

Forest Plan - Chapter 2

This document shows the sections of the current Forest Plan that have changed since January 2008, with the changes highlighted and annotated.

2 Goals and Objectives

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Chapter 2

Goals and Objectives

Introduction

The management direction for the Forest is described under the section titled “Forest Plan Management Direction” in Chapter 1. This chapter presents the Plan’s desired conditions for the Forest and the Forest-wide goals and objectives. Achievement of the goals and objectives is subject to all applicable management standards and guidelines, as are presented in Chapters 3 and 4, and will be strongly influenced by annual budget direction and fiscal limitations.

Forest Desired Conditions

Desired landscape attributes describe the mosaic of land and resource conditions envisioned for the Forest in the future. They are attained through Forest-wide multiple-use goals and objectives, and through the cumulative achievement of the goals, objectives, and desired conditions for each of the 18 individual Land Use Designations (LUDs) described in Chapter 3. The Forest’s desired landscape attributes are described below.

- The Forest is managed to produce desired resource values, products, services, and conditions in ways that also sustain the diversity and productivity of ecosystems. In addition
- The Forest is characterized by extensive, unmodified natural environments. Old growth is the predominant vegetative structure on the Tongass. Large areas of previously harvested stands now support young growth that are trending towards mature, old-growth forest conditions. Connections between patches of old growth are evident. On those portions of the Forest available for harvest activities, stands contain a variety of tree ages ranging from 0 to 300+ years. Some stands contain trees of uniform height and size, while other stands contain trees with a variety of sizes and heights. Endemic levels of insect and disease perform their natural role in the ecosystem.
- Viable populations of native and desired non-native species and their habitat are maintained and are not threatened by invasive species. Viable populations of sensitive and rare species and their habitats are considered and maintained as to preclude the need for listing species as threatened or endangered. There are no threatened or endangered species on the Forest.
- Fish and wildlife habitat is maintained and improved to ensure sustainable fish and wildlife and their uses.
- A range of recreation opportunities is maintained on the Forest from primitive to more urban settings. Recreation opportunities will allow for a different type of experience in visual quality, access, remoteness, visitor management, on-site recreation development, social encounters, and visitor impacts.
- Opportunities for hunting, trapping, and viewing game species are being provided. World-class wildlife resources such as brown bears and wolves, considered threatened or endangered in the lower 48 states, are relatively abundant and available for human use and enjoyment in perpetuity.

These edits were made for a Forest Plan amendment, dated 9/13/09.

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- Overall aquatic habitat quality is considered good to excellent. Fish thrive in the Forest's lakes and streams due to good water quality and other habitat features, and provide world-class fisheries.
- Rural residents have opportunities to participate in subsistence activities and to harvest subsistence resources in accordance with the direction in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA).
- The outstanding scenery of the Forest is a major attraction for resident and non-resident recreation users; a full range of recreation opportunities is present. In some cases, scenic values from certain travel routes, trails, high vista points, or aerial observations are affected by timber harvest or mining activities. Users have the opportunity to experience independence, closeness to nature, solitude, and remoteness.
- Occasional natural catastrophic events occur; however, the condition of watersheds and riparian areas, and careful design and location of roads, minimize resource degradation due to such events.
- Areas congressionally designated as either Wilderness or LUD II will be managed consistent with their legislative intent. The desired conditions for Wilderness are as specified in Section 2 of the 1964 Wilderness Act. The desired conditions for LUD II areas are as specified in Section 508 of the 1990 Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA).
- The Forest is actively engaged in collaborative discussions with interested parties to resolve issues and build partnerships. Data collection, monitoring and other plan implementation work is coordinated with the State of Alaska, other federal agencies and organizations.
- The Forest is managed to sustain desired provisioning ecosystem services while preserving valuable cultural, supporting, and regulating ecosystem services.

