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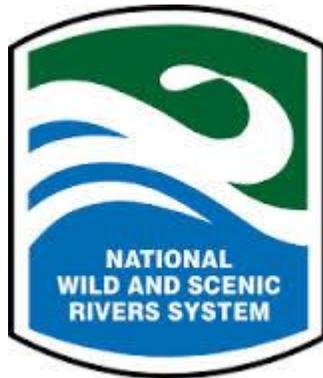
Forest
Service

Pacific Northwest Region

Umatilla National Forest

Wenaha Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive River Management Plan

Pomeroy Ranger District, Umatilla National Forest
Pomeroy, Washington



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Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of the Wenaha River Wild and Scenic River (WSR) Management Plan is to outline goals and standards to protect and enhance the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) for which the river was designated into the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. A formal river corridor boundary has been selected to ensure that the free-flowing condition, water quality and the ORVs are protected and to conform with sections 3 (b) and (c) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The following sections summarize other applicable management direction that apply to the Wenaha Wild and Scenic River Corridor (WWSRC) and define the desired future condition in broad terms, presenting a vision of the desired state for fisheries, wildlife, recreation and scenery in the river corridor.

Changes from Current Management Direction

This plan amends the Umatilla National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USFS 1990) Standards and Guidelines to provide specific management direction where needed to protect or enhance the WWSRC and its values or address issues related to river management. Changes are marked as DC (changes in desired condition) and WSR (management change) or WSR SG (for new standards and guidelines). All new standards and guidelines are listed in Appendix A for quick reference.

Background on the Wenaha River Wild and Scenic River Designation

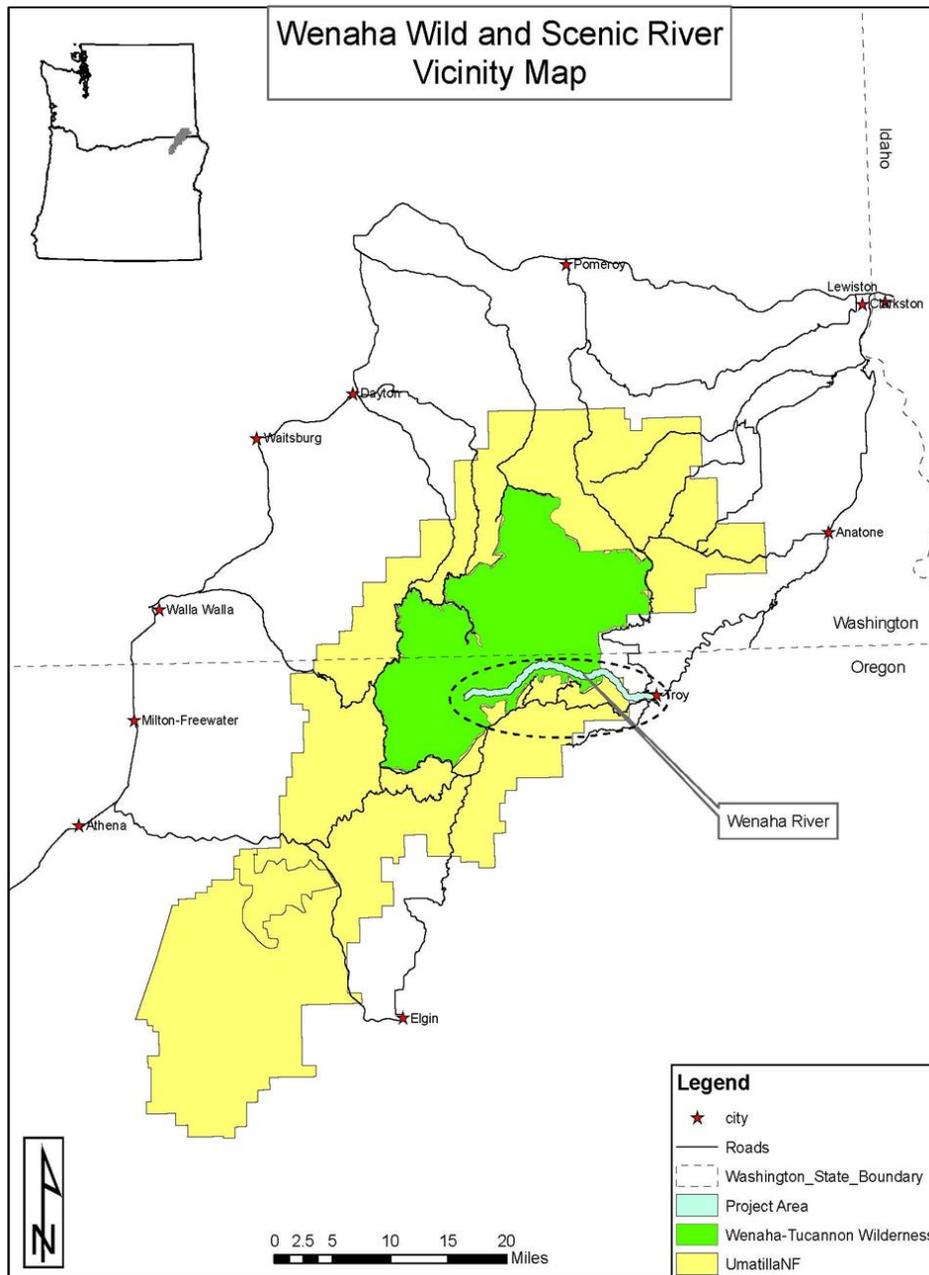
Location

The Wenaha River, a tributary of the Grande Ronde River, is located in the Northeast corner of Oregon near the small town of Troy, Oregon. It flows from the confluence of the North and South Forks in the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness, located on Forest Service land, east to its confluence with the Grande Ronde. The Wenaha River flows through the Wenaha State Wildlife Area and several parcels of private and federal lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands before it reaches the confluence with the Grande Ronde River.

Boundary

Upon designation, an interim corridor boundary of ¼ mile (440 yards) from each bank's high-water mark was designated (Figure 1 – Wenaha Wild & Scenic River Project Map).

Figure 1. Vicinity Map



The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires a formal corridor boundary be designated and documented within one year of completing a Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP). A formal corridor boundary will insure the best protection of the WWSRC's ORVs, its free-flowing condition, and water quality.

The interim boundary, with minor adjustments, has been determined to be sufficient for protection of ORVs and will become the formal corridor boundary (WSR-1).

Designation

In 1968, Congress passed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (P.L. 90-542) and established a nationwide system of outstanding free-flowing rivers. For a river segment to be considered eligible for Wild and Scenic River status it must be “free-flowing” and possess “outstandingly remarkable values” within its immediate environment. These rivers are protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Management direction for WSRs can be found in Appendix A and are incorporated by reference into this plan.

The entire mainstem of the Wenaha River (21.55 miles, Figure 1) was added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System with the passage of the Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988. The legislation classified the Wenaha WSR, as follows:

WILD RIVER: The 18.7 mile segment from the confluence of the North and South Fork to the Umatilla National Forest boundary.

Of the 18.7 mile Wild segment, 15.2 miles flows through the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness (Figure 2). The remaining 3.5 miles of the Wild segment flows through the Umatilla National Forest but is outside of the Wilderness (Figure 2). These segments will be identified in this document as Wild (Wilderness) and Wild (non-Wilderness) when there is a need to separate management discussion.

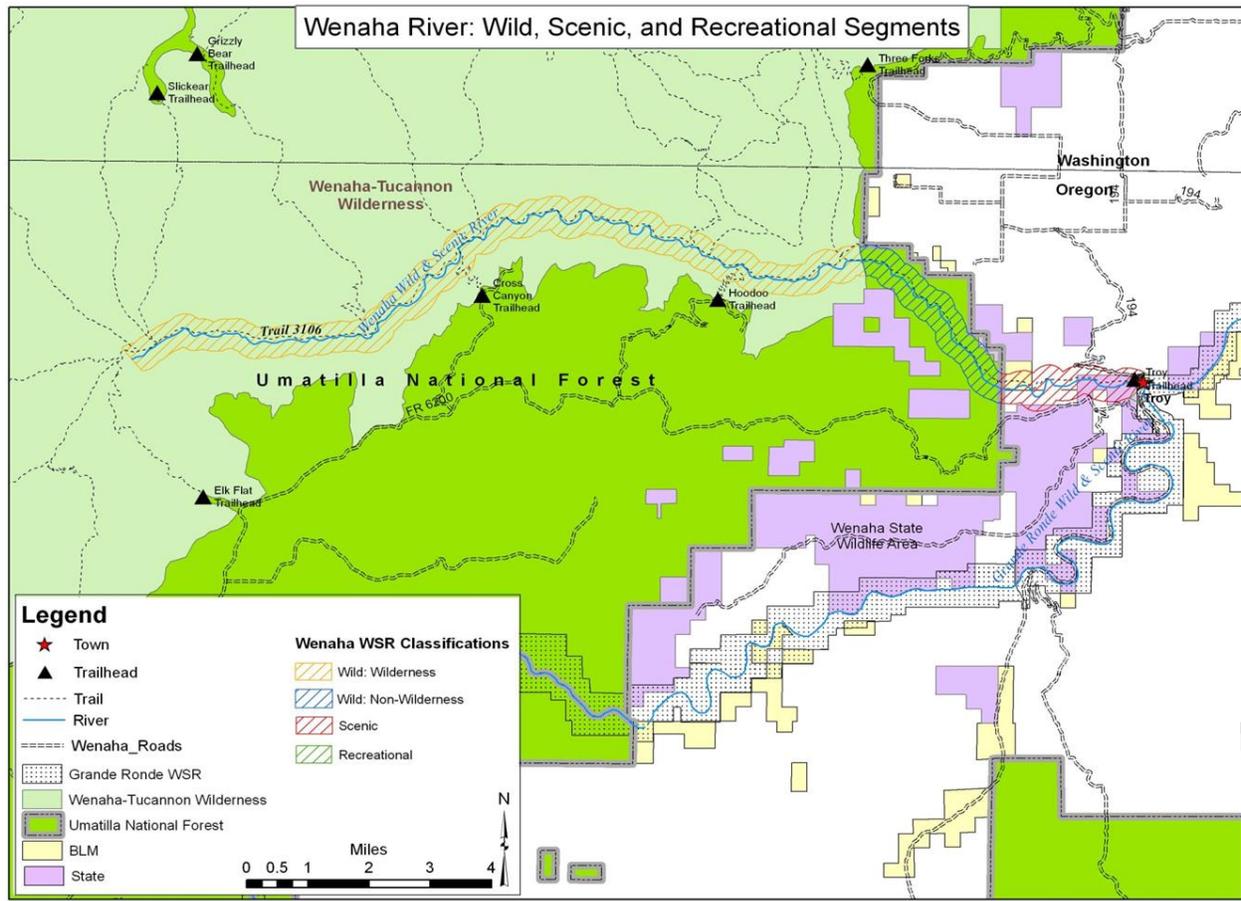
- **SCENIC RIVER:** The 2.7 mile segment from the Umatilla National Forest boundary to the easternmost boundary of the Wenaha State Wildlife Area. The Scenic segment is entirely outside of the Umatilla National Forest boundary (Figure 2).

The Scenic corridor includes an isolated parcel of federal land administered by the BLM adjacent to the Umatilla National Forest Boundary and continues easterly to include other state and private lands.

- **RECREATIONAL RIVER:** The 0.15 mile segment from the easternmost boundary of the Wenaha State Wildlife Area to the confluence with the Grande Ronde River. The Recreational segment is also entirely outside of the Umatilla National Forest boundary (Figure 3).

The Recreational corridor includes a small parcel of the Wenaha State Wildlife Area and private land in the unincorporated town of Troy.

Figure 2. WSR Segments



Area Description

Landscape character

The Wenaha WSR originates in the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness. It forms a maze of deep, sheer-walled canyons that cut into what was once a flat and expansive plateau at the northernmost reach of the Blue Mountains located in Northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington. Elevation ranges from nearly 2,000 feet at the Wenaha River to Oregon Butte which is the tallest point of the vast wilderness at 6,401 feet.

Ponderosa pine dominates the lower drainages, then transitions into a forest of lodgepole pine above about 4,500 feet, with some larch, fir, and spruce. Subalpine fir reigns supreme at the highest elevations, with native grasses and forbs covering the ground. Rocky Mountain elk thrive in this area, which seasonally attracts more hunters than hikers. Rattlesnakes are sometimes seen and mule deer, white-tailed deer, moose, black bears, wolves, coyotes, cougars, bobcats, and snowshoe hares are present. Also present, though rarely seen, are bighorn sheep that inhabit the area.

Snowfall at higher elevations can accumulate up to five feet deep between November and April. Summers are typically very hot and very dry. Approximately one-third of the wilderness is in Oregon (see Fig.1) with the remainder in Washington State. There are no wild, scenic or recreational segments in Washington State. Approximately 200 miles of trail system stays high on the open ridges, winding and connecting often enough to provide long loops through the wilderness and along the WWSRC. Trailheads are located in both states with Three Forks, Godman, Troy, Cross Canyon, Hoodoo, Elk Flats and Timothy being the most easily accessed locations.

Land ownership and land use description

The entire Wild segment of the Wenaha WSR is within the Umatilla National Forest boundary. When the WSR corridor was first identified, there was a private inholding within the Wild corridor which has since been acquired by the Forest Service through a land exchange. There are several small parcels of the Wenaha State Wildlife Area within the ¼ -mile interim corridor boundary on the Wild segment within the forest boundary, but just east of the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness (Figure 2).

The Scenic and Recreational segments flow through the Wenaha State Wildlife Area but there are also some small pieces of state, private, and federal lands administered by the BLM. Private and BLM-administered lands are primarily used as forest or pasture, residential living and private business. The confluence of the Wenaha River with the Grande Ronde River is within the Troy city limits. Since Troy is unincorporated, zoning issues are determined by the Wallowa County Commissioners who are located in Enterprise, Oregon, approximately 60 miles to the south.

Although the Forest Service does not have full jurisdiction over these lands, it is the responsible Federal Agency under the Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988. Forest Plan management direction for the WSR corridor applies only to National Forest System lands and does not apply to other federal, state, or private lands. The responsible Federal Agency works cooperatively with partners using cooperative agreements and other means to facilitate development of voluntary management strategies for these other lands that will protect and enhance river values consistent with law, regulation, and policy.

Free-flowing status

The Wenaha is free-flowing, without past or present major diversions. There are no waterfalls, dams or culverts on the Wenaha River, and no known diversion structures on private lands. A bridge does cross the mouth just as it enters the Grand Ronde, but has no real effect on the WSR characteristics located upstream. Stream surveys identify the river channel as a Type IV Rosgen channel that is typified by shallow rocky understructure separated by deep pools. Limiting factors for fish survival are temperature and sediment, which applies across all the north end of the Blue Mountains. Even though the Wenaha River is natural within the wild section, it still

exhibits a distinct lack of large woody debris. This can be attributed to large spring run-offs which move large materials downriver and scour the channel down to bedrock.

