

**Study Plan
for
Adjustment and Update
of the
Tongass Forest Plan**



APPROVAL PAGE



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

A 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision dated August 5, 2005 (NRDC v. USFS, No. 04-35868) found inadequacies, primarily in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes, for the 1997 Tongass National Forest Plan. For the most part, the identified inadequacies dealt with timber demand, the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) range of alternatives in relation to timber demand, and cumulative effects related to activities on non-National Forest System lands. These Court-related inadequacies need to be analyzed and appropriate actions need to be conducted to adjust the Plan, as appropriate, and develop appropriate NEPA documents.

In addition, ongoing implementation, maintenance, and monitoring of the 1997 Forest Plan has generated a list of potential updates to the Plan that are currently being investigated or are appropriate to be considered in the near future. Most of these were identified during the 5 Year Review of the Forest Plan conducted in 2004 (<http://www.tongass-5yearreview.net/>). Additional items of concern have been added to the Potential Concern List provided on the Forest Plan Maintenance Program Web site (<http://www.tongass-fpmaintprog.net/>). These potential Forest Plan updates and adjustments, together with the related work, cover the following topics: karst standards and guidelines, invasive species emphasis, review of the Conservation Strategy, wildlife Management Indicator Species (MIS), State transportation/utility routes and the TUS Land Use Designation (LUD), young growth emphasis, Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) emphasis, Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) updates, heritage sacred sites standards and guidelines, land adjustments. Other items that should be considered in any update or adjustment include the 1999 Record of Decision (ROD) and the 18 Areas of Special Interest and environmental management system (EMS) implementation.

The 1997 Forest Plan was developed under the 1982 Forest Planning Rule. However, the Forest Service recently issued the 2005 Forest Planning Rule. It is not clear at this time which rule would be most appropriate for the Tongass to follow in making the Court-related and other adjustments and updates to the Forest Plan. Transitioning to the 2005 Forest Planning Rule will occur over the long term. However, the 2005 Planning Rule requires that each Forest establish an EMS that includes the land management planning process. An EMS must be in place before a Forest Plan amendment or revision can take place under the 2005 Planning Rule. The Tongass is in the process of establishing an EMS.

This study plan was developed under the 1982 Planning Rule. Under this Rule, Forest Plans can be adjusted or updated using either amendments or revisions. Amendments can be either significant amendments or non-significant amendments. At this stage, it appears likely that the changes under consideration will require either a significant amendment or a revision; but it is not clear which one. Therefore, the process is currently being referred to as a Forest Plan Adjustment and Update.

A similar document, based on the 2005 Planning Rule, is also being developed. It will address optional approaches that could be followed to bring the Forest Plan adjustment and update process more in line with the 2005 Forest Planning Rule.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study plan are to provide a strategy and guide: 1) for adjusting the Forest Plan, in response to Court-identified inadequacies, and 2) for updating the Forest Plan, in response to the concerns identified during the 5 Year Forest Plan Review and based on the Forest Plan Maintenance Program. It is recognized that the process and schedule for these efforts are dynamic, and there will necessarily be refinements to the process and schedule as this study plan is implemented.

This plan provides guidance under the 1982 Planning Rule. As noted above, the Forest Service is currently transitioning to conduct planning activities under the 2005 Planning Rule. Opportunities for this transitioning, by conducting work items in a manner that satisfies the 2005 Planning Rule, will be sought throughout the process.

1.3 Study Plan Organization

This study plan presents a description of tasks organized according to the five phases identified for the project. An overview of the phases, the public participation and collaboration process, the general and science consistency review processes, and roles and responsibilities are presented in the General Approach section (Section 2); a schedule, which identifies the sequence and interrelationships among the tasks, is also provided (see accompanying Microsoft Project file). An overview schedule section is presented at the end of the task descriptions.

2.0 General Approach

This Study Plan will address work items that fall into five overlapping phases (see below). It will address adjusting the Forest Plan under the 1982 Planning Rule. A second plan will address the tasks that differ under the 2005 Planning Rule, and will assist the Forest Service in understanding the tradeoffs and deciding on an optimal course of action. The work defined by the Study Plans can be categorized into five work phases as follows:

- 1) Initiation and Study Plan
- 2) Integrated Timber Operability and Other Initial Analyses
- 3) Forest Plan Adjustment and Update Package
- 4) Draft Planning Documents
- 5) Final Planning Documents, Decision, and Adjusted/Updated Forest Plan

This Study Plan describes the appropriate steps and the associated skills and timeframes necessary to complete the project. Primary emphasis is on describing Phase 2 and identified tasks in other phases that are deemed ripe for work earlier in the project. The schedule is displayed graphically (see accompanying Microsoft Project file) and relationships between tasks are described and/or diagrammed.

