



# Forest Plan Revision

Chippewa National Forest



Superior National Forest

## Forest Plan Revision Alternatives

The National Forest Management Act requires the Forest Service to develop and analyze a broad range of reasonable alternatives that respond to the issues and concerns identified during the planning process. An Alternative is an option for meeting the purpose and need of a proposed action. All alternatives in the environmental analysis must meet the overall purpose and need which is to achieve a balance between social/economic and ecological needs.

### The following attributes apply to all alternatives for Forest Plan Revision:

- Management area boundaries are based on ecological classifications, existing management areas, social zones, and identifiable landscape features such as rivers and roads.
- All Superior National Forest alternatives continue with direction in the current Management Plan for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.
- All alternatives will recognize the unique status of American Indians and rights retained by treaty with the United States.
- All alternatives will, as a minimum, meet the Minnesota Forest Resource Council guidelines for mitigating the impacts of forest management activities. Additional standards and guidelines will be considered for enhancement or restoration in some of the alternatives.

***A reasonable range of alternatives is defined as:***

- **Realistically implementable**
- **Responsive to the issues raised during the planning process.**
- **Responsive to regional management direction**
- **Producing a range of outcomes and outputs**

<b>Development of Alternatives</b>	
<b>Step #1: What did people say?</b> Approximately 460 people responded during the initial scoping or public comment period after the Notice of Intent to conduct analysis to Revise the Forest Plans was issued.	<b>Public Comment</b>
<b>Step #2: What are the key issues?</b> Twenty issues were identified from public comments, concerns of other agencies, and from internal considerations.	<b>Key Issues</b>
<b>Step #3: How do we address the issues?</b> Alternative themes, or emphasis, were developed during public and employee workshops. These themes indicate the desired future condition for each alternative. A Forest Service interdisciplinary team combined similar themes resulting in six alternatives in addition to the No Action Alternative.	<b>Preliminary Alternatives</b>
<b>Step #4: What management activities should be used?</b> Different levels and mixes of management direction was identified for the Preliminary Alternatives using Management Areas (MAs). The alternatives are designed to provide a wide range of multiple uses, goods and services by addressing the issues in different ways	<b>Apply Management Areas</b>
<b>Step #5: What else do the alternatives need to address?</b> The concept of Landscape Ecosystems was incorporated into Forest Plan Revision. Preliminary Alternatives are being refined based on new information and analysis, including ecological objectives.	<b>Refine Preliminary Alternatives</b>
<b>Step #6: Do the alternatives meet regional objectives?</b> The Preliminary Alternatives will be reviewed by the Regional Forester in Milwaukee. Once the Regional Forester approves the alternatives, the draft EIS and the draft revised Forest Plans can be completed.	<b>Finalize Alternatives</b>

## Management Areas

<b>Management Areas for Plan Revision</b>
<b>General Multiple-use Forest Emphasis</b> (previously MAs 1, 2 and 4) <b>These have been combined to better address desired future conditions that are tied to the Landscape Ecosystem approach and capabilities of the land.</b>
Multiple-use Forests - Less Intensive Timber Management (10.2)
Multiple-use Forests - More Intensive Timber Management (10.1)
<b>Recreation/Scenic Emphasis</b>
Potential Candidate Wild and Scenic Rivers (7.3)
Recreation Use in a Scenic Landscape (7.2)
<b>Semi-primitive Recreation Emphasis</b>
Non-motorized Semi-primitive Recreation (6.2)
Non-motorized & Motorized Semi-primitive Recreation (6.3)
Motorized Semi-primitive Recreation (6.1)
<b>Conservation and Rare Features Emphasis</b>
Minimum Management Natural Area (8.5)-Alt.D only
Unique Biological, Geological, or Historical Areas (8.3)
Riparian Emphasis Areas (8.6)
Special Management Complexes (8.4)
<b>Research Emphasis</b>
Existing Research Natural Areas (8.2)
Recommended Research Natural Areas (8.2a)
Experimental Forest (8.1) – Chippewa only
<b>Wilderness Emphasis</b>
Pristine Wilderness (5.1)
Primitive Wilderness (5.2a)
Semi-primitive Non-motorized Wilderness (5.2b)
Semi-primitive Motorized Wilderness (5.3)
Recommended Wilderness (5.4)
<b>Minimum Intensity Emphasis</b>
Minimum Intensity Management (9.1)-Superior only

A Management Area (MA) emphasizes a certain management direction. Each alternative has a different mix of MAs that reflects the theme of that particular alternative. Not all MAs will appear in all alternatives.