Water Rights and Streamflow

There are 24 registered water rights within the Wenaha River Watershed (Oregon Water Resources Department). Of the 24, only 4 are to private citizens, and the rest are issued to state and federal agencies. All 24 registered water rights are for water associated with spring and pond developments on tributaries to the Wenaha River. These are all for domestic and/or livestock use outside the riparian corridor, totaling less than one cubic foot per second (CFS). No surface water right for the main channel of the Wenaha River was found and no withdrawals have been observed.

On federal lands, the Forest Service has federal reserved water rights under the Wild and Scenic River Act to protect and enhance ORVs on the Umatilla National Forest.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Water Resources Department have established priorities for restoration of streamflow as part of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds (Measure IV.A.8). The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has prioritized streamflow restoration needs by ranking biophysical factors, water use patterns, and the extent that water limits fish production in a particular area. Watermasters will incorporate the priorities into their field work activities as a means to implement flow restoration measures. The needs priorities will be used by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board as one criterion in determining funding priorities for enhancement and restoration projects. Watershed councils and other entities may also use the needs priorities as one piece of information to determine high priority restoration projects. Bull trout occupied streams in the recovery unit are included in the highest priority designation for streamflow restoration (Northwest Power Planning Council 2001). Instream flow has been measured under 100 CFS in late summer conditions and estimated over 2000 CFS in spring runoffs. The overall gradient is less than one percent for the stream corridors.

Opportunities to convert existing out-of-stream flows to instream flows in Oregon are available through a variety of legislatively mandated programs administered by Oregon Water Resources Department:

- Transfers of type and place of use (ORS 536.050(4))
- Voluntary written agreement among water users to rotate their use of the supply to which they are collectively entitled (ORS 540.150 Chapter 11 - Grande Ronde River 35 and OAR 690-250-0080)
- Allocation of “conserved water” to instream use (ORS 537.455 to 537.500)

- Lease all or a portion of consumptive water rights to instream purposes (ORS 537.348, OAR 690-77-070 to 690-77-077)
- Exchange of a water right for an instream purpose to use water from a different source, being stored water, surface or ground water (ORS 540.533 to 540.543)
- Substitute a ground water right for a primary surface water right (ORS 540.524).
- Oregon Water Trust provides purchase of water rights from willing landowners for conversion to instream water rights.

Water Quality

Under an agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency, the State of Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality is conducting total maximum daily load surveys and developing Water Quality Management Plans. In the Grande Ronde River subbasin, total maximum daily load surveys have been completed throughout the subbasin. A water quality management plan was also developed for the Upper Grande Ronde River In April 2000. This plan addresses forest, agricultural, urban and transportation sources of water quality impairment. The Wenaha River has been listed twice under the 303d for water quality impairment for temperature. The first was in August of 1996 and the second in September of 2006. This was determined by the Pomeroy District Fish Biologist in 2006 to be a natural phenomenon. Temperature thresholds were established through criteria using life history needs for bull trout. Therefore, any proposed management activities within the stream corridor may not raise water temperatures.

A detailed stream survey was conducted by the Forest Service, collecting riparian and stream attributes. A summary of that information is available from the Supervisor's Office of the Umatilla National Forest.

Applicable Management Direction

All federal land management activities in the WWSRC must follow standards and guidelines listed in the following plans and direction.

Forest Plan

The Wild and Scenic River corridor encompasses lands managed under the Umatilla National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA 1990). Two management areas apply specifically to the river area:

Management Area 7 (MA7) Wild and Scenic Rivers: The goals for this management area include managing the area appropriate standards as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational river areas, as defined

by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Public Law 90-542, October 2, 1968 (U.S. laws, statutes, etc. 1968), and amended by the Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988 (Public Laws 100-557) (Forest Plan, page 4-123). Desired future conditions include protecting and enhancing the values for which the river was designated. Additional Forest Plan direction is included in Appendix A.

Management Area B1 (Wilderness): Forest Plan direction states that river sectors that are within wilderness will be managed under the most restrictive standards and guidelines between Management Area A7 and B1. The goal of Management Area B1 is to *Manage to preserve, protect, and improve the resources and values of the Forest wildernesses, as directed by the Wilderness Act of 1964* (Forest Plan, page 4-141). Standards and guidelines for wilderness are included in Appendix A.

Management Area C5 (Riparian and Wildlife): This is another overlapping management area along the Wenaha WSR corridor. Forest Plan direction for Management Areas A7 and B1 are more restrictive and therefore take precedence over Management Area C5.

The Forest Plan contains direction for some of the ORVs. These are listed in Appendix A.

Clean Water Act (1977, as amended in 1982)

The State of Oregon, as directed by the Clean Water Act and the Environmental Protection Agency, is responsible for the protection of rivers and other bodies of water in the public interest. To show that water quality is being protected, states are required by the Clean Water Act to adopt water quality standards which must be approved by the Environmental Protection Agency. Best Management Practices (BMP) and state-wide management plans are a requirement of the Clean Water Act and are used to meet water quality standards.

Relationship to other federal land management or regulatory agencies

Interagency cooperation is necessary to manage the WWSRC. BLM-administered lands are located within the Scenic segment of the Wenaha WSR corridor. The Recreational segment overlaps with the Grande Ronde WSR corridor. The Grande Ronde is also classified as a Recreational river where the two corridors intersect. The BLM, Forest Service, and the State of Oregon developed the Grande Ronde River Management Plan cooperatively in 1993. Administration of the two connected Wild and Scenic Rivers needs to be complementary as the Grande Ronde WSR segment already includes the Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 736-040-0047 which contain Oregon State standards. Cooperation, coordination, and inter agency planning needs to be ongoing to achieve future management objectives (access, trailheads, trails, facilities, etc.) and to ensure consistency in management and enforcement.

The Forest Service is also required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries concerning how forest management activities may affect threatened

and endangered species. Fish recovery plans are in place for the anadromous fisheries (Chinook and steelhead) and has been identified as critical habitat for bull trout.

Relationship to tribal governments

Both the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) and the Nez Perce Tribe are federally recognized Indian Tribes with treaty reserved rights and interests along portions of the WWSRC.

As a result of the Treaties of 1855, specific treaty rights applicable to the land base managed by the Umatilla National Forest were reserved and are generally articulated in Article I and Article III of the Treaties:

“The exclusive right of taking fish in all the streams running through and bordering said Reservation is hereby secured to said Indians, and at all other usual and accustomed stations in common with citizens of the United States, and of erecting suitable buildings for curing the same; the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries and pasturing their stock on unclaimed lands in common with citizens, is also secured to them.”

Consequently, trust responsibilities and duties include managing natural resources in a manner that assures the exercise of treaty rights by consulting, coordinating, and working cooperatively with Tribes on activities that may affect these reserved rights.

Relationship to state and local governments and non-governmental organizations

Portions of the Wenaha State Wildlife Area, managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, lie partially within the Scenic and Recreational segments of the Wenaha WSR. The goals of the Wenaha State Wildlife Area are complementary to protecting and enhancing the river-values of the Wenaha WSR. The Wildlife Area has three primary goals:

- Provide natural and supplemental forage for Rocky Mountain elk, mule and white-tailed deer, and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep
- Enhance habitat for indigenous fish and wildlife species
- Provide wildlife oriented recreational opportunities for the public

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife determine the number of tags awarded for big game hunts. The recent trend in the Wenaha-Tucannon has been an emphasis on a longer season and quality of stay hunts. The issuance of big game tags directly correlates with visitor use numbers in the WWSRC

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Water Resources Department have established priorities for restoration of streamflow as part of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and

Watersheds (Measure IV.A.8). These state agencies will prioritize funding priorities for Bull Trout enhancement and restoration projects. The Recreational segment of the Wenaha WSR is also coincidental with the Grand Ronde River Scenic Waterway, part of the Oregon Scenic Waterways Program. Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 736-040-0047 (Appendix E) contains State standards for the “Troy River Community Area.” The standards from the OAR place limitations on the type of development and activities that can occur in the town of Troy.

Relationship with private landowners

The private lands within the Scenic segments are primarily used for pasture. The Forest Service has a 15-foot right of way on National Forest System Trail 3106, which passes through BLM-administered, State, and private lands in the Scenic segment of the WWSRC. This ensures access to the Wenaha WSR and the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness for those traveling by primitive, non-motorized means. The Recreational corridor flows through the southern edge of the unincorporated town of Troy, Oregon. A number of residential properties, small businesses and a bridge with Wallowa County road access are located within the Recreational corridor at the river’s mouth. Acreages of private land within the Scenic and Recreational corridor are as follows:

Acres of private land within Scenic and Recreational corridors:

- Approximately 477 acres of private land in the Scenic corridor.
- Approximately 28 acres of private land in the Recreational corridor. These acres consist of 5 private residences, a café/store, trailer park, campground and Laundromat. Being an unincorporated town, Troy depends on direction from the Wallowa County Commission for planning and zoning issues. The recreational segment for the Wenaha WSR also overlaps with the Grand Ronde River Scenic Waterway, a program of the state of Oregon subject to Oregon Administrative Rule 736-040-0047 and the federally designated Grande Ronde Wild & Scenic River.

Outstandingly Remarkable Values



Fisheries

Both fish populations and fisheries habitat led to fisheries being an Outstandingly Remarkable Value of the Wenaha WSR. Of particular significance is habitat for wild stocks and federal or state listed or candidate threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. Native spring and summer Chinook salmon, bull trout, and steelhead are listed as Threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Columbia River Basin, which includes the Wenaha River. Native Wenaha stock of spring Chinook, summer steelhead, and bull trout use the river for spawning and rearing. Historically, Coho and an early fall Chinook salmon, which spawned from mid-September to late October also were present (also listed).

Desired Condition

Populations of native spring and summer Chinook salmon, bull trout, and steelhead are healthy and thriving utilizing the river for spawning and rearing. Natural processes keep the river well supplied with wood and pool formation, overhead cover and organic matter for invertebrate production. Riparian vegetation in the floodplain provides streambank stability and shade. Natural inputs of groundwater from springs and groundwater contribute to high water quality and cooling water temperatures. Fish travel freely along the length of the river. (WSR DC-4)

Consistent Uses

The following are examples of uses that are consistent with protection and enhancement of the Fisheries ORV:

- Stream restoration.
- Installation of scientific monitoring equipment with negligible impacts.
- Consolidation, removal, relocation, or maintenance of roads, trails and campsites to protect riparian areas.
- Vegetation management that meets all other direction and protects streamside shade, streambanks, and provides for long term wood input.

Inconsistent Uses

The following are examples of uses that are inconsistent with protection and enhancement of the Fisheries ORV:

- Introduction of fish which affect native population genetics or introduce disease.
- Activities which alter channel morphology.
- Removing or cutting instream wood.
- Driving vehicles through the channel.
- Bridge or culvert installations which destabilize streambanks.
- Adding riprap along streambanks.
- Activities which consistently contribute sediment beyond natural inputs.
- Vegetation management which removes future instream wood, causes erosion, or reduces streamside shade.
- Wildfire suppression techniques which cause more damage to the river's water quality and riparian areas than direct and indirect wildfire effects. Examples are: safety zones, fire camps, or drop points in riparian areas or hydrologically connected areas, or dozer lines or fire lines in riparian areas or hydrologically connected areas that lead to excessive erosion.
- Activities which could pollute the river.
- Fire retardant or a retardant mixing plant that could contaminate the river.
- Herbicides or other chemicals which are not safe for aquatic use.

Existing Condition and Management Needs

The Wenaha River is a Class I stream possessing anadromous stocks of steelhead trout and chinook salmon. Riparian habitat conditions are good to excellent along the WSR corridor. Spawning gravels, woody debris, pool and glide habitats occur in ample supply. The primary

limiting factor is the water temperature in the lower six miles of river, which usually exceeds the preferred range for salmonids during summer low flows. Other fish populations known to inhabit the river are bull trout, mountain whitefish, rainbow trout, northern squawfish, white and mountain suckers, several species of minnows, dace and sculpins.

Existing Forest Plan Standards mandate collaboration with other Federal and State agencies, ensuring compliance with the Endangered Species Act. As Threatened and Endangered Species are listed or recover, regulations will be modified and goals adjusted consistent with WSR Act Section 7(a). Consultations with appropriate state and federal agencies will continue to enhance recovery of threatened and endangered species under existing Forest management standards and guidelines. Forest Plan Standards specific to Wild and Scenic Rivers also allows for habitat improvement to enhance the ORV of Fisheries.

Standards and guidelines from applicable plans in general adequately protect fisheries resources. Five exceptions follow:

- 1) Location and quantity of dispersed campsites
- 2) Trail locations and types of use on trails
- 3) Wildfire suppression activities
- 4) Dredging activities
- 5) In-stream wood cutting

Standards and Guidelines

Dispersed Camping in Riparian Areas and Associated Uplands:

WSR G-1: The quantity and location of dispersed camping sites is regulated to protect river resources, particularly riparian vegetation and water quality (Also see Recreation Standards and Guidelines)

WSR G-2: Dispersed camping sites are rested, relocated, or closed where unacceptable impacts to riparian vegetation, stream banks, or water quality occurs. Unacceptable impacts are identified by devegetation or increased bare soil exposure created by site expansion or site proliferation, loss of bank stability, exposed tree roots, loss of overhanging bank structure, or point source erosion and siltation.

WSR G-3: The hitching or tethering of a horse or other saddle or pack animal should not be authorized or allowed within 50 feet of the Wenaha River (Wild Section).

Wildfire Suppression:

WSR G-4: Minimum impact suppression techniques will be used in the river corridor. Examples include avoiding such actions as: the use of heavy equipment in the river canyon, hand lines or

dozer lines that drain directly into the creek, locating fire camps, spike camps, drop points, and heli-bases in wet meadows or riparian areas, and retardant mixing plants in the river corridor.

WSR G-5: Resource advisors will be utilized on larger wildfires during extended attack.

Trails and trail use:

WSR G-6: Trails will be designed to avoid sensitive riparian areas to the extent possible while providing access to the creek at designated locations.

WSR G-7: Locate trails in upland areas as much as possible and consolidate and remove user trails in riparian areas.

WSR G-8: Any trail construction is for the primary purpose of relocating public use to reduce resource damage and retains as much vegetation as possible, fits with the topography, and is consistent with riparian function.

WSR G-9: Trails are defined, hardened, replanted, relocated, or closed where unacceptable impacts to riparian vegetation, stream banks, or water quality occurs. Unacceptable impacts are identified by devegetation beyond normal tread width, loss of bank stability, exposed tree roots, loss of overhanging bank structure, lack of trail definition or multiple parallel trails, or point source erosion and siltation.

WSR S-1: No motorized travel is allowed in Wild (Wilderness) section except in emergency situations with appropriate authorization.

WSR S-2: Motorized vehicles and equipment are only allowed in the non-Wilderness Wild section under the following circumstances: with District Ranger approval, for fire suppression if much of the WSR corridor is jeopardized; for trail maintenance, reconstruction, relocation or other administrative actions, or in emergency situations..

