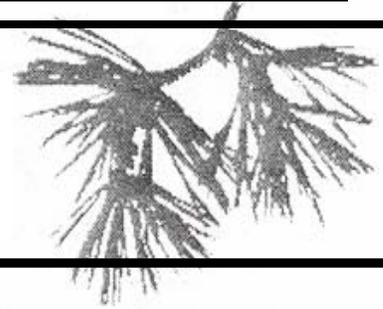

Ottawa National Forest



Forest Plan Revision Notice of Intent Public Comments



Forest Hosts Public Meetings

The Ottawa National Forest hosted six public meetings across the western Upper Peninsula in October 2003 and participated in additional meetings in lower Michigan in partnership with the Hiawatha and Huron-Manistee NF's that same month. These meetings were held in an effort to gather feedback on the Notice of Intent which was published in September 2003. The Forest received nearly 200 comment forms and letters. In addition, a court recorder was present at all public meetings and oral comments were solicited. The table below summarizes public comments received for this stage of the planning process.

Key Comment	Suggestions
Wilderness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support high numbers of wilderness areas• Emphasis on high number of acres for biodiversity• No additional wilderness designations• Oppose closing any additional areas to vehicular traffic• Designate the Trap Hills area as a wilderness area• Assess all areas across the Forest that are eligible for wilderness designation• Recognize the need for analysis of additional areas• Oppose any motorized trails within the perimeter or wilderness area• Recreation is not the only value to take into account when designating wilderness areas• Maintain and expand wilderness characteristics in designated wilderness areas and other areas of the Forest• Consider access for all people (seniors and handicapped) when designating wilderness areas• Make provisions for proposed wilderness areas not designated by Congress in a timely manner• Compensation to owners of mineral rights within designated areas of wilderness should be provided• Describe impacts to areas enjoined from active management (e.g., wildland fire)

Key Comment	Suggestions
Recreation	<p><i>OHV Access, Trails, Designated Routes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorized areas should be the lowest priority use • OHV's are destructive to the land, air and water • Keep as much of the Forest open to vehicular use as possible • Consider access for people with significant mobility impairments • OHV's should be banned from the Forest completely • Make no changes in ATV rules (e.g., open unless posted closed) • Promote use of trails for OHV's to keep them out of the forest (no cross-country use) • Maintain and increase motorized access • Consistent regulations between State and Federal land managers to create uniformity • Limit the number of semi-primitive non-motorized areas to provide access for hunters, hikers and firefighters • Any new trails should be environmentally sound • Designate specific trails for OHV to eliminate conflict between users • Suggest user fees to offset costs of maintaining trails • Create interconnecting trails, loop trails • Better enforcement of OHV use needed to prevent damage to the land • Change OHV use policy to "closed unless posted open" • Conduct a thorough analysis before creating or eliminating additional OHV trails • Consideration should be given to the recreationists who are looking for a quiet, remote experience • Use snowmobile trails for ATV trails • Guidelines for closing trails when damage occurs • Monitor the affects of OHV usage across the Forest • An increase in trails should be followed by a decrease of remaining areas open to OHV use • Consider use of ATV's within campgrounds • Ban OHV's from areas with sensitive ecosystems • Do not make OHV access restrictive • Prohibit ATV's from using snowmobile trails • Create a balance between OHV use and wilderness trails • Use OHV system to bring tourists to the area • Concentrate use to areas already disturbed by human activity (i.e., mining and tailing areas) • Roads closed to autos should also be closed to OHV's

