

## CHAPTER 4 – Proposed Forest Plan Revision Topics

The Forest Plan Interdisciplinary Team and Forest Leadership Team reviewed findings from the evaluation of the current Forest Plan and determined where changes may be needed in management direction. This chapter describes the topics identified as areas where changes may be needed that could be addressed through Forest Plan revision. Topics that will not be included in the revision but would be addressed later as opportunities allow through the Continuous Assessment and Planning (CAP) process, and topics that will not be revised will also be addressed.

### TOPICS REQUIRED BY PLANNING REGULATIONS AND OTHER LAWS

Regulations require the evaluation of the following topics during Forest Plan revision regardless of whether or not a need for change has been identified.

The 1982 Planning Regulations require evaluation of the six decisions made in Forest Plans (36 CFR 219.11, 219.17, 219.25) as follows:

- Forest-wide goals and objectives
- Forest-wide standards
- Identification of suitable uses
- Monitoring and evaluation requirements
- Recommendations to Congress of areas eligible for wilderness designation
- Identification of lands not suited for timber production

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (P.L. 90-542) of 1968 establishes goals, objectives, and procedures for Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River designation. Agency policy related to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires that all rivers be evaluated as to their eligibility, with findings documented in the Forest Plan. Additionally, it is recommended but not required, to complete the Wild and Scenic Rivers suitability studies during the Forest Plan revision process.

### Goals and Objectives/Standards and Guidelines/Suitable Uses

#### **FINDING:**

#### **Goals and Objectives**

A *goal* is a concise statement that describes a *desired condition* to be achieved some time in the future. It is normally expressed in broad, general terms, without any specific date for attainment.

The 1986 Forest Plan does not provide a clear description of the long-term goals or desired conditions for Forest resources and uses. Many are vague or do not address all the components of the ecosystem. Many of these goals reiterate law or policy, or pertain to administrative procedures rather than to land and resource management. National planning improvement efforts have deemed this type of management direction inappropriate for forest plans.

Managing the Forest in order to reach integrated goals (goals that resolve conflict by taking into consideration multiple resource areas) requires a clear description of the desired conditions for all resources and uses of those resources. Desired conditions describe the physical, biologic, social, and economic conditions that can be expected to result in 50-100 years through implementation of the plan and the achievement of specific objectives.

## ***Preliminary Analysis of the Management Situation***

Ecosystem management principles, in use over the last decade by the Forest Service, are not expressed clearly in the current Forest Plan. Current Forest Plan goals focus primarily on sustaining commodity outputs. The Forest is currently implementing the principles of ecosystem management and now places a greater emphasis on sustaining ecological processes and sustaining a wide variety of goods, services, conditions, and values.

An *objective* is a concise time-specific statement of measurable planned results that move toward pre-established goals. An objective helps define the precise steps to be taken and the resources to be used in achieving identified goals. Many of the objectives included in the 1986 Forest Plan are not tied to achieving specific goals. Additionally, the objectives were developed considering an unconstrained budget; many were not achieved due to inadequate funding.

### **Standards and Guidelines**

The current Forest Plan does not differentiate between management direction *standards*, which must be followed, and *guidelines*, which describe management intent. Like desired conditions and goals, many standards and guidelines in the 1986 Forest Plan reiterate law or policy, or pertain to administrative procedures.

### **Suitable Uses**

National Forest System lands are generally suitable for a variety of activities such as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, timber harvest, energy resource development, mining, cultural and heritage interpretation, wildlife viewing, and other uses. Rather than determine the suitability of all land for all uses, a plan should assume that all lands are potentially suitable for a variety of uses except when specific areas are identified and determined not to be suited for one or more uses.

The 1986 Forest Plan identified 15 management emphasis units based on the Forest's capacity to provide resources in an environmentally acceptable manner (Table 3-1). Management units share similar management objectives and a common management prescription. Although the management prescriptions for these units are multiple-use, each management unit delineation is based on the primary management emphasis for that area. The management units are generally not unique to any one area of the Forest and, as such, do not necessarily represent or lend themselves to providing a sense of place for the local public and communities, or other publics who utilize the Forest.