The table to the left lists the MAs that will be included in the alternatives in the draft EIS. For convenience in referring to the various MAs they have been grouped by the general emphasis of activities within the area. These descriptions are still evolving.

MAs are applied spatially across the different alternatives to reflect the management theme of each. The vegetation objectives within MAs will also vary by alternative.

Some of the MAs in the proposed Forest Plans have not changed from the MAs from the 1986 Plans. Others differ in management direction and where they occur on the Forests.

The following pages include a brief description of each MA how they are being used in the Preliminary Alternatives.

**Maps of the distribution of MAs across the Preliminary Alternatives will be posted on the web site by the end of March.**

## Management Areas

The following is a brief description of each MA that is being used in Forest Plan Revision alternatives. A detailed description and desired condition for each MA will be included in Chapter 3 of the proposed Forest Plans with a spatial distribution of MAs displayed in a series of maps.

### General Multiple-use Forest Emphasis

**MAs 1, 2 and 4 from the 1986 Forest Plan have been combined to better address desired future conditions that are tied to the Landscape Ecosystem approach and capabilities of the land.**

#### Multiple-use Forests – More Intensive Timber Management

A mosaic of young to mature (1-150 years) trees dominates these areas. There is an emphasis on younger forests. Forest communities are maintained through management practices that mimic ecosystem processes, such as stand replacement disturbance. Management activities are often noticeable and may occasionally dominate the landscape.

When forests are harvested, they provide commercial saw timber, pulp, and fiber at a sustainable level. A full range of vegetation treatment practices is employed.

Recreational activities occur primarily in natural forests surroundings with some development and roaded natural and semi-primitive settings.

#### Multiple-use Forests – Less Intensive Timber Management

A mosaic of young to old (1-250 years) trees dominates these areas. Forest communities are maintained through management practices that mimic both stand replacement disturbance and less severe stand maintenance disturbance. Management activities are somewhat noticeable but do not dominate the landscape.

When forests are harvested, they provide commercial saw timber, pulp, and fiber at a sustainable level. A full range of silvicultural practices is employed, with less emphasis on clear cut harvesting. Prescribed fire will also be used. Recreational activities occur primarily in natural forests surroundings with some development and roaded natural and semi-primitive settings.

#### Recreation/Scenic Emphasis

Ecosystems are managed to provide a predominantly natural-appearing landscape, emphasizing large trees and older forest. Management activities enhance recreation and aesthetic objectives and may be noticeable to visitors. Timber harvest, prescribed fire, tree planting, and other management techniques may be used to meet recreation and scenic resource objectives.

#### Recreation Use in a Scenic Landscape

Low- to high-density recreation occurs in these large geographic areas. These areas may either be developed or undeveloped. View sheds are managed for scenic beauty

and big-tree character. Generally, these areas offer a natural forest setting with some development and roads for recreation.

### **Potential Candidate Wild and Scenic Rivers**

These areas provide for the interim protection of river corridors identified as Wild, Recreational, and Scenic River candidates. Protection provides for continuing recreation and aesthetic goals of the river corridors. Areas would be managed from primitive to developed recreation areas, depending on the river designation.

### **Semi-primitive Recreation Emphasis**

These are motorized and non-motorized semi-primitive settings for recreation. They provide low-density undeveloped recreation opportunities. Examples include: walking, hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, trail running, and horseback riding.