An overview of each of the five phases is provided in Section 2.1. Two additional sections provide overviews of the public participation and collaboration process and the science consistency process that are incorporated throughout the Forest Plan Adjustment and Update process. A final section addresses roles and responsibilities.

2.1 Overview of the Phases

A brief description of each of the five overlapping phases is as follows :

- **Phase 1 – Initiation and Study Plan.** This phase represents initiation of the project and includes the initial planning meetings and general agreement on the approaches. A general planning meeting with Regional office and OGC staff was held in Juneau on September 7, 2005. Planning meetings were also held between Tetra Tech and Forest Service Planning staff on the same day and again on September 26, 2005. Approaches outlined at those meetings are developed and documented in writing in this Study Plan.
- **Phase 2 – Integrated Timber Operability and Other Initial Analyses.** During this phase, various tools will be developed and various analyses will be conducted that will form the basis for future work in other phases. Phase 1 work will help develop the overall list of work items for Phase 2. However, some work has been identified that can be initiated immediately. This includes conducting a Forest-wide integrated timber operability analysis, which will result in development of the Forest-wide Logging System and Transportation Analysis (LSTA). Work on other potential adjustments listed in the Background section above would also be initiated in this phase. For example, the Forest is in the planning stages for Web sites to support the Conservation Strategy Review and the Forest Plan Monitoring Program, and these may be initiated during this phase as well.
- **Phase 3 – Forest Plan Adjustment and Update.** This phase will include the preparation of the package of Forest Plan adjustments into a consolidated proposal, along with preliminary alternatives to the proposal, which will be used to initiate appropriate NEPA and associated public involvement efforts.

- **Phase 4 – Draft Planning Documents.** This phase will cover the finalization of alternatives, the development of a Draft Planning Document, and the public comment period.
- **Phase 5 - Final Planning Documents, Decision, and Adjusted/Updated Forest Plan.** The final phase will cover the analysis of comments on the Draft Planning Document, development of the Final Planning Document, Decision, and the final Adjusted and Updated Forest Plan.

2.2 Public Participation and Collaboration

Public participation and collaboration will be encouraged throughout the Forest Plan Adjustment and Update process. This study plan describes the specific tasks that are designed to: 1) provide for public notification, 2) provide for public participation and collaboration opportunities, and 3) engage the skills and interests of Forest Service staff, other Federal agencies, federally recognized Indian Tribes, State and local governments, and interested communities, organizations, and individuals. The study plan does not present a Communication Plan. Event-specific Communication Plans will be developed for each major announcement or event by the Tongass Public Information staff in conjunction with Forest Planning staff.

A variety of methods will be used for notifying and involving the public. One of the primary methods for communicating with the public will be through a Forest Planning Web site. This site will include a variety of information about the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update process, including descriptions of the planning process, work products and evaluation reports, newsletters, draft and final planning documents, and other key documents. The posting of work products and evaluation reports throughout the process will be accompanied by a request for public comment and a defined public comment period. In this way, public participation will be an ongoing process and public input through comments will influence the process as it evolves. The Web site will also provide electronic methods for providing comments (email or direct on-line entry) and may be used for public open houses or hearings. In addition to the main Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site, additional Web sites will be developed for one or more of the work items (e.g., the Conservation Strategy Review) described in Phase 2. The Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site is planned to be on-line in December 2005.

Other public notification and involvement methods will include news releases, mailings, newsletter development, and public briefings (including briefings of elected officials, agencies, and other groups). Public open houses in the larger Southeast Alaska communities may be held during the planning document review process. If deemed necessary, ANILCA hearings will also be held.

The Forest Service recognizes the Federal Government's trust responsibility for federally recognized Indian Tribes. Therefore, government-to-government consultation will be conducted early and throughout the process, with the District Rangers taking the lead in consulting with, inviting, and providing opportunities for the Tribes to participate in the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update process.

It is important to note that a substantial amount of public participation and input has already been received and has shaped the work items identified in this study plan. Many of the work items (particularly those in Phase 2) were identified based on concerns or information provided by the public and Forest Service staff, relative to past Forest Plan and project-specific public involvement efforts. These were identified and assembled during the Forest Plan 5 Year Review and the Forest Plan Maintenance Program. The overall level and intensity of additional public involvement

activities will be commensurate with the degree of change decided upon in adjusting and updating the Forest Plan.