Ecosystem Services

What are ecosystem services? Ecosystem services include the full suite of goods and services that are vital to human health and livelihood provided by ecosystems—in this case, ecosystems on the Tongass National Forest. Ecosystem services based in the Tongass benefit communities from the local to global scale: salmon from waters of Southeast Alaska are a prized food item locally and across the nation; carbon stored in forests can contribute to adding or removing atmospheric carbon dioxide; fiber from trees provides materials for traditional customs; and trees provide timber for homes. Generally, ecosystem services on the Tongass may be divided into four categories:

1. **Provisioning services** provide society with food, fresh water, fuel, and fiber.
2. **Regulating services** refer to processes affecting climate, water, disease regulation, and pollination.
3. **Supporting services** include those processes necessary for proper functioning of other services, such as soil formation and nutrient cycling.
4. **Cultural services** refer to educational, aesthetic, and cultural heritage values as well as recreation and tourism.

These categories provide a holistic framework for establishing monitoring and management operations, and encourage integration across disciplines and agencies

Forest-wide Multiple-use Goals and Objectives

to determine the best management decisions while moving toward the more desired conditions.

Forest Plan goals are responsive to identified public issues and ecosystem service related opportunities, and collectively describe the desired conditions sought to be attained in the long run. Consistent with the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA) planning regulations, goals are expressed in broad, general terms and specify no date by which they are to be accomplished. Complementary goals are listed under the Management Prescriptions in Chapter 3 for each LUD. Taken and considered together, goals represent management from an “ecosystem” perspective, where ecosystems are considered from the “site” to the “Forest” level.

Goals are achieved through the allocations of lands to the set of LUDs, implementation of the standards and guidelines specified for the LUDs, and other activities conducted on the Forest. The management objectives are expected to be achieved during the 10- to 15-year life of this Plan to help accomplish Plan goals. Additional objectives to help accomplish the goals are listed under the Management Prescriptions presented in Chapter 3, and in the Resource Schedules contained in Appendix J.

Resources in this Plan fall into one of three groups of ecosystem services: natural capital, built capital, and human capital.

1. **Natural capital** includes ecosystem services and other goods derived from the Forest.
2. **Built capital** includes structures and functions provided by the Forest Service in administering and managing the Tongass.
3. **Human capital** refers to functions and activities employed by people, for people, who have direct contact with the Forest.

The natural capital group comprises the largest subset of resources described in this document, but the Forest does prioritize certain built and human capital resources in this Plan, and these are highlighted here as well.

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Category	Goal	Objective
Air	Maintain the current air resource condition to protect the Forest's ecosystems from on- and off-Forest air emission sources.	Attain national and state ambient air quality standards Forest-wide.
Biodiversity	Maintain ecosystems capable of supporting the full range of native and desired non-native species and ecological processes. Maintain a mix of representative habitats at different spatial and temporal scales.	<p>Maintain a Forest-wide system of old-growth and other Forest habitats (includes reserves, non-development LUDs, and beach, estuary, and riparian corridors) to sustain old-growth associated species and resources.</p> <p>a) Ensure that the reserve system meets the minimum size, spacing, and composition criteria described in Appendix K.</p> <p>b) Provide sufficient habitat to preclude the need for listing species under the Endangered Species Act, or from becoming listed as Sensitive due to National Forest habitat conditions.</p> <p>c) Manage the Forest in order to reduce, minimize, or eliminate the potential for introduction, establishment, spread, and impact of invasive species.</p> <p>d) Develop a baseline estimate of current habitat types, patterns and structural components on the Tongass National Forest.</p> <p>e) Restore watersheds to provide healthy, diverse terrestrial and aquatic habitat.</p>
Fish	Maintain or restore the natural range and frequency of aquatic habitat conditions on the Tongass National Forest to sustain the diversity and production of fish and other freshwater organisms.	<p>Use baseline fish habitat objectives (identified in Fish Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines) to evaluate the relative health or condition of riparian and aquatic habitat.</p> <p>Design and implement fish habitat improvement projects annually across the Forest.</p>
Heritage Resources	Identify, evaluate, preserve, and protect heritage resources.	Protect heritage resources (as described in the Heritage Resources Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines). Provide public outreach about heritage stewardship.