### **ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Clarify and expand, where necessary, the description of desired conditions for all physical, biological, social, and economic components associated with the Forest, including addressing the unique components of each geographic area. The desired conditions will be utilized to clarify overall Forest-wide resource management goals and facilitate development of objectives to reach those goals and desired conditions. Additionally, these desired conditions will identify the Forest's niche, describe how the Forest contributes to the broader vision for the Intermountain Region and the Forest Service as a whole, and provide a vision of the Forest's contribution to the human dimension.*
- *Identify objectives that when implemented will take the Forest resources and uses toward desired conditions. These objectives will be developed considering realistic future budget expectations and will be based on expected personnel availability to implement projects to meet the objectives.*
- *Redefine the management boundaries, identifying geographic areas that will provide a sense of place for the local publics and communities, as well as other recreating publics, when discussing activities and uses within them. Forest-wide and geographic area suitable uses will be identified.*

## **Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements**

### **FINDING:**

Evaluation and monitoring provide knowledge and information to keep the Forest Plan viable. The appropriate selection of indicators, and monitoring and evaluation of key results help determine if Forest Plan management direction is being met. Evaluation and monitoring also helps determine if there should be changes made to the goals and objectives, or monitoring methods.

The tie between monitoring and Forest Plan desired conditions, goals, and objectives needs to be strengthened. Priorities need to be established for monitoring elements to ensure that important items are accomplished with available funding (USDA Forest Service, 2001b).

Federal Regulations (36 CFR 219.19) require forests to select management indicator species (MIS). Management indicator species in the current Forest Plan were selected because their habitat requirements encompass a diverse range of conditions. Monitoring and management experience with MIS since the Plan was implemented indicate that some species may not be the best indicator for the habitat they were chosen to represent; their population trends may be affected by factors other than forest management; they are difficult to monitor accurately; and/or monitoring techniques were so complex they could not be adequately completed within present forest budgets. A revised list will better indicate the effects of management activities on fish and wildlife habitats.

### **ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Develop a meaningful, realistic, and implementable monitoring and evaluation program, focusing monitoring activities on required monitoring items (meet intent of law), eliminating duplicate monitoring requirements, and developing reasonable reporting schedules.*
- *Revise the list of Management Indicator Species (MIS).*

## **Recommendations to Congress of Areas Eligible for Wilderness Designation**

### **FINDING:**

The regulations implementing the National Forest Management Act (36 CFR 219.17) require that "roadless areas...shall be evaluated and considered for recommendation as potential wilderness areas during the forest planning process." The 1984 Utah Wilderness Act (P.L. 98-428) also requires that a roadless inventory be completed during forest plan revision. Further requirements for evaluation and designation of wilderness are in the Forest Service Manual (FSM 1923, FSM 2320) and Handbook (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 7). The Manti-La Sal National Forest has completed the draft roadless area inventory.

The awareness of ecological and social values associated with roadless areas has increased since the development of the current Forest Plan. Roadless areas meeting the criteria for potential Wilderness recommendation will be evaluated accordingly. Suitable uses will be determined for areas not recommended to Congress for wilderness designation.

**ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Evaluate inventoried roadless areas for wilderness potential and make wilderness recommendations as appropriate.*
- *Develop management direction and identify suitable uses for roadless areas that are not recommended for wilderness designation.*

<b>Re-evaluation of Lands not Suited for Timber Production</b>
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**FINDING:**

National Forest Management Act (NFMA) regulations require that lands identified as not suited for timber production be examined at least every 10 years to determine if they have become suited (36 CFR 219.12(k)(4)(ii)). For lands to be suited for timber production, they must be:

- Outside of withdrawn areas (such as designated wilderness or research natural areas).
- Forested (have or have had 10 percent tree cover).
- Areas where reforestation can be assured within five years following harvest.
- Areas where timber management activities can take place without causing irreversible resource damage to soil productivity or watershed conditions.

