



## Newsletter July 2002

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**B**imonthly newsletters update the public on the progress of Forest Plan revision on the Chippewa and Superior National Forests. These newsletters also introduce helpful background about some of the steps involved in plan revision.

Earlier editions summarized public response to the Notice of Intent and subsequent addition of recreation topics to the scope of concerns that Forest Plan revision will address.

This month's newsletter focuses on three aspects of ongoing National Forest analyses that directly affect how recreational opportunities are allocated on the National Forests. This information will be considered along with other data to revise the Forest Plans.

Previous editions of this newsletter are posted along with other related information on the Forest Plan revision website:

[www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa)

Information is also available through the contacts listed on the back page of this newsletter.

### Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is a range of settings, activities, and opportunities described in six categories on the following page. Current conditions on the Chippewa and Superior National Forests have been inventoried to determine the area that meets the criteria under each classification. The alternatives for plan revision include recreation objectives for future management that reflect ROS classes.

#### The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is:

- An approach to inventorying and describing the combination of recreation settings, activities, and experiences provided by the Forests.
- A guide for planning and managing recreation on the National Forests.
- Also used by other federal, state, and local land management agencies.

#### The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is not:

- A qualitative comparison of different uses.
- Meant to result in any particular distribution of recreational opportunity across the Forest.



## Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

Category	Description
<b>Primitive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unmodified environment</li> <li>• Large size (greater than 2,500 acres)</li> <li>• Evidence of human use is minimal</li> <li>• Minimal developed trails and management activities</li> <li>• Interaction with other users is very low</li> <li>• Restrictions and controls are minimal</li> <li>• Motorized use is prohibited</li> </ul>
<b>Semi-primitive – non-motorized</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly natural environment - subtle modification</li> <li>• Moderate to large size (greater than 1,500 acres)</li> <li>• Evidence of other users is common</li> <li>• Visitor interaction is low</li> <li>• Minimum on-site controls and restrictions</li> <li>• Motorized use prohibited, but roads may be present</li> </ul>
<b>Semi-primitive - motorized</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly natural environment</li> <li>• Moderate to large size (greater than 1,500 acres)</li> <li>• Often evidence of other users</li> <li>• Minimum on-site controls and restrictions</li> <li>• Low standard, natural surface roads and trails</li> <li>• Some motorized recreational trail use allowed</li> </ul>
<b>Roaded Natural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly natural environment - moderate modification</li> <li>• No minimum size</li> <li>• Visitor interaction is moderate to high</li> <li>• Evidence of other users common</li> <li>• Motorized use is allowed and designed into construction of facilities</li> </ul>
<b>Rural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment considerably altered by development or vegetative manipulation</li> <li>• Sights and sounds of people are common</li> <li>• No minimum size</li> <li>• Visitor interaction is moderate to high</li> <li>• Facilities designed for large numbers of people and special activities</li> <li>• Motorized use is intense and parking is available</li> </ul>
<b>Urban</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment dominated by human-made structures</li> <li>• Vegetation is often exotic and manicured</li> <li>• No minimum size criteria</li> <li>• The sights and sounds of people dominant</li> <li>• Large numbers of users</li> <li>• Facilities for highly intense motor use and parking, sometimes with mass transit.</li> </ul>

*In the alternatives for Forest Plan revision, the following are emphasized differently to create a range of recreational opportunities:*