Key Comment	Suggestions
<p>Recreation (Continued)</p>	<p><i>Wild & Scenic Rivers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All remaining wild rivers should be considered for inclusion into the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System • Evaluate protection buffer on wild and scenic rivers • Complete current studies of all rivers • Provide for compensation to owners of mineral rights within Wild & Scenic River corridors <p><i>Other</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support high access for semi-primitive non-motorized areas • Promote cross-country skiing • Consider economic impacts to local communities tied to recreation opportunities/tourism • Evaluate proposals for shelters along the North Country Trail • Include direction for horseback riding in the Forest Plan • Develop improved trout fishery program • Explore recreation opportunities associated with turkey • Analyze the forest for potential recreation areas • Better posting of trails to eliminate user conflicts • Consider hunting as a major recreation use of the forest • Develop (non-motorized) bike trails • Limit dispersed camping • Oppose jet skis on lakes
<p>Roads</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadless areas should be maintained in their roadless state and managed in accordance with the Roadless Rule • Decrease the number of roads on the forest • Consider access needs to private land within Forest • Oppose building of additional roads • Where possible roads should be allowed to revert to forest
<p>Invasive Species</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a proactive plan to limit the spread of invasives • Prepare for aggressive control • Monitor current sites • Identify and destroy invasive plants and animals • Close lakes to motorized boats and trailers to prevent the invasion of Eurasian water milfoil • Include steps to avoid introduction and control or eliminate invasive species within the Forest • Implement procedures to avoid further introduction and spread of earthworms • Consider adverse ecological, aesthetic and economic effects of invasive species • Quarantine lakes currently infested with Eurasian water milfoil

Key Comment	Suggestions
Vegetative Mgmt	<p data-bbox="560 170 716 201"><i>Old Growth</i></p> <ul data-bbox="571 212 1370 548" style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve old growth forests • Review old growth designation process • Coordinate old growth designations with the State • Increase roadless, old growth tracts • Oppose old growth designations outside of wilderness or Research Natural Areas • Maintain old growth trees anywhere logging is allowed • Examine old growth plans using the current, best available science <p data-bbox="560 590 643 621"><i>Aspen</i></p> <ul data-bbox="571 632 1382 926" style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase aspen harvesting • Address over-mature and poor health issues of aspen stands • No planting of aspen or any other non-native species • Continue aspen harvest and regeneration projects • Support aspen clear cutting which benefits wildlife • There is currently too much aspen on the Forest • Address decline of aspen forests • No net loss of aspen acres <p data-bbox="560 1010 1073 1041"><i>Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ)/Harvest</i></p> <ul data-bbox="571 1052 1382 1913" style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze current ASQ and suitable lands for harvest • Use new scientific and ecological data when determining ASQ • Support moderate numbers of acres available for harvest • No forest lands are suitable for timber harvest • Support large patch management • Address economic impact/benefits of timber program to local communities • Provide for a reasonable range of alternatives using a benchmark analysis • Consider a no logging alternative • Oppose clear cutting as a management practice • Consider regional demand for timber products • Consider other values besides current market when determining lands suitable for timber harvest • The Ottawa is growing more timber than is being cut • Provide standards and guidelines to ensure environmentally sound practices are adhered to during harvest • Eliminate logging within sight of any trail or riparian area • Managed forests are healthier forests; support harvesting of timber to reduce fire threats • Develop a forest restoration alternative • Timber cutting damages watersheds and wildlife species

Vegetative Mgmt
(continued)

- Communities are now more economically dependent upon recreation opportunities vs. timber harvest
- Support commercial timber sales to provide habitat for game and non-game species
- Increase the current ASQ as proposed for the second period of the current Forest Plan
- Retain guidelines of poor quality timber in areas of poor access
- Lands which provide rare older habitat on rich sites should be considered unsuited for timber harvest
- Map suited and unsuited lands and their variation in the new Plan—current Plan is confusing
- ASQ should reflect the need to increase the reinvestment of growing stock volume back into the system
- Count timber sales for salvage, fuel barriers and habitat restoration toward ASQ
- Decrease the location and number of suitable acres to maintain soil productivity and high quality water
- Address Forest's impact on stumpage price on the value of private landowners forest resources
- The maximum sustained yield capacity estimates should be cut by 50 percent
- Long-term cutting rotations may allow higher profits by favoring large saw logs cut from mature trees rather than cutting aspen stands frequently for pulp
- Consider impacts of large timber companies' reliance on timber from federal land
- Projections for timber cutting fell short in the first Forest Plan, with volumes per acre not producing what was calculated