2.3 General and Science Consistency Review Processes

In order to ensure that quality work products are developed and that the Forest Plan Adjustment and Update is based on the “best available science,” a comprehensive review process will be implemented. This review process will include both general reviews and science consistency reviews, as appropriate.

General reviews will be conducted by a Joint Review Team, which is an internal team of experienced Forest/Regional staff covering a wide range of disciplines. At least two members of this team will conduct a review of all work products, including those developed during Phase 2. Following this review, appropriate products will be submitted for review and comment to the Forest Leadership Team, and an Interagency Overview Team (including the Regional Office Directors).

Appropriate levels of science consistency reviews and other technical reviews will also be incorporated during Phase 2 and at appropriate times in other phases. As noted by Gravenmier and Connelly (2005), science consistency reviews are most useful when applied early enough in the planning process to assist in adjusting the process. Because not all components of the planning process merit the same level of science consistency review, a range of levels and intensities of review will occur. These reviews will involve staff from the Pacific Northwest Research Station, outside sources, Regional staff, and other technical experts with scientific credibility in the particular field of interest. The purpose of these reviews is to ensure that Forest Plan Adjustment and Update decisions are based on “best available science” and that the information developed to support the decisions is technically correct.

2.4 Roles and Responsibilities

The Forest Plan Adjustment and Update process will be managed by a Project Manager, under the direction of the Forest Supervisor. As noted in Section 2.3, a Joint Review Team, the Forest Leadership Team, and an Interagency Overview Team (including the Regional Directors) will provide guidance through the general review process, and a variety of science and technical experts will provide science consistency and other technical reviews. In addition, a number of Subject Matter Experts, including an Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team), will conduct the tasks described in this study plan, under the direction of the Project Manager.

The specific roles and responsibilities for each of these categories will be defined in a Project Initiation Letter, under the signature of the Forest Supervisor, which will be sent out to all involved staff in early December 2005. This letter will also include specific assignments for Subject Matter Experts, the Joint Review Team, technical reviewers, and other key positions.

3.0 Phase 1 – Initiation and Study Plan Development

3.1 Initial Planning/Coordination Meetings

Initial efforts include a planning/coordination meeting with Forest and Regional staff in Juneau on September 7, 2005, and multiple smaller planning meetings prior to and after that date. Initial meetings involve discussions of potential overall approaches (e.g., 1982 vs. 2005 Planning Rule), the additional items to be considered in adjusting and updating the Forest Plan, public involvement, GIS and other data sources, roles and responsibilities, and other items. Initial efforts also involve considerable discussion of the integrated timber operability analysis, because of the urgency associated with its initiation.

3.2 Develop Study Plan Based on 1982 Planning Rule

Prepare a study plan that describes the scope to be conducted under all subsequent phases, as it is currently understood, and in compliance with the 1982 Planning Rule. The study plan will tie each phase and task to a detailed schedule and it will be based on the planning and coordination meetings described above. It will lay out a strategy for satisfying the objectives described earlier: to provide a strategy and guide for satisfying the Court-identified inadequacies and for responding to the other identified potential adjustments under the 1982 Planning Rule.

The study plan will incorporate public involvement efforts and government-to-government consultation to engage and involve the public, agencies, and tribal governments throughout the process. It will also address specific internal communication needs, but will not take the place of Communication Plans that still need to be developed for major events.

It is recognized that the process and schedule for these efforts are dynamic, and there will necessarily be refinements to the process and schedule as it is implemented. This document represents a final study plan and is expected to be dynamic throughout the implementation of the project.

3.3 Develop Study Plan Based on 2005 Planning Rule

A second study plan will be prepared by January 2006 based on the 2005 Planning Rule. This second study plan will inform the Forest Supervisor about the processes likely to be needed to adjust and update the Forest Plan following the new Rule. It will also inform how the planning processes could contribute to transition to the new Rule. It is expected that by March 2006 a decision will be made on which Rule will be the primary guide for adjusting and updating the Forest Plan.

4.0 Phase 2 – Integrated Timber Operability Analysis and Other Initial Analyses

During Phase 2, various analyses will be conducted that will form the basis of future work in other phases. In addition, Phase 2 will result in the development and refinement of updates and other logical adjustments to the 1997 Forest Plan that were identified in the Background section above. Tools will be developed and various analyses will be conducted that will form the basis for future work in other phases. Phase 1 work will help refine the overall list of work items for Phase 2. However, many work items have been identified that can be initiated immediately. This includes conducting a Forest-wide integrated timber operability analysis. Public involvement activities will be initiated during this phase as well.