In-stream wood cutting:

WSR S-3: In-stream wood would only be cut in the Wild section to enhance or protect ORVs, or in case of emergency involving certain loss of life. In stream wood would not be cut for fire suppression unless the entire WSR corridor is threatened, with District Ranger approval.

Wildlife

An array of native wildlife species and a diversity of habitat make wildlife an Outstandingly Remarkable Value of the Wenaha WSR. The 1992 Resource Assessment gave particular significance to unique species or threatened and endangered species of wildlife. At that time, the bald eagle was on the federal list of threatened and endangered species. However on August 9th, 2007, the bald eagle was removed from the list and is currently being monitored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The river or area within the river corridor provides exceptionally high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, and provides unique habitat and critical links for diverse habitats outside the river corridor. Some species that frequent the Wenaha River are Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and elk, moose, mule deer and whitetail deer, cougar, black bear, wolves, bobcat, river otter, pine marten, beaver, blue and ruffed grouse, chukar, valley and mountain quail, Lewis woodpecker, bald eagle, golden eagle, peregrine falcons, and other small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. A contributing factor to wildlife as an ORV was the abundance and variety of big game species present in the area. Wildlife viewing is most popular in the spring when animals are raising their young and taking advantage of new spouts of brush, grass and forbs.

Desired Condition

The diversity of wildlife in the Wenaha River corridor is recognized and managed as part of a healthy riverine ecosystem. The need for habitat and security for common species is recognized and refugia are maintained and protected allowing wildlife to disperse through the corridor. The undeveloped characteristics of the area are maintained by managing dispersed camping and user trails to minimize disturbance to wildlife species in the corridor. The upper reaches of the corridor will provide even more remoteness and solitude for those species requiring such an environment. The river and its environs attract this variety of life because of the clean, abundant water, diversity of vegetation, and relatively low amount of disturbance by roads and other human activities.

Forest habitats and remnant old growth trees are managed for their unique habitat value and as part of an important habitat network. Snags are an important habitat component and appear in rich abundance in the corridor due to natural processes. Cottonwood and other hardwoods habitats increase and provide important habitat diversity for wildlife. (WSR DC-5)

Consistent Uses

The following are examples of uses that are consistent with protection and enhancement of the Wildlife ORV:

- Low impact recreation (see Recreation section for more information).
- Vegetation management which complies with current direction and plans.
- Hunting game with appropriate permits and licenses.
- Road closures, conversions of roads to trails, and restoration of unneeded roads.
- Installation of scientific monitoring equipment with negligible impacts.

Inconsistent Uses

The following are examples of uses that could adversely affect the Wildlife ORV:

- Human disturbance including new social trails in undeveloped areas which currently function as wildlife refugia.
- Illegal shooting of wildlife
- Shed antler hunting during early spring months.
- Firewood cutting
- Activities which could pollute the river.
- Actions which fragment forest or riparian habitat.
- Development of trails or roads in sensitive areas.
- Vegetation management which affects current or future habitat for species of concern or management indicator species.
- Herbicides or other chemicals which are not safe for aquatic use.
- Grazing of domestic sheep and/or goats.

Existing Condition and Management Needs

The area is diverse in species as well as habitat types. As noted above, big game species present in the WWSRC include black bear, Rocky Mountain elk, white-tailed and mule deer, bighorn sheep, cougar, bobcat and coyotes. Non-big game species present include beaver, marten and river otter. Bird species include blue and ruffed grouse, bald and golden eagles, nutcrackers, woodpeckers, flickers, swallows and sparrows. The western diamondback rattlesnake is another inhabitant of the river corridor.

Standards and guidelines from applicable plans in general adequately protect wildlife resources. Three exceptions follow:

- 1) Development of trails and roads
- 2) Establishment of invasive plants
- 3) Firewood cutting

Standards and Guidelines

Trails and Trail use:

WSR G-6-9 and S 1-2 are applicable to this resource.

Invasive Plants:

WSR S-9 is applicable to this resource.

Firewood cutting:

WSR S-4: Only dead and down wood will be collected for personal campfire use. If necessary, additional restrictions could be imposed.

Scenery

The 1992 Resource Assessment identified scenery as an Outstandingly Remarkable Value. For those willing to travel by primitive means, the Wenaha boasts a mosaic of vegetation, seasonal color variation, an abundant variety of wildlife, and a rugged landscape for an exceptional visual experience. It is these visual features that were recognized to be protected and, if possible, enhanced.

Desired Condition

The portion of the Wenaha River classified as Wild is on National Forest System lands and remains a premier example of an undeveloped Blue Mountain river. Visitors can take in the beauty of the canyon without seeing the management activities that take place on the non-wilderness lands to the south and northeast. The landscape appears natural and pristine with little evidence of human activities.

The river itself is an ever changing combination of pools and rapids, bends and straight stretches, broad slow-moving waters with islands and fast water gorges. Large old growth trees, down wood and riparian vegetation dominate views from the river corridor. Settled into a deeply eroded canyon, the river displays its geologic history in the cliffs above. The canyon walls, accented by natural vegetation provide a sense of seclusion. The seasons of the year impart distinct and vivid changes as the mosaic of native vegetation varies with seasonal color schemes. The natural fire ecology of the area is a part of the scene. More distant views may include burned or fire maintained mosaic landscapes.

The Recreational and Scenic portions of the river are on BLM-administered, state and private lands where facilities are more evident but complimentary to protecting and enhancing river values. They are rustic in character and blend with the natural surroundings. (WSR DC- 6)

Consistent Uses

The following are examples of uses and activities that are likely to be consistent with protection and enhancement of the Scenery ORV:

- Vegetation management, as allowed by other plans and standards. This includes managing noxious weeds and other invasive plants as prescribed in the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Invasive Plant Management Plan under the direction of the Umatilla National Forest Invasive Plant Treatment Plan EIS and ROD (2010). It may

also include prescribed fire or managed wildfires which represent natural processes at work.

- Facilities in the town of Troy including developed campsites, lodges and tents, roads and a bridge at the mouth of the river that reflect a rustic character in a natural setting as prescribed in State law and county ordinances.
- Primitive backcountry campsites that have low to moderate levels of disturbance. Physical campsite conditions accommodate camping use without deterioration from year to year. Campsites are rated as “Low or Moderate” per the 2011 Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness campsite inventory evaluation process.
- Installation of educational signs or directional signs at the Wenaha River trailhead. Minimal directional signing will exist elsewhere.
- Installation of scientific monitoring equipment with negligible scenic impacts.

Inconsistent Uses

The following are examples of uses and activities that are likely to be inconsistent with protection and enhancement of the Scenery ORV:

- Unmanaged recreation use causing excessive permanent destruction of vegetation or multiple user developed trails; especially along the banks of the river.
- Uninformed, unskilled, or careless practices while camping (camp location, excessive size and number of campfire rings, improper sanitation, illegal firewood cutting, leaving trash, excessive noise, and vandalism).
- Primitive backcountry campsites that are High or Moderate but trending toward a High impact condition per the 2011 Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness campsite inventory evaluation process.
- Uninformed, unskilled, or careless practices while hiking or parking (parking in vegetation, improper sanitation, leaving trash, creating user trails, and vandalism).
- Illegal or undesirable behaviors such as scaring trees, graffiti, leaving trash, cutting live trees, or vandalism.
- Too many signs, which detract from the scenic quality and the near natural or natural setting.
- Uncontrolled or unmanaged invasive plant species.

Existing Condition and Management Needs

The scenery resource of the WSR corridor has been slightly altered by past logging activity outside of the Wilderness boundary. In general, the entire corridor exhibits little influence of people. There is a mosaic of vegetation, seasonal color and rugged landscape.

Standards and guidelines from applicable plans in general adequately protect scenery resources. Two exceptions follow:

- 1) Use of campsites that are trending to a high impact condition.
- 2) Lack of Leave No Trace camping and hiking skills that lead to scenery impacts as detailed above.

Standards and Guidelines

Dispersed Camping:

WSR G-12 and WSR G-9 are applicable to this resource.

Recreation

Big-game hunting was singled out in the Congressional Record for the Wenaha River as a value that should be preserved on the Wenaha WSR. Hunting and fishing draws a majority of the visitors to the Wenaha. Elk hunting draws many visitors in the fall, seeking a primitive hunting experience in the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness.

The 1992 Resource Assessment also recognized fishing as an important recreational element. The Wenaha provides good spawning habitat for steelhead and Chinook salmon, and recently there have been increases in backpackers and trout-fishing anglers in the summer and early autumn. Seasonal fishing restrictions are regulated by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Other activities that draw visitors to the Wenaha are camping, horseback riding, traveling with pack strings, sightseeing, pursuit of solitude, photography, nature study, swimming, and wildlife viewing. The combination of a rugged, remote-feeling landscape and outstanding opportunities for solitude contribute to the Recreation ORV.

Desired Condition

The Wenaha River's Wild and Scenic segments are remote in character providing the setting for a host of recreation opportunities that are of an undeveloped nature. The natural setting of the river is unencumbered by recreation facilities or persistent, heavy recreation use. Recreation activities are centered on experiencing the scenic beauty and solitude available in the river canyon and pursuing the abundant fishery and wildlife resources requiring primitive methods of

travel. Opportunities for hunting big game within a primitive and semi-primitive setting remain abundant. (WSR DC-7)

Consistent Uses

The following are examples of uses that are consistent with protection and enhancement of the Recreation ORV:

- Opportunities for primitive or semi-primitive experiences which involve low impact recreation as discussed above.
- Protection of river values, recreation experience and opportunities for solitude are primary considerations in managing permitted uses.
- Brief periods of peak use during summer holiday weekends and fall big game hunting seasons that may reduce opportunities for solitude in primitive and semi-primitive settings.
- Facilities in the town of Troy including developed campsites, tents and lodges, roads and a bridge at the mouth of the river that reflect a rustic character in a natural setting as prescribed in State law and county ordinances.
- Semi-primitive backcountry campsites that generally have low level of disturbance. Physical campsite conditions accommodate camping use without deterioration from year to year. Campsites are rated as “Low or Moderate Impact” per the 2011 Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness campsite inventory evaluation process.
- Non-motorized floating that does not require cutting of in-stream wood for passage.
- Installation of educational signs or directional signs at the Troy trailhead. Minimal directional signing elsewhere.

Inconsistent Uses

The following are examples of inconsistent uses are likely to be inconsistent with protection and enhancement of the Recreation ORV:

- Persistent, heavy recreational use that reduces opportunities for solitude in primitive and semi-primitive settings.
- Unmanaged recreation use causing excessive permanent destruction of vegetation or multiple user developed trails; especially along the banks of the river.

- Primitive backcountry campsites that are High or Moderate but trending toward a High impact condition per the 2011 Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness campsite inventory evaluation process.
- Parking capacity exceeded and visitors choosing to park in vegetation, illegally on private lands, and in other undesirable locations
- Illegal or undesirable behaviors such as scaring trees, graffiti, leaving trash, cutting live trees, or vandalism.
- Uninformed, unskilled, or careless practices while camping (in camp location, excessive size and number of campfire rings, improper sanitation, illegal firewood cutting, leaving trash, excessive noise, and vandalism).
- Uninformed, unskilled, or careless practices while hiking: improper sanitation, leaving trash, creating user trails, and vandalism).
- Too many signs, which detract from the scenic quality and the near natural or natural setting.
- Uncontrolled or unmanaged invasive plant species.

Existing Condition and Management Needs

Most of the river corridor is extremely rugged with access limited to a few trails located in the headwater, upper, and middle portions of the canyon. Recreation use is highest in the lower canyon where activities such as fishing, hunting, walking/hiking, horseback riding, scenic and wildlife viewing, and primitive camping are more easily accessed. The upper and middle canyon receive lighter use from hunting, fishing and hiking due to the higher elevation and shorter use season. As much as 80 percent of the visits to and through the river corridor are estimated to be hunting related.

Tourism and scenic driving are promoted in the town of Troy, which is located at the confluence of the Wenaha and Grande Ronde Rivers. This area is also promoted in numerous outdoor recreation and sport fishing magazines.

Fishing: A substantial amount of tourism centers on fishing during late summer and early fall, after water levels have receded. Recently, with the return of anadromous fish runs they have extended winter fishing seasons.

Floating: The Grande Ronde River continues to offer outstanding scenery and float boating. However, floating is very rare on the Wenaha River because accessibility is only practical by

pack string or foot travel. The Wenaha River can be challenging to navigate as trees and other woody debris that fall into the river are not cleared.

Motorized use is not allowed within the Wild segment of river that is located in the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness, which is the vast majority of the WSR corridor. For comparison, the Grande Ronde WSR plan does not allow motorized boat use along the WSR corridor.

Commercial recreation use is authorized in the Wenaha River corridor. There is one outfitter and guide service permitted within the area that could access the river corridor for hunting, fishing, hiking and camping. There are designated campsites established, but they are rarely used by the permittee. Most of the commercial hunting camps are located outside the river corridor on the ridge tops.

Early season wildlife and scenery viewing and horn hunting are popular as the lower part of the river corridor typically becomes accessible in early spring.

Existing Recreation Developments and Trails

Wenaha River Trailhead: The Wenaha River Trail, NFST # 3106, begins at Troy Oregon from a small parking area accessed from Wallowa County Road 194 that serves a minimally developed trailhead. It is outside the designated WSR corridor and off National Forest System lands. Trail 3106 runs the entire length of the river corridor and is open to foot and horseback travel only.

Hoodoo Trailhead: The Hoodoo Trail, NFST # 3244, begins outside the designated corridor on the upper rim of the canyon. The trailhead is in keeping with the rustic nature of the recreation facilities in the area. It offers little parking and there is not any water available for stock. This trailhead can be seasonally accessed from Forest Road 6214060.

Viewpoints along the trail offer terrific vista sights of the Wenaha drainage and Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Backcountry. The trail is open to foot and horseback travel only. It reaches the Wenaha River at river mile 8.

Cross Canyon Trailhead: Cross Canyon, NFST #3242, begins outside the designated corridor on the upper rim of the canyon. This non-motorized trail is used by horse/hikers. This trail offers spectacular views of the Wenaha River. It enters the WSR corridor near river mile 13. This trailhead can be seasonally accessed from Forest Road 6217. There is an adequate area available for parking given current and anticipated future use.

Elk Flat Trailhead: Elk Flat, NFST #3241, begins outside the designated corridor on the upper rim of the canyon. This trail is maintained for foot and horse traffic only since it is located within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness and provides scenic vistas of the canyon corridor. This upper canyon trail reaches nearly to river mile 20. This trailhead can be seasonally accessed from Forest Road 6200290 spur. There is an adequate area available for parking given current and anticipated future use.

Twin Buttes Trailhead: Grizzly Bear, NFST #3103, is maintained for foot and horse traffic only. The first five miles generally follow along a ridge at a gentle grade then the last few miles drop quickly in elevation to the Wenaha River corridor. It basically runs south to north and connects at river mile 16. This trailhead can be seasonally accessed from Forest Road 4600300 spur.

