

volume) up to approximately 20 MMBF per year.

## 2. Watershed Health

The Huron-Manistee National Forests updated aquatic standards and guidelines in 2003 through Forest Plan Amendment number 24. Based on a review of the Forest Plan, the Forests propose the following changes:

1. Incorporate Aquatic Ecological Classification and Inventory System information into the aquatics desired condition.
2. Categorize lakes in the desired conditions, goals and objectives in terms of baseline trophic status and morphological/hydrological sensitivity in order to better manage our lakes.
3. Incorporate by reference the terms and conditions of applicable Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license orders as standards and guidelines.
4. Update the guideline to manage vegetation attractive to beaver in riparian areas to closer mimic natural disturbance regimes.

## 3. Recreation

*A. Semiprimitive:* The Forests reviewed existing and potential semiprimitive areas for suitability and propose the following changes:

1. Add approximately 5,000 acres of semiprimitive non-motorized recreation areas.
2. Add approximately 5,500 acres of semiprimitive motorized areas.
3. Change the southern portion of the Briar Hills Semiprimitive Non-motorized Area to a semiprimitive motorized area.

*B. Aesthetics:* Visual quality objectives have been replaced by the National Scenery Management System which incorporates ecological and socio-economic considerations in scenery management. The Forests propose to incorporate the Scenery Management System visual integrity and sensitivity principles to better integrate ecological and social considerations.

*C. Access:* The Huron-Manistee National Forests have adequate Forest Plan direction for access (roads and trails). The Forest Plan did not consider new uses such as mountain bikes. The Forests propose to allow mountain bikes on trails unless posted closed. Evaluate and incorporate into the Forest Plan, as needed, new trail uses as they occur.

## 4. Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers

*A. Wilderness:* The Huron-Manistee National Forests have one Wilderness Area, Nordhouse Dunes, and one RARE II (Roadless Area Review and

Evaluations) area, Bear Swamp. The Forests conducted an initial roadless inventory and found no areas that qualified as roadless. Based on our initial inventory and assessment, no areas would be recommended for wilderness study.

*B. Wild and Scenic Rivers:* The Huron-Manistee National Forests have five federally designated national wild and scenic rivers. River management plans have been developed and approved for all rivers. The Forests have four study rivers. Some of the wild and scenic or study rivers boundaries need to be established or improved. Recent changes in land uses have altered the values of some of the study rivers. The Forests propose to:

1. Change the Au Sable River management area boundary to extend to roads on both sides of the River.
2. Place the White River, Little Manistee River, and a portion of the Pine River up to M-55 in "lands-in-holding" status until river studies are completed.
3. Drop the Little Muskegon and Muskegon Rivers from further Wild and Scenic River study because of limited federal ownership and private development along the rivers.

## 5. Wildland Fire and Fuels Management

The Huron-Manistee National Forests' Forest Plan contains general guidance on fire and fuels management. The Forests are comprised of land type association and vegetative communities that are fire dependent. The Forests are also highly fragmented with private ownership and an increasing number of new homes and cabins. The Forest Service, through the National Fire Plan, is emphasizing fire and fuels management. The Huron-Manistee National Forests reviewed the current situation, new information (ecological, social and Forest Service direction) and propose to:

1. Add a standard to integrate fire and fuels management with natural resources and programs.
2. Include a description of the urban-rural interface (mixed forests and dense housing areas) and intermix (mixed forests and sparse housing areas) within the desired condition of Management Areas 2.4 and 4.4 (approximately 77,500 acres).
3. Include a description of the fire history, forest type, fuel loadings and risks, fire suppression strategy, and fire response in the desired conditions of each management area.
4. Include a guideline to manage hazardous fuels by mimicking natural fire regimes in fire-dependent

ecosystems and at-risk urban-rural interface and intermix areas.

5. Add an objective/outcome to annually initiate, create or maintain approximately 2,000 acres of fuel barriers and 8,000 acres of hazardous fuels reduction.

6. Add a guideline to limit fuel barrier creation to be up to approximately 8 miles in length and temporary or permanent openings up to approximately 500 acres in size.

7. Add a guideline to conduct, as needed, project-level fuels hazard reduction effectiveness monitoring.

## 6. Minerals

The Huron-Manistee National Forests have a very modest oil and gas program. The Forests have identified National Forest System lands available for oil and gas development and have established adequate standards and guidelines. Regulations require the Forest Plan to include a reasonable foreseeable development of oil and gas resources and the identification of lands which may be leased. The Forest proposes to:

1. Calculate the Reasonable Foreseeable Oil and Gas Development (our interim estimate is approximately 100 wells on National Forest System lands) for the next 10–15 years.
2. Identify National Forest System lands which may be consented to lease for oil and gas developments.

*Your Comments are Important to Us:* Your comments about the Huron-Manistee National Forests proposed actions for revising the Forest Plan are important. It would be most helpful if you clearly indicated that you are referencing the Huron-Manistee National Forests' 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 Forests 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 Huron-Manistee National Forests" 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 Forests' Web page. See the schedule of public meetings that appears in the section "Inviting Public Participation".