

benefits, desires and preferences for aesthetics and scenery. The Visual Management System will be replaced with the Scenery Management System, a scenery planning tool. Mapping and definition of new scenery objectives will be made across the Allegheny National Forest.

4. Transportation Systems

Proposed changes include modifications to road closure policies based on changes in management area goals, objectives, allocations, and changes in standards and guidelines. Establishment of new standards and guidelines by management area for road density will be considered.

5. Monitoring

Proposed changes center on the development of a systematic framework of criteria and indicators to assist in monitoring management outcomes. This will allow for improved evaluation of management practices that enable determination of the adjustments needed for achieving desired outcomes. Improvements to monitoring and evaluation methods will enable a more effective use of an adaptive management approach.

6. Management Areas

Management areas display how lands will be allocated for various management objectives and outcomes. Proposed changes include re-defining and re-mapping management areas on a landscape level to create a strategic, programmatic and outcome-based plan that is more compatible with an ecosystem management approach. Particular emphasis will be placed on revising the goals and objectives for certain management areas, such as Management Area 6.1, to address habitat connectivity concerns. Modifications to Management Area 6.2 are needed to address compatibility issues between timber management and dispersed recreation. An evaluation of the extent of oil and gas development on the Allegheny National Forest may also lead to a re-allocation of lands such as Management Area 9.1.

7. Economics

Any changes will be analyzed in terms of the economic stability of communities in the region surrounding the Allegheny National Forest. Alternatives developed for the Forest Plan Revision will be evaluated in terms of their economic impact on these communities, recognizing contributions to diversification and long-term sustainability of communities'

economies and the linkages among on-forest and off-forest activities.

Additional detail on changes to be addressed in Forest Plan Revision is available in the document entitled "Analysis of the Need for Change in Forest Plan Revision." You are encouraged to review this additional document before commenting on the Notice of Intent. You may request the additional information as indicated in the **ADDRESSES** and **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** sections of this notice.

Issues not Addressed in Forest Plan Revision: Issues addressed adequately in the current Forest Plan will not be revisited. Issues that relate to site-specific actions are better addressed in projects. Some issues, while important, are beyond the authority of the Allegheny National Forest. Issues that do not pertain to the six decisions made in Forest Plans are excluded from further consideration. In addition, some issues, though related to Forest Plan Revision, may not be undertaken at this time, but addressed later as a future Forest Plan amendment. Not all issues raised by the public are applicable to Forest Plan Revision and will consequently not be addressed in Revision. They include:

Improving public education and outreach. The Allegheny National Forest received numerous comments requesting more education programs and public outreach in regard to the Allegheny and the way it is managed. However, the direction provided in the current Forest Plan is adequate to address these concerns and realize the suggested improvements. Public education and outreach has been limited by a lack of staff and funding rather than Forest Plan direction.

Acquisition of mineral rights. The current Forest Plan adequately allows the Allegheny National Forest to acquire mineral rights, especially in consideration of special area designations, such as wilderness. The limiting factor is whether the Allegheny National Forest has the funding needed to make these purchases, and also whether there are willing sellers.

Appeals and litigation. The public has expressed concerns and frustration with legal challenges to management on the Allegheny National Forest. Laws and federal regulations govern how litigation is handled. The Allegheny National Forest does not have the authority to change these procedures.

Creation of jobs and community stability. The resource management activities of the Allegheny National Forest have impacts on the regional economy, including employment and

community well-being. As a resource management agency, the Forest Service is required to maximize long-term net public benefit. Analysis of Forest Plan Revision alternatives will include assessments of economic impact, and these will be reported to the public as part of the Environmental Impact Statement.

Implementation of the current Forest Plan. Many public concerns focus on problems that the Allegheny National Forest has experienced in achieving the goals and objectives set forth in the current Forest Plan, particularly regarding timber harvest levels, miles of ATV trails, and creation of early-successional habitat. In each case, the current Forest Plan sets expectations that have not been fully met due to a variety of reasons, such as funding limitations. The reasons for these problems rest with implementation of the Forest Plan rather than the direction of the Forest Plan itself.

Site-specific improvements. Both the public and Allegheny National Forest staff have identified numerous site-specific improvements, such as:

- "Create more low-head dams and improvements."
- "Develop a trailhead at Bear Creek to create funding for a bridge."
- "Develop a trailhead in Ridgway."
- "Create an ATV connector trail for Sandy Beach to Timberline ATV Trail."
- "Build a lodge/restaurant development at Willow Bay area."
- "Complete the Sugar Run Day Use Area."
- "Grant an easement for construction of a rails-to-trails trail for Kinzua Bridge to Red Bridge."
- "Increase mileage by building a bike/hike trail from the end of Elijah Bank to Dewdrop."

Improvements such as these are more appropriately addressed on a project level rather than on a Forest level. The Allegheny National Forest welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with the public and interest groups to develop strategies for meeting common interests that set goals and project schedules within budget constraints.

Range of Alternatives: The Allegheny National Forest will consider a range of alternatives when revising the Forest Plan. Alternatives will provide different ways to address and respond to issues identified during the scoping process. A "no-action alternative" reflecting the effects of continuing management as directed under the existing Forest Plan is a required alternative.

Inviting Public Participation: The Allegheny National Forest is now soliciting comments and suggestions from the Seneca Nation of Indians,