Access and Roads

The road system has been in place since the Wild and Scenic River designation. All roads have gone through an analysis that documented the road management objectives (RMOs) of each segment and how it relates to the overall District transportation system. RMOs identify the long term maintenance level and use of each road segment as it relates to the surrounding needs for access or protection of other resource values. There are approximately 3.5 miles of road open to motorized use in the WWSRC. These roads are entirely within the Scenic and Recreational segments of the Wenaha WSR:

- The town of Troy, located within the 0.15 mile Recreational segment, maintains nearly ½ mile of improved local roads that access private residences and businesses.
- Wallowa County (WC) Road 194, located near the town of Troy, Oregon, accesses NFST #3106 ¼ mile up from the junction with WC Road 569 in the Scenic segment.
- A privately maintained, natural aggregate road accesses the river from the third switchback of WC Road 194. This unimproved road is nearly one mile in length and terminates at the point in the river known as the “Mile Bluff.” This portion of Road 194 is also in the Scenic segment of the River corridor.
- WC Road 569 is located at the mouth of Wenaha River and has a bridge crossing at Troy. WC Road 569 provides access to public camping at Mill Bar Cabin, an ODFW facility, comprising of another ¼ mile of road in the Scenic segment.
- Standards listed below and the guidelines listed under Scenery and Wildlife will more specifically serve to protect and enhance the Recreation ORV in addition to existing Forest Plan guidance.

Standards and Guidelines

Dispersed camping and trails and trail use guidelines mentioned above are also applicable to this resource.

WSR S-5: Commercial outfitter-guides will report their specific use within the WWSRC.

WSR G-10: New proposals for outfitting and guiding special use permits or recreation event permits should be approved only when the special use or event is consistent with Outstandingly

Remarkable Values (ORVs), wild and scenic rivers desired conditions, and when a need is identified by a Needs Assessment and Capacity Analysis.

WSR G-11: Trailhead parking capacity on NFS Lands will be limited to the following: 50 vehicles/220 people at one time (PAOT), including vehicles with trailers, parked at the five trailheads that provide primary access to the WSR corridor: Wenaha River, HooDoo, Cross Canyon, Elk Flat and Grizzly Bear Trailheads. This does not include and public and private parking in the Town of Troy and on adjacent state lands.

WSR G-12: There will be a range of 76-85 primitive campsites located within the Wild, Scenic and Recreation River segments that meet a condition rating of “Low Impact or “Moderate Impact” as defined in the 2011 Campsite Inventory for the Wenaha WSR. This does not include private camping in Troy or car camping on state lands adjacent to Troy. This includes areas defined as Larger Hunting Camps; 18-22 (400-800 square feet): Smaller campsites; 5-65 (up to 400 square feet). Mitigation in the form of additional standards will occur for that upper limit of disturbance if site sizes begin to exceed these limits.

WSR S-6: Maximum Group Size will be 12 people and/or 18 head of stock within the Wild River Segment.

WSR S-7: Boat motors will be prohibited on the Wild section of the WSR (including the section in Non-Wilderness) except in the situations listed in WSR S-2.

Desired Future Condition for the WWSRC

General Desired Future Condition (DFC) statements for each classification of river segment were prepared for Management Area A7 in the Forest Plan. These are listed in Appendix A. The following are DFCs more specific to the WWSRC.

Wild: The Wild River segment of the Wenaha will be free of impoundments and continue to be accessible by trail and/or water, and inaccessible by road. The viewing area and shorelines will be essentially natural appearing. Signs of human activity, including structures or evidence of resource use, will be kept to a minimum or be inconspicuous. Sectors within the wilderness will be managed in conjunction with the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Management Plan. The opportunity to interact with the natural environment, with challenges and minimal sights and sounds of other people, will be available. Outside of wilderness there will generally be no use of motorized vehicles. Where a need to regulate use exists, indirect methods will predominate. Outfitter-guides will provide services to the extent necessary for recognizing the public purposes of the Wilderness Act and to help people enjoy and interpret the environment. Outstandingly remarkable values must be protected and enhanced. (WSR DC-1)

Scenic: The scenic portion of the Wenaha River corridor will be free of impoundments; shorelines and viewing areas will be largely natural appearing. Some recreation structures,

evidence of timber harvest roads, and other evidence of human activity may be present, but will not detract from the near natural appearance and scenic qualities of the immediate environment. Since the entire scenic portion of the river flows through private land, or land administered by the Oregon State Department of Wildlife, recreation opportunities will be limited. Landowner rights are not changed by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act or by subsequent management. Some water related recreation opportunities will be available. Frequency of contact with others will be moderate. Ongoing activities such as timber harvest, fish habitat improvement, mining and others may be permitted if scenic and recreation values are protected and enhanced and adverse effects avoided. (WSR DC-2)

Recreational: The recreational section will be free of impoundments and be readily accessible from roads. Management guidelines are designed to complement the town of Troy, Oregon, located within this section of the corridor, and includes some public use facilities such as undeveloped campgrounds, administrative buildings, bridges, private residences, and commercial businesses within the corridor. Considerable development may be evident near the river. (WSR DC-3)

Direction from the Decision Notice: Timber Cutting

Commercial timber harvest is not allowed in the Scenic section of the WWSRC managed by the Forest Service. On private land, a permit is needed from Oregon Department of Forestry for timber harvest.

Direction from the Decision Notice states that “trees will not be sold, cut, or otherwise harvested except for emergencies involving public safety for the designated Wild portion of the Wenaha WSR.”

Such cutting shall be away from trails, campsites, or other public-use developments to the degree practical and only to meet river management objectives.

Additional Standards and Guidelines for the WSR

The management of other resources can also have a cause-effect relationship with protecting and enhancing the ORVs, the free-flowing character, and the water quality of the Wenaha WSR. Where conflicts exist or existing management of these other resources does not protect and enhance the river values of the Wenaha WSR, a need for change in management direction is identified. The desired conditions have already been described for river values of the Wenaha WSR, so this section will only discuss existing management and the gaps that need to be addressed in the Wenaha WSR corridor. These standards only apply to the Wild segment of the Wenaha WSR corridor that is within the Forest boundary.

Range

There are no existing federal grazing allotments within or overlapping the Wild segment of the Wenaha WSR. Sheep allotments that grazed throughout the wilderness were all cancelled around 1965. Animal grazing that might occur on Forest lands within the corridor would be associated with pack stock during hunting season or horse grazing from the recreating public. However, most hunting occurs on the ridge, well outside of the WSR corridor. Pack stock grazing has not been an issue that affects the ORVs or other values of the Wenaha WSR.

Existing management direction for Management Area A7 – Wild and Scenic Rivers states that:

The existing domestic livestock grazing level and management intensity (prior to designation of rivers) is permitted consistent with recreation, visual, and other management objectives.

Development and maintenance of range improvements are permitted. Range utilization standards, management practices, and improvements will be designed and managed to meet wild and scenic and riparian objectives (Forest Plan, page 4-126).

There is no need for change in existing management direction for range.

Weeds

Weeds pose a significant, adverse threat to the river-values of the Wenaha WSR. Existing management direction that presently applies to the Wenaha WSR is Forest-wide direction, which can be found under “Pest Management” in the Forest Plan.

Cultural Resources

Existing management direction for Wild and Scenic Rivers is to meet Forest-wide direction for Cultural Resources. Forest-wide standards ensure compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act as amended. These standards adequately protect the river-values of the Wenaha WSR (Forest Plan, page 4-126).

There is no need for change in existing management direction for cultural resources.

Lands and Land Uses

Existing management direction for Wild and Scenic Rivers is to meet Forest-wide direction for Lands and Land Uses. Furthermore, existing direction states that Wild sections are “Exclusive Areas” for development of utilities. In other words, no utilities can be constructed within the Wild corridor inside the Forest Boundary (Forest Plan, page 4-128).

Existing standards state that all federal land within the WSR corridor will remain in holding for the benefit of the public. The existing management also states that “where opportunities exist, private land within a formally designated Wild and Scenic River will be acquired.” However, all land within the Wenaha WSR corridor that falls within the Forest boundary is currently National

Forest System Land. So, there is no opportunity for the Forest to acquire land within the Wenaha WSR corridor.

Existing management direction is adequate for lands and land uses.

Facilities

Existing management direction for Wild and Scenic Rivers is to “*Maintain existing facilities that support Wild and Scenic River management objectives. Fences, gauging stations, and other management facilities may be permitted if there is no major effect on the character of the area. Addition of new facilities, including recreation facilities, may be permitted, consistent with maintaining and protecting Wild and Scenic River values (Forest Plan, pages 4-128-129).*” The Wild (Wilderness) segment within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness is subject to more stringent regulations for developments according to the Wilderness Act.

Furthermore, stringent scenery standards would apply to any recreational facilities within the Wild corridor. Preservation is the norm, and retention may be used for some limited recreation facilities in the corridor.

There is no need for change in existing management direction for facilities as it is not anticipated any new facilities will be needed or approved.

Fire and Fuels Management

Existing Management Direction: for Management Area A7 – Wild and Scenic Rivers states the following:

FIRE

For moderate to high intensity wildfires, the appropriate suppression response will emphasize a control strategy. Emphasis should be on protecting life and facilities.

Wildfire suppression efforts should utilize low impact methods, as use of heavy equipment may require restoration efforts to mitigate visual impacts.

FUELS

Prescribed burning is permitted. Low intensity prescribed fires, producing minimal scorch and rapid recovery, are the most desirable.

Generally, existing management direction is adequate for fire and fuels management, with the addition of the following standards and guidelines.

WSR G-13: Planned ignition is allowed in the Wild section only to enhance and protect ORV values. Otherwise fire of all types within the Wild section will be managed according to the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Fire Management Plan.

WSR G-4 and 5 also apply to this resource.

Pests

Existing Management for Management Area A7 – Wild and Scenic Rivers states the following:

Use integrated pest management (IPM) principles and methods. Prescribed fire may be used to help reduce stocking and conditions favorable for bark beetle and other insects and diseases.

Suppress pests when outbreaks threaten users and/or managed resources. Use suppression methods that minimize site disturbance.

Existing management direction is adequate. There is no need for change in pest management.

Cooperative Management Strategies

Scenic and Recreational Segments outside of Forest Boundary

The Scenic and Recreational segments of the Wenaha WSR flow through several small parcels of state, private, and BLM lands. The Umatilla National Forest does not have jurisdiction over nonfederal lands, but contacts have been made with adjacent land managers and a collaborative approach will be used to work with other agencies and private land owners to achieve desired future conditions. The following is a summary of the landowners outside federal boundaries and strategies to achieve desired conditions on these lands and includes additional standards and guidelines.

Public Agencies

State and Federal

The Wenaha State Wildlife Area, managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), is managed in a manner that protects and enhances river values of the Wenaha WSR.

No major issues are foreseen with the management of this area that would detract from the river-values of the Wenaha WSR. Any management activity proposed must be consulted on with the appropriate regulatory agencies and comply with standards and policy for management of threatened or endangered fish or wildlife species.

The BLM manages a parcel of land adjacent to the Forest boundary. Collaboration with the BLM will be ongoing to ensure that the river-values of the Wenaha WSR are protected. This parcel of BLM-administered land is not associated with the management of the Grande Ronde WSR, as it is outside the Recreational corridor of the Grande Ronde WSR (Figure 3). Currently there are no known activities ongoing or proposed in the reasonably foreseeable future. If the BLM were to propose any activity, they would normally contact the Forest Service as road access is an issue and permits may be required depending on the proposed activity.

WSR G-14: Entities involved in management of the Scenic section will adopt a group size limit in order to protect and enhance ORVs that is consistent with the Wild section regulations.

Private Lands

The private lands within the Scenic and Recreational segments of the corridor are primarily used for pasture and forest products. Grazing cattle is a current use within the Scenic corridor on private lands only. These current uses are compatible with the Scenic and Recreational designations under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and thus far have not infringed on the character of the WSR corridor. Cattle primarily graze the upper slopes and only occasionally drift down the steep hillsides towards the river. There is generally not palatable forage on the steep slopes to entice cattle to move down slope. If cattle are seen, they are usually reported to the Forest Service Pomeroy District Ranger who notifies the owner, who then removes the cattle, driving them back up the slope.

Future development such as the construction of a house on private lands could degrade the ORV of the Wenaha WSR. Potential strategies that might be used to maintain desired conditions within the corridor are as follow:

To ensure values are protected with possible activities or developments, the FS may:

- Provide technical assistance under Section 11(b)(1), work with the county and state or consider acquisition from willing sellers
- Initiate conservation easements
- Provide resource incentives (i.e. assist in noxious weed control, etc.)
- Support acquisition proposals by the State of Oregon or Federal Government from willing sellers

The Recreational segment of the Wenaha WSR is concurrent with the Grand Ronde River Scenic Waterway, part of the Oregon Scenic Waterways Program. Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 736-040-0047 contains State standards for the “Troy River Community Area” which are outlined below. The standards from the OAR place limitations on the type of development and activities that can occur in the town of Troy. These standards protect and enhance the river values of the Recreational section of the Wenaha WSR.

OAR 736-040-0047(4) – Grande Ronde River Scenic Waterway

(a) That segment of the Grand Ronde River that includes the area zoned Rural Service by Wallowa County at Troy;

(b) This River Community Area shall be administered consistent with the standards set by OAR 736-040-0035 and 736-040-0040(1) (f). In addition to these standards, all new development shall comply with Wallowa and Union County land use regulations:

- (A) New mining operations and similar improvements shall be permitted only when they are substantially screened from view from the river by topography and/or existing vegetation. If inadequate topographic or vegetative screening exists on a site, mining and similar forms of development may be permitted if vegetation (preferably native) is established which would provide substantial screening of the affected area. The condition of "substantial screening" shall consist of an ample density and mixture of evergreen and deciduous vegetation (preferably native) to totally obscure the altered improvement site;
- (B) If land is to remain in forest use, visible timber harvest may be allowed provided that:
- (i) The operation complies with the relevant Forest Practices Act rules;
 - (ii) Harvest methods with low visual impact are used; and
 - (iii) The effect of the harvest enhances the scenic view within a reasonable time (5-10 years). For the purposes of this rule, "enhance" means to improve timber stand health, including reducing stand density, by emulating the mosaic character of the natural forest landscape (pre-forest management tree density patterns - Prior to 1920).
- (C) New roads constructed for timber harvest, mining or any other purpose shall be partially screened with vegetation and/or topography. If inadequate topography or vegetative screening exists, the road may be permitted if vegetation (preferably native) is established to provide partial screening of the road within a reasonable time (4-5 years);
- (D) The condition of "partial screening" shall consist of an ample density and mixture of evergreen and deciduous vegetation (preferably native) to allow a partially filtered view (at least 30 percent filtering) of the road;
- (E) Improvements needed for public recreation use or resource protection may be visible from the river, but shall be designed to blend with the natural character of the landscape;
- (F) Whenever the standards of OAR 736-040-0035 and the above rule are more restrictive than the applicable County Land Use and Development Ordinance, the above Oregon Administrative Rules shall apply.

