

The Analysis Area

The Clearwater National Forest contains approximately 1.8 million acres in north central Idaho and encompasses the North and Middle Forks of the Clearwater River and the Lochsa, Potlatch and Palouse River drainages. These rivers are part of the Snake and Columbia River System. About 972,000 acres of the 1.8 million is Inventoried Roadless Areas with an additional 271,000 acres in designated areas such as wilderness or wild & scenic rivers. The remaining 550,000 acres has been developed with roads. Nearly all of the classified roads are located within the 550,000 acre developed part of the Forest.

The ID Team divided the Forest into five subbasin watersheds for analysis and reporting purposes. Analysis findings will refer to these five areas only as needed to point out specific situations. Generally, results will be discussed Forest-wide. The five subbasins are:

- Palouse/Hangman
- Lochsa/Middle Fork of the Clearwater
- Clearwater Main Stem
- Upper North Fork of the Clearwater
- Lower North Fork of the Clearwater

The Palouse subbasin covers 1,521,000 acres and is made up of Forest Service, State Idaho, Bureau of Land Management, Corps of Engineers, Nez Perce tribal and private lands. Only 52,920 acres are National Forest System Lands. Only a very small amount of the National Forest is located in the Hangman subbasin. Many Forest roads traverse public and privately owned lands. The primary landforms are low-relief rolling hills and colluvial midslopes with vegetation communities composed of primarily Douglas-fir, western larch, grand fir, ponderosa pine, and western white pine. Overall erosion potential is low in this subbasin.

The Lochsa/Middle Fork of the Clearwater subbasin covers 892,181 acres of mostly forested, steep mountainous country. The Clearwater National Forest manages approximately 719,600 acres. The Nez Perce National Forest manages a portion of the Middle Fork subbasin (57,826 acres) but this is not included in this roads analysis. The remaining lands are privately owned.

The Clearwater main stem subbasin covers 1,490,000 acres and is made up of National Forest Service System, State of Idaho, Bureau of Land Management, Nez Perce tribal, Corps of Engineers and private lands. About 136,000 acres of the subbasin are National Forest System lands. These public lands are located in the Potlatch River and Lolo Creek watersheds.

The Upper North of the Clearwater subbasin contains total 827,215 acres and is made up of primarily Clearwater National Forest System lands. There 781,705 acres of land managed by the Clearwater National Forest with the remainder being privately owned. The Lower North Fork of the Clearwater subbasin contains 737,491 acres and is made up of primarily private and State of Idaho lands. It drains into Dworshak Reservoir. There 90,382 acres of land managed by the Clearwater National Forest in this subbasin.

Generally, erosion potential is low on rolling hill landscapes and high on steep breaklands for the Lochsa/Middle Fork, Clearwater, and Upper and Lower North Fork of the Clearwater subbasins, although potentials also vary due to geology, slope angle, and other factors.

See Figure 1 for a map display of National Forest System lands.