an abundance of wildlife. The area is home to whitetail deer, moose, and elk, as well as a variety of birds (common loon, harlequin ducks, goshawk, owls, woodpeckers, and songbirds) and smaller animals (pine marten, wolverine, and fisher).

There are other animals not commonly found in the area, but the right kind of habitat is available and they could move into the area. For example, bald eagles, lynx and wolves probably visit the area on occasion, but are normally just passing through.

Our analysis considered the effects to Threatened and Endangered species (gray wolf, bald eagle, lynx, and grizzly bear), Sensitive species (goshawk, wolverine, fisher, black-backed woodpeckers, flammulated owls, white-headed woodpeckers, and Coeur d'Alene salamanders), big-game management indicator species (elk), old-growth management indicator species (pine marten and pileated woodpeckers), nongame species (such as amphibians, rodents, songbirds, furbearers and raptors), and neotropical or migrant birds (those that breed and nest in one area and migrate to another area to winter).

We have discussed wildlife habitat needs and concerns with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and with Idaho Fish and Game officials. As provided by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, we must ensure that our actions do not jeopardize listed species or adversely affect their habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviews



Fisher (*Martes pennanti*)

our analysis and determination of effects to ensure that we have provided the best scientific and commercial data available concerning the anticipated impact on listed species or critical habitat, and we work together to fulfill the requirements of the Act (referred to as the "consultation" process).



To view the comments provided by Idaho Fish & Game and other members of the public, please refer to Appendix A - Public Involvement in Issue Identification And Alternative Development and Modification

Greg Tourtlotte provided comments on behalf of Idaho Fish and Game that were used to develop a new alternative (Alternative 8) and design features of the alternatives that will help to protect a diversity of wildlife habitats. For example, the Iron Honey Resource Area would be divided into three subdivisions. Activities would occur in no more than two subdivisions at a time, so that wildlife would have an undisturbed area to move into while we accomplish our activities. We would leave many large trees in all harvest units to provide homes for those types of wildlife that like to live in the cavities of standing dead trees (called "snags"). In addition, opening roads would be timed to have the least disruption to big-game animals such as deer and elk.



For a discussion of features designed to protect wildlife and their habitat, please refer to Chapter II - 2.6.9 Features Common to All Action Alternatives (specifically section (F) Features Designed to Protect Wildlife Habitat)

Recreation and Scenery

The Iron Honey Resource Area is relatively close to the Coeur d'Alene and Spokane metropolitan areas, making it a popular destination for the many people who are drawn to the lakes, rivers and streams. In the Iron Honey Resource Area, they camp along the Upper Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene River and other smaller streams. After driving to their destination, they mostly get around on ATV's, with some on motorcycles or horseback.



Since 1995, the number of ATV's in Idaho has increased three-fold, with over 33,000 ATV's currently registered in our state. In winter, snowmobiles navigate the

more than 40 miles of groomed trails in the Iron Honey Resource Area, often gathering at the old Horse Heaven airstrip to race.

In addition to providing clean water and fish habitat, the water corridor formed by the Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene River is a strong attraction to forest visitors. Segments of the Coeur d'Alene River and its' North Fork have been identified as potential recreational river segments under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. None of the alternatives (including Preferred Alternative 8) would

modify these river segments to the extent that eligibility or classification would be affected.

The proposed activities would have little effect on the recreation of the area. Harvest activities could disrupt traffic into the area at times, and could produce dust, noise and smoke in the immediate vicinity. The watershed improvement work would also likely disrupt traffic on a temporary basis. The change in groomed snowmobile routes won't greatly affect the quality of their experience, since the new routes would have fewer curves and would be easier to groom. Except for the changes in the groomed routes, snowmobile use would not be affected; overland snow use would continue.



There are about 288 miles of road crossing the Iron Honey Resource Area. Most are old roads that were used for past logging and later closed. About 85 miles of road are currently open in the area. Under the No-Action Alternative, road management would continue as directed under the District's Travel Plan. Under the Alternative 6 long-range transportation plan, there would be about 53 miles of open road. Alternative 8 would have slightly more, with 57 miles of open road.