Forest Management Practices

- Maintain a balance of age classes and wildlife habitat
- Identify specific landscapes for even-aged forest management treatments to benefit wildlife
- Old growth must be kept at a manageable level to maintain a healthy forest
- Reevaluate current management practices in stands adjacent to old growth areas
- Support the use of the full array of silvicultural tools (including fire and harvest) to achieve forest health
- Address residual basal areas within even-age units to maximize understory development
- Maintain early successional communities at a variety of scales to address the needs of wildlife species
- Protect large diameter den trees; trees with nesting cavities to provide shelter for wildlife

<p>Vegetative Mgmt (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an ecological value for recovering the dominate habitat type native to Michigan • Focus on maintaining the largest, most fire resistant trees and areas of older forest that are less prone to spreading crown fires • Manage jack pine stands to provide habitat for the Kirtland warbler • Support young forest management and uneven growth patters in large areas with limited road access • Enhance or expand current mesic conifer component, especially white pine and hemlock on upland sites • Coordinate management efforts with adjacent landowners • Provide habitat for old-forest interior species • Do not create small and large-scale opening and permanent fuel breaks • Stop increasing management for ruffed grouse • Consider climate changes when calculating the range of natural variation in forested ecosystems • Emphasis on high number of acres for biodiversity • Maintain belts of taller trees among clear cut patches for biodiversity • Size of clear cuts in even-aged management areas should be kept small in at least one alternative • Determine what management practices would result in the most healthy and productive forest landscape over the long term • Uneven-aged management over a long run will result in the loss of diversity within the stands as the forest ages • Manage hardwood stands in a manner that promotes a more natural state • Restore white pine and other conifer species to sites and habitats where they once were
<p>Wildlife/Fisheries</p>	<p><i>Lynx Habitat</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oppose habitat management for lynx (and other predators) • Oppose introduction of lynx • Forest has marginal habitat for lynx, do not improve or increase habitat available • Do not want lynx to negatively affect management of the Forest • Be cautious when trying to protect a non-existent resident population of lynx • Support early successional habitat for lynx when it benefits other species • Surveys should be conducted to determine presence of lynx • Complete an amendment to the current Plan listing the lynx as threatened

<p>Wildlife/Fisheries (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow guidelines in the Lynx Conservation Assessment Strategy (LCAS) and provide necessary level of protection to lynx <p><i>Management Indicator Species (MIS)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the current MIS listing to include flora • Species included on the MIS should be recognized by the general public • Game species representing various habitat types and conditions are preferred (black bear, grouse, deer, snowshoe hare) • MIS should be selected as a focal species for ecological conditions of concern • Include better protection for MIS species • MIS should include a balance of species utilizing young and mature forests • Pay particular care to species which are dependent upon at risk communities • Pick at least one species where over-abundance is an indicator of danger <p><i>Other Comments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the forest for a diverse suite of species and habitats • Continue management for traditional species (e.g., white tailed deer) and all native natural communities for nongame, threatened, endangered and regionally sensitive terrestrial and aquatic species • Implement informational and educational programs regarding conservation of threatened species • Work cooperatively with other agencies in the development of a post-delisting monitoring program of the gray wolf • Maintain protective standards to endure the continued survival of the bald eagle • Management practices should protect all species • Do not increase ruffed grouse habitat • Protect the historic diversity of all animals and the forest • Standards and guides should be reviewed for all alternatives • Re-draw management areas to conform with land type associations (LTA's) • Support high number of acres for biodiversity • Biological diversity should not be the primary focus of the plan—include social and economic impacts in decisions • Desired future condition (DFC) should emphasize recovery and sustaining natural habitat • Include the eastern cougar in the management plan • Stop focusing on game species
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Wildlife/Fisheries (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include consideration of songbird species of high management concern • Be aggressive in collecting and sharing data on deer damage levels with the State • Encourage native aquatic species • Evaluate the historic occurrence and ecological potential for large opening complexes and associated wildlife communities
Research Natural Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assess RNA, roadless and wilderness area concepts • Object to any proposal which will limit access to any part of the forest • Designation of RNA's should consider potential mineral exploration as well as ecological information • Encourage active research in designated RNA's
Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of fire systems should focus on the wildland/urban interface • Use low intensity surface fires for oak regeneration • Proposed fuel breaks are unproven and could be expensive to maintain • Analyze use of fire for long-term feasibility • Clarify language in current plan relative to fire • Recognize and utilize the role of fire within the forest to maintain certain plant and animal communities • Include the impact of fire activities on air quality • Use fire to control the spread of invasive species in the wilderness • Oppose adding standard to integrate fire and fuels management
Minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address hard rock mining issues • Assess which areas of the forest should be designated "no surface occupancy for minerals exploration" • Address hard rock mining as it relates to water quality and general forest health
Water, Air and Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include benefits to water quality from closure and restoration of forest roads • Include measures for oversight of provisions contained within FERC license orders • Identify actions needed to protect areas downstream of dams • Man-made dams should be reviewed for possible elimination to restore cold water streams when possible • Include hydrological controls on hydro dams • Consider the effects of management activities on erosion and siltation • Enforce procedures to protect waterways from siltation