The recreational corridor of the Wenaha WSR actually overlaps two distinct river management schemes in the community of Troy:

- 1) The Grande Ronde Wild & Scenic River – designated by the U.S. Congress and managed cooperatively by the BLM, the Forest Service, and states of Oregon and Washington.
- 2) The Grand Ronde River Scenic Waterway – part of the Oregon Scenic Waterways Program subject to Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 736-040-0047 (Appendix E).

Implementation and Monitoring

The rate of implementation of this plan will be determined by the amount of funding available and the capacity of our organization, our volunteers, and our partners. The following guidelines should be used to help set priorities for allocation of funding and staff time:

- 1) Public safety
- 2) Protection of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values to maintain conditions consistent with those at the time of designation. Ranked in order of emphasis based on potential risk to the resource, these include: water quality, cultural resources, fisheries, scenery, and geology.
- 3) Enhancement of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values to exceed conditions at the time of designation.
- 4) Activities that implement the decisions of this plan which receive outside or cooperative funding, have partners, or advance public stewardship would likely be given a higher priority.

A complete monitoring plan is included in Appendix D.

Appendix A. Summary of Standards and Guidelines

The following are the standards and guidelines for the WWSRC as detailed in the document; here they are listed together instead of by resource for quick reference.

WSR S-1: No motorized travel is allowed in Wild (Wilderness) section except in emergency situations with appropriate authorization.

WSR S-2: Motorized vehicles and equipment are only allowed in the non-Wilderness Wild section under the following circumstances: with District Ranger approval, for fire suppression if much of the WSR corridor is jeopardized; for trail maintenance, reconstruction, relocation or other administrative actions, or in emergency situations..

WSR S-3: In-stream wood would only be cut in the Wild section to enhance or protect ORVs, or in case of emergency involving certain loss of life. In stream wood would not be cut for fire suppression unless the entire WSR corridor is threatened, with District Ranger approval.

WSR S-4: Only dead and down wood will be collected for personal campfire use. If necessary, additional restrictions could be imposed.

WSR S-5: Commercial outfitter-guides will report their specific use within the WWSRC.

WSR S-6: Maximum Group Size will be 12 people and and/or 18 head of stock within the Wild River Segment.

WSR S-7: Boat motors will be prohibited on the Wild section of the WSR (including the section in Non-Wilderness) except in the situations listed in WSR S-2. Desired Future Condition for the WWSRC

WSR G-1: The quantity and location of dispersed camping sites is regulated to protect river resources, particularly riparian vegetation and water quality (Also see Recreation Standards and Guidelines)

WSR G-2: Dispersed camping sites are rested, relocated, or closed where unacceptable impacts to riparian vegetation, stream banks, or water quality occurs. Unacceptable impacts are identified by devegetation or increased bare soil exposure created by site expansion or site proliferation, loss of bank stability, exposed tree roots, loss of overhanging bank structure, or point source erosion and siltation.

WSR G-3: The hitching or tethering of a horse or other saddle or pack animal should not be authorized or allowed within 50 feet of the Wenaha River (Wild Section).

WSR G-4: Minimum impact suppression techniques will be used in the river corridor. Examples include avoiding such actions as: the use of heavy equipment in the river canyon, hand lines or

dozer lines that drain directly into the creek, locating fire camps, spike camps, drop points, and heli-bases in wet meadows or riparian areas, and retardant mixing plants in the river corridor.

WSR G-5: Resource advisors will be utilized on larger wildfires during extended attack.

WSR G-6: Trails will be designed to avoid sensitive riparian areas to the extent possible while providing access to the creek at designated locations.

WSR G-7: Locate trails in upland areas as much as possible and consolidate and remove user trails in riparian areas.

WSR G-8: Any trail construction is for the primary purpose of relocating public use to reduce resource damage and retains as much vegetation as possible, fits with the topography, and is consistent with riparian function.

WSR G-9: Trails are defined, hardened, replanted, relocated, or closed where unacceptable impacts to riparian vegetation, stream banks, or water quality occurs. Unacceptable impacts are identified by devegetation beyond normal tread width, loss of bank stability, exposed tree roots, loss of overhanging bank structure, lack of trail definition or multiple parallel trails, or point source erosion and siltation.

WSR G-10: New proposals for outfitting and guiding special use permits or recreation event permits should be approved only when the special use or event is consistent with Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs), wild and scenic rivers desired conditions, and when a need is identified by a Needs Assessment and Capacity Analysis.

WSR G-11: Trailhead parking capacity on NFS Lands will be limited to the following: 50 vehicles/220 people at one time (PAOT), including vehicles with trailers, parked at the five trailheads that provide primary access to the WSR corridor: Wenaha River, Hoodoo, Cross Canyon, Elk Flat and Grizzly Bear Trailheads. This does not include and public and private parking in the Town of Troy and on adjacent state lands.

WSR G-12: There will be a range of 76-85 primitive campsites located within the Wild, Scenic and Recreation River segments that meet a condition rating of “Low Impact or “Moderate Impact” as defined in the 2011 Campsite Inventory for the Wenaha WSR. This does not include private camping in Troy or car camping on state lands adjacent to Troy. This includes areas defined as Larger Hunting Camps; 18-22 (400-800 square feet): Smaller campsites; 5-65 (up to 400 square feet). Mitigation in the form of additional standards will occur for that upper limit of disturbance if site sizes begin to exceed these limits.

WSR G-13: Planned ignition is allowed in the Wild section only to enhance and protect ORV values. Otherwise fire of all types within the Wild section will be managed according to the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Fire Management Plan.

Appendix B. Applicable Management Direction

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was signed into law in 1968 (Public Law 90-542). The Act protects the free flowing waters of many of our nation's most spectacular rivers and safeguards the special character of these rivers, while also recognizing the potential for appropriate use and development. The Act purposefully strives to balance river development with permanent protection for the country's most outstanding free-flowing rivers.

To accomplish this, the Act prohibits federal support for actions such as the construction of dams or other instream activities that would adversely affect the river's free flow or outstanding values. Designation neither prohibits development nor gives the federal government control over private property. The Act specifically:

- Prohibits dams and other federally assisted water resource projects that would adversely affect river values.
- Protects outstanding natural, cultural, or recreational values.
- Ensures water quality is maintained.
- Requires the creation of a comprehensive river management plan that addresses resource protection, development of lands and facilities, user capacities, and other management practices necessary to achieve the purposes of the Act.

Agency policy

Management direction for Wild and Scenic Rivers can be found in Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2354, beginning with sections 2354.32. Highlights include the following:

2354.4 - Wild and Scenic River Management Activities

2354.41 - Recreation Visitor Use

When necessary, develop prescriptions to manage the character and intensity of recreational use on the river.

Use specific management objectives for each segment. Consider the following factors in developing direction:

1. Capabilities of the physical environment to accommodate and sustain visitor use.
2. Desires of the present and potential recreation users and trends over time in the amounts, types, and distribution of recreational use and the characteristics of recreation

users. These help identify what kinds of recreation opportunities to provide and how and where to manage and maintain such opportunities.

3. The diversity of river recreation opportunities available within the geographic region.
4. History of nonrecreation uses that are compatible or conflict with recreation use of the river.
5. Budgetary, personnel, and technical considerations.

2354.41a - Distribution of Visitor Use

Develop visitor management techniques needed to achieve the river management objectives. Use management techniques including site management, indirect regulation of use, and direct regulation of use. Exhibit 01 summarizes management techniques and selected methods for each.

Recognize that use-management techniques may have a significant effect on the character of the river area and the kind of recreation opportunities available. Ensure that management techniques relate to specific river management objectives.

When regulatory measures are necessary to manage use, apply these measures as far in advance of the visitor's arrival as possible. Apply management techniques before the visitor enters the river area. Then to the extent possible, allow the user to move about freely without interference.

Apply indirect techniques for regulation of use before taking more direct action. However, do not ignore violations of laws and regulations.

When it becomes necessary to limit use, ensure that all potential users have a fair and equitable chance to obtain access to the river. Also ensure that the use-limiting system is within the administrative capabilities of the managing unit.

2354.42 - Wild and Scenic River Resource Protection and Management

2354.42a - Range

Permit livestock grazing within the designated river area provided it does not substantially interfere with public use or detract from the values which caused the river to be included in the National Wild and Scenic River System. For Wilderness River Areas see FSM 2320.

Permit facilities and improvements within a wild river area, if they are necessary to support the range activities, provided the area retains a natural appearance and the structures harmonize with the environment. Such improvements must conform to established river management direction and FSM 2520, 2526, and 2527.

2354.42b - Wildlife and Fish

Manage wildlife and fish habitats in a manner consistent with the other recognized river attributes.

Recommendations to State agencies concerning the management of fisheries must be consistent and in harmony with established river objectives.

Stocking of fish is generally consistent with designated river status. Stocking levels and habitat manipulation must complement and be compatible with the recreation opportunity objectives set for the river segment and the law designating the river.

The construction of minor structures for such purposes as improvement of fish and game habitat are acceptable in Wild River areas provided they do not affect the free-flowing characteristics of the river and harmonize with the surrounding environment.

2354.42c - Water

The objectives of water management as described in the Act require that "selected rivers or sections thereof be preserved in their free-flowing condition to protect the water quality"

1. Maintain or enhance existing water quality on all rivers managed for recreation. The river management plan shall prescribe a process for monitoring water quality on a continuing basis.
2. Advise users on safe drinking-water practices.
3. Undertake watershed improvements where deteriorated soil or hydrologic conditions create a threat to the values for which the river is managed; where these conditions present a definite hazard to life or property; or where such conditions could cause serious depreciation of important environmental quality outside the river area.

Undertake no rehabilitation or stabilization projects unless they enable the area to retain its natural appearance, harmonize with the environment, and have no substantial adverse effect on the river and its environment.

When practical, use native species to restore watershed vegetation. All such watershed restoration measures shall follow the prescriptions established for the river and shall be consistent with the requirements of FSM 2526 and 2527.

4. Approve only those watershed projects that protect and enhance the values that caused the river to be designated and that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values. Normally, there is little opportunity for increasing water yield or for changing the timing of runoff within the confines of a river area.

5. For issuance of licenses, permits, or other authorizations concerning projects under the Federal Power Act or other construction, see 36 CFR part 297.
6. Permit the construction of water bars, drainage ditches, flow measurement devices, and other minor structures or management practices when necessary for protection, conservation, rehabilitation, or enhancement of the river area resources. They must be compatible with the classification of the river area and harmonize with the surrounding environment. They must not pose a direct and adverse impact on the river values.
7. Address the need for retaining and maintaining existing water divisions, ditches, and water management devices. If retention is part of a valid existing right or in the interest of good river management, prescribe maintenance standards in the management plan.

When an existing structure is not retained, return the area to a more natural condition in a manner that does not have an adverse effect on the river and its immediate environment.

8. Approve gathering of water resources information if the permittee carries out these activities in a manner that protects the values for which the river was designated. Approvals should show the Forest Service is not committed to concur with any future development proposal that may result from such activity or studies.

Permit prospecting for water resources that is, drilling or digging to locate underground water supplies, for minor developments for range, wildlife, recreation, or administrative facilities.

2354.42d - Vegetation and Forest Cover

Manage the forest cover to maintain or enhance those values for which a particular river segment is managed.

1. Ensure trees are not sold, cut, or otherwise harvested in a designated wild river area except under emergency conditions, such as for insect or disease control, fire, natural catastrophe, disaster, public safety, or under specified conditions on valid mining claims.
2. Harvest timber or manipulate vegetation in classified scenic or recreation river areas, in a manner that satisfies river management objectives.
3. Reestablish tree cover, preferably by natural revegetation. Reforestation plans are subject to the objectives of river management.
4. Trees may be cut for use in the construction and maintenance of authorized improvements located in the designated river area when it is not reasonably possible to obtain or bring in the necessary materials from outside the area. Design the harvest to avoid conflicts with the river management objectives.

Such cutting must be away from trails, campsites, or other public-use developments to the degree practical.

5. Limit fuel wood cutting to dead or down material. Where necessary, prescribe restrictions on the use of wood for fuel.

2354.42e - Wilderness Rivers

Manage rivers that are entirely or partially within a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System to preserve the wilderness resources including solitude, natural environments, and opportunities for primitive, unconfined activities that offer challenge.

Resolve any conflicts between provisions of the Wilderness Act and provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in favor of the more restrictive of the provisions unless a specific exception is stated (FSM 2320).

2354.42f - Structures and Improvements

Prescribe structures and improvements needed for visitor use and administration in the river management direction. Examples of such structures and improvements are: boat launch and dock facilities, parking areas, bridges, portages, campground and toilet facilities, trails, information centers, and administrative sites.

1. Wild River. Where practical, locate administrative headquarters and interpretive centers outside the river area.
2. Scenic River. Administrative site developments and modest public information centers may be located in the river area provided they are not readily visible from the river.
3. Recreation River. Administrative site developments and public information centers may be located along the river shoreline providing they do not have adverse effects on the values for which the river was designated and classified.

2354.42g - Transportation System

Decide the type and location of transportation facilities in the river management direction.

1. Wild River. Generally, a wild river is accessible only by trail. Normally, do not permit motorized travel on the trail system in the river area. Airfields in existence at the time of designation may remain if needed. Do not develop new airfields. Normally do not permit the landing of aircraft except for emergencies and then only at facilities that existed prior to designation. Develop airfield management and maintenance direction as needed (FSM 7725).

2. Scenic River. A scenic river may be accessible in places by road. However, scenic rivers should not include long stretches of conspicuous and well-traveled roads closely paralleling the riverbank. Trails may be located and designed to accommodate motorized travel.

Establish transportation design criteria to protect the values for which the river is managed.

3. Recreation River. A recreation river is usually readily accessible by road. Roads are normally open to motorized travel but use may be regulated.

2354.42n - Fire

Manage fire within a designated river area in a manner compatible with contiguous National Forest System lands.

On wildfires, use suppression activities that cause the least lasting impact on the river and river area. Conduct presuppression and prevention activities to reflect the management objectives for the specific river segment.

Prescribed fire may be utilized to maintain environmental conditions or to meet objectives specified in the river management plan.

2354.42o - Motorized Use

Permit motorized use if such use is compatible with other management direction, public use of the resource, and resource attributes of the river. Prohibit motorized use if the use causes, or is likely to cause, considerable adverse effects on the resource. Normally, motorized use will be prohibited in a wild river area. Establish prescriptions for management of motorized use.

Forest Plan Direction

The Umatilla National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan contains the following direction for desired condition of each river segment and for resources identified as ORVS for the Wenaha WSR.

Wild River Section

Wild rivers or sections of rivers will be free of impoundments and continue to be accessible by trail and/or water, and inaccessible by road. The viewing area and shorelines will be essentially natural appearing. Signs of human activity, including structures or evidence of resource use, will be kept to a minimum or will be inconspicuous. Sections flowing through the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness will be managed with wilderness laws, regulation and policy. Requirements for managing wilderness are more restrictive than managing for a WSR. An opportunity to interact with a natural environment, with challenges and minimal sights and sounds of other people will

be available. There is no use of motorized vehicles within the ¼ mile wide wild wilderness section. Within the ¼ mile wild non-wilderness section there are some areas on the outside edges that can be accessed by motorized vehicles through private or state lands. In the river bottom itself, steep topography limits access except for foot trails administered by the Forest Service. Where a need to regulate use exists, indirect methods will predominate. Outfitters and guides will continue to provide services to the public to assist them in the enjoyment and use of the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness.