A completed Forest soil survey, adjustments in land base because of exchanges and acquisitions, and designated research natural areas need to be considered in the evaluation of lands not suited for timber production. The availability of Geographic Information System (GIS) technology as an analytic tool will facilitate a more accurate evaluation of lands based on physical characteristics (i.e., soils, slope, aspect, tree species involved).

Changes in both the economic and technical feasibility of harvesting timber have occurred during the planning period, given increased stumpage prices and the availability of helicopter and cable harvest systems. As a result, the suitability classification has the potential to change for slopes greater than 40 percent. In addition, potential changes in the management direction and suitable uses of roadless areas may result in changes to the suitable timber base.

The current spruce beetle epidemic on the Wasatch Plateau is part of the largest recorded outbreak in the history of Utah (USDA Forest Service, 2004c). The loss of the majority of mature spruce on the Manti Division has changed growing stock conditions over an estimated 80,000 acres, altering the growth and yield projections of the 1986 Forest Plan.

The incorporation of sensitive species management, potential changes in timber suitability for forested lands, and adjustments to the long-term sustained yield capacity are likely to alter the original Allowable Sale Quantity projection.

**ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Review all forested lands to determine those lands deemed not suited for timber production as required by NFMA (36 CFR 219.14).*
- *Review and adjust as necessary the long-term sustained yield capacity, and in turn the allowable sale quantity as appropriate, in response to:*
  - a) *Changes in forest growing stock resulting from insect-related mortality.*
  - b) *Proposed changes in management direction for forest resources, as appropriate.*
  - c) *Final identification of lands suited for timber production.*

## Wild and Scenic Rivers

### **FINDING:**

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-542) requires consideration of Wild and Scenic Rivers as a part of the ongoing planning process. Fourteen river segments on the Forest were found to be free-flowing and to possess at least one remarkable value, making them eligible for a suitability analysis and potential recommendation for designation into the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

### **ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Complete the suitability analyses on the Fish Creek and Gooseberry Creek, lower left fork of Huntington Creek, Huntington Creek, Hammond Canyon, and the north fork of Whiskers (including Whiskers Draw) eligible river segments during Forest Plan revision. We propose to develop interim direction for management of activities and uses that have the potential to affect the outstandingly remarkable values for the remaining nine eligible river segments. This interim direction will be utilized for management of each river segment until the suitability analysis can be completed (post-revision), at which time the segment will either be recommended for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System or not.*

## TOPICS WHERE NEEDS FOR CHANGE HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED

### MAJOR REVISION TOPICS

The Forest Plan Interdisciplinary team used a broad array of existing information to identify areas of the Forest Plan most in need of change. Sources of information included monitoring reports, new scientific information, Forest Service employees, input from public meetings (March/May 2003 and May 2004), and responses to the 2003 revision newsletter questionnaire. The Forest Supervisor, Forest Leadership Team, and Forest Plan Interdisciplinary team have identified four major topics the Forest proposes to address during Forest Plan revision. Those major topics are:

- Recreation Management
- Watershed Health
- Minerals Management
- Fire/Fuels Management

The needs for change in these resource areas are evident. Because the solutions may generate some controversy or multiple solution possibilities, alternatives will be developed to determine the type and amount of change.

## Recreation Management

### **FINDING:**

By mid-century our Nation's population is projected to increase by nearly 50 percent. Simultaneously, public access to privately owned forestland is expected to continue to decline. This situation will increase the pressure on public lands to provide recreational opportunities. If public lands are to meet increased demand for recreational opportunities without experiencing unacceptable impacts to resources, emphasis must be placed on effective management solutions. In particular, it is critical that management of off-highway vehicle access and use on National Forest System lands be improved to preserve high-quality experiences for all recreational users (USDA Forest Service, 2004a).

## *Preliminary Analysis of the Management Situation*

The Forest Plan stated that over the planning period new developed sites would be constructed on average of about 20 PAOTS (people at one time) each year. In actuality, new construction occurred in the form of hardened dispersed sites that provide the social setting people desire while providing the resource protection needed to allow intensive use of these areas. The current Forest Plan predicted the demand for developed recreation facilities would occasionally exceed supply. The capacity of developed recreation facilities has not been exceeded. The public's demand for an unconfined camping experience has resulted in more and larger dispersed recreation sites across the Forest.