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Category	Goal	Objective
Karst and Cave Resources	Maintain, to the extent practical, the natural karst processes and the productivity of the karst landscape while providing for other land uses where appropriate.	<p>Allow for the continuation of natural karst processes. Maintain the productivity of the karst landscape while providing for other land uses, where appropriate.</p> <p>Manage lands in a manner that protects significant caves and their associated resources.</p>
Local and Regional Economies	Provide a diversity of opportunities for resource uses that contribute to the local and regional economies of Southeast Alaska.	<p>Work with local communities to identify rural community assistance opportunities and provide technical assistance in their implementation.</p> <p>Support a wide range of natural resource employment opportunities within Southeast Alaska's communities.</p>
Minerals and Geology	Provide for environmentally sound mineral exploration, development, and reclamation in areas open to mineral entry and in areas with valid existing rights that are otherwise closed to mineral entry. Seek withdrawal of specific locations where mineral development may not meet LUD objectives. Maintain inventory of surficial geology, geomorphic features, geologic hazards, and paleontological resources.	Implement the Minerals and Geology Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.
Plants	Maintain viable plant communities and populations; maintain a mixture of habitats that are capable of supporting the full range of naturally occurring flora, including a variety of vegetation types, botanical life forms, patterns, structural components, and the consideration of rare species.	Prevent species from becoming listed as threatened, endangered, or sensitive.

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Category	Goal	Objective
Recreation and Tourism	Provide a range of recreation opportunities consistent with public demand, emphasizing locally popular recreation places and those important to the tourism industry.	<p>Manage the Forest's recreation settings in accordance with the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Standards and Guidelines for each LUD.</p> <p>Maintain existing Forest Service system trails to a standard that provides for the health and safety of all users. Construct or reconstruct trails to encourage a healthier lifestyle for the public. Emphasize projects that facilitate community use or community connections.</p> <p>Maintain existing recreation sites and facilities to provide for the health and safety of all users. Construct or reconstruct facilities in locations where the need for the facilities are supported by either known use, partnerships for long-term maintenance, or repeated safety concerns. Remove facilities that are no longer needed or are not affordable.</p>
Research	Continue to seek out and promote research opportunities that are consistent with identified information needs.	Cooperate with the Pacific Northwest Research Station and the State of Alaska in pursuing the high priority information needs.
Sacred Sites	Consult with tribes to protect and maintain sacred sites Forest-wide.	Manage and protect sacred sites as an integral part of the landscape and land management planning (as described in the Heritage and Sacred Sites Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines).
Scenery	Provide Forest visitors with visually appealing scenery, with emphasis on areas seen along the Alaska Marine Highway, tour ship and small boat routes, state highways, major Forest roads, and from popular recreation places; recognize that in other areas where landscapes are altered by management activities, the activity may visually dominate the characteristic landscape.	Manage the scenery of the Forest in order to achieve the adopted Scenic Integrity Objectives.