Scenic River Section

Scenic rivers or sections of rivers will be free of impoundments; shorelines and viewing areas will be largely natural appearing. Some recreation structures, evidence of timber harvest, roads, and other evidence of human activity may be present but will not detract from the near natural appearance and scenic qualities. A variety of non-motorized water related recreational opportunities will be available. The river can be accessed primarily by trail only through this section. Wenaha State Wildlife Area does have road access and provides minimal public accessibility to the river's edge. They also allow some motorized use on a few trails within their management corridor. There are also some private parcels within the ¼ mile corridor. Given the deep incised nature of the canyon, most of the accessible and usable area is directly related to the river bottom. Side hills are steep and rocky and only allow minimal private livestock grazing and some vegetation management (timber) at the very tops of the slope. In general, these activities are not visible from the river bottom. Frequency of contact with others will be moderate. Ongoing activities such as timber harvest, fish habitat improvement, mining, and others may be permitted if scenic and recreation values are met or enhanced and adverse effects avoided.

Recreational River Section

The recreational sections will be free of impoundments and be readily accessible from roads. Some major privately owned facilities such as developed campgrounds, administrative buildings, bridges, county roads, private roads and residences, and commercial businesses will remain within the corridor. Public access to the river corridor can be made over Wallowa County Road #763 from the south and Asotin County Road #100 from the north. These two major access points, and forest development roads around the perimeter of the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness provide numerous access points and facilitate keeping visitors dispersed across the landscape. Considerable development may have occurred and be evident near the river, but the area shall be managed to protect recreation and scenic values. A range of recreational opportunities will be available in settings in which interactions are relatively high and visitors are likely to share their recreational experience with other individuals or groups.

Resource Direction

Fisheries

Management Area B1– Wilderness

WILDLIFE AND FISH

Wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing are appropriate uses of wilderness.

Wildlife and fish habitat management will be permitted where they conform to the management of the wilderness resource.

Reestablishment of indigenous species is permitted, subject to environmental assessments and Regional Forester approval.

Coordinate with the state wildlife and game agencies to establish user densities that are compatible with the management of the wilderness (Forest Plan, page 4-144).

Forest Management Area C5 – Riparian and Fish

FISH

Anadromous fish habitat (includes stream and associated riparian area) will be managed to produce at least 90 percent of potential smolt habitat capability index (SHCI). The standard should be achieved by meeting the following:

- Riparian vegetation will be managed to promote floodplain, bank, and channel stability, to provide resiliency to disturbance and promote aquatic diversity.
- Where natural conditions permit, streamside vegetation along the entire length of perennial streams will be managed to maintain an average shading of 80 percent of the entire stream surface shaded. Where existing shading is already below this level, retain all vegetation contributing to stream surface shading.
- Lands and trees adjacent to perennial streams will be managed to provide for a continuous, well distributed supply of naturally occurring, large woody material for instream fish and riparian habitat. At a minimum, these lands will include a zone within one tree height of the stream channel but may be extended to upland areas when the additional areas are determined to be critical to the provision of future large wood to downstream fish bearing reaches.

- Streams will be managed to provide pools that are relatively large, frequent, well distributed, and persistent during low flows.
- Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for water temperature and instream flows will be met.
- The sediment budget will fall well within the range and frequency adapted to by indigenous aquatic communities.

Fish habitat enhancement, restoration, and maintenance practices (projects) will be used to increase smolt habitat capability (Forest Plan, page 4-170).

Recreation

Forest-wide Goal for Recreation

Provide for a broad spectrum of recreation opportunities and experiences and a variety of recreation settings on the National Forest for Forest recreationists (Forest Plan, page 4-1).

Forest-wide Desired Future Condition for Recreation

A diversity of recreation opportunities in a variety of forest settings will continue to be provided. Use of the well-maintained recreation sites will continue to occur at high levels. Hunting will continue to be a featured recreation activity and will occur in a variety of settings. Big game populations will be near desired numbers as species respond to favorable forest habitat. Other wildlife dependent on managed forest environments will be evident. Recovering and improving anadromous fish runs will be a feature, particularly on the south end of the Forest. Resident fishing opportunities will be expanding. Although the level of future road development is high, motor vehicle access will be somewhat limited because of the many road closures (Forest Plan, page 4-3).

Forest-wide Objectives for Recreation

Forest-wide objectives are found on page 4-14 through 4-17 of the Forest Plan. The recreation objectives are Forest-wide outputs expressed as yields and do not specifically relate to protecting and enhancing the ORV of recreation on the Wenaha Wild and Scenic River.

Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for Recreation

Forest-wide standards and guidelines are found on pages 4-46 to 4-47 of the Forest Plan but are superseded by WSR standards and guidelines described in Management Areas A7 and B1. These standards and guides are more restrictive relative to the implementation of general recreation management activities.

Forest Management Area A7 – Wild and Scenic Rivers

RECREATION

River-oriented recreation opportunities may be provided, consistent with protecting and enhancing Wild and Scenic River values.

River area recreation will be managed according to the following permissible interim design criteria.

Wild Classification:

- 1. Manage areas for Primitive, Semi-primitive Nonmotorized (SPNM).*
- 2. Access points (trailheads) will accommodate use by primarily non-motorized floaters, hikers and horseback riders. Signs located at the trailheads will discuss allowed uses in the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness and specific items relative to the WSR corridor.*
- 3. No motorized use is permitted in the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness, therefore this criteria eliminates motorized use within the wild section of the corridor.*
- 4. Only rustic recreation facilities and settings may be permitted (development scale 1 or 2) within the WSR corridor. Wilderness standards and guidelines are restrictive in nature relative to recreation facilities and will be sufficient to protect any ORV's along the WSR corridor.*

Trail and related facility construction, reconstruction, and maintenance are permitted.

Outfitter and guide services may be permitted under special use permit. Currently only existing outfitter and guides are allowed to operate within the wilderness. The Umatilla National Forest Plan also identified an area in the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness headwaters that does not allow outfitters and guides to operate and is open specifically to the public.

Scenery

Forest Management Area A7 – Wild and Scenic Rivers

VISUAL

Manage visual resources to meet standards for each classification as follows (Scenic and Recreation are not listed as these segments of the Wenaha are outside of the Forest Boundary):

Wild:

Preservation is the normal

Retention may be used for some limited recreation facilities

Activities within corridors may only repeat form, line, color, and texture which are frequently found in the characteristic landscape. Changes should be of such size, amount, intensity,

direction, and pattern that they are not visually evident in the foreground distance zone and are visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape in the middleground distance zone.

Principles of visual management will be applied so that positive attributes of a managed forest can be enjoyed while negative visual aspects of activities will be minimized.

Landscapes containing negative visual elements will be rehabilitated. Landscapes may be enhanced by opening views to distant peaks, unique rock forms, unusual vegetation, or other features of interest.

River corridor viewshed management direction will be established as part of the river management plans. In the interim, direction will be guided by Forest visual quality mapping, associated visual quality standards, and direction in these standards and guidelines (Forest Plan, page 4-126).

Wildlife

Forest-wide Goals for Wildlife

The Forest-wide goals are located on pages 4-1 through 4-3. Though there are numerous goals relating to wildlife, the following two goals are most related to protecting and enhancing the ORV of Wildlife on the Wenaha WSR:

Provide and manage big game (elk and deer) habitat and its components (cover, forage, and roads) to assist in meeting state wildlife agency population management objectives (Forest Plan, page 4-1).

Maintain or improve habitats for all threatened or endangered plant and animal species on the Forest, and manage habitats for all sensitive species to prevent the species from becoming threatened or endangered (Forest Plan, page 4-2).

Forest-wide Desired Future Condition for Wildlife

Forest-wide desired future condition is found on pages 4-3 through 4-14 of the Forest Plan. Desired Future conditions exist for wildlife (Forest Plan, page 4-6), big game (Forest Plan, page 4-6), and threatened, sensitive and endangered species (Forest Plan, pages 4-6 – 4-7). However, references to maintaining wildlife habitat are sprinkled throughout the Forest-wide desired conditions for other resources as well. To summarize, the Forest will maintain ideal big game habitat and also work to be responsive to the Endangered Species Act.

Forest-wide Objectives for Wildlife

Page 4-15 of the Forest Plan details Forest-wide management objectives for wildlife. This includes a Forest-wide Satisfactory Cover and Habitat Effectiveness Index for Rocky Mountain Elk.

Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for Wildlife

Forest-wide standards and guideline can be found in multiple resources in the Forest Plan on pages 4-46 through 4-94. Standards and guidelines closely related to protecting and enhancing the ORV of Wildlife for which the Wenaha WSR was designated can be found in the following sections: Wildlife Habitat pages 4-53 to 4-56; Ecosystems & Diversity, pages 4-62 to 4-63; Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species, pages 4-90 to 4-92. These forest-wide standards provide numerous guidelines for maintaining excellent big game species and protecting threatened, endangered, and sensitive species.

Forest-wide Monitoring for Wildlife

The Forest Plan, pages 5-6 through 5-8, contains Forest-wide monitoring for wildlife. The Forest particularly focuses on monitoring for Elk/Deer populations and Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species.

Existing Management Area Standards from Forest Plan

In addition to the preceding Forest-wide wildlife standards, there are wildlife standards and guidelines specific to Wild and Scenic Rivers and Wilderness. The Wenaha WSR is within three overlapping Management Areas detailed below. The most restrictive standards and guidelines are applicable.

Forest Management Area A7 – Wild and Scenic Rivers

WILDLIFE AND FISH

Wildlife and fish habitat improvement, development, and maintenance projects are permitted, provided Wild and Scenic Rivers objectives are met.

Dead and down tree habitat will be managed to provide or maintain 80 percent of the potential population level for all primary cavity excavators.

Forest Management Area B1 – Wilderness

WILDLIFE AND FISH

Wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing are appropriate uses of wilderness.

Wildlife and fish habitat management will be permitted where they conform to the management of the wilderness resource.

Reestablishment of indigenous species is permitted, subject to environmental assessments and Regional Forester approval.

Coordinate with the state wildlife and game agencies to establish user densities that are compatible with the management of the wilderness.

Forest Management Area C5 – Riparian and Fish

Standards and Guidelines in Forest Management Area C5 apply to retaining snags, a percentage of dead and down woody material, and satisfactory cover. However, management direction from Management Areas A7 and B1 are more restrictive in habitat management. Under Management Area A7 habitat can only be managed to protect and enhance the ORVs, free flowing condition, and/or water quality. Under Management Area B1, compliance with the Wilderness Act is required, so habitat management is restricted even further. The standards and guidelines for Vegetation and also under Fuels explore this issue further.

Appendix C. Resource Assessment

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a result of the Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988 the entire mainstem of the Wenaha River (21.55 miles) was designated as a National Wild and Scenic River (W&SR). Under this Act, the Forest Service is required to prepare a comprehensive management plan to prescribe protection for the values of the Wenaha River. This resource assessment is being done to identify the river values that are outstandingly remarkable.

The findings of the Forest Service interdisciplinary team determined the following values of the Wenaha River to be outstandingly remarkable values: scenic, recreational, wildlife and fisheries. As a result of our review of public and other agency comments, a couple changes were made in the resource assessment document. The statement under fisheries stating no attempts were being made to enumerate steelhead and bull trout population was removed from the document. A discussion on the results of the stream survey was added.

II. INTRODUCTION

In 1968, Congress enacted the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and for the first time, established a specific system for preserving outstanding free-flowing rivers. The Wenaha River was added to this system in 1988 when it was designated as a National Wild and Scenic River by the Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988. As defined by the Act, a National Wild and Scenic River must be free-flowing and have at least one outstandingly remarkable value.

The Congressional Record states that "The outstandingly remarkable values of the Wenaha River are: scenic, recreational, wildlife and fisheries."

Under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the U.S. Forest Service is required to "prepare a comprehensive management plan for such river segment to provide for the protection of the river values." This river planning process, of which the resource assessment is one step, will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning regulations. Public involvement will be invited throughout each phase of the planning process and will be essential in the development of a sound river management plan that can be implemented.

III. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

This resource assessment serves as the foundation of the river management planning process. The assessment documents the determination of which river related values or features are outstandingly remarkable or contribute substantially to the river setting or to the functioning of the river ecosystem.

The resource assessment process provides a standardized approach for the evaluation of resources and values of designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. This assessment will help guide interim management, development of the management plan, and determination of boundaries.

Although the determination of value significance is a matter of informed professional judgment and interpretation, this process includes the following steps or verification techniques:

The use of an interdisciplinary team approach

Consideration of uniqueness and rarity at a regional and national level

Values must be river related in that they owe their existence or contribute to the functioning of the river system and its environs.

The use of qualitative guidelines to help determine significance.

Verification by other experts in the subject area.

The resource value categories that have been considered and included:

Scenic

Recreational

Geologic

Fisheries

Wildlife

The rationale and full methodology for determining outstandingly remarkable values is found in a letter from Regional Forester John F. Butruille to Forest Supervisors, dated March 9, 1990.

Based partially on the eight geographic regions described in the 1989 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for Oregon. See NE Region SCORP Planning Map, Appendix A.

Historic

Prehistoric

Traditional Use, Cultural Values

Other River-Related Resource Values

IV. RIVER DESCRIPTION

The Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988 designated 21.55 miles of the Wenaha River from its headwaters at the junction of the North and South Forks of the Wenaha to its confluence with the Grande Ronde River. It was classified into the following three segments:

Segment A

Segment B

Segment C

WILD RIVER: The 18.7 mile segment from the confluence of the North and South Fork to the Umatilla National Forest boundary.

SCENIC RIVER: The 2.7 mile segment from The Umatilla National Forest boundary to the easternmost boundary of the Wenaha State Wildlife Area.

RECREATIONAL RIVER: The 0.15 mile segment from the easternmost boundary of the Wenaha State Wildlife Area to the confluence with the Grande Ronde River.

For the purposes of interim management, the Forest Service, as the lead agency, established a corridor width of 1/4 mile on either side of the river. The interim boundary map included in Appendix B, shows private and federal landownership. The final corridor boundary will be determined as part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers management planning process.

V. SPECIFIC DESCRIPTION OF VALUES

SCENIC

Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Rating

The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attractions within the geographic region. When analyzing scenic values, additional factors such as seasonal variations in vegetation, scale of cultural modifications, and the length of time negative intrusions are viewed may be considered. Scenery and visual attractions may be highly diverse over the majority of the river or river segment length and not common to other rivers in the geographic region.