Beyond the issue of developed and dispersed recreation, the Forest Plan does not discuss the necessity of providing a broad range of recreation opportunities that would ensure the breadth of recreational experiences that have come about. The Forest Plan did not anticipate dispersed recreation and off-highway vehicles as dominant forms of recreation on the Forest. Current direction focuses on recreation management units (Developed Recreation Sites, Undeveloped Motorized Areas, Semi-Primitive Recreation Areas) and does not provide guidance for Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes currently available on the Forest. A new ROS inventory is needed to ensure alternatives are compared to the existing array of recreation settings.

The Forest Plan does not provide adequate direction for the management of winter recreation activities. Increased winter use of the Forest has led to conflicts between motorized users and nonmotorized recreationists. The favorite areas for motorized winter use are also the preferred areas for nonmotorized use.

Resource damage often takes place when unauthorized motorized/mechanized use occurs off designated routes. Current trail definitions (FSH 2309.18) do not distinguish width requirements for the range of off-highway vehicles. Off-highway vehicle routes can range from singletrack to doubletrack to roads depending on the vehicle type.

The Forest has issued numerous Outfitter and Guide (O&G) permits covering a variety of activities including guided hunts, mountain bike and OHV touring, and other recreation related activities. A demand for additional permits exists. The actual demand or need for guided activities has not been determined. A capacity study will be completed later as a Continuous Assessment and Planning (CAP) project to determine the need and capacity for outfitter and guide operations.

### **ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Emphasize management of dispersed recreation opportunities to address user conflicts and minimize resource impacts, while providing the recreational opportunities sought by the public.*
- *Identify desired recreation environments using the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). Management direction would be expanded for recreation opportunities and settings in both winter and summer seasons that balance current and anticipated visitor needs while sustaining or enhancing resources. Suitable recreational opportunities would be identified within each geographic area.*
- *Clarify management direction for roads, off-highway vehicle routes, and hiking/biking trail systems.*
- *Develop direction to facilitate the determination of how outfitter/guide operations may be utilized to provide recreational opportunities for that segment of the recreating public who require such services to experience the variety of recreational opportunities available on the Forest.*

## **Watershed Health**

### **FINDING:**

Conservation of the soil and water resources of forest ecosystems is vital to all aspects of sustainable resource management. These resources, the building blocks of all ecosystems, are also the most complex elements in the landscape to consistently and comprehensively assess.

## **Water Resources**

### **Streams**

Management direction for mineral resources, in part, emphasizes protection for perennial sections of the drainage network that support aquatic life (USDA Forest Service, 1986, Appendix B, Stipulation #9). The Plan does not address management of activities or permitted uses within intermittent and ephemeral stream reaches and springs, the source areas for perennial stream segments.

Streambank trampling, in areas of concentrated livestock and recreational use, is resulting in soil compaction, the loss of stabilizing vegetation, streambank erosion, increased sediment delivery, and changes in channel structure and function.

### **Springs**

In some instances, uses of and activities that occur around spring developments (by wildlife, livestock, and recreation activities) are resulting in undesirable effects to soil, vegetation, wildlife habitats, and riparian ecosystems. In addition, spring developments involving flow diversions are affecting the dependent, associated riparian ecosystem as surface flows are reduced and/or diverted.

### **Wetlands**

Wetlands are included in the general definition and management direction for riparian areas (USDA Forest Service, 1986, III-69). The Plan does not separate wetlands from other riparian areas to reflect their unique soils, vegetation, landform, sensitivity to disturbances, recovery potentials, and legal protections.

### **Proper Use Criteria**

The proper use criteria for rangelands in the current Plan lacks the specificity recommended by the Regional Office to provide for the desired resource conditions on lands affected by grazing and browsing animals (USDA Forest Service, 2002c).