Management activities in these areas enhance recreation and aesthetic objectives and may be occasionally noticeable to visitors. These management activities may be timber harvest, prescribed fire, and planting trees. Harvesting is done in a way that retains a forested appearance.

Ecosystems are managed to provide a predominantly natural-appearing landscape, emphasizing large trees and older forest with a continuous forest canopy

### **Motorized Semi-primitive Recreation**

In some areas, motorized trail opportunities will be provided.

### **Non-motorized Semi-primitive Recreation**

No motorized trails are provided in these areas.

### **Motorized and Non-motorized Semi-primitive Recreation**

These areas provide recreational opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized travel. Timber harvest is used to return areas to their native cover types and maintain cover types. This MA would only be used on the Chippewa National Forest.

### **Conservation and Rare Features Emphasis**

#### **Unique Areas**

Unique biologic, geologic, or historic areas (including a National Natural Landmark on the Superior National Forest) are preserved. In some areas, the focus is on interpreting features. Timber products are incidental to the primary objective. Recreation and access opportunities, values, and benefits are different in each MA.

#### **Special Management Complexes**

Large areas managed for continuous, older forests. Terrestrial and riparian ecosystems are generally shaped by natural ecological processes. However, management activities, such as tree planting and timber harvesting, may be used to enhance or restore species composition. Recreation activities generally occur in semi-primitive settings.

#### **Minimum Management Natural Areas**

Natural processes shape terrestrial and riparian ecosystems, and there is minimal resource management. Road networks are

substantially reduced compared to the current road density. Recreation activities occur in semi-primitive settings. This MA only applies to Alternative D.

### **Riparian Emphasis Areas**

This MA emphasizes riparian values and functions. Riparian resources are restored, protected, and enhanced in areas where ecosystem processes are sensitive to degradation. Recreation activities occur in natural forest settings with roads to semi-primitive settings.

### **Research Emphasis**

Overall emphasis is on Forest Research. Ecosystems are managed for representative or rare ecological settings or components. Management is generally limited but sometimes evident. Recreational use is incidental to overall research goals.

### **Experimental Forests**

These areas are formally designated as Experimental Forests. The focus is on researching forest management techniques. Timber products are incidental to the primary objective. No developed recreation facilities will be provided. Dispersed recreation use occurs but is generally discouraged.

### **Research Natural Areas**

These areas are the existing formally designated Research Natural Areas. The focus is on preserving and maintaining areas for ecological research, observation, genetic conservation, monitoring, and educational activities. Forests are not managed for timber products. No recreation facilities are provided.

Dispersed recreation use occurs but is generally discouraged.

### **Recommended Research Natural Areas**

These areas have been recommended to be Research Natural Areas

### **Wilderness Emphasis**

Wilderness MAs are federally designated wilderness or areas that have been recommended for wilderness designations.

Ecosystems are managed to allow ecological processes such as fire, insects, and disease to operate relatively free from human influence. Diverse landscapes result from natural succession and natural disturbance. Vegetation is managed only to protect wilderness values or to protect adjacent property from fire or pests.

Primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunities are emphasized, except where motorized travel is allowed.

### **Pristine Wilderness**

These areas are non-motorized where activities of contemporary humans are not noticeable. Trails, portages, and campsites are not constructed or maintained. Visitors rarely encounter each other.

### **Primitive Wilderness**

These areas are also non-motorized, but activities of contemporary humans are somewhat noticeable. Campsites have latrines and fire grates. Portages and trails are maintained and are off main travel routes. Visitors infrequently encounter each other.

### **Semi-primitive Non-motorized Wilderness**

Campsites have latrines and fire grates. Portages and trails are constructed and maintained but are on main travel routes. Visitors encounter each other with moderate frequency.

### **Semi-primitive Motorized Wilderness**

Based on the BWCA Act, these are the only places where motorized watercraft are permitted in wilderness. Campsites have latrines and fire grates. Portages and trails are constructed and maintained and are along main travel routes. The frequency of encounters with others is moderate to high.

