

FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT 04-01
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest
Land and Resource Management Plan

Amendment

This Forest Plan amendment amends the 1983 GMUG Land and Resource Management Plan, as Amended and republished in 1991. This amendment reflects the decision documented in the March 2004 Decision Notice related specifically to this amendment, and the decision to allow motorized use on selected routes of the Grand Mesa, reflected a Decision Notice dated December 1, 2003. Those decisions are supported by the environmental analysis documented in the Environmental Assessment for Grand Mesa Travel Management, published in August 2002.

The direction in the Plan that is the focus of this amendment is attached to this amendment as Appendix A.

By this amendment, the designation of routes #4, #25, and #27 as motorized recreation travel routes is allowed even though these routes pass through areas which are not meeting above stated HE objectives, and there is a consequent reduction in calculated Habitat effectiveness for elk. Routes 110, 121 and 129 also pass through areas where HE objectives are being met and the decision to allow ATV use on these routes does not reduce calculated HE, and need not be addressed in this amendment.

Applicable Regulation/Direction

This amendment follows procedure from the Planning Regulations at 36 CFR 219, dated September 30, 1982, and in Forest Service Manual 1900, and Forest Service Handbook 1909.12.

Significance Determination

Attached to this amendment as Appendix B is a copy of applicable direction for amending Forest Plans. As I review the criteria for determining the significance of an amendment in both the Forest Service Manual at FSM 1900, and the Forest Service Handbook at FSH 1909.12.Chapter , it is clear to me that this amendment is not a significant plan amendment.

Specifically, looking at criteria for significance in the FSM, multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management are not affected; there is not adjustment of management area boundaries or management prescriptions; the change to the applicable standard and guideline is very small and limited in application to less than 3 miles of routes.

In terms of direction in the FSH , the location and size to this change is very small in relation to the over-all National Forest. There is no change in goals objectives, or outputs (goods and services) from the Forest. The introduction of one additional mile of access for motorized use in a 5A management prescription area, does not in true effect change that prescription, and there is no possible effect to any other management prescription.

This amendment is a non-significant amendment of the Forest Plan.

Effective Date

This amendment will be effective 5 days after the end of the appeal filing period for the March 2004 Decision Notice related to this amendment, or 15 days after resolution of appeals if any are received.

ROBERT L. STORCH
Forest Supervisor
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests

Date

**AMENDMENT 04-01, APPENDIX A
SUMMARY OF FOREST AND MANAGEMENT AREA DIRECTION RELATING TO
HABITAT CAPABILITY AND HABITAT EFFECTIVENESS**

Management Area	Management Area Emphasis	Management Activities	General Direction	Chapter 3 Standards and Guidelines
	Forest Direction	Transportation System Management	04 Manage public motorized use on roads and trails to maintain or enhance effective habitat for elk. (3201 GM)	a. Objective level of habitat effectiveness for elk within each fourth order watershed is at least 40% (i.e. 40% or above) (9200 GM)
1A				
1B				
1D				
2A				
2B				
3A	Provide for Semi-Primitive non-motorized recreation experience	Wildlife Habitat Improvement and Maintenance	01 Maintain wildlife habitat effectiveness. Permanent openings may be employed. Reduce disturbance to wildlife so that no significant long-term negative wildlife effects result. (0161) (3A)	a. Work toward a minimum level of 80% habitat effectiveness for elk. (9077 GM)
4B	Optimize habitat capability for all management indicator species	Transportation System Management	02 Manage public motorized use on roads and trails to maintain or enhance effective habitat for elk.(3202 GM)	a. Work toward a minimum level of 80% habitat effectiveness for elk. (9203 GM)
4D	Emphasis is on Aspen Management	Transportation System Management	02 Manage public motorized use on roads and trails to maintain or enhance effective habitat for elk.(3202 GM)	a. Work toward a minimum level of 60% habitat effectiveness for elk. (9204 GM)
5A	Optimize habitat capability for big game on nonforested winter range	Transportation System Management	02 Manage public motorized use on roads and trails to maintain or enhance effective habitat	a. Work toward a minimum level of 90% habitat effectiveness for elk. (9205GM)

			for elk.(3204 GM)	
5B	Optimize habitat capability for big game on forested winter range	Transportation System Management	03 Manage public motorized use on roads and trails in combination with hiding and thermal cover and forage to maintain or enhance effective habitat for elk.(3206 GM)	a. Work toward a minimum level of 80% habitat effectiveness for elk. (9206GM)
6A				
6B				
7A				
8A				
8B				
8C				
9A				
10A, B, and C				

* Management Areas left blank have no direction relating to habitat capability or effectiveness.

**AMENDMENT 04-01, APPENDIX B
DIRECTION APPLICABLE TO DETERMINING SIGNIFICANCE
OF A PLAN AMENDMENT**

From Forest Service Manual 1900.

Findings of the responsible official regarding the consistency of management practices and actions with the forest plan and the determination of the significance of an amendment are an integral part of decisions. As such, they are appealable.