Concerns have arisen over the sustainability of riparian and upland browse species due to browsing pressure on young plants, the effects of streambank trampling, the physiological differences of hydric and non-hydric species in the greenline, and the inconsistency in definition and terminology for soil disturbance in the riparian zone.

### **Soil Productivity**

Increasing knowledge and understanding has led to a greater emphasis on long-term soil productivity. Management direction in the current Plan does not address the role of effective ground cover and above ground organic matter, which protect and/or contribute nutrients to the soil resource.

### **Water Quality/Quantity**

Best Management Practices (BMPs) have been developed in cooperation with the Utah Department of Environmental Quality and other state and federal agencies as part of a statewide Non-Point Source Management Plan for Silvicultural Activities (Silvicultural Addendum Subcommittee, 1998). This

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plan identifies standard management practices to reduce non-point source pollution from silvicultural activities. These standard practices, which are not addressed in the current Plan, can provide similar soil/water protection from other management activities and permitted uses.

Since the current Plan was approved, some stream segments on the Forest have been identified as water quality impaired under the Clean Water Act. These impaired stream segments are known as 303d waterbodies. The current Forest Plan does not address 303d waterbodies.

The Forest Plan is too general to secure favorable water flow to meet Forest purposes and to sustain ecological functions. Forest specialists have identified concerns regarding continued water depletions and/or diversions and their effects on high-value aquatic sites such as riparian areas, recreational streams, Colorado cutthroat conservation/recovery watersheds, wetlands, eligible wild and scenic rivers, research natural areas, and other water dependent sites.

## **Municipal Watershed Management**

Numerous municipalities depend on the Forest for all or a portion of their culinary water. The Plan currently identifies only a small fraction of the actual municipal water sources under the municipal water supply (MWS) management prescription. The Plan is inconsistent in its identification and management direction for municipal water supply areas.

As per the 1996 amendment to the Safe Drinking Water Act, all municipalities are required to identify their drinking water source areas, evaluate the risk of accidental contamination, and develop source protection plans accordingly. Drinking water source protection plans have not been evaluated to ensure Forest Service management activities or permitted uses do not jeopardize drinking water source areas.

While Forest Plan direction seems generally adequate, it does not promote vegetation management for the protection of municipal water supply areas from catastrophic events, such as wildland fire, which may result in large-scale impacts to vegetation, soil, and ultimately, water quality and water supply system infrastructure.

### **ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Clarify desired conditions and strengthen existing direction for management of activities and uses within stream-side riparian areas, wetlands, and springs, including emphasizing the need to provide for water quality/quantity needs for ecosystems and threatened and endangered species.*

*Specific items we propose to address include:*

- a) Clarify appropriate protections for perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral stream reaches.*
- b) Clarify direction limiting streambank alteration to levels which minimize effects to streambank soils and vegetation, allowing streams to maintain normal channel morphology and function.*
- c) Clarify and update direction for spring developments to include protection for wildlife, the spring source area, and the associated riparian area.*
- d) Clarify direction, as appropriate, to sustain and protect wetland function and values.*
- e) Revise proper use criteria to ensure livestock grazing is managed to meet desired conditions for browse species, hydric and non-hydric species in the greenline, and ensure sufficient ground cover in riparian zones.*
- f) Incorporate desired conditions and management direction, as appropriate, for effective ground cover and above ground organic matter*
- g) Incorporate direction from Best Management Practices (BMPs) for soil and water protection, as appropriate.*

- h) Incorporate direction for 303d listed waterbodies to ensure management activities or permitted uses do not contribute to further degradation or new listings.*
- i) Include direction for qualifying and quantifying consumptive and non-consumptive water needs for instream flows, in-place standing water, and conservation pools. To facilitate identification of suitable uses, we propose to develop criteria to identify sites where water developments, diversions, and occupancy to divert may be prohibited, or situations where mitigation may be required to protect and provide for National Forest resources and uses.*
- j) Clarify direction for management of suitable uses within those areas where municipal water sources areas exist.*

## **Minerals Management**

### **FINDING:**

#### **Oil and Gas Leasing**

The Nation's forests play a significant role in meeting America's need for the production and transmission of energy. Unless otherwise restricted, National Forest System lands are available for energy exploration and development. The Oil and Gas Leasing FEIS (USDA Forest Service, 1992b) made a determination of areas not available for leasing (NAL) and identified a number of sensitive resources that require protection through stipulations. The Record Of Decision on Oil and Gas Leasing (USDA Forest Service, 1994b) stated decisions that designated lands as not available for leasing would be revisited. Current leasing stipulations should be reviewed relative to current laws and agency roles.