Evaluation of the Present Situation

The Wenaha River drainage is located on the eastern slope of the northern Blue Mountains. The precipitation and subsequent runoff converges from seven major tributaries to form the Wenaha River. These tributaries drain lands that are located in the states of Oregon and Washington. Although all of the designated river segment (21.55 mile mainstem) is in the state of Oregon, a majority of the watershed area is in the state of Washington. Nearly sixteen miles of the designated river segment is located within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness. The remaining

five and a half miles generally appears undeveloped with the exception of the last two tenths of a mile where the rural community of Troy, Oregon occupies the area around the confluence of the Wenaha and Grande Ronde Rivers.

The Wenaha River is a rare example of an undeveloped Blue Mountain river. Excluding the Wallowa Mountain portion of the Blue Mountain complex, there is probably no better example of a clear, free-flowing and nearly pristine river in this part of the Inland Northwest.

The river is accessible only by trail. The scenic attributes of the river are therefore observed from the perspective of the hiker or horseback visitor. The exception to this perspective is the opportunity to view a substantial portion of the river canyon from the plateau to the south and, to the northeast from the Grouse Flats area. Road access to the canyon rim is limited to about four locations which serve as access to trailheads leading into the river canyon and more generally into the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness. Access to the mouth of the river is by state and county roads which serve the community of Troy, Oregon. Visitors traveling along the river, via Forest Service trail No. 3106, can take in the natural beauty of the canyon without seeing the management activities that take place on the non-wilderness lands to the south and northeast.

From the relatively open bunch grass slopes that border the river along the lower portion, to the mostly forested slopes of the upper reaches of the designated segment, diversity abounds. Around each bend in the trail, which follows the course of the river, anew combination of timbered stringers, open bunch grass slopes and layers of rim rock paint a new picture that is similar yet different than the last. And a glance back down the trail will present a much different perspective than was observed, just moments earlier, while traveling through that section.

It would be a beautiful experience even if the canyon was dry. It is not. The Wenaha River has characteristics that are just as diverse and changing as the landscape it travels through. The river has, over the eons, shaped the landscape and conversely, the landscape now imparts its character onto the river. The result is an ever changing combination of pools and rapids, bends and straight stretches, broad slow moving waters with islands and narrow fast-water gorges. The river is a stark contrast with the landscape. This effect is mellowed by the riparian vegetation which bands both sides of the river and seems to complete the picture by giving reason and solace to the powers of the river.

The seasons of the year impart distinct and vivid changes in the appearance of the Wenaha country. Winters are relatively mild in the canyon, considering its Inland Northwest location. Migratory big game winter in the lower portion of the river and can be seen grazing native bunch grasses on slopes that face the winter sun. Spring arrives early in the Grande Ronde and lower Wenaha drainages. The open slopes rapidly turn from winter brown to lush green as soon as snows melt and spring rains arrive. Shortly after the arrival of the new year's grasses, the deciduous vegetation along the river and tributaries, take on the faintest shades of green and mild

yellows as the buds swell and new leaves emerge. The resulting mixture of greens are a pleasant change from the stark contrast of winters brown grasses and dark green coniferous forests.

Summers can be harsh in the canyon country of southeast Washington and northeast Oregon. Just to the east, Hells Canyon earned its name due to the oven-effect of the hot summer sun radiating off the canyon walls and being concentrated and held in by the topography. The Wenaha is only a smaller version. The consequences are that the lush spring grasses soon begin turning color to darker green with purple hues and eventually to cured browns. Water becomes a precious commodity at this time of the year. The riparian vegetation escapes much of summer's curing effects by being sub-irrigated by the streams and the water table that maintains stream flows, though diminished, during the dry hot summers. The streams and springs at this time of year become oases for human and animal alike.

Shorter days, cooler nights and the promise of rains mark the coming of the fall season. The most spectacular change that takes place are the fall colors of the deciduous trees and shrubs. The first fall colors appear in the clumps of ninebark which turn to a bright red. These shrub patches are most obvious when they occur in the open bunch grass slopes and the draws which dissect the canyon wall. Soon to follow are the aspen groves which are not all that common in the northern Blue Mountains, but make their presence well known at this time of year with the yellow-gold for which they are so famous. As if to make up for the lack of aspens, or perhaps to offer strong competition, the Western Larch also turn to a yellow-gold. This deciduous conifer is a significant stand component on the plateaus on either side of the Wenaha River. There truly are four distinct seasons in the Wenaha country, and each of these seasons reveal an explicit image to the visitor and bear special meaning in the life cycles of the flora and fauna.

Finding

The Wenaha River is recognized nationally for its scenic qualities. The majority of the Wild and Scenic River mileage was designated as Wilderness in 1978 by the Endangered American Wilderness Act. Very few Wild and Scenic Rivers offer the undeveloped visual experience that is available on the Wenaha River. Only one public road approaches the river and makes a bridge crossing at the mouth. The mosaic of vegetation, the seasonal color variation, the abundant variety of wildlife to view, the stark ruggedness of the landscape all contribute to an exceptional visual experience.

The findings of this resource assessment agree with the Congressional Record that scenery in the Wenaha River Canyon is an outstandingly remarkable value.

RECREATIONAL

Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Rating

Recreational opportunities are, or have the potential to be, unique enough ~~ attract visitors from outside of the geographic region. Visitors would be "willing to travel long distances to use the river resources for recreational purposes. River-related opportunities could include but not be limited to, sightseeing, wildlife observation, photography, hiking, fishing, hunting, and boating.

Interpretive opportunities may be exceptional and attract or have the potential to attract visitors from outside the geographic region.

The river may provide or have the potential to provide settings for national or regional usage or competitive events.

Evaluation of the Present Situation

The Wenaha River, with the exception of the town of Troy, Oregon, is an undeveloped river drainage. It follows then that the recreational opportunities are also of an undeveloped nature. Trail No. 3106 has been closed to the use of motorized vehicles (except motorized access as directed by the right-a-way agreements) from the trail head at the town of Troy to the Wilderness boundary. All motorized or mechanized equipment and vehicles are prohibited by law within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness. Recreational activities are centered around experiencing the scenic beauty and solitude available in the river canyon and pursuing the abundant fishery and wildlife resources.

The majority of recreational use takes place in conjunction with the big game hunting seasons and fishing in the Wenaha River. It is not appropriate to separate these specific activities from the setting within which they occur. Hunting and fishing would still be sought in this area even if it were developed with roads and campgrounds. However, visitors seek out this area specifically to enjoy their sport in a setting that requires primitive methods of travel and with the expectation of getting away from the more crowded areas accessible by vehicle. Hunting and fishing trips into the Wenaha country have become a tradition that in many families goes back several generations.

The Wenaha River canyon receives approximately 6,000 visitor days of use each year. Visitors travel to the area from throughout the Pacific Northwest and many foreign visitors have taken the opportunity to experience the recreational qualities of the river. Activities that attract visitors in addition to hunting and fishing include; camping, horseback riding, traveling with pack strings, sightseeing, pursuit of solitude, photography, nature study, swimming and wildlife viewing.

Finding

The Wenaha River is recognized nationally for its recreational opportunities. The area has become a traditional destination for many generations of vacationers, many of which center their trip around the excellent hunting and fishing opportunities. As stated in the Congressional Conference Report, upon designating the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness,

"Both the House and Senate recognize and approve of the long established use of much of the Wenaha-Tucannon area for hunting. Although wilderness designation does not affect hunting activity per se, the conferees want to emphasize the importance of this use in the Wenaha-Tucannon area and make clear that congressional intent is that Forest Service policies, when at all possible, should make allowance for and not conflict with this activity."

The findings of this resource assessment agree with the Congressional Record that recreation in the Wenaha River canyon is an outstandingly remarkable value.

GEOLOGIC

Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Rating

The river or the area within the river corridor contains an example(s) of a geologic feature, process, or phenomena that is rare, unusual, one-of-a-kind, or unique to the geographic region. The feature(s) may be in an unusually active stage of development, represent a "textbook" example and/or represent a unique or rare combination of geologic features (erosional, volcanic, glacial, and other geologic structures).

Evaluation of the Present Situation

The Wenaha River is located in a deeply eroded canyon on the south flank of the Blue Mountain Uplift. The river has carved a flat-bottom canyon with steep slopes, cliffs and associated side drainages into the Miocene Columbia River Basalt. The cliff-forming basalt forms a bold, dark gray to black outcrop interlayered with red scoria, minor amounts of andesite, and thin interbeds of clay, silt and sandstone known as the Latah Formation.

Sedimentary interbeds are exposed along the river trail and locally display minor calcite and/or malachite-filled fractures. Occasionally, these occurrences are accompanied by minor amounts of chalcedonic quartz or agate.

Also found along the -river trail just upstream from Fairview Creek is a porphyritic basalt containing a white to pale yellow gemstone variety of plagioclase commonly known as "sunstone". The sunstone is Oregon's state gemstone.

The course of the Wenaha River follows the roughly east-west troughline of the Grouse Flat Syncline dropping from an elevation of 2500 feet near the confluence of the North and South Forks to 1700 feet where it empties into the Grande Ronde River near Troy, Oregon. The rugged , topographic relief in the canyon is near 2000 feet in places and is the central part of the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness.

Other than the local occurrences of semi-precious stones, there is no history of mining, prospecting or mineralization within the Wild and Scenic River corridor.

Finding

The geology of the Wenaha River is typical of many other Columbia River Basalt drainages. Although the geology of the river canyon contributes to the scenic and recreational qualities, the geologic features found here are not unique to the region.

The findings of this resource assessment are that geology is not an outstandingly remarkable value. It is an important resource value with many features that should be interpreted for the public. This finding concurs with the Congressional Record.

FISHERIES

Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Rating

Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of either fish populations, habitat, or Native American cultural use - or a combination of these river-related conditions. Considerations shall be given for potential as well as existing values.

Populations. The river is internationally, nationally or regionally an important producer of resident and/or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance is the presence of wild stocks and/or federal or state listed threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. Diversity of species is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of outstandingly remarkable.

Habitat. The river provides or has the potential to provide exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region. Of particular significance is habitat for wild stocks and/or federal or state listed or candidate threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. Diversity of habitats is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of outstandingly remarkable.

Evaluation of the Present Situation

Populations

The Wenaha River supports fish populations which are of regional and national importance. Spring chinook, summer steelhead and bull trout presently utilize the system for spawning and rearing and, historically, Coho and an early fall chinook (which spawned from mid-September to late October) also were present.

Pre-historic and early historic population sizes are unknown and no attempts are presently being made to enumerate steelhead and bull trout populations due to the difficulty in observing them during the high water period when they are spawning. Spring chinook, spawning ground surveys

were initiated on the South Fork (the primary spawning area) in 1948, but the time of the surveys was not standardized until 1964. The largest recorded count in the South Fork occurred on August 28, 1957 (one week earlier than what is now considered to be peak spawning so it is probably low) when 293 redds were observed. This would equate to approximately 744 adults. The present runs suffer from the same malaise that affects all Snake River spring chinook populations and since 1985 have ranged from a high of 235 in 1988 to a low of 22 in 1989. For the entire Wenaha, the estimate would range from 503 in 1988 to 46 in 1989.

A hatchery program located on the Wenaha River in 1903 provides some indications of early fall chinook and Coho population sizes. Hatchery personnel spawned 25 chinook females and 483 Coho females. A conservative estimate would be 50 early fall chinook and 966 Coho entering the system in 1903.

This stream is presently classified as Wild according to Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife Wild Fish Policy. This means that the fish presently in the system are of native Wenaha origin. The purpose of the Wild Fish Policy is to protect these unique stocks of spring chinook and summer steelhead.

Habitat

The Wenaha River is located within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness except for the lower five miles. The river system is thus preserved in a near pristine condition which is unique in the Grande Ronde subbasin. The Nez Perce Indians lived in the river valley year round prior to the Treaty of 1863 and the scant signs of their habitation are the major indications of human occupation and activity. Three miles of the lower river are located within the Umatilla National Forest and the remaining two miles run through private land with the community of Troy, Oregon located at the Grande Ronde confluence.

Finding

The Wenaha River contains native chinook which were recently listed as threatened under the Threatened and Endangered Species Act. The Wenaha River also contains steelhead. Both the chinook and steelhead are classified as a Wild runs by ODF&W. Bull trout populations are considered to be one of the healthiest in the Grande Ronde subbasin.

No sport or Indian harvest is presently occurring in the river system but the Nez Perce Tribe preserved its' fishing rights when this territory was ceded to the United States Government in 1863. A sport catch and release steelhead fishery is presently allowed from Crooked Creek to the mouth of the river.

The findings of this resource assessment are that both fisheries populations and habitat are outstandingly remarkable values. This assessment concurs with the testimony in the Congressional Record.

WILDLIFE

Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Rating

Wildlife values may be judged on the relative merits of either wildlife populations, habitat, or Native American cultural use - or a combination of these conditions.

Populations. The river or area within the river corridor contains nationally or regionally important populations of indigenous wildlife species. Of particular significance are species considered to be unique or populations of federal or state listed or candidate threatened, endangered and sensitive species. Diversity of species is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of outstandingly remarkable.

Habitat. The river or area within the river corridor provides exceptionally high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, or may provide unique habitat or a critical link in habitat conditions for federal or state listed and candidate threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. Contiguous habitat conditions are such that the biological needs of the species are met. Diversity of habitats is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of outstandingly remarkable.

Evaluation of the Present Situation

Populations

Many species of wildlife typical and unique to the region inhabit the area including Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and elk, both mule deer and whitetail deer, cougar, black bear, bobcat, river otter, pine marten, beaver, blue and ruffed grouse, chukar, valley and mountain quail, Lewis woodpecker, bald eagle, golden eagle, and other small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. This area of Northeast Oregon is well known for its variety and abundance of wildlife populations.

There is one Federally listed Threatened and Endangered wildlife species known to occur within the river area. The threatened Bald Eagle occurs as a winter migrant in small numbers (8-10) utilizing suitable large snags as perch trees. While there are no confirmed sightings, there is a possibility that the endangered peregrine falcon occurs within this area.

Big game hunting within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness is the attraction which brings the most visitors to the area. The large Rocky Mountain Elk herd of the northern Blue Mountains has been popular with hunters for generations. The Wenaha River drainage is a remote, undeveloped and non-motorized haven for the elk hunter who wished to pursue this regal animal in a natural setting. Nearly eighty percent of the total visitor use of the Wenaha watershed is associated with the big-game hunting seasons.

Habitat

Wildlife habitat within the Wenaha River drainage is varied, ranging from high elevation sub-alpine meadows and forests to mid elevation ponderosa pine forests and ultimately to the lower elevation native grasslands. The wildlife that inhabit and frequent the designated portion of the river are influenced by these habitat types even though the sub-alpine zone is not within the designated river corridor. One of the greatest attributes of the Wenaha canyon is the diversity and mix of habitats. Bunch grass and talus slopes are interspersed with timbered slopes that have deeper soils and more moderate micro-climates. The results are an almost perfect ratio of cover and forage areas for large mammals. This mix also provides the habitat needs for small animals, reptiles and birds of prey.

Finding

The wildlife habitat and population diversity of the Wenaha River canyon offers unparalleled opportunities for sport and viewing. It was one of the contributing factors to the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness designation.

The findings of this resource assessment agree with the Congressional Record that both wildlife populations and habitat are outstandingly remarkable values.

