

the mid-1980's, and any amendments associated with those individual Forest Plans. This Notice describes the focus areas of change, the estimated dates for filing the EIS, the information concerning public participation, the names and addresses of the responsible agency official and the individual who can provide additional information for each of the three National Forests in Michigan. In an effort to create efficiencies in the process, the Michigan National Forests are identifying areas of Plan Revision where resources, information needs, data assessments and public involvement can be cooperatively accomplished by all three Forests.

DATES: Your comments are needed on this Notice of Intent (NOI) in writing on or before November 17, 2003. The Draft EIS documents should be available for public review by March 2005. The Final EIS and Revised Forest Plans should be completed by March 2006. Comments should be addressed to the appropriate National Forest as shown below.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to:

Huron-Manistee Nat'l Forests

NOI-FP Revision, Huron-Manistee
Nat'l Forest, 1755 S. Mitchell St.,
Cadillac, MI 49601

Hiawatha Nat'l Forest

NOI-FP Revision, Hiawatha Nat'l
Forest, 2727 No. Lincoln Rd.,
Escanaba, MI 49829

Ottawa Nat'l Forest

NOI-FP Revision, Ottawa Nat'l Forest,
E6248 U.S. Hwy. 2, Ironwood, MI
49938.

Or direct electronic mail to (type:
NOI-FP Revision in the subject line):
Huron-Manistee Nat'l Forest:
r9_huronmanistee_revision@fs.fed.us.
Hiawatha Nat'l Forest:
r9_hiawatha_revision@fs.fed.us.
Ottawa Nat'l Forest:
r9_ottawa_revision@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Huron-Manistee Nat'l Forests

Forest Planner, 231-775-5023, Fax:
231-775-5551, TTY: 231-775-
3183, www.fs.fed.us/r9/hmnf

Hiawatha Nat'l Forest

Forest Planner, 906-786-4062, Fax:
906-789-3311, TTY: 906-789-
3337, www.fs.fed.us/r9/hiawatha

Ottawa Nat'l Forest

Forest Planner, 906-932-1330, Fax:
906-932-0122, TTY: 906-932-
0301, www.fs.fed.us/r9/ottawa

Responsible Official: Randy Moore,
Regional Forester, Eastern Region, 626
East Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee,
Wisconsin 53202.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The
Regional Forester for the Eastern Region

gives notice of the Agency's intent to prepare three separate EIS documents to revise the Huron-Manistee, Hiawatha and Ottawa National Forest Plans. The Regional Forester approved the original National Forest Plans in the mid-1980's. These plans guide the overall management of the Michigan National Forests. The six primary decisions in the Forest Plan are:

1. Forest-wide multiple-use goals and objectives,
2. Forest-wide management requirements,
3. Management area direction,
4. Lands suited and not suited for resource use and production (timber management etc.),
5. Monitoring and evaluation requirements,
6. Recommendations to Congress (such as wilderness), if any.

By the requirements of the National Forest Management Act, National Forests must revise the Forest Plan every 10-15 years (U.S.C. 1604(f)(5)). At this time, there are three reasons to revise the current Forest Plans: (1) The National Forest Management Act of 1976 requires that such plans be revised every 10-15 years; (2) New research and information is available regarding management of forestlands; and (3) agency goals and objectives, along with other national guidance for strategic plans and programs, have changed. The agency Government Performance and Results Act Strategic Plan (2000) provides guidance to forest planning.

Proposed Actions for Revising the Forest Plans: Across the state of Michigan, people value the opportunities public forests provide for enjoying recreation, solitude, nature study, and scenic beauty. People also expect important products from managed forests, such as wildlife species and habitats, recreation opportunities and events, wood products, and other forest products. The Michigan National Forests are integral to the sense of place for communities across the State, as well as adjoining states.

However, each of the three Michigan National Forests also serves local communities with diverse needs and unique expectations. When making decisions in the revised plans, economic and social impacts will be examined. Each National Forest has proposed to focus analysis on topics identified as being most critically in need of change for their individual National Forest. These were identified through public comment, monitoring and evaluating implementation of the current forest plan.

Hiawatha National Forest Revision Topics

1. Sustainable Ecosystems, Conditions and Uses

The Hiawatha National Forest has diverse ecosystems that provide habitat for numerous plants and animals, serve as a setting for recreational activities, and provide a mix of forest products. Since the implementation of the Forest Plan, new information on the ecological function and capability of the forest landscape has been developed. The Hiawatha has also completed mapping of ecological units using updated criteria and information, which will be used, along with other resource information, to:

- Determine the most effective mix of tree species, their sizes and locations;
- Determine how the vegetation composition and structure will provide conditions that contribute to species viability, habitat for game species, recreation, and forest products;
- Determine the best locations to manage for old growth characteristics;
- Determine what lands are suitable for timber harvests.

The Hiawatha National Forest proposes the following revisions to the Forest Plan:

A. *Vegetation Management:* Some of the Plan's vegetation composition and structure goals have not been met. This is due to numerous factors, including changed market demand, natural events (such as insect and disease infestations, wind events and fire), and the discovery of new rare plant and animal species. Species most affected were jack pine and the aspen group. The Hiawatha proposes to:

1. Review and change, where necessary, the vegetation goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines.
2. Use improved information about the Forest's ecosystems to better align management prescriptions where ecosystem capabilities favor their applications.

B. *Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, Sensitive and Management Indicator Species:* The Hiawatha has many threatened, endangered or sensitive plant and animal species. These species require a diverse array of ecological conditions. Based on species viability evaluation and review of the current Forest Plan, the Hiawatha proposes to:

1. Revise desired future conditions, goals, objectives and standards and guidelines to address rare species.
2. Incorporate by reference designated federally threatened, endangered and proposed and Regional Forester Sensitive Species.