#### **Coal Suitability**

Federal regulations (43 CFR 3420.1-4) require: 1) identification of areas acceptable for further consideration for coal leasing take place during forest planning or in a land use analysis, and 2) a land use plan contain an estimate of the amount of coal recoverable by either surface or underground mining operations or both. Coal unsuitability criteria and changes in other resources (such as additional threatened, endangered, and sensitive species) require a review of unsuitability occur and management direction revised based on the review.

#### **Common Variety Minerals**

Demand for common variety minerals (gravel, sand, and stone) is expected to increase. Because of limited supplies of common variety mineral sources, Forest Service and local government needs should be considered over commercial uses by private developers. Criteria for issuing free-use permits to other agencies, local governments, and the public for non-commercial uses of common variety minerals are not discussed in the Plan.

#### **Mine Reclamation**

Several abandoned uranium/vanadium mines and other mining area sites have been inventoried for reclamation. These abandoned mines present a hazard and are sources of potentially polluting materials.

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### **Gypsum**

The existence of gypsum deposits is not acknowledged in the 1986 Forest Plan.

### **Paleontological Resources**

The Manti-La Sal National Forest contains a large variety of invertebrate and vertebrate, as well as plant fossils. Regulations provide for protection of paleontological resources (e.g., fossils). The Forest Plan does not provide direction for issuing permits or for the documentation and curation of discoveries.

### **ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Review areas currently identified as Not Administratively Available for Leasing (NAL), review oil/gas (including coalbed methane) leasing and occupancy stipulations, and clarify/update as needed.*
- *Review coal leasing unsuitability criteria and determine if any additional lands are unsuitable for leasing or if any previously identified suitable areas are now unsuitable. We also propose to:*
  - a) *Incorporate estimates of remaining recoverable coal reserves.*
  - b) *Review and clarify/update coal stipulations.*
  - c) *Identify areas for withdrawal as appropriate.*
- *Focus management of common variety minerals for Forest, local government, or small/limited personal use, and limit commercial use or development.*
- *Emphasize reclamation of abandoned mines.*
- *Update locatable minerals definition and management direction to include gypsum.*
- *Clarify direction for management of paleontological resources (research opportunities, interpretation).*

## **Fire/Fuels Management**

### **FINDING:**

New policy and legislation has been enacted since the Utah Fire Amendment (USDA Forest Service, 2000a) updated fire management direction in the Forest Plan. The amendment was approved prior to the National Fire Plan (2001), the 10-Year Comprehensive Wildland Fire Strategy (2001), the Healthy Forests Initiative (2000), and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (2003).

Residential communities and recreation residences continue to expand into areas within and around the boundaries of the Manti-La Sal National Forest. This boundary zone between forestland and developed, private lands is known as the wildland-urban interface. The wildland-urban interface has been recognized as a high priority area for fire and fuels management given the risks to life and property from wildfire. The current Plan does not address management of the wildland-urban interface, where ground fuels, ladder fuels, and vegetation arrangement and density are typically maintained at levels less than general forest conditions, to provide a defensible space from wildland fire.

**ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Review and update the Forest Plan, as necessary, to reflect current policy, legislation, and terminology for fire and hazardous fuel management. This will include a fire regime/condition class assessment and identification of management direction for vegetation and fuel treatments within the wildland-urban interface. Criteria may be developed to facilitate identification of priority treatment areas in coordination with the local communities.*

**TOPICS WHERE EXISTING DIRECTION DOES NOT FULLY CONVEY THE INTENT OF THE FOREST PLAN, ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT, FOUR THREATS, AND/OR STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

How management of each of the following resource areas contributes to addressing Forest Plan, ecosystem management, four threats, and Forest Service Strategic Plan goals were considered in identifying the specific items associated with each resource area to be addressed through revision.