Key Comment	Suggestions
Water, Air and Soils (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include heightened protection for Wild and Scenic Rivers, Michigan Natural Rivers and Blue Ribbon Trout Streams • Take actions on the ground to reduce the need for in-stream devices • Best management practices should be utilized in watershed protection • Future logging contracts must require water quality control and wide, protected buffers along all streams, rivers and wetlands • Riparian management guidelines must include provisions for young forest habitat along these areas • Stream management should focus on mimicking as closely as possible the natural disturbance regimes • Develop an aquatic classification and management approach (consistent with other Michigan National Forests) • Preserve water resources • Reduce or eliminate heavy or intense activity within riparian areas • Expand watershed protection to tributaries, streams, springs, and wetlands • Include monitoring plans that will determine potential impacts on surface and ground water quality • Include mitigation measures to protect critical fish and wildlife habitat areas from potential adverse effects of proposed management actions • Include critical fisheries habitat, especially spawning and rearing areas and other sensitive sites • Wetlands and riparian areas should be managed for old growth and uneven age forests • No roads or trails in riparian areas • Examine the number of roads on the forest and reduce negative impacts of stream crossings on watersheds • Encourage early succession in riparian zones • Active vegetation management in riparian areas needs to be done with caution

Key Comment	Suggestions
<p>Miscellaneous Comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support multiple-use goals for the forest • Do not support recreational hunting • Preserve the forest for those that wish to use it “peacefully” • Allow communication towers to be located on the Forest necessary for the health and safety of our population • Address Native American rights and include them in Plan • Conduct surveys of forest users to help meet social goals • Loggers need to pay for full cost of timber sales • Establish regular schedule to meet with county officials to discuss forest activities • The future of the forest is eco tourism with wilderness, old growth, and distinct forest refuge • Forests should be open to all types of recreation • The land should be self funded by selective cutting and timber management • Propose an inventory of non-contiguous parcels of Forest Service land and allow them for public sale • Focus on implementation of the Plan—currently lacking • A thorough map of all roads and trails on the forest is needed • Support the local governments affected by Forest programs, especially the 25 percent payment • Establish an advisory committee to provide ongoing input • Hold meetings outside of the immediate local area (Wisconsin, lower Michigan, Minnesota) • Paper recycling factor should be figured into the economic analysis • Help people make informed choices about natural resources on public and private land • Should be using the 2000 Planning Regulations vs. the 1982 regulations • Discuss long-term implications of proposed forest management strategies • Discuss whether new proposals are consistent with or a departure from past management • Clearly describe existing resource conditions on the Forest