

with primarily National Forest ownership were designated as wild and scenic rivers, while those segments with primarily private ownership were designated as study rivers. The Hiawatha completed resource assessments for all five rivers and amended the plan with comprehensive management plans for the Indian and Carp Rivers.

The Hiawatha proposes to:

1. Incorporate specific river management plans and establish final corridor boundaries for the designated sections of the East Branch Tahquamenon, Sturgeon and Whitefish Rivers.

2. Incorporate new information and update management direction for National Forest lands within the study river segments.

Your Comments are Important to Us: Your comments about the Hiawatha National Forest's proposed actions for revising the Forest Plan are important. It would be most helpful if you clearly indicated that you are referencing the Hiawatha National Forest's proposed changes and specific items/areas where you are in agreement with the proposal or wish to express a concern or alternative approach. Your rationale for agreeing or providing different viewpoints will assist the Forest in understanding your position, developing alternatives, and/or addressing your concern.

The document titled "Need for Change, Description of Proposal for Revising the Forest Plan of the Hiawatha National Forest" provides additional details on the revision topics and is available upon request. You are encouraged to review this additional document before commenting on the Notice of Intent. You may request this additional information by calling the number listed above, by writing or e-mailing to the addresses listed in this notice, or by accessing the Forest's Web page.

See the schedule of public meetings that appears in the section "Inviting Public Participation".

Huron-Manistee National Forests Revision Topics

The Huron-Manistee National Forests have completed the Forest Plan Revision "Need for Change, Description of Proposal for Revising the Forest Plan of the Huron-Manistee National Forests." The following summarizes the proposed changes to the Forest Plan that are necessary to bring the 1986 Forest Plan as amended up-to-date.

1. Sustaining Ecosystems, Conditions and Uses

A. Management Areas: The Huron-Manistee National Forest's management areas are based on ecological and social economic considerations. Each management area has unique desired conditions, goals and objectives. There is a need to change management areas, desired conditions, goals and objectives because there is new ecological and social information and conditions. The Huron-Manistee National Forests propose to:

1. Increase ruffed grouse emphasis areas by 1,400 acres; Rural areas by 74,300 acres; Semiprimitive Areas by 10,500 acres; and candidate Research Natural Areas by 9,600 acres; and decrease the sandy hills and plains management area by 59,700 acres and deer and wildlife emphasis areas by 20,800 acres.

2. Establish desired conditions, goals, and objectives for the aquatics and riparian, undesirable invasive species, fire and hazardous fuel management, and oil and gas resources.

3. Update the desired conditions, goals and objectives for vegetation, wildlife, fish, rare plants, soils, and semiprimitive recreation areas.

B. Wildlife and Rare Plants: The Huron-Manistee National Forests have many threatened, endangered or sensitive plant and animal species. These species require an array of ecological conditions. Other wildlife changes are proposed because areas are better suited for specific wildlife species, semiprimitive recreation opportunities, or candidate research natural areas. Based on species viability evaluation and review of the current Forest Plan, the Huron-Manistee National Forests propose to:

1. Manage the Regional Forester Sensitive Species according to the Eastern Region Regional Forester's Sensitive Species Framework.

2. Restore and maintain large-scale openings for grassland, prairie, savannah, and oak-pine barrens up to approximately 10 percent of the sandy hills and plains land type associations (approximately 58,600 acres). The size of openings may be up to approximately 500 acres.

3. Restore Kirtland's warbler nesting habitat areas up to approximately 550 acres in size.

4. Protect resource values by managing landforms such as coastal plain marshes, bogs, swales, fens, and mesic prairies consistent with ecological processes.

5. Improve habitat conditions for species such as: American ginseng,

northern goshawk, red-shouldered hawk, red headed woodpecker, Eastern massasauga rattlesnake, cerulean warbler, and common loon.

6. Change the Nordhouse Dunes North Semiprimitive Area to a grouse emphasis area.

7. Increase the amount of ruffed grouse emphasis areas by approximately 1,400 acres and reduce the deer emphasis areas by approximately 18,511 acres and wildlife emphasis areas by approximately 2,326 acres in order to establish candidate research natural areas and semiprimitive areas.

C. Research Natural Areas: The Huron-Manistee National Forests presently have three research natural areas and four candidate research natural areas. The Forests have inventoried potential areas for candidate research natural areas and propose to add 19 candidate research natural areas (approximately 9,600 acres) to protect unique or representative areas and conduct research, observation, and education programs.

D. Management Indicator Species and Monitoring: The Huron-Manistee National Forests have management indicator species and conducts monitoring annually. The Forests annually prepare a monitoring and evaluation report. There is a need to identify management indicator species to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the effects of implementing the Forest Plan and to monitor in an efficient and effective manner. The Forests propose to evaluate, and revise if needed, management indicator species and monitoring requirements during the preparation of the draft environmental impact statement and Forest Plan.

E. Timber Management: The Huron-Manistee National Forests Allowable Sale Quantity is 82.2 MMBF per year; Maximum Long Term Sustained Yield Capacity is 261.0 MMBF per year; and little or no timber volume was projected from lands classified as not suitable for timber production. The lands suitable for timber management have changed due to past decisions and proposed Forest Plan revision changes. The Forests are planning activities, such as stewardship contracts and timber sales, to restore old growth, create small and large-scale openings and create permanent fuel breaks on lands classified as not suitable for timber production. The Forests propose to:

1. Recalculate the maximum long-term sustained yield capacity.

2. Add an objective/outcome for timber derived from lands classified as not suitable for timber production (non-chargeable to the allowable sale quantity