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Category	Goal	Objective
Soil and Water	Maintain soil productivity Forest-wide and minimize soil erosion resulting from land-disturbing activities.	Meet Alaska Regional soil quality standards.
	Minimize sediment transported to streams from land-disturbing activities.	Attain State of Alaska water quality standards Forest-wide.
	Maintain and restore the biological, physical, and chemical integrity of Tongass National Forest waters.	Complete Hydrologic Condition Assessments and Restoration Plans for priority watersheds. Complete watershed restoration projects in conjunction with Integrated Resource Program (see Appendix J).
Subsistence	Provide for the continuation of subsistence uses and resources by all rural Alaskan residents.	Evaluate and consider the needs of subsistence users in making project land management decisions.
Timber	Provide for the continuation of timber uses and resources by the timber industry and Alaska residents.	Pre-commercial thin previously harvested suitable forest land. Evaluate non-clearcutting silvicultural systems.
	Manage the timber resource for production of saw timber and other wood products from suitable forest lands made available for timber harvest, on an even-flow, long-term sustained yield basis and in an economically efficient manner.	Seek to provide an economic timber supply sufficient to meet the annual market demand for Tongass National Forest timber, and the market demand for the planning cycle, up to a ceiling of this Plan's allowable sale quantity, which is 2.67 billion board feet in the first decade.
		Manage young growth to improve habitat for wildlife and commercial timber products. Review standards and guidelines for applicability to young-growth stands.
		Provide 2 to 3 years supply of volume under contract to local mills and then establish shelf volume to maintain flexibility and stability in the sale program. Review the timber sale program and work with the state and other partners to implement changes that will keep an "economic timber" perspective throughout the process and monitor the implementation of these reforms to ensure they are consistently employed across the Forest.

Economic timber is defined as a sale of timber wherein the average purchaser can meet all contractual obligations, harvest and transport the timber to the purchaser's site, and have a reasonable certainty of realizing a profit from the sale.

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Category	Goal	Objective				
Transportation	Develop and manage roads and utility systems to support resource management activities; recognize the potential for future development of major Transportation and Utility Systems.	Provide access for Forest users.				
		Design and construct roads in support of Forest resource management activities. Decommission roads that are no longer needed or are not affordable.				
		Manage and maintain roads to protect water, soil, fish, and wildlife resources.				
Wetlands	Minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands, and preserve and enhance wetland functions and values.	Avoid alteration of, or new construction on wetlands, wherever there is a practicable, environmentally preferred alternative.				
		Implement Best Management Practices and Estuary, Riparian, Soil, and Water Standards and Guidelines specific to wetlands.				
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Maintain the outstandingly remarkable values and the free flowing conditions of rivers designated or recommended for designation as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.	Manage the 31 rivers (or segments) recommended for designation as Wild, Scenic, and Recreational, pending designation by Congress, to maintain the eligibility of the total miles of river for the following recommended classifications:				
		<table> <tr> <td>Wild</td> <td>359.5 miles</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scenic</td> <td>87.5 miles</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Recreational</td> <td>89.0 miles</td> </tr> </table>	Wild	359.5 miles	Scenic	87.5 miles
Wild	359.5 miles					
Scenic	87.5 miles					
Recreational	89.0 miles					
Wilderness	Manage designated Wilderness to maintain an enduring wilderness resource while providing for the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use, as provided in the Wilderness Act of 1964 and ANILCA.	Provide for public use of the Wilderness in accordance with ANILCA provisions for motorized and non-motorized access and travel, including reasonable traditional subsistence use by rural residents.				
		Provide trails and primitive facilities that are in harmony with the natural environment and that promote primitive recreation opportunities. Feature facilities designed primarily to provide resource protection and encourage smaller group size. Facilities and trails tend to allow for challenge and risk instead of convenience.				
		Maintain the wilderness to provide information on natural ecological processes.				
		Preserve and perpetuate biodiversity. Inventory and reduce or eliminate invasive species in Wilderness.				
		Manage Wilderness as a place where self reliance and primitive skills are needed and can be honed by the general public.				

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<i>Category</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Objective</i>
Wildlife	Maintain the abundance and distribution of habitats, especially old-growth forests, to sustain viable populations in the planning area.	See biodiversity objectives. Design and implement structural and non-structural wildlife habitat improvement projects.
	Maintain habitat capability sufficient to produce wildlife populations that support the use of wildlife resources for sport, subsistence, and recreational activities.	Include a young-growth management program to maintain, prolong, and/or improve understory forage production, and to improve habitat distribution, including future old-growth characteristics in young-growth timber stands for wildlife (e.g., deer, moose, black bear, and other species) on both suitable and unsuitable lands.

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