*Access (roads and docks)*

*Non-recreational uses*

*On-site management (facilities, landscaping, and traffic barriers)*

*Social interaction (sights or sounds of other visitors)*

*Visitor impacts (trampling of vegetation)*

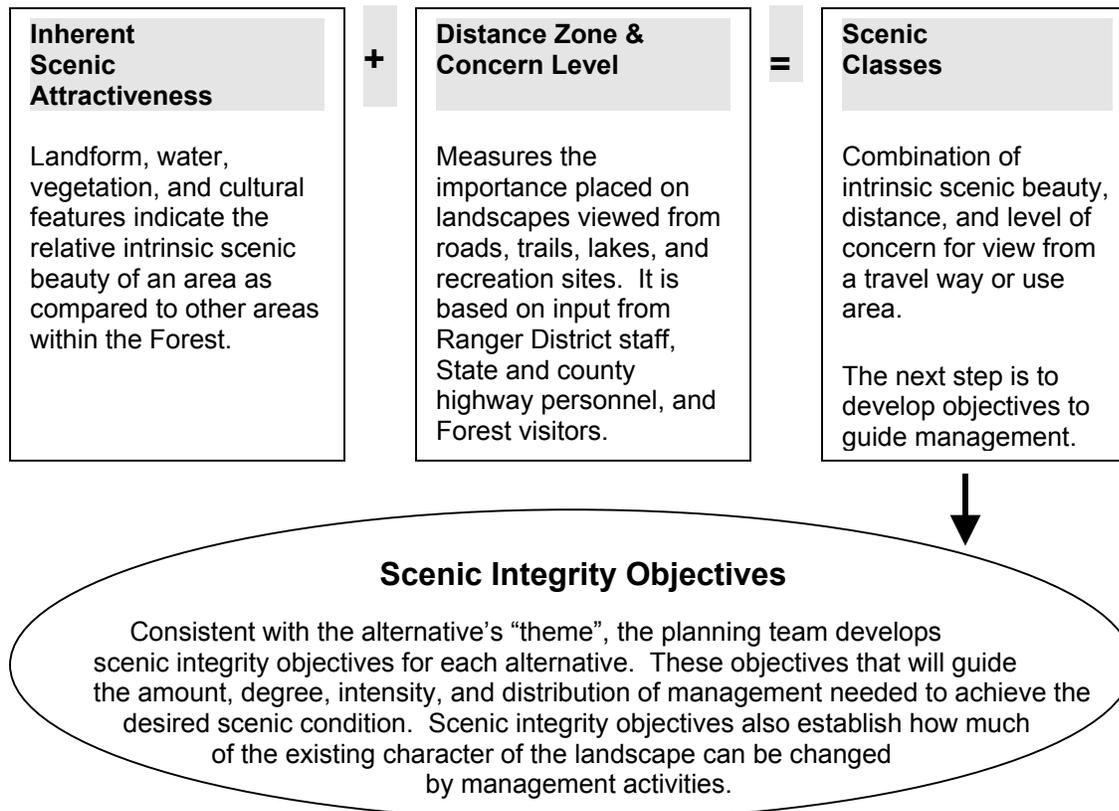


## Scenic Quality

Since the current Forest Management Plans for the Chippewa and Superior National Forests were created in 1986, the Forest Service has developed a new approach to managing scenic quality. This new approach, called the Scenery Management System, provides an overall framework for the inventory, analysis, and management of scenery. In Forest Plan revision, the Scenic Management System (SMS) will be used to develop and analyze a range of scenic integrity objectives across the alternatives, and will affect future management on the Forests.

The SMS classifies different areas across the Forests according to scenic beauty and level of concern for views from travel ways or use areas. The SMS compares the inventory current conditions to desired conditions, and provides management direction through scenic integrity objectives.

### Main Steps of Scenery Management System Process



*Forest Plan revision will address:*

*What are the appropriate scenic integrity objectives for the Chippewa and Superior National Forests?*

*How much and where should various scenic integrity objectives be emphasized?*



## Roads Analysis Process (RAP!)

Inventory and management of road systems on the Chippewa and Superior National Forests will be considered in the Forest Plan revision analysis.

National Forest System roads include different types of routes that provide access to forest resources, provide recreational opportunities and facilities, and contribute to rural transportation. Plan revision will analyze potential impacts, including fish passage through road crossings, sediment in run-off, fragmented wildlife habitat, and potential for land development or timber harvest. Ongoing and long-term road management will also be reviewed.

Road management on National Forests has been a topic of debate for several years. In 2001, a new rule was developed, which applies to all National Forests in the country. The National Forest System Road Management Transportation Rule requires each National Forest to conduct a roads analysis process (RAP) to assess current road conditions, and to determine the optimum road system needed to meet management objectives.

The analysis process includes consulting with local and state transportation agencies, input from the public, and involving an interdisciplinary team of various Forest Service specialists. The focus of the analysis is on higher standard roads that

support passenger cars. These are referred to as maintenance level 3, 4, and 5 roads. The higher the level, the more developed the roadway and the higher the maintenance requirement. (Level 1 roads are maintained on a seasonal basis for management access. Level 2 roads are only maintained to accommodate high-clearance vehicles.)

The Chippewa and Superior National Forests will be completing their Forest-wide roads analyses this summer. The Headwaters and Arrowhead Regional Development Commissions facilitated the roads analysis process. In 2001, over 100 people attended eight public meetings around the Forests to provide their input.

The roads analysis includes an update of the transportation system inventory of roads under Forest Service jurisdiction, and any other roads authorized for use by the Forest Service. The inventory also identified a large number of old routes from the past that are not part of the Forest road system.

The analysis will be documented in a final report, which will be available upon request. The information in the report will provide information for plan revision analysis. Project-level analysis will continue to fine-tune our transportation access needs after plan revision. Road condition surveys that will yield new information about management needs are planned for the next few years.

*Many questions were addressed in the road analysis process that are relevant to Forest Plan revision, including how the road system affects:*

- *Quantity and quality of water and aquatic resources in an area*
- *Timber management or other commodities on Forest Service and adjacent ownerships*
- *Fire management*
- *Various recreational uses*
- *Threatened or endangered species*
- *Access to the Forest*



## Since the last newsletter:

### **Regional Office Review**

The Chippewa – Superior Forests planning team moved one step closer to finalizing alternatives during a recent review at the Regional Forest Service office in Milwaukee at the end of May. The Forest Supervisors and planning team met for two days with the Regional Forester and his staff, to discuss the preliminary alternatives and analysis process. The planning team is continuing to refine the individual alternatives, conduct analysis, and consult with state, county, and tribal governments.

## What's coming?

### **Release of New Proposed Planning Rule**

The Forest Service plans to release a new framework for land and resource planning on National Forests. The following website will have more information:

***<http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma>***

However, the current Forest Plan revision on the Chippewa and Superior National Forests will continue under the guidelines of the 1982 planning regulations, and will not be affected by the new rule.

### **Revised Timeline**

In order to assure adequate analysis the draft environmental impact statement and draft plans, the timeline for release of these documents has been extended to December 2002.

## New on the website:

- Species Expert Panels - list of species reviewed
- Special Management Complexes - fact sheet
- Link to ***Northern Superior Uplands: A Comparison of Range of Natural Variation and Current Conditions***, Terry Brown and Mark White, NRRI, February 26, 2002
- Chronology of public involvement activities
- Fact sheets on Riparian Management and Vegetation Management Objectives will also be available on the website soon.

## For more information:

**Chippewa National Forest website:** [www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa)

**Specific questions concerning revision may be directed to:**

Duane Lula, Forest Planner, Superior National Forest, (218) 626-4383, [dlula@fs.fed.us](mailto:dlula@fs.fed.us)

or

Tracy Beck, Forest Planner, Chippewa National Forest, (218) 335-8619, [tbeck@fs.fed.us](mailto:tbeck@fs.fed.us)

**In order to request revision documents not available on the internet, please contact:**

Tonya Struecker, Chippewa National Forest, (218)335-8681, [tstruecker@fs.fed.us](mailto:tstruecker@fs.fed.us)