1922.51 - Changes to the Forest Plan That Are Not Significant. Changes to the forest plan that are not significant can result from:

- 1. Actions that do not significantly alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management;*
- 2. Adjustments of management area boundaries or management prescriptions resulting from further on-site analysis when the adjustments do not cause significant changes in the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management; and*
- 3. Minor changes in standards and guidelines.*
- 4. Opportunities for additional management practices that will contribute to achievement of the management prescription.*

The Forest Supervisor must prepare an amendment to the forest plan to accommodate a change determined not to be significant. Appropriate public notification is required prior to implementation of the amendment.

From Forest Service Handbook 1909.12.....

5.32 - Process to Amend the Forest Plan. The following actions must be taken when a proposal is not consistent with the forest plan and the proposal is to be considered further for implementation.

- 1. Prepare a proposed amendment to the forest plan.*
- 2. Make a determination of the significance of the change to the forest plan under 16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(4), 36 CFR 219.10(f), and FSM 1922.5.*

It is important to distinguish between significance of the change to a forest plan and significance of the environmental impacts of the proposed action as defined by Council on Environmental Quality regulations found at 40 CFR 1500 to 1508.

3. The following factors are to be used when determining whether a proposed change to a forest plan is significant or not significant, based on NFMA planning requirements. Other factors may also be considered, depending on the circumstances.

a. Timing. Identify when the change is to take place. Determine whether the change is necessary during or after the plan period (the first decade) or whether the change is to take place after the next scheduled revision of the forest plan. In most cases, the later the change, the less likely it is to be significant for the

current forest plan. If the change is to take place outside the plan period, forest plan amendment is not required.

b. Location and Size. Determine the location and size of the area involved in the change. Define the relationship of the affected area to the overall planning area. In most cases, the smaller the area affected, the less likely the change is to be a significant change in the forest plan.

c. Goals, Objectives, and Outputs. Determine whether the change alters long-term relationships between the levels of goods and services projected by the forest plan. Consider whether an increase in one type of output would trigger an increase or decrease in another. Determine whether there is a demand for goods or services not discussed in the forest plan. In most cases, changes in outputs are not likely to be a significant change in the forest plan unless the change would forego the opportunity to achieve an output in later years.

d. Management Prescription. Determine whether the change in a management prescription is only for a specific situation or whether it would apply to future decisions throughout the planning area. Determine whether or not the change alters the desired future condition of the land and resources or the anticipated goods and services to be produced.

4. If the amendment is determined not to be a significant change to the forest plan, the Forest Supervisor may implement the amendment following appropriate public notification and satisfactory compliance with Forest Service environmental policies and procedures for the project or action.

5. If the change to the forest plan is determined to be significant, follow the required 10 step planning process found at 36 CFR 219.12. Preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) is mandatory (16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(4), 36 CFR 219.10(f), and 36 CFR 219.12). The Forest Supervisor shall determine the issues, concerns, and opportunities to be addressed in the amendment and will normally concentrate on those issues that have generated the need for change.

5.4 - DECISION AND DOCUMENTATION. The analysis and evaluation of management practices and actions provide information and findings for reaching a well reasoned decision. Decisions made following analysis must be documented to: provide a public record; facilitate public notification; explain the rationale for selection of an action; and document the findings addressed above at 5.31. The process depicted in exhibit 01 is not precise in either the order or timing of events it predicts. Discretion must be used in determining consistency with and the need to change the forest plan. The following is required.

1. In order to assure the responsible official and the public that all actions are consistent with the forest plan, a finding of consistency must be a part of each decision document. The finding must indicate consistency with the general management requirements of the forest plan (36 CFR 219.27), as well as indicating consistency with the specific standards and guidelines. This finding need not be lengthy or detailed, but should briefly state why the proposed action is consistent with the particular management direction or requirements of law or

regulation. The finding should include appropriate references to the pages in the forest plan, planning records, or environmental documents used in making the consistency determination. This finding is an appealable decision (36 CFR 211.18).

2. In the case of a change to the forest plan that is determined not to be significant, the Forest Supervisor documents the decision in the appropriate document and at the same time, if the activity is approved, amends the forest plan and implements the project or activity following appropriate public notification. Once the amendment is approved, permanently attach a copy of the amendment to all reference copies (36 CFR 219.6(i)(3)) of the forest plan. This finding is an appealable decision (36 CFR 211.18).

3. In the case of a change to the forest plan that is determined to be significant, follow the same procedure required for development of a forest plan (36 CFR 219.10(f)). Prepare a record of decision that accompanies the final environmental impact statement and address both the project and the change to be made to the forest plan. The decision is appealable (36 CFR 211.18) once the Regional Forester has signed the record of decision. When 45 days have elapsed since signing the record of decision, the forest plan is amended and the project or activity may be implemented.

4. Instructions for documentation necessary to comply with Forest Service environmental policies and procedures are found in FSM 195