

## Ottawa National Forest Revision Topics

### 1. Sustaining Ecosystems, Conditions and Uses

Since the implementation of the present Forest Plan began in 1986 advancements have been made in knowledge of ecological capabilities and mapping of ecological units. This knowledge, along with field experience, will be used to reassess the suitability of lands for timber management, enhance the contribution to the viability of plant and animal species, provide for cultural, commercial and personal uses of special forest products, and adjust management objectives to better match ecosystems capabilities. Specifically, the following will be addressed:

**A. Invasive Species:** The Forest Plan will be revised to include standards and guidelines outlining a Forest-wide program on non-native invasive plant and animal listing, inventory, mapping, treatment, and monitoring, as the current Plan direction is limited in this area.

**B. Management Indicator Species:** The Forest will evaluate and change Management Indicator Species (MIS), as necessary, based on monitoring and new information.

**C. Vegetation Management:** New information concerning: The suitability of lands for timber production, biological diversity, conditions that support the viability of species, cultural, commercial and personal uses of special forest products, and ecosystem capacity offer the Forest an opportunity to better align the management of the resources to ecosystem capabilities.

Through the revision process the Forest proposes to:

1. Review, and as needed, change forest-wide goals and management requirements, location and management direction for individual management areas including standards and guidelines to enhance the contribution to the viability of native and desired non-native species known to reside on the Forest, as well as other multiple use objectives, including cultural uses and values.

2. Change Forest Plan direction as needed to contribute to a diversity of plant and animal communities, and tree species, consistent with the overall multiple-use objectives of the planning area.

3. Change the location and number of acres of land suited and not suited for timber production in order to maintain soils productivity and high quality water conditions.

4. Better align hardwood silviculture (management methods) with ecosystem units which favor its application. This

will result in an increase in the number of acres managed uneven-aged versus even-aged.

5. Emphasize the retention and or expansion of white pine and hemlock in northern hardwood stands to improve biodiversity.

6. Increase the number of acres managed for long-lived conifers.

7. Maintain or increase a number of acres of short rotation conifers as needed to further contribute to habitat for native species.

8. Adjust the amount and location of aspen forests to better match ecosystems capabilities, align with new suitable lands information and support conservation of the Canada lynx.

9. Change Forest Plan direction concerning the management of forest stands adjacent to old growth. In addition, old growth management direction may be changed as needed to contribute to species viability.

10. Adjust the amount of managed forest openings to better match ecosystem capabilities and opportunities.

11. Change Forest Plan direction to address the role of wildfire and prescribed fire in fire-prone ecosystems including management areas emphasizing conifer species.

It is anticipated that these proposed actions will lead to a change in species composition objectives in some management areas, and change the location and size of some management areas. As a result, the ability of the Forest to maintain its current and projected levels of timber harvest and contribution to the regional economic market will be reassessed.

**D. 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 Ottawa has 1 designated and 2 candidate RNAs. The Ottawa proposes to review the existing candidate RNAs using new ecological information.

**E. Canada Lynx:** Management direction for the Forest will provide habitat and management direction that supports the conservation of the threatened Canada lynx.

### 2. Watershed Health

**A. Watershed, Riparian and Aquatic Habitat:** The Revised Forest Plan will include standards and guidelines that enhance protections and guide management decisions in riparian areas. These will address riparian function and structure which contribute to biodiversity. These will also address

management to improve cold-water stream habitats.

**B. Management of Dams:** Guidelines will be included in the Revised Forest Plan to be considered with projects involving existing dams, or additions or removals of dams on forest streams. Guidelines will address residual stream flow, habitat for sensitive species, trout fisheries, and recreational values. Guidelines for hydro-power dams on the Forest managed under licenses administered by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission are contained within their respective licenses.

**C. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission:** Incorporate by reference the terms and conditions of applicable Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license orders.

### 3. Recreation

All-Terrain Vehicle/Off Road Vehicle (ATV/ORV) use on the Ottawa National Forest is rapidly changing. Current Forest Service policy is to manage ATV/ORV use. To be consistent with Forest Service policy, the Ottawa National Forest will consider allowing for a designated ATV/ORV system. Current direction on areas and roads open to use needs to be clarified to better manage this use. In addition to developing guidelines that protect natural resources in areas where these uses may occur, the Forest will look for opportunities to coordinate ATV/ORV use and access with adjoining roads, trails and lands held by private and public owners.

### 4. Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers

**A. Wilderness:** A roadless inventory and potential wilderness evaluation will be part of the revision process. The inventory process will analyze areas for roadless qualities. Those areas that meet basic inventory criteria will be evaluated as potential wilderness study areas. Based on the results of this work, recommendations to Congress may be made for potential wilderness study areas.

**B. Wild and Scenic Rivers:** The Ottawa is working to complete Comprehensive River Management Plans and finalize river corridor boundaries. Portions of six river systems were designated as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System with Michigan Scenic Rivers Act of 1991. The Forest Plan will be amended in the future, as necessary, based on completion of this work.

**Your Comments are Important to Us:** Your comments about the Ottawa National Forest's proposed actions for revising the Forest Plan are important. It would be most helpful if you clearly