4.1 Public Involvement and Government-to-Government Consultation

Public involvement and government-to-government activities will initiate in a major way during Phase 2. Communication Plans will be developed for each major announcement or event by Tongass Public Information staff in conjunction with the ID Team. The following public involvement and government-to-government activities are planned:

- Initial Government-to-Government contacts made by District Rangers to explain the efforts and describe the Web site (December 2005)
- Develop Forest Plan Adjustment and Update Web site (December 2005)
- Send out news release and letter to the 2003 Forest Plan SEIS mailing list, announcing the Web site and how it will be used during the process for soliciting public input on various topics. Provide general scheduling for the project and inform people about electronic mailing list (December 2005).
- Periodically announce interim products that are developed during Phase 2, as they are posted on the Web site either individually or in groups.
- Review and consider feedback on the products from the public and refine the products.

4.2 Integrated Timber Operability Analysis

One of the key analysis support items, that needs to be determined early in the process, is the approximate size and distribution of the harvestable supply of timber that is available under the Forest Plan. This item requires the development of an integrated timber operability analysis. One of the key products of this analysis will be a complete and consistent planning-level Logging System and Transportation Analysis (LSTA) with uniform coding for the lands potentially suitable for timber management. In addition, the degree of operability of the LSTA (including level of falldown)^{1/} needs to be assessed because economic conditions and resource standards and guidelines are likely to have a significant effect on LSTA operability over the next 10 years. The results of this work item will be used as the basis for many analyses in other phases of the Forest Plan adjustment and update efforts.

This work item will be conducted under contract with Tetra Tech. However, key Forest Service staff will be involved throughout the process, particularly during procedure development and work product review, and Ranger District staff with local knowledge will participate and be involved during LSTA development.

The integrated timber operability analysis involves four tasks. The first three relate to LSTA development and the fourth task represents the operability analysis, based on the LSTA. The first task is called LSTA Initiation and will include initiation, collection of data, discovery, detailed procedure development, production of draft LSTAs for three or four small pilot areas, Forest Service review and comment on the draft LSTAs for the pilot areas, revision of the detailed procedures, and preparation of a detailed cost estimate for the production of a near-final draft LSTA. This task will provide the detailed procedures, which will have been pilot-tested, so that the next task, LSTA Production, can proceed more smoothly and will require less revision. LSTA Production will result in the development of a near-final draft LSTA for the entire Tongass. The third task, LSTA Finalization and Adjustment, will include the fine-tuning of the Tongass-wide LSTA based on Forest Service review of the draft prepared during LSTA Production. It is anticipated that the draft prepared in the second task will be near-final because of the detailed procedures reviews, the reviews of the pilot areas, and other quality assurance and control procedures conducted during the first task. However, it should be noted that this LSTA will be a “paper plan” and will not be based on any new ground verification. As such, it will be useful for forest planning, but will need to be modified based on ground verification and other site-specific information during project planning. The fourth task, Operability Analysis, will be initiated following completion of the LSTA Production task, but will not be completed until after LSTA Finalization and Adjustment.

4.2.1 LSTA Initiation

This task will include initiation, collection of data, discovery, detailed procedure development, production of draft LSTAs for three or four small pilot areas, Forest Service review and comment on the draft LSTAs for the pilot areas, revision of the detailed procedures, and preparation of a detailed cost estimate for the production of a near-final draft LSTA. These subtasks will overlap to a high degree and are described in the following sections.

^{1/} The term, operability, is defined here in a broad sense to include the partitioning of the suitable land base into various economic increments, as well as the potential falldown (or difference between planned and actual harvest) associated with future implementation.

4.2.1.1 Initiation, Data Collection, and Review

This subtask begins with kickoff meetings and conference calls and the establishment of subcontracts so that a sufficient number of supporting staff will be available to conduct the work within the necessary timeframes. The major effort in this subtask involves coordinating with the appropriate Forest Service Timber and GIS staff to obtain electronic or paper copies (for those areas with no electronic copies) of the best available LSTAs (including project-specific LSTAs) for each area of the Forest. It also includes collection of available metadata associated with these LSTAs; collecting and verifying that Tetra Tech has the latest GIS resource coverages for roads, managed stands, existing vegetation, streams, soils, karst, and other resources that will be required for LSTA updating and development; the development of the suitable forestland coverage and visual coverages, based on these layers; and collection of available roads analyses, access travel management plans, and relevant NEPA documents that Tetra Tech does not already have, so that these can be appropriately considered during LSTA development.

This subtask also includes the important step of reviewing the existing LSTAs to determine: how they are coded, how consistent they are with the current Forest Plan, how complete they are, and how much adjustment they will require due to recent harvest and road construction. During this step, three or four small pilot areas will be selected for updating.

