

#### IV. FOREST LANDS

Summary: Federal ownership accounts for more than 56 percent of forest lands in Wallowa County. With the large amount of commercial timberland in Federal ownership, management plans and decisions can and do have a direct effect on the local economy. This has been especially true with the planning effort for the Wallowa Valley Planning Unit which implemented an allocation reducing the allowable cut. While appreciable, other than a local sting from a possible decrease in employment, if such a decision was implemented for the remaining planning units in Eastern Oregon or even the immediate economic area of the Blue Mountains; the effect could be staggering and the number of spin off effects, such as: the price of housing materials, might be endless. The planning units are to be managed on a sustained yield, multiple use basis. But, as the complexity of planning for public lands increases, the necessity for emphasis or trade off has clearly been in favor of wildlife habitat. In future planning and management decisions, the Wallowa County Planning Commission would hope that a more regional perspective be used because the resulting economic impact could be more readily understood.

The County witnessed some disparaging actions in the mid-1970's. The Wallowa County Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners were and are concerned about the continued withdrawal of timber land for other uses - specifically the withdrawal to wilderness designation and game emphasis. The two current wilderness areas comprise 15% of the total land area of the County and represent close to 600 million board feet. The inclusion of the Lower Minam and Wenaha area would add an additional 100,000 acres to the total and would represent approximately one billion board feet of timber. It is seriously questioned if this is indeed necessary and in the best interests of the local residents when considering the long range aspect of insect problems, housing costs, and the possibility of other viable management alternatives. By rough figures, it is estimated that one million board feet can mean anywhere from three to sixteen men/women in employment. The difference in employment is due to the amount of diversification of the industry. Simply put, the greater the processing of logs at the local level, the more employment it creates.

The majority of timber lands and a large portion of the grazing land is shown on the Plan as Timber Grazing. This zone is essentially the same as the Exclusive Farm use

designation with single family residences not provided in conjunction with farm or forest uses handled on a case by case basis. One of the primary considerations for allowing single family residences will be compatibility to existing services, in other words, the general economic suitability of the proposal. The Plan/Zone map does not recognize any additional wilderness designation other than the current existing areas. This is overwhelmingly supported by the County's residents.

Forest Land: Much of the area zoned for Timber Commercial is in public ownership - 1,187,809 acres. Due to the large ownerships and the restriction of residential dwellings, a minimum lot size is appropriate for maintaining resource use in the Timber Commercial zone.

The maintenance of custom and culture associated with timber and wood products and production in Wallowa County is necessary to the livelihood and well-being of the citizens.

Besides the contribution to the local economy through timber harvesting; another significant aspect of the National Forest Lands contribution to the local economy is grazing lands. County government feels that maintenance of grazing rights especially in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area is essential for the continued well-being of the cattle ranchers.

Other significant forest uses include water shed, fish, wildlife habitat, recreation and open space.

Goal: To conserve forest lands for forest uses.

Findings: The findings below are the basis of decisions made with respect to the county's timberland resource.

1. Forest land comprise close to 50 percent of all land and contribute significantly to the county's income (Appendix 4-1).
2. Forest lands are used for a variety of purposes, including timber production, grazing, water supplies, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation and other open space uses.
3. The U.S.F.S. controls approximately 50 percent of the county's commercial timberland, and has given approval to a management alternative (Appendix 4-2, 4-3).

4. It is estimated that close to 60 percent of the timber harvested in the county is exported for production.
5. Ninety percent of the county's residents do not favor any additional wilderness designation.
6. Close to 15 percent of the county's residents are directly dependent on timber harvesting for their livelihood.
7. Withdrawal of one million board feet of timber could mean from three to fifteen jobs.
8. Harvesting (or not harvesting) of one million board feet could have the following economic impact:

		<u>\$/MMBF</u>
1	(1) Wages and Salaries	\$81,746
	(2) Contractor Payments (logging, hauling, roads)	81,461
	(3) Purchases of Equipment and Supplies	86,601
	(4) Revenue of railroads	<u>74,921</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$324,729</b>

Boise Cascade figures

9. That it appears entirely possible to increase the allowable cut and maintain a continuous yield.
10. A general policy of the Forest Service is to support the local economy.

Policies: The following statements of policy are related to satisfying the above goal.

1. The use and renewal of timber resources and the timber land base be protected in order to promote the continuation of a sustainable wood products industry by providing economic opportunity relying on self determination and ensuing open market conditions.
2. That inventories be updated as time and information are available.
3. That the forest lands will be considered for multiple forest uses.

4. That conversion of timbered or grazing lands to residential uses will be approved according to the following guidelines:
  - A. Take an exception that is consistent with Statewide Planning Goal II and OAR 660-Division 4.
  - B. The proposed use is compatible with the Oregon Forest Practices Act.
  - C. The proposed use will not interfere seriously with the physical, social, economic and environmental considerations.
  - D. It will not create an economic hardship on the county due to other needed public facilities and services.
5. Confine road development to minimum in number and rights of way width that is needed for forest uses. Revegetate temporary roads to forage producing species or erosion controlling species where necessary.
6. Confine power line and non-road rights of way to minimum width and maintain forage vegetation and small trees where compatible with purpose of approved rights of way.
7. Restock forest land logged by timber harvest according to Oregon Forest Practices Act of 1972 as amended.
8. Development and implementation of timber harvesting logging systems according to Forest Practices Act of 1972 as amended.
9. Maintain optimal sustained yield of timber and grazing resources.
10. Retention of recreational potential and support services where compatible with other uses.
11. Public land shall not be used for further designations as wilderness areas, as expressed by local, public sentiment.
12. Discourage clearing of Class I and Class II lands as defined by the Oregon State Forestry Department for agricultural purposes. Approval would require a production capability to determine best use.
13. Retention of farm practices on Class III lands where compatible with other uses.
14. Encouragement of farm forestry on Class I and Class II forest lands and management plans.

15. Development of mineral resources be allowed where compatible with other uses.
16. Prior to any further withdrawals of public timber lands, an economic impact statement be provided and that all concerned agencies and individuals be allowed an opportunity to respond.
17. Temporary roads be required to be revegetated with forage producing species or erosion controlling species.
18. Lands deforested by fire, insect or disease attack, timber harvest or other causes be reforested according to the Oregon Forest Practices Act of 1972 as amended (Appendix 4-4).
19. All State or Federal policies regarding timber management in Wallowa County shall be coordinated with the County Court to maintain and enhance both short and long-term economic and cultural viability as well as forest health.
20. Opportunities for sustainable wood products industry shall be continued at levels consistent with custom and culture as affected by prevailing market conditions.
21. Wallowa County shall promote and foster forest health practices which will significantly reduce the chance for catastrophic disaster; i.e. fire, insect infestation and disease control on its State, Federal and private lands.