HISTORIC AND PREHISTORIC

Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Rating (Historic)

The river or area within the river corridor contains a site(s) or feature(s) associated with a significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare, unusual or one-of-a-kind in the region. A historic site(s) and/or feature(s) in most cases is 50 years old or older. Of particular significance are sites or features listed in, or are eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places.

Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Rating (Prehistoric)

The river or area within the river corridor contains a site(s) where there is evidence of occupation or use by native Americans. Sites must be rare, one-of-a-kind, have unusual characteristics or exceptional human interest value(s). Sites may have national or regional importance for interpreting prehistory; may be rare and represent an area where a-culture or cultural period was first identified and described; may have been used concurrently by two or more cultural groups; or may have been used by cultural groups for rare or sacred purposes. Of particular significance are sites or features listed or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Evaluation of the Present Situation

The Wenaha River canyon is rich with history. At one time a portion of what is now the Umatilla National Forest was the Wenaha Forest Reserve. During the early custodial era of the

Forest Service there was a Ranger Station situated on the lower portion of the river a few miles above the town of Troy. Very little evidence remains at the site where the once busy Ranger Station was located. Other indicators of historic human presence are few and have become subordinate to the landscape.

Just as historic evidence of human presence and occupation has faded with the passage of time, the evidence of prehistoric human occupation of the Wenaha River canyon has become difficult to locate and identify. Most of the designated river segment has not been inventoried for the artifacts that are the result of thousands of years of occupation by the Wenaha Band of the Nez Perce Tribe. Minor clues to the presence of the Nez Perce people are common knowledge of many visitors and land managers. Significant sites have not been discovered and inventoried, or their presence has not been disclosed for fear of disturbance.

Finding

Very little of the Wenaha River corridor has been inventoried for the presence of archaeological resources. No known sites exist which are now eligible to be named to the National Register of Historic Places. Future inventories may locate prehistoric sites that would be important and significant enough to make cultural resources an outstandingly remarkable value of the Wenaha River. At this time, that is not the case. Existing laws and regulations are adequate to protect any important sites that may be located.

The findings of this resource assessment are that historic and prehistoric values of the Wenaha River are not unique and rare as described in the criteria for this value category. Therefore, this finding agrees with the Congressional Record in that historic and prehistoric resources are not identified as an outstandingly remarkable value.

TRADITIONAL USE, CULTURAL VALUES

Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Rating

The river or area within the river corridor contains regionally unique location(s) of importance to Indian tribes (religious activities, fishing, hunting, and gathering). Locations may have unusual characteristics or exceptional cultural value being integral to continued pursuit of such activities. Locations may have been associated with treaty rights on ceded lands or activities unprotected by treaty on ceded lands or in traditional territories outside ceded lands.

Evaluation of the Present Situation

The entire Wenaha River drainage is within 1855 reservation lands that were ceded as a result of the 1863 Treaty between the U.S. Government and the Nez Perce Indian Tribe. Archaeological evidence and historic records testify to the fact that the Nez Perce Indians have used the Wenaha River area for many thousands of years. As was discussed in the Prehistoric Cultural Resource

section of this assessment, there are sites that attest to this fact. In more recent times, use by American Indians of the Wenaha River area has diminished to a few visits each year.

Finding

The Wenaha River drainage is within ceded reservation lands of the Nez Perce Indians and is visited by members of this tribe. Although no regionally unique locations of importance have been reported by the tribes that would qualify this value as outstandingly remarkable, it is recognized that all significant drainages in northeastern Oregon have special cultural value to the Nez Perce Tribe.

The findings of this resource assessment are that traditional use and cultural values are important in the Wenaha River corridor, however, these values were not found to be outstandingly remarkable as they are fairly typical of other rivers in the region.

OTHER SIMILAR VALUES

Additional river-related values were considered during the assessment process, including but not limited to hydrologic, botanic, and ecologic resources. Information on these "other similar values" was considered but did not warrant the need to fully develop separate sections on additional values. Hydrologic, botanic, and ecologic values are included in the discussions of the major value areas (See preceding sections, specifically scenery, fisheries, and wildlife values).

Appendix D. Capacity Analysis

A visitor capacity analysis was prepared for the Wenaha WSR corridor in 2013. The recommendations from this document were used to prepare the desired condition and standards and guidelines for the Recreation ORV. The entire document can be obtained from the Umatilla National Forest. Relevant sections include the following:

Use Trends

Assessment of existing use on the river is based largely upon long-time resource observation and professional judgment in conjunction with more recent larger scale trend data. Based upon past use and recent observations in the field, use within the WSR corridor is estimated at 5,000-5,500 recreation visitor days (RVDs). Maximum people at one time (PAOT) is estimated at 250. The largest amount of use occurs during the fall hunting seasons.

Over the last twenty years visitor use levels within the WSR corridor appear to have fluctuated around the 5,000-7,000 RVD mark. The more recent observed declines in use coincide with changes in hunting opportunities.

A campsite inventory was conducted on the entire 22 mile WSR corridor during the early summer of 2011. At this time 131 campsites were identified and inventoried. A few were in the Recreation river segment, about 35 in the Scenic river segment and approximately 90 in the Wild river segment. Data was gathered on the location, size and condition of each campsite. A campsite condition rating system was developed using multiple criteria and each site was rated either “low”, “moderate” or “high” impact based upon the criteria. 128 campsites were rated as low impact, 3 were rated as moderate and 0 were rated as high impact.

When considered individually, campsites with a condition rating of low or moderate impact generally meet the desired condition for all ORVs. None of the 131 campsites inventoried had a high impact rating in the 2011 inventory.

During peak visitation it is estimated that 62 user groups of various sizes comprising up to 250 people would be expected to be staying within or travelling through the river corridor. Visitor use is well distributed along the length of the 22 mile river corridor. Most visitors travel a relatively small distance (5-7 miles) from one of five trailheads to reach their campsites or they pass through the river corridor into other parts of the wilderness. Visitors could expect to encounter 3-6 groups along the trails within the river corridor and several occupied camps. Those staying at semi-primitive camps located along trails could expect to encounter groups passing by their sites and expect to see others camped nearby, especially if occupying one of the hunting camps located at a confluence of the river with a creek.

During peak visitation (about 10 days per year) visitors can expect to see more people. Some may experience a sense of crowding at certain locations and their sense of solitude may be

diminished. However, while reduced, most visitors' expectations for solitude during summer holiday weekends and fall big game hunting seasons would still likely be met.

Wenaha WSR Visitor Use Capacity – Summary of Recommendations

Based upon the analysis of current conditions, the following is the recommended ranges of visitor capacity for the Wenaha River. These are the prescribed number of appropriate visitor opportunities that will be accommodated within the Wenaha River WSR corridor that can be sustained without adverse impacts on the outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs), free-flowing character of the river area, water quality, quality of the recreation experience and public health and safety.

1. **Trailhead Parking Capacity on NFS Lands:** 50 vehicles/220 PAOT (including vehicles with trailers) parked at the five trailheads that provide primary access to the WSR corridor: Wenaha River, HooDoo, Cross Canyon, Elk Flat and Grizzly Bear Trailheads. Does not include and public and private parking in the Town of Troy and on adjacent state lands.
2. **Semi-Primitive Campsites:** 76-85 primitive campsites located within the Wild, Scenic and Recreation River segments that meet a condition rating of “Low Impact or “Moderate Impact” as defined in the 2011 Campsite Inventory for the Wenaha WSR. Does not include private camping in Troy or car camping on state lands adjacent to Troy. Larger Hunting Camps; 18-22 (400-800 ft²): Smaller campsites; 5-65 (up to 400Ft².)
3. **Maximum Group Size:** 12 people and/or 18 head of stock within the Wild River Segment.

Table D1. Summary of Recommended Visitor Use Capacity*

Visitor Capacity Indicator	Standard	Threshold	Comments
Trailhead Parking	50 vehicles/220 PAOT	Parking capacity is not exceeded more than 10 days/year.	Represents the parking available on NFS lands.
Total Semi-Primitive Campsites	76-85	No more than 85 semi-primitive campsites	Located throughout the River corridor. Meets low-moderate impact condition per 2011 inventory protocol.
Larger Hunting Camps	18-22	No more than 22 large hunting camps	400-800 ft ² .
Smaller Camps	55-65	No more than 65 smaller camps	Up to 400Ft ² .
Maximum Group Size	12 people and/or 18 head of stock.	No groups exceeding these limits	Applies to Wild River Segment Only.
Corresponding Maximum Number of Groups	55-65 groups at one time.	No groups exceeding these limits	Estimated encounters; 3-6/day
Corresponding PAOT	275-375 PAOT within the Scenic/Wild segments and a portion of the Recreation segment.	No groups exceeding these limits.	Does not include the Town of Troy located within the Recreation Segment.

*Campsites represent a reasonable range from 81-85, based on existing use and inventory.

Additional thresholds that correspond to visitor behavior and not necessarily visitor numbers should be monitored. If exceeded, managers should focus educational efforts, restoration and outreach to these areas.

Table D2. Indicators and Standards

Indicator	Standard	Threshold	Comments
Destruction of vegetation from user trails along riverbank	Number of new user created trails per mile/season	No new trails	Trails are limited to those existing in 2013.
Illegal shooting of wildlife	Number of poaching incidents reported	None reported	Poaching could affect capacity by causing stricter limitations on visitor use.

Management indicators and thresholds should be monitored yearly to ensure that capacity is not being exceeded and that desired conditions are met. Should monitoring conclude that capacity has exceeded thresholds, management actions may be required. These could include revegetation and restoration of campsites, establishment of a permit and/or quota system, trail rerouting, or other decisions.

Appendix E. Implementation and Monitoring

Adaptive Management

Adaptive management is a key tool to implement the Wenaha WSR Plan. This would include implementation monitoring to review previous decisions and determine in future changes to management actions may be triggered by exceeding a standard that would no longer protect the ORV's, free-flowing condition, or water quality within the river corridor. Sampling methods could change as better science or techniques become available or if the current monitoring strategy was not providing the needed answers.

It is Forest Service policy to manage WSR to protect and enhance the river values for which the river was designated. If monitoring were to find that the current level of management was not protecting or enhancing the ORVs, more restrictive measures could be instituted by the agency. The monitoring tables that follow include some site-specific management actions that may require additional NEPA.

Documentation as to the need for change and the needed action would be collected and if implementation monitoring substantiates that current management practices are not providing the appropriate protection measures, new NEPA may be required to initiate new management practices. If the proposed changes are still within the range of alternatives developed and evaluated, implementation could be simultaneous with a decision if it is more restrictive than the original practice. As a result of new information and monitoring conducted over the life of the CRMP, a new decision could be issued to address resource concerns. The management actions listed in the following monitoring tables are listed in descending order, from least restrictive to most restrictive.

Table D1. Wenaha Wild and Scenic River Monitoring Program

River-Related Value	Key Indicator	Measure	Sampling Procedure and Frequency	Possible Management Actions Considered if Conditions are Not Met
Free-flow	No new dams, diversions, straightening, riprapping or obstructions	No obstruction to free-flow “Free-flowing”, as applied to any river or section of a river, means existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, riprapping, or other modification of the waterway. (Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 1968 (Sec. 15(b)))	Annual observation to ensure no obstructions to free-flow	Water resource projects which would obstruct free-flow would go through a WSR Act, Section 7 analysis (Section 7 analysis is not a “decision document”)
Water Quality	Water quality meets standards in Upper Grande Ronde Subbasin WQMP	Standards are set by Oregon’s DEQ in compliance with the Clean Water Act	Annual grab samples conducted by the Forest Service Grab samples when events are noted Compare monitoring data to the standards and make recommendations to the Line Officer if samples indicate a trend away from current standards.	Identify possible sources of pollutants 1. If non-point sources derived from NFS lands, implement corrective actions to reduce pollutants to levels consistent with water quality standards 2. If pollutant source is on other than NFS lands, work with Oregon’s DEQ to implement corrective actions or develop corrective plans

River-Related Value	Key Indicator	Measure	Sampling Procedure and Frequency	Possible Management Actions Considered if Conditions are Not Met
Water Quality/ Fisheries River Sediment Loads: Streambank Erosion	Human disturbances are small and localized (within the boundaries of dispersed use sites) with no long-term change to channel morphology, sediment regimes, or water quality	<p>The desired condition is an erosion severity index of less than moderate at any site due to human disturbance</p> <p>Actions will be triggered if the severity index moves from less than moderate to moderate or severe</p> <p>The cumulative amount of hardened streamside stabilization over time does not exceed 5% of the total shoreline, for the Wild and Scenic Section.</p>	<p>Perform Hankin & Reeves Level 2 Survey using R6 protocols at representative reaches on the Wenaha River</p> <p>Evaluate erosion site by using cobble embeddedness sampling</p> <p>Visit erosion sites and evaluate the severity at least every 5 years</p>	<p>Inform and educate users to stay on trails and on stable areas of the bank</p> <p>Harden trails and provide access to water at heavily used sites, obliterate and restore unnecessary trails</p> <p>Relocate problematic sections of trail</p> <p>Close areas to foot travel if stabilization measures fail, if hardened streamside stabilization exceeds 5%, or if the amount of stabilization would result in a change in river classification</p>
Water Quality/ Fisheries River Restoration Projects	Past restoration is effective at stabilizing the banks and terraces	<p>The desired condition is that past restoration efforts are functioning</p> <p>Actions will be triggered if past restoration is not stabilizing the banks and reducing sediment input into the river corridor</p>	<p>Use photo points to document past restoration efforts</p> <p>Visit past restoration sites and evaluate their effectiveness and need for maintenance at least every 5 years</p>	<p>Identify source of erosion and fix the source</p> <p>Implement a restoration or maintenance project</p> <p>Close the access point or trail if other measures are not successful</p>

River-Related Value	Key Indicator	Measure	Sampling Procedure and Frequency	Possible Management Actions Considered if Conditions are Not Met
Fisheries Fish Population	Self-sustaining fish populations (steelhead, Chinook, Bull Trout)	Fish populations show a stable or upward trends	Assist ODF&W with periodic fish sampling	If fishing pressure is greater than the ability of the species to self-sustain, work with ODF&W on solutions
Fisheries Fishing Pressure	Level of use that maintains the steelhead, Chinook, and Bull trout fisheries	Angler-days, catch rates, and harvest does not exceed the fish populations ability to be self-sustaining	Creel survey every 10 years	If fishing pressure is greater than the ability of the species to self-sustain, work with ODF&W on solutions
Wildlife	Appropriate level of wood cutting commensurate to standards	Wood cut for personal use is only dead and down for campfires	Monitored during campsite surveys	Visitor education program; fire bans
Scenery/Fish	Number and type of trail uses that do not impact ORVs	Trails are non-motorized and no new social trails have developed	Monitored during campsite surveys	Close/vegetate
Recreation	People at one time/encounters/camp sites that do not impact ORVs	PAOT/Encounters/numbers of campsites meet the desired condition cited in the capacity analysis	Monitoring every 5 years	Permit/quota system Closure/rehab of campsites