

3. Evaluate and change Management Indicator Species, as necessary, based on monitoring and new information.

4. Assess current and projected Canada lynx habitat to determine the amount and distribution of suitable habitat. Develop standards and guidelines that incorporate the Canada Lynx Conservation Strategy, when appropriate.

*C. Land Suitability:* The Plan classifies lands as suited and unsuited for timber production. Because of improved ecological classification information there is a need to review the Hiawatha's lands allocated as suited and unsuited for timber production. The Hiawatha proposes to review and change, as necessary, lands identified as suitable and not suitable for timber production incorporating new information on ecosystems sustainability and capability.

*D. Old Growth:* The Forest Plan provides for a minimum of 51,988 acres of lands classified as suitable for timber production to be designated as old growth. This implies that timber harvest could occur because suited lands are available to contribute the Forest's timber volume goals. The plan also provides guidance on the amount and species composition by management area. New ecological information and monitoring of designated old growth stands indicates some adjustments to the old growth system are needed. The Hiawatha proposes to:

1. Review the old growth system design focusing on ecological function.

2. Designate core old growth areas that include: wilderness, research natural areas, semi-primitive non-motorized areas, and Grand Island National Recreation Area.

3. Maintain current plan minimum of 51,988 acres of designated old growth in addition to core areas; however, re-classify designated old growth stands from suited to unsuited for timber production.

4. Develop forest-wide desired future conditions, goals, objectives, and standards and guidelines for old growth.

*E. Management Areas:* The Hiawatha has 26 different management areas. Each area has a desired condition, prescriptions and standards and guidelines. The Hiawatha has mapped its ecological land types (ELT) to better define the inherent ecosystem capabilities that change across the forest. There is a need to modify management goals and objectives so that management is better aligned with the inherent capability of the land and other multiple use objectives. The Hiawatha proposes to review and change management areas to incorporate

ecological land types, new information on ecosystems, sustainability and capability concepts and other pertinent resource information.

*F. Research Natural Areas:* Research Natural Areas are examples of important forest, shrubland, grassland, alpine, aquatic and geologic types that have special or unique characteristics to complete the national network of research natural areas (RNAs). The Hiawatha has 3 designated and 18 candidate RNAs. The Hiawatha proposes to review the existing candidate RNAs using new ecological information (ecological land-type mapping).

*G. Timber Output:* The Hiawatha's projected timber harvest may change in response to changes to land suitability, management prescriptions, and vegetation goals. Any changes to lands identified as suited for timber production, as well as vegetation objectives, may have an affect on timber volume. The Hiawatha proposes to adjust, as necessary, the Plan's timber projections based on changes to land suitability, vegetation goals and management areas.

## 2. Watershed Health

Approximately 46 percent of the Hiawatha National Forest is designated as wetlands. It includes nearly 1,850 miles of streams and 28,700 acres of lakes and ponds. Based on new ecological information, monitoring, and review of existing Plan direction, the following areas need to be updated:

*A. Watershed, Riparian and Aquatic Habitat:* The Hiawatha proposes to:

1. Develop a desired future condition, goals, objectives, standards and guidelines for watershed, riparian and aquatic resources.

2. Incorporate by reference the State of Michigan Water Quality Management Practices on Forest Land (BMPs).

3. Establish watershed, riparian and aquatic monitoring protocol and standards.

*B. Soils:* The Hiawatha proposes to:

1. Develop a desired future condition, goals, objectives, standards and guidelines to insure that soil productivity and function is maintained in conjunction with new ecological information.

2. Incorporate by reference regional soil standards.

## 3. Recreation

*A. Access:* Recreation use and demands for access have changed since the Forest Plan was developed. Conflicts between motorized and non-motorized recreation users have increased and demands for access to inland lakes and

the Great Lakes continue to rise. The Hiawatha National Forest proposes to develop forest-wide and/or update management area desired condition statements, goals, objectives, standards and guidelines for recreation access. It will include direction for:

1. Motorized and non-motorized access that provides opportunities for future loop and connected trails.

2. Forest-wide direction for OHV (off highway vehicles) use.

3. The quantity and development level for inland lakes and Great Lakes boat accesses.

4. Providing access to both motorized and non-motorized recreation settings on inland lakes.

*B. Recreation Opportunity Spectrum.* Forest plan Amendment 5 (which resolved the appeal(s) of the Forest Plan in 1986), allocated the areas of Delia's Run, Boot Lake and Buck Bay Creek to a "semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS). Prior to the amendment, these areas were allocated to a "roaded natural" ROS. These areas do not meet the desired future condition for management for the SPNM recreation setting because there is a historic pattern and significant motorized use throughout these areas and the quality of the setting is not beneficial to SPNM recreation. The Hiawatha proposes to change the ROS classification for these areas from semi-primitive non-motorized to semi-primitive motorized.

## 4. Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers

*A. Wilderness Areas:* The Hiawatha National Forest has six wilderness areas (Rock River Canyon, Big Island Lake, Mackinac, Round Island, Delirium, and Horseshoe Bay) and two RARE II (Roadless Area Review and Evaluation) Areas (Government Island and Fibre). The Forest conducted an initial roadless inventory and found no areas except Fibre that qualified as roadless. Based on our initial inventory and assessment, only Fibre will be further evaluated for wilderness study.

*B. Wild and Scenic Rivers:* The Forest Plan identified the Indian, Carp, Whitefish, Sturgeon, and East Branch Tahquamenon Rivers as "study rivers" for evaluation of their potential for possible inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (WSR). They were allocated to Management Area 8.4, with management direction that would not diminish their river values or free-flowing condition. As a result of the Michigan Scenic Rivers Act of 1991, these rivers were designated as Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers. Those segments