### **Potential Wilderness**

These areas are recommended as additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System. They will be managed in a way that will allow them to retain their

eligibility as wilderness. These areas are semi-primitive, so there are minimal encounters with others, minimal evidence of human activities, and minimal comforts provided for visitors.

### **Minimum Intensity Emphasis**

These are areas of sparse federal ownership where management and investment are minimal. Terrestrial and riparian ecosystems are managed for protecting and maintaining environmental values and protecting public health and safety. Natural processes shape the terrestrial and riparian ecosystems. Recreational opportunities occur but no additional facilities or investments will be made other than for user safety and resource protection.

This MA only applies to Alternative A on the Superior National Forest.

## **Alternative Themes**

### **Alternative A**

This alternative represents the amended 1986 Forest Plans. It is the 'no action' alternative, required by the National Environmental Policy Act. In this situation, 'no action' means no change from the current management direction.

Alternative A emphasizes managing the forests primarily for early successional aspen-dominated forests to provide timber and deer and moose habitat. Management direction would provide for mitigation activities in riparian areas. Outside designated wilderness areas, this alternative generally emphasizes

developed and undeveloped, motorized recreation settings.

### **Alternative B**

Alternative B emphasizes increasing older, mixed forests and coniferous species. Protecting rare resources would also be emphasized more in this alternative than the other alternatives. Timber management and other commercial resource management would occur secondary to increasing the amount of older forest

Management activities would maintain, enhance, or restore riparian areas. Alternative B emphasizes a natural-appearing forest for recreation in both motorized and non-motorized semi-primitive settings, which would reduce national forest road densities.

### **Alternative C**

Alternative C emphasizes replicating large-scale natural disturbances, such as large fires or blowdowns, resulting in a full array of forest conditions. Timber harvest would be used to create this disturbance.

Management direction would provide for mitigation in riparian areas. Alternative C emphasizes natural forest settings with roads developed and undeveloped motorized recreation. Relatively high road densities would be maintained.

### **Alternative D**

Alternative D emphasizes natural recreation settings and restoring limited cover types. The highest priorities for restoration would be re-establishing white pines and increasing the old forest component. Under this alternative, forest management would transition away from timber production toward restoration. However, logging would be allowed in the first ten years to restore some cover types. After this ten-year period, selective timber harvest would be used to maintain cover types on the Chippewa National Forest but not on the Superior National Forest.

Management activities would maintain, enhance, or restore riparian areas. This

alternative emphasizes semi-primitive, non-motorized recreation settings, substantially reducing road density.

### **Alternative E**

Alternative E emphasizes timber production, recreation, tourism, and local community needs to promote economic stability.

Management activities would protect riparian areas, and proactive riparian management would occur in some areas. This alternative would provide a variety of recreation opportunities in a range of settings from rural to semi-primitive. Road densities would be reduced in some areas.

### **Alternative F**

Alternative F emphasizes managing both terrestrial and riparian systems to mimic natural disturbances. Ecological processes would be maintained or restored using a variety of timber harvest methods, prescribed fire, and by allowing natural processes to operate. Areas that historically experienced high-intensity, stand-replacing events, such as wildfires and large-scale blowdowns, would be intensively managed. However, areas that experienced low-intensity, stand maintenance events, such as surface fires and minor wind throw, would be less intensively managed.

A variety of recreation opportunities would be provided in a range of developed to semi-primitive settings. Some road closures and obliteration would result in reduced road densities.

## Alternative G

Alternative G emphasizes managing forests to reach a balance of age classes across a large landscape. Areas of younger forest, older forest, and very old forest (old growth) would be spatially distributed.

Management activities would maintain, enhance, or restore riparian areas. Alternative G would provide a variety of recreation opportunities in a range of settings from rural to semi-primitive. Road density would vary by area with some overall decrease.

**For more information:**

Log on to the Forest Plan Revision web site at: [www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa)

To request revision documents not available on the internet, please call (218)335-8681,  
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