Under the No-Action Alternative, there are no roads currently designated specifically for ATV's and smaller vehicles. Under Alternative 6, there would be 2 miles of road designated for these uses (which can also be used for non-motorized access, such as horses, hiking, and mountain biking). Under Alternative 8, there would be 15 miles of road available to these uses.

There are two areas where the views in the area are of particular concern - on Road 209 along the Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene River, and on the Chilco Mountain National Recreation Trail. If the Preferred Alternative 8 is implemented, some harvest units would be visible from both of these viewpoints, as well as from several other less sensitive viewpoints. In order to lessen the impact of the changes, harvest in these units would use tree screens and other boundary effects, so that most of the units cannot be seen from the road or campsites along the Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene River.

Although the recreation experience and scenery would be affected over the short term, the activities would be implemented in such a manner that there would be no long-term impacts to either.



For a discussion of current recreation uses and the changes that could be noticed by forest visitors, please refer to Chapter II - 2.7 Comparison of Alternatives (specifically sections 2.7.6 Recreation and 2.7.7 Scenery), and Chapter III - 3.7 Recreation Access and 3.8 Scenic Resources.

How much is this going to cost?

There are essentially two concerns related to funding - how much money will be generated, and how much money will be spent.



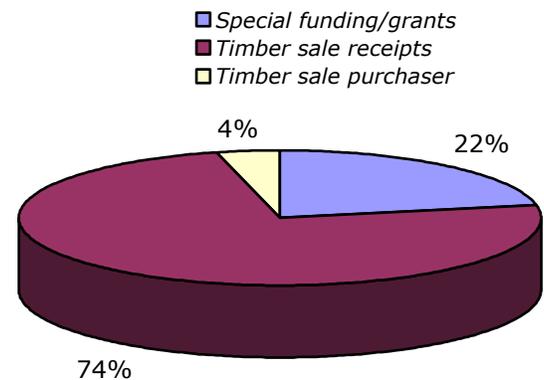
Under our Preferred Alternative 8, the proposed timber harvest would contribute to the operation of local mills, bringing money into the local and state economy through employment and tax revenues. After giving Kootenai and Shoshone Counties their share (approximately \$2.3 million), the project would result in a net value of approximately \$1.8 million, all of which would go toward paying for the watershed restoration work. This would still not be quite enough to pay for all of the proposed work - an estimated \$557,000 of additional money would come through special funding or grants, and about \$105,000 worth would be accomplished by the timber sale purchaser.

The charts below display the percent of funding that would come from each of these three sources to pay for the watershed restoration work proposed under the watershed restoration-only Alternative 6 and Preferred Alternative 8.

Watershed Restoration Funding Sources - Alternative 6



Watershed Restoration Funding Sources - Alternative 8



Some people don't like the idea that watershed restoration would be paid for from money generated by timber harvest. In the past, we've received considerably less annual funding than we've needed to accomplish our watershed restoration projects (and far less than the \$2.5 million needed to accomplish all of the restoration activities identified under Alternative 6). We don't anticipate any change in those funding levels anytime soon, so we have to get the work done with the money we've got - in this case, the bulk of the money would be generated from the sale of timber. However, it's important

to remember that we wouldn't be cutting timber just to generate funds - the harvest, prescribed burning, and subsequent planting would benefit the health of the forest. If we were to get more funding up front than we expected, we would spend it to get the watershed restoration work done first, similar to what we did in the Camp Goose, Brett Creek and other watershed restoration projects in recent years.



For a discussion of financial costs and revenues, please refer to Chapter II - 2.7 Comparison of Alternatives (specifically sections 2.7.8 Finances), and Chapter III 3.9 Finances.