**Forest and Rangeland Health/Condition**

**FINDING:**

**Invasive Species**

Invasive species such as cheat grass and tamarisk are present on the Forest. Forest users and management activities have the potential to introduce or spread invasive species. The current Plan does not address invasive species.

**Noxious Weeds**

Current Plan direction focuses more heavily on noxious weed control than prevention. Forest users and management activities continue to contribute to the establishment and spread of noxious weeds.

**Native Seed Collection**

The Manti-La Sal National Forest offers several permits for the collection of native seed, much of which is used for revegetation projects on State and federal lands. Forest resource specialists have voiced concerns regarding the collection of native seed such as collection in protected areas, timing and method of harvest, plant and seed depletions from continuous harvesting, and accuracy in seed source identification. The current Plan does not provide direction regarding the collection of native seed.

**ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Incorporate goals and objectives for invasive species and noxious weeds that focus on prevention, early detection, and control to restrict their colonization and expansion on the Forest.*
- *Incorporate direction for the collection of native seed to address protection of Forest resources.*

**Terrestrial and Aquatic Species**

**FINDING:**

The current Forest Plan addresses many of the key indicators of biological diversity. These indicators are largely described and analyzed as separate functional entities. There is little

## *Preliminary Analysis of the Management Situation*

information as to how these indicators interact with one another and with natural processes, particularly at the broad, forest-level scale.

The Northern Goshawk Amendment (USDA Forest Service, 2000b) provided specific direction for activities occurring around active goshawk nests. The current Plan does not provide management direction for habitat management or protection measures for other raptor species. Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Eagle Protection Act, and Endangered Species Act, the Forest is required to protect raptors, their nests, or eggs.

### **ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Clarify/update management direction for terrestrial and aquatic species and the communities in which they occur (the whole instead of pieces). As appropriate, management direction will be incorporated from approved conservation agreements and strategies for threatened, endangered, and sensitive terrestrial and aquatic species found on the Forest.*
- *Provide direction that contributes to the maintenance/improvement of native species habitat on National Forest System lands.*
- *Incorporate guidance for management activities and permitted uses around active raptor nest sites (for species other than northern goshawk) from nest site selection to fledging.*

## **TOPICS WHERE EXISTING DIRECTION IS INCONSISTENT WITH MEETING AGENCY DIRECTION**

This topic represents inadequate or outdated Forest Plan direction that should be updated to bring the Forest Plan current with national direction.

### **Scenery Management**

#### **FINDING:**

The current Forest Plan includes Forest-wide standards that were developed under the Visual Management System (1974). In 1995, the Forest Service adopted the Scenery Management System (SMS). The new system is designed to incorporate ecological concepts and valued cultural features to better address and complement other resource needs and management strategies. In response to an appeal on November 18, 1993, an agreement between the Forest Service, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, and Owen Severance was reached stating that the Forest Service would complete a visual resource inventory for the Monticello Ranger District prior to revision of the Forest Plan.

#### **ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Develop scenery management objectives as part of the desired conditions, which will utilize an inventory of landscape character, visual sensitivity, and scenic integrity. These attributes, along with the objectives, will provide the framework for the Scenery Management System. A detailed resource inventory will be completed to bring the Forest in compliance with the Scenery Management System prior to completion of the Forest Plan revision.*

## Heritage Resources

### **FINDING:**

While Forest Plan direction is adequate and appropriate to meet the basic requirements of Section 106 of the law, new legislation, agency direction, and trends in public use warrant review and revision of current Forest Plan direction. Forest-wide direction needs to accommodate changes in the areas of tribal consultation and provide emphasis on the requirements of Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

### **ACTION:**

*We propose to:*

- *Clarify objectives for cultural resources areas and provide direction for the proactive identification, preservation, and nomination to the National Register of Historic Properties of historical and archeological properties on lands within the Forest's jurisdiction.*

## **TOPICS WHERE CORRECTIONS WOULD NOT REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT REVISION RESOURCES**

Addressing these topics during revision would simplify and clarify the intent of the Forest Plan and would likely not require significant resource expenditures.

- *Remove administrative or procedural direction to reduce redundancy of agency requirements.*
- *Correct typographical and description errors. These editorial corrections, clarifications, and updates will result in more accurate Forest Plan.*
- *Eliminate objectives and implementation schedules that are not required. Many of the objectives and schedules in the existing Forest Plan are not required and are quickly out-of-date.*
- *Eliminate redundant monitoring requirements.*
- *Update acreages and other "Current Situation" data in the Forest Plan.*
- *Move management direction for paleontological resources from the Heritage program to the Minerals program.*
- *Clarify direction to allow for flexibility in determining a grazing system strategy dependent on allotment needs.*
- *Assess rangeland capability as per current national and regional direction using current data and technology.*
- *Clarify timber management direction to provide for the protection of aspen regeneration projects.*
- *Update special designations list with research natural areas and special interest areas designated since current Forest Plan implementation and incorporate management direction for these areas as found in the establishment records.*

## **TOPICS THAT WILL BE ADDRESSED THROUGH CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING (CAP)**

The following topics are areas where existing management direction may need to be clarified, refined, or changed. Addressing these topics during Forest Plan revision would require significant resources. These topics are better addressed at a later time and may need to be analyzed at a different scale.

**Table 26. Continuous Assessment and Planning Projects.**

<b>CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING PROJECTS (CAP)</b>	
<b>Lands</b>	Review and update guidance for long-term use or occupancy, such as utility corridor designations and communication sites. Evaluate and designate new sites as appropriate. Develop a Land Adjustment Plan Prepare a Rights-of-Way Acquisition Plan
<b>Recreation</b>	Complete a capacity analysis to manage development of outfitter and guide services. Establish use capacity in some areas of the forest to minimize conflicts and ensure quality experiences. Develop a recreation facilities master plan Develop a recreation and trails business plan
<b>Watershed Health</b>	Review municipal drinking water source protection plans and develop management direction as appropriate.
<b>Special Interest Areas</b>	Evaluate potential Special Interest Areas (SIAs). Maple Canyon, White Mountain, Maloy Park, and Little Dry Mountain have been identified by Forest specialists for potential SIA designation. Evaluate proposed expansion of Mont E Lewis Botanical Area. Identify and review archeological resource sites for potential SIA designation.
<b>Research Natural Areas</b>	Evaluate potential and proposed research natural areas (RNAs). Sinbad Ridge has been proposed by the Nature Conservancy for RNA designation
<b>Transportation System Management</b>	Update travel management plan Complete watershed scale roads analysis
<b>Wilderness Management</b>	Develop a wilderness plan for Dark Canyon Wilderness Analyze capacity study and set group size limits to mitigate the impacts on wilderness resources
<b>Wild and Scenic Rivers Suitability</b>	Complete suitability analysis for nine eligible river segments.

## **TOPICS WHERE FOREST PLAN DIRECTION WILL NOT BE REVISED**

The 1986 Forest Plan contains direction that will not be revised as it has been determined to be adequate and reflects current agency policy, direction, laws, and regulations. Much of this direction will be edited for clarification and included in the revised Forest Plan.

- *Direction provided in the Utah Fire Amendment will be retained.*
- *There will be no reduction in existing developed recreation opportunities.*
- *There will be no change in the following:*
  - *Areas identified as suitable and open for grazing.*
  - *Areas currently identified and utilized as utility corridors (e.g., powerlines and pipelines).*
  - *Management direction for air quality.*
  - *Management direction for critical winter range areas.*
  - *Management direction for the Dark Canyon Wilderness.*
  - *Management direction for long-term use and occupancy special uses (e.g., existing dams, reservoirs, culinary water collection and distribution systems).*