4.2.1.2 Detailed Procedure Development

This step will include preparation of detailed procedures (including guidelines and “rules of thumb”) for updating or developing LSTAs across the Forest with uniform coding. Consideration will be given to the size of the editing effort that would be required for various procedural options, including the updating of LSTA polygon and road coding. Coding will be consistent with operability classifications and will incorporate some level of risk assessment so that operability (including falldown) can be assessed. This step will be important because many areas will be worked on at the same time during the production task, and consistency is critical. A procedure development workshop with Tetra Tech team and Forest Service staff was conducted on November 8-10, 2005, to discuss the procedures first. Then this draft document was prepared and is being submitted for Forest Service review/comment. Revision will occur prior to the development of the LSTAs for the small pilot areas. Final revision will occur as a result of experience gained on the pilot areas and based on Forest Service input on the pilot areas. One of the purposes of the pilot studies will be to test the practicality of the draft procedures.

4.2.1.3 LSTA Production for Small Pilot Areas

This step will include the production of draft LSTAs for three or four small pilot areas, following the procedures developed in the previous step. One of these pilot areas will be selected from within the portion of the former Ketchikan Area where Tetra Tech developed a uniform Area-wide LSTA in 1994-95, but which has not been recently updated. This area may also represent one of the areas where existing road locations have been updated with GPS, so that the effects of adjusting road locations on the effort associated with LSTA editing can be assessed. In addition, a pilot area may be selected from areas with no previous LSTA, areas in the northern half of the Forest, and/or areas with more recent LSTAs. When these draft LSTAs are developed, the Forest Service will review them at the Tetra Tech office; this review meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 8, 2005. Based on this review meeting, the detailed procedures for LSTA development will be finalized. A detailed cost estimate will be developed for LSTA production, based on the pilot studies and the revised procedures. The pilot area LSTAs will be revised to reflect Forest Service comments during the LSTA production phase along with the larger analysis area they are included within.

4.2.2 LSTA Production

This task is the production phase for the remaining LSTAs. Draft LSTAs will be prepared according to the finalized procedures developed in the latter part of LSTA initiation. Therefore, the draft LSTAs produced will already address most Forest Service comments that would have been generated in the absence of detailed procedures and pilot LSTA reviews.

The Tetra Tech team includes a variety of logging engineers, foresters, and other specialists with extensive experience on the Tongass, particularly in certain project areas or ranger districts of the Forest. Also, the level of effort required to develop the Forest-wide LSTA varies substantially among areas, depending on the quality of the existing LSTAs. In order to assign the work in a manner that will take full advantage of the experience and capabilities on the team, the first subtask in the LSTA production task is the review, scheduling, and assignment of analysis areas. This subtask may involve some level of GIS processing and updating of existing LSTAs relative to the current Forest Plan, prior to detailed review by the final analysts. The project areas will be divided into logical LSTA analysis areas, primarily based upon roadsheds, to allow for a clean breakout of the work to the engineering staff. The details of this subtask will be developed during the pilot area LSTA development.

At the same time, a training program will be conducted for all interpreters who work on the project to review the procedures and the Forest Plan so that consistency can be achieved. This training is tentatively scheduled for December 14 - 15, 2005.

The staff selected to work on the LSTA will be those contractor staff with the most Tongass National Forest experience available. To the extent possible, staff will be assigned to work on portions of the Tongass where they have the most experience.

In addition, to the extent that the schedule allows, input from appropriate Forest Service staff relative to unique problems and decisions that need to be made will be sought during this production phase. The Forest Service will provide Tetra Tech a list of key ranger district contacts for each LSTA area so there can be a direct link between the analysts conducting the work and the ranger district staff with local knowledge of each area.

As a result of the up-front efforts to refine procedures, develop and review the pilot areas, use of experienced staff, and QA/QC efforts during the process, the products of LSTA Production will be a near-final LSTA.

4.2.3 LSTA Finalization and Adjustment

LSTA Finalization and Adjustment will include the final review and revision of the LSTAs. It is anticipated that the extent of revisions required in this task will be minimal, because of the up-front review process conducted during the LSTA Initiation task. As in the case of the reviews of the draft pilot area LSTAs, the reviews of the near-final LSTA will take place during a meeting or meetings at the Tetra Tech office. These will be scheduled during the review periods identified in the schedule. Final revisions will be made following the meeting(s).

In addition, there is a potential for needing to adjust the LSTA to cover new areas that are currently inside Non-Development LUDs, in order to fully assess all alternatives. This could occur as a result of adjustments to Small OGR boundaries in Phase 2 of the Forest Plan Adjustment and Update process, or as a result of an alternative being developed that adjusts other LUD boundaries. If large areas of new LSTAs are required, the LSTA work conducted in the 1980s in preparation for the Forest Plan Revision will be obtained and considered. This early work covered all forested lands.

4.2.4 Operability Analysis

The development of a preliminary LSTA is an office exercise that uses the best information available in GIS, topographic mapping, aerial photography, and other sources, to develop the most economically efficient system of roads and settings that is consistent with the Forest Plan. However, there are a large number of factors that result in less suitable land being economically operable and less suitable land actually being available for harvest than is planned.

During LSTA development, a variety of risk flags and other codes will be attached to the LSTA information so that there is an improved basis for determining operability and estimating falldown. In addition, there are other factors that can be more easily applied on a landscape scale that result in refining the definition of economically marginal settings (during the current planning cycle), falldown due to cumulative effects (e.g., goshawk and marten standards and guidelines, cumulative visual effects), and similar factors that will affect the amount of suitable forestland that is available during the planning cycle.

This task will involve an analysis of the results of the LSTA and its associated risk and economic factors, along with other Forest Plan factors, to produce an estimate of the forest land that is actually available for timber management during the planning cycle. This process will begin when the LSTA Production Phase is completed. Experience on previous timber sale projects and Forest Service expert opinion will be used to refine the analysis. Detailed procedures for this task will be developed during the LSTA Initiation and Production tasks.

4.3 Timber Demand Analysis

4.3.1 Background

Two of the three inadequacies identified by the 9th Circuit Court were related to timber demand. One dealt with the timber demand estimates that were used in the 1997 Forest Plan development and one dealt with the range of alternatives that was developed in response to the demand estimates. Therefore, this task will evaluate these inadequacies and develop updated timber demand estimates.

4.3.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

The Pacific Northwest Research Station is currently developing new estimates of timber demand from the Tongass for both annual demand and planning cycle demand. The first step in this process is the evaluation of the previous analyses. The second step is the development of updated timber demand estimates.

Both of these steps will receive science consistency reviews. The estimates and the process for their development will be peer reviewed by a scientist not involved in the process to ensure that they are based on the best available science.

As soon as the numbers are finalized, they will be used to begin the process of identifying alternatives for consideration; therefore, they are needed early in the process. In addition, when the integrated timber operability analysis is completed, its results will be used in conjunction with the demand numbers to test the alternatives, if necessary, in order to more closely match timber demand and supply.

When the results of the timber demand analysis are finalized, they will be made available for public review and will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.3.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

Timber demand analyses will inform and test the preliminary and final alternatives in Phases 3 and 4. In addition, the ID Team will consider whether additional updates or adjustments to the Forest Plan are indicated based on these analyses.

4.4 Wildlife Management Indicator Species (MIS)

4.4.1 Background

The Forest Plan identifies 13 Wildlife MIS to represent other wildlife in a variety of habitats across the Forest, as required by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA). The Forest Plan also identifies monitoring strategies (also required by NFMA) for each of these species to track population trends and other key information for future Forest Planning needs. NFMA also indicates the Forest should use annual population information generated by a variety of sources, including that generated by other State and federal agencies. There is a concern that the annual data gathered from the various sources may not be of a high enough statistical rigor to be useful. In view of the enormous area of the Tongass National Forest and island biogeographical effects, it is highly unlikely that an intensified monitoring effort would produce statistically defensible estimates of population levels or trends. Another concern is that there may be insufficient funds available to monitor 13 species, especially if the protocols and sampling effort are intensified in an attempt to improve statistical rigor. Moreover, only a subset of the 13 species has potential to inform management about the efficacy of the conservation strategy in meeting wildlife objectives.

4.4.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

The Forest Service has developed an internal preliminary draft report that compiles and evaluates the results of those monitoring strategies. This report needs to be finalized and the assessment, with recommendations, needs to be reviewed and assessed by the Interagency Monitoring and Evaluation Group (IMEG) and by scientists from the Pacific Northwest Research Station.

This task will involve the completion of the MIS assessment, including the reviews, and the presentation of the results to the group conducting the Conservation Strategy Review (see below), who will consider them in their recommendations. It is also possible that other recommendations for Forest Plan updating could come directly from the MIS assessment. The MIS assessment will be made available for public review at the appropriate time in the process and will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.4.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

Based on the MIS assessment, wildlife staff will consider the following questions relative to the Forest Plan:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the MIS monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest

Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.5 Conservation Strategy Review

4.5.1 Background

A centerpiece of the Forest Plan is the old-growth conservation strategy, which is designed to assure sustainability for wildlife and other resources and values, while allowing sustainable development on a relatively small portion of the Tongass to support communities in Southeast Alaska. The 1997 Forest Plan FEIS and ROD require that the conservation strategy included in the plan be reviewed after 5 years, to see if it is having the intended effect. This review is to involve interagency partners and other members of the scientific community.

4.5.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

A true test of whether the conservation strategy is having the intended effect will not be possible, for two reasons. One reason is that the planned level of forest harvest has not taken place and, thus, the “management experiment” is only partially implemented. The second reason is that 5 years is too brief to produce measurable effects in the biological parameters of interest. In the absence of actual effects to study, we will evaluate the strategy’s basic approach, elements, and assumptions against new scientific information that has emerged since the strategy was developed.

The general approach for this task is to conduct the evaluation as a number of separate studies/evaluations that will be brought together for review and synthesis in an interagency workshop format. The proceedings and recommendations from this workshop will form the basis for identifying additional information needs, adjusting monitoring efforts, and/or adjusting the conservation strategy. This approach is described in more detail in the following paragraphs

Relevant new information includes several Tongass Forest Plan follow-on studies that were designed to meet specific information needs (the journal, *Landscape and Urban Planning*, Volume 72, Issues 1-3, contains the results of these follow-on studies). In addition, a substantial body of research in the conservation biology field has been conducted world-wide since the Forest Plan conservation strategy was developed. A review of this relevant research will be conducted to determine whether there is any new evidence that invalidates or calls into question the fundamental approach, elements, or assumptions upon which the conservation strategy is based. This evaluation will be written into a report and presented at the workshop.

Information provided to workshop participants will include, but not be limited to the following presentations:

- Results of the review of the conservation strategy in light of new scientific information since the strategy was developed
- Results of the Wildlife MIS assessment
- Goshawk status and the application consistency and effectiveness of goshawk standards and guidelines
- Marten status and the application consistency and effectiveness of goshawk standards and guidelines
- Deer, wolves, and subsistence
- Young-growth management

- Small endemic mammals

The 4-5 day technical workshop will include representatives from interagency partners and the Pacific Northwest Research Station. The workshop will be facilitated and the proceedings, conclusions, and recommendations of the workshop will be documented in a draft report. The draft report will be reviewed by workshop attendees, revised as necessary, and posted on the Web site.

Science consistency reviews are incorporated throughout this work item. In addition, the scientists gathered for the workshop will provide some level of science consistency review for the information being presented, including the MIS Assessment, Young-growth Emphasis, and others.

4.5.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

Based on the workshop report, Tongass staff will consider the following questions relative to the Forest Plan:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the MIS monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.6 Small Old-growth Reserve Mapping

4.6.1 Background

The 1997 Forest Plan established a conservation strategy to address wildlife sustainability and viability. The conservation strategy provides habitat to maintain well-distributed, viable populations of old-growth-associated species across the forest. The complete conservation strategy also served as the basis upon which the US Fish & Wildlife Service issued determinations that the Queen Charlotte Goshawk and the Alexander Archipelago Wolf did not warrant listing as threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act.

Descriptions of the conservation strategy and its components can be found in key sections of the Forest Plan, the Final EIS, and its ROD. The conservation strategy includes Large, Medium and Small Old-Growth Reserves (OGRs). The locations for Large and Medium OGRs were finalized in the 1997 ROD, but the locations of Small OGRs were not.

Small OGRs are key components of the conservation strategy. They serve as old growth habitat refugia between Medium and Large OGRs, and assist in providing connectivity across the landscape for old-growth dependent species. Small OGRs vary in size, but are approximately equivalent to 16 percent of a Value Comparison Unit (VCU). Most VCUs are approximations of small watersheds.

Although Small OGRs were mapped as a paper exercise in the 1997 Forest Plan, the Plan and ROD recognized that insufficient information and effort were available to finalize Small OGR locations, and provided specific guidelines in Appendix K for adjusting the locations during NEPA projects such as timber sales. In 1998, the Tongass Plan Implementation Team (TPIT) clarified the

parameters for Small OGRs and described an interagency process, conducted by biologists representing the Forest Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Since 1997, the interagency biologist teams (“interagency teams”) have reviewed approximately 176 Small OGRs as part of 20 individual NEPA reviews. Initially, these were strictly reviews of the OGRs associated with a specific timber sale. More recently, teams have tried to review all OGRs on an island or logical geographic area associated with the NEPA project. This landscape-scale review has proven to be both more efficient and more comprehensive, providing better site-specific recommendations and also helping prepare for future reviews. The current adjustment and updating of the Forest Plan, provides an opportunity to conduct this efficient and comprehensive review for all Small OGRs that still need to be finalized.