Other opportunities

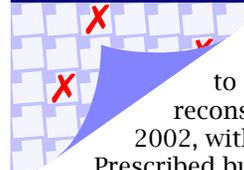
We have the opportunity to accomplish other activities that could help to improve streams and their related habitat (through removal of problem roads or crossings, placing wood in streams to improve fish habitat, etc.), increasing the amount of white pine and western larch, improving forest health through precommercial thinning and pruning, and reducing the spread of noxious weeds by surveying, monitoring and treating noxious weed infestations. We do not have to accomplish these in order to do the activities identified under the alternatives, nor are these opportunities guaranteed to be accomplished - rather, they *could* be accomplished if funding becomes available.



For more information about these activities, please refer to Chapter II - 2.5 Opportunities.

When would activities take place?

Calendar of events



If Preferred Alternative 8 is selected, timber sales would likely be sold in fiscal year 2002, with completion of harvest activities in 3 to 5 years. Road construction and reconstruction activities would also begin in 2002, with completion in about 3 years.

Prescribed burning would begin in 2003, lasting 3 to 4 years. Tree planting would follow (beginning about 2005), and lasting 3 to 4 years. Depending on the source of funding, watershed restoration activities could begin as early as 2002, with any watershed restoration funded by the sale of timber beginning the following year. All watershed restoration activities would be complete by 2012.

The actual seasons of work and acres treated would depend upon availability of funding and timing restrictions (for example, those to protect nesting birds or spawning fish). The project team is looking at using a "stewardship" contract to implement any timber sales and accomplish the sale-related restoration work. Under this type of contract, virtually all of the watershed restoration work (such as removing and upgrading culverts, or obliterating and recontouring sections of road) is done by the timber sale purchaser before or at the same time as the timber harvest.

This is different from our standard contract, where the timber harvest occurs first (with only a portion of the necessary road work), generating funds that are used to

contract the watershed restoration work. Using the stewardship contract could change the schedule for implementation and accomplishment.

In addition, implementation could be delayed by an administrative review (appeal) of the project decision. Implementation of those activities described as opportunities would occur based on funding availability.

If new information or changed circumstances relating to the environmental impacts of this proposal come to our attention after the decision has been made and before the project is completed, we will carefully review the information to determine its importance based on guidance by the Forest Service Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook.



To learn more about possible timing of activities, (including our process in the event of new information) please refer to Chapter II - 2.6.9 (K) Anticipated Timing of Activities Under the Action Alternatives.

Monitoring Our Activities

Monitoring is done to ensure that we've implemented activities as we said we would (called implementation monitoring), that the activities are having the level of effects that we predicted (effectiveness monitoring), and that the long-term effects are as anticipated (trend monitoring).

Some monitoring elements can be documented as soon as an activity is implemented. For example, road density is one measure for improving hydrologic integrity - as roads are removed, the road density decreases. To monitor effectiveness, we measure the changes of specific conditions at specific locations. This would include such things as fish abundance, the amount of water in pools, and an inventory of large wood in the stream channel. Other elements have to be checked periodically over time, to ensure the change in conditions is trending the way we planned. One such element is the change in forest composition - that is, the tree species that make up each forest stand.

Each year, the Districts of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests report their monitoring findings to the staff in the Supervisor's Office, who use the information to develop a "Forest Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Report" that is available to the public.



To learn more about monitoring of activities in the Iron Honey Resource Area, please refer to Chapter II - 2.6.10 Monitoring and Appendix C - Aquatic Resources Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

Copies of the monitoring report can be obtained by calling the Supervisor's Office at (208) 765-7223 or writing to the Forest Planner, Idaho Panhandle National Forests, 3815 Schreiber Way, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815-8363. Copies are also available on our website:

www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/eco/manage.html

Meet the Iron Honey Project Team

There have been many people involved in this project, which has taken several years to near completion. The project was initiated in 1996, but was at times derailed by more pressing concerns, such as responding to the ice storm of 1996 and the Douglas-fir beetle infestation of 1998. Some people have been with the team from the very beginning, while others have only recently become part of the effort. The following are primary members of the project team. There are several more people who contributed to the project in the course of their work - for example, the aquatics crew that gathered stream data and who will implement any watershed restoration projects, the timber crew who gathered site-specific unit information and who will layout any harvest units, and the people who provided similar support during sensitive plant surveys, wildlife surveys, road reconnaissance, and so forth.

The 16 primary team members have a combined career experience of nearly 350 years, which does not include their years of work in private industry!

Glenn Truscott has been the Team Leader for the project since it began. He recently put the project timeline in



perspective by noting that his daughter was in the seventh grade when he started this project, and she's a freshman in college this fall! Team leader is a role Glenn has filled many times in the past several years. His education includes a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry (majoring in Range Management) and another in Wildlife Biology. Glenn has been with the Forest Service since 1972, working in Idaho and Montana as a forestry technician and forester, planning and preparing timber sales, and in fire control. Prior to that, Glenn served in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for 10 years as a Commissioned Reserve Officer Small Combat Unit Leader and Biologist.

There are several "resource specialists" on the team, each focusing on a particular aspect or value of the area. We have had two silviculturists on the team, providing information and analyses related to the forests. **Steve Zieroth** started with the team, providing the silvicultural analysis and initial harvest prescriptions. His education includes a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry. Steve began his career with the Forest Service in 1974, working in California, Colorado, Washington, and Idaho. In 2000, Steve left Idaho for a position as Assistant Fire Manager on a National Forest in Utah.

When Steve left, his replacement on the team was **Joyce Stock**. A certified silviculturist, her education includes a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Resources. Her career with the Forest Service also began in 1974, working as a forestry technician and forester in Minnesota and Idaho. Prior to that, she worked in private industry as an interpretive naturalist.



There have been three key people

addressing the aquatic concerns of the Iron Honey Resource Area. **Ted Geier** has been the lead hydrologist for the team. His education includes a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Management, a Master's degree in Public and Environmental Policy, and a Doctor of Philosophy Degree (Ph.D.) in Forest Hydrology and Water Quality. He began his career with the Forest Service in 1993 as a hydrologist in Alaska before coming to Idaho. Prior to that, he worked for 3 years as a consultant in private research in northern Minnesota. Ted has recently accepted a job as hydrologist in the Regional Office for the Forest Service's Eastern Region in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Throughout the project, Ted has had the support of hydrology technician **John Ruebke**. John has an Associate's Degree in Forest Technology. He began his career with the Forest Service in 1981, working in the fields of planning, timber operations, and hydrology.



An issue closely related to the water resource is protection of fisheries habitat. **Edward Lider** is a certified Fisheries Scientist, and has been a fisheries biologist on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests for several years. His education includes both a Bachelor of Science and Master's degree in Fisheries Management and Limnology (the scientific study of lakes, ponds and streams). His career with the Forest Service began in 1981. In addition to fisheries, he has worked in the fields of hydrology and wildlife in Idaho. Prior to that, he worked for 3 years with the Desert Research Institute as a Research Associate in aquatic ecology in Nevada, Oregon, and California. He also worked in private industry for 3 years as a fisheries biologist and limnologist in Nevada.



The other biologist on the team is **Gail Worden**, who assessed the wildlife species and habitat in the Iron Honey Resource Area. Gail has a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Management. She began her career with the Forest Service in 1978, and has served her entire tenure in Idaho.



Val Goodnow is the Team's botanist. Val has a Bachelor of Science degree in biology. She began her career with the Forest Service in 1983, and has worked in Idaho in the field of silviculture as well as botany. In addition to addressing Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive plants and their habitat, Val is the Noxious Weed Treatment Coordinator for the District. She identified the sites and

methods for noxious weed treatment in the Iron Honey Resource Area.



Jack Dorrell addressed the issues of recreation and scenic resources in the Iron Honey Resources Area. Jack has a Bachelor of Science degree in Recreation Management. He began his career with the Forest Service in 1984, and has worked in Idaho in the fields of recreation, minerals, range, land uses, and watershed resources. Prior to that, he worked in the recreation field for 3 years for the City of

Burbank (California), and for 3 years for the State of California. Jack's work in scenery management has been based on training received through the Forest Service.

Dave Brown has conducted the fire and fuels management for the Iron Honey Resource Area project. Dave has a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Resource Management. He began his career with the Forest Service in 1978, working in the field of Forest Management in Idaho and Oregon. Prior to that, Dave worked for private industry for 5 years in Oregon.



Carl Ritchie has served a dual role on the team, addressing both soils and heritage resources (buildings, sites or other areas or objects that have scientific, historic or social values). Carl has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology and Archaeology, and is well known as the unofficial historian of the Coeur d'Alene National Forests (now the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District),

and especially the Silver Valley. He began his career with the Forest Service in 1980, working with both heritage resources and soil science in Idaho. Prior to that, he worked for 8 years as a field archaeologist for private industry in California, Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming.

The issues related to the transportation system in the Iron Honey Resource Area have been addressed by two people. **Dennis Adams** was the engineer first assigned to the team. Dennis has a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering. He began his career with the Forest Service in 1973, working in engineering and logging systems in both Idaho and Montana. After Dennis retired in 1999, **Dwight Clift** took on the engineering responsibilities for the Iron Honey Resource Area project. Dwight began his Forest Service career in 1970, working as an engineer in both Idaho and Oregon.



Ralph Shepard provided technical support to the team, developing a variety of maps using the Geographic Information System (GIS) and related computer software programs. Ralph has a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Resource Management. He began his career with the Forest Service in 1977, and has served his entire career in Idaho.

Kerry Arneson is the Writer-Editor for the Iron Honey Resource Area project team, helping to coordinate the analysis and documentation process, as well as the public involvement efforts associated with the project. Kerry began her career with the Forest Service in 1980, working in public information and planning in Idaho, Oregon and Washington. She also worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for 2 years in their Public Affairs Office in Vicksburg, Mississippi.



The Iron Honey Resource Area project has had a number of people provide guidance and supervision. **Steve Bateman** is the Ecosystems Staff Officer at the Coeur



d'Alene River Ranger District. As such, he has provided guidance through the analysis process. Steve has a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry. He began his career with the Forest Service in 1972. He has worked in forestry and silviculture, fire management, and forest planning in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, California, South Dakota and Minnesota.

The District Ranger is responsible for steering the direction of the team and coordinating the project with the many interested publics. There have been three people in this role since the project began. **Susan Jeheber-Matthews** was the District Ranger at the time the project was initiated. When she left for a National Forest in California, Deputy (and Acting) District Ranger **Jose Castro** stepped into the role. Last spring, **Joe Stringer** accepted the District Ranger position for the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District, and has since steered the course for the team and the project. Prior to becoming District Ranger, he served as an attorney for the Department of Agriculture's Office of General Counsel, making his home in Ogden, Utah. Along with his legal experience, Joe brings to the District a determination to manage these forests so that they are in better shape for future generations as a result of our actions.



In the Final EIS, the project team members are identified in the List of Preparers, along with their area of expertise, and their experience.

What are the decisions to be made, and who will make them?

Forest Supervisor Ranotta McNair is the Deciding Official. When she decides which activities, if any, should be implemented in the Iron Honey Resource Area, the details and rationale for her decision will be described in a document known as the "Record of Decision." The Forest Supervisor will select an alternative based on how well the alternative addresses our objectives, public concerns, Forest policy (including standards, goals and objectives of the Forest Plan), and other agency goals and legal mandates. The decision will be prepared based on comments received throughout the process from the public and other agencies, identification of necessary corrections or additional analysis, and any new information.

Ranotta McNair was named Forest Supervisor of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests in May 2001. Her most recent post was as Deputy Forest Supervisor of the National Forests in North Carolina.

Prior to that, McNair worked for the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Region, guiding an interagency effort in the formulation of the Northwest Forest Plan. Her previous service was largely in Oregon, as Area Manager for the Bureau of Land Management's Prineville District, Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor on the Deschutes National Forest, Nursery Manager of the Bend Pine Nursery, Area Ranger for the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area on the Siuslaw National Forest, and District Ranger on the Zigzag Ranger District of the Mt. Hood National Forest.

McNair is a forester by trade, graduating from Oregon State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Outdoor Recreation Planning and a minor in Forest Management.

When will the decisions be made?

Although no public review of a Final EIS is required before issuing a Record of Decision, we are providing the public with a 30-day review of the Iron Honey Final EIS because the document is quite large, and because we realize how interested and concerned the public is in any potential action we might take in the area. We anticipate issuing the Record of Decision sometime in early 2002.

The Final EIS –including maps and letters from the public - is available on compact disk (CD) or in paper format from the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District (see our telephone number and street address at the end of this summary), and on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests' internet website:

www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/eco/manage/nepa

What's the best way to find the information you need in the Final EIS?

The environmental impact statement is not a decision document, it simply shares our analysis findings. Because we are required to document so many specific issues and regulations in a fairly rigid format, the document is unavoidably long. You may want to abandon the habit of reading a book from front to back, and focus on those sections that discuss the issues that most concern you.



If you're interested in learning what brought this project about, and the basis for our process, refer to Chapter I. This sets the stage for the project - describing why we believe we need to do something in this area, our objectives, the organization of the document, and our process for making a decision.

If you want to get familiar with the alternatives, start in Chapter II. This chapter focuses on the key resource issues upon which we based development of the alternatives, specific features of the alternatives (including mitigation measures necessary for implementation, and the monitoring that would occur) and a comparison of the effects of the alternatives. See also -

- ☑ Appendix A, describing how the public's involvement helped identify issues and develop alternatives, including descriptions of those issues not addressed in detail and those alternatives briefly considered but later eliminated from further study
- ☑ Appendix E, providing specific information about each of the timber harvest units proposed under each alternative

If you want to learn more about the natural resources and human uses of the area, the most detailed information is in Chapter III and certain appendices.

This chapter addresses both the existing conditions of specific resources and the changes that would occur to each resource under each alternative. Direct, indirect and cumulative impacts are discussed, as well as whether each alternative complies with Forest Service policy, Forest Plan standards, and other federal and state laws or requirements.

If you are specifically interested in water resources and fisheries habitat, start in Chapter III, section 3.2 Aquatics. See also -

- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6, Table II-2, identifying watershed recovery treatments (such as road obliteration and culvert removal) that would occur under each of the alternatives
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.9 (A), describing specific features of the alternatives that were designed to protect aquatic resources (such as stream buffers and timing restrictions)



- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.10 (A), describing actions (mitigation measures) that would reduce the effects of the activities on aquatic resources (specifically addressing stream crossings)
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.11, describing monitoring activities that would occur to ensure effects to aquatic resources are within the extent predicted during our analysis
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.7.1, comparing effects to aquatic resources (including fish habitat) under each of the alternatives
- ☑ Appendix C, describing the Aquatic Resources Monitoring and Evaluation Plan specific to the Iron Honey Resource Area project
- ☑ Appendix D, describing in detail the watershed characteristics, condition indicators, and dominant watershed disturbances for each of the watersheds in the Iron Honey Resource Area

If you are specifically interested in forest stand conditions, start in Chapter III, section 3.3 Forest Vegetation. See also -

- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6, Table II-2, identifying vegetative restoration treatment (harvesting and associated activities) that would occur under each of the alternatives
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.9 (B), describing specific features of the alternatives that were designed to improve vegetation management (such as harvest unit design and guidelines)
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.9 (D), describing specific features of the alternatives that were designed to protect rare plants
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.10 (B), describing actions (mitigation measures) that would reduce the effects of the activities on rare plants (including surveys and buffers)
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.11, describing monitoring activities that would occur to ensure effects to vegetative resources are within the extent predicted during our analysis
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.7.2, comparing effects to forest vegetation (including old growth) under each of the alternatives
- ☑ Appendix B, describing Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plants
- ☑ Appendix G, describing proposed harvest openings greater than 40 acres
- ☑ Appendix H, describing pruning and thinning opportunities in the Iron Honey Resource Area



If you are specifically interested in protection of soil resources, start in Chapter III, section 3.4 Soil Productivity. See also -

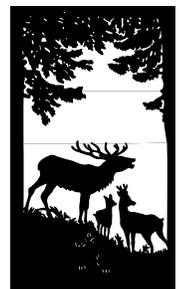
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.9 (C), describing specific features of the alternatives that were designed to protect soils (such as leaving some branches and other woody debris on the ground to sustain nutrient recycling, and spacing guidelines for skid trails)
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.10 (C), describing actions (mitigation measures) that would reduce the effects of the activities on soils (specifically on low potassium sites)
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.7.3, comparing effects to soil productivity under each of the alternatives

If you are specifically interested in the risk of fire, start in Chapter III, section 3.5 Fire/Fuels. See also -

- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6, Table II-2, identifying fuel-reducing activities that would occur under each of the alternatives (including underburning and top-attached yarding)
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.9 (E), describing specific features of the alternatives that were designed to protect air quality (especially during burning activities)
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.7.4, comparing risk of wildfire under each of the alternatives

If you are specifically interested in wildlife and their habitat, start in Chapter III, section 3.6 Wildlife. See also -

- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.9 (F), describing specific features of the alternatives that were designed to protect wildlife habitat (such as maintaining snags for wildlife habitat and timing restrictions)
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.10 (D), describing actions (mitigation measures) that would reduce the effects of the activities on wildlife (including the use of subdivisions to provide security, surveys of various species, and buffering in certain habitats)
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.11, describing monitoring activities that would occur to ensure effects to wildlife are within the extent predicted during our analysis
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.7.5, comparing effects to wildlife habitat under each of the alternatives



If you are specifically interested in how the proposed activities directly affect people, there are three areas of the document that you will want to review: **Recreation Access, Scenic Resources, and Finances.**

Recreation Access is addressed in Chapter III, section 3.7. See also -

- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.9 (I), describing the Long-term Transportation Plan that would be implemented under any of the alternatives
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.10 (E), describing actions (mitigation measures) that would reduce the effects related to recreation (specifically the effects of off-road vehicle use)
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.11, describing monitoring activities that would occur to ensure effects to public access are within the extent predicted during our analysis
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.7.6, comparing effects to recreation under each of the alternatives
- ☑ Appendix F, describing the existing transportation system and changes that would occur in public access to the Iron Honey Resource Area over the long term



Scenic Resources are addressed in Chapter III, section 3.8. See also -

- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.6.10 (F), describing actions (mitigation measures) that would reduce the effects of the activities on scenery (by blending unit boundaries and retaining certain tree species to help diversify the color and texture of the stand in the future)
- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.7.7, comparing effects to scenery under each of the alternatives

Finances are addressed in Chapter III, section 3.9. See also -

- ☑ Chapter II, section 2.7.8, comparing effects to finances under each of the alternatives

Also, refer to Appendix A, which displays copies of comment letters received from the public and describes how the public comments were used to identify issues and develop alternatives, with our response to their comments.

The remainder of the document provides supporting information. A **List of Preparers** identifies the individuals who conducted the analyses and prepared the environmental impact statement. A **List of References** provides the full citation for those references noted in the environmental impact statement. A list of **Acronyms** used in the text is provided, and the **Glossary** defines terms that may be unfamiliar to the reader. A **List to Whom Copies of this environmental impact statement Have Been Sent** is provided (although it is likely that others will request and receive copies of the document).

Supporting information



During the course of this project, we've generated and used much more information than we could fit into the document and still have a somewhat readable product, either because the information was very technical in nature or simply too long. Those items are referred to as being part of the "project files." All project files for the Iron Honey Resource Area Environmental Impact Statement are available for review by the public.

For more information or if you'd like to review the Project Files, please contact

Steve Bateman, Ecosystems Staff Officer
or
Glenn Truscott, Project Team Leader
by telephoning
(208) 664-2318

or by visiting us at the
Fernan Office
of the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District
2502 East Sherman Avenue
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814