4.6.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

The first step in addressing this issue is to identify and assign at least two interagency biological teams (at least one for the north and one for the south halves of the Forest) to review the VCUs, where Small OGRs have not been adjusted, and to make recommendations. Each team will work with one major island or island group at a time. The ID Team will provide information (e.g., GIS) to the Small OGR teams, as requested.

In making the recommendations, each team will identify the biological strengths and the weaknesses of each existing Small OGR, if and why it needs strengthening, and why any recommended changes will be an improvement. If options exist that are similar in terms of achieving biological objectives, then these will also be identified. In addition, if the recommended modifications would have a major effect on proposed development activities (based on preliminary LSTA work), then alternatives will be developed as well. When alternatives are developed, the interagency biologists will review and report on the degree to which each alternative meets the Appendix K criteria and the conservation strategy. Finally, any aspects of the recommendation that need field verification will be described.

4.6.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

Based on the interagency recommendations, the ID Team will develop a package of Forest Plan updates and alternatives for consideration in the process of updating the Forest Plan. These will likely be only LUD-map related changes. However, consideration will be given to the other three questions identified below:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

For example, there may be some field verification or other additional information needs that will be defined in the Forest Plan updates, and which will allow some refinement of the boundaries in the future. Based on these considerations, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the entire ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the project Web site.

4.7 Deer Model

4.7.1 Background

Concern has been expressed about the accuracy of the current GIS-based deer model used subsequent to the 1997 Forest Plan, and its ability to be consistently applied on a project-level across the Forest. Concern has also been expressed regarding the consistency of the Forest-wide GIS vegetation mapping that is used with the model.

4.7.2 Technical Assessment

The Pacific Northwest Research Station is currently developing a new habitat-based deer model. It is not clear at this time if it can be used at the Forest-wide scale. The model will be evaluated to determine if it can be directly used in the Forest Plan Adjustment/ Update analysis process, or if it should be prescribed for use in project planning as an update to the Forest Plan. The current deer model will also be assessed relative to using it with the new vegetation mapping model (Veg_Mod).

The value of the two deer models for various applications relative to Tongass planning will receive science consistency reviews through consultation with experts at the Pacific Northwest Research Station.

4.7.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

The revised deer model will be reviewed by the ID Team when available, and a determination will be made regarding whether it can be used as a basis for some of the effects analyses and/or whether it should be prescribed for future use on a project level, within the updated Forest Plan. In the development of the package of Forest Plan updates and alternatives, the ID Team will give consideration to the following questions:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on these considerations, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the entire ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the project Web site.

4.8 Vegetation Mapping Model

4.8.1 Background

Timber volume classes (VCs 4, 5, 6, 7 in the GIS TIMTYP layer) have been deemed statistically invalid for determining timber volumes by themselves. The Forest Plan made adjustments in its volume mapping strategy and used timber volume classes in conjunction with soils and other data to define high, medium, and low volume strata (Caouette et al. 2000).

A new predictive vegetation mapping assessment looks at tree density and mean tree diameter as a more comprehensive means of assessing forest structure, ecosystem diversity, or wildlife habitat, than timber volume (Caouette and DeGayner 2005). In addition, this method has developed a vegetation-mapping model or Veg_Mod which can portray broad-scale patterns and in tree sizes and densities using selected attributes from existing GIS layers.

Testing and assessment of the overall vegetative structure mapping is ongoing and nearing completion. Future uses of this tool will be determined and implemented as appropriate.

In addition, there is much interest in the old-growth forests on the Tongass, how they are classified and ultimately how they are managed through time. However, terminology that mixes timber volumes with ecological or wildlife habitat components often leads to misinterpretation or even misuse of Tongass Forest Plan related information. The new vegetation work is expected to help standardize and/or add clarity to the ongoing discussions.

4.8.2 Technical Assessment

Complete the testing and assessment of the Caouette and DeGayner vegetation mapping model relative to the Tongass National Forest. This will include adapting the base layers so it can be applied in wilderness, where base layers are not as refined as in non-wilderness portions of the Tongass. Include in that assessment, options for use relative to wildlife habitat mapping, the use or relationships to wildlife models, and the use for timber volume mapping. Ideally, the new work should be able to link into the FACTS process as well.

Because much of the vegetation mapping work is being published in peer-reviewed journals, it is receiving science consistency reviews through that process. Direct consultation with the technical authors will also take place to ensure appropriate model adjustments are made the model is used appropriately.

4.8.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

The revised vegetation assessment methods will be reviewed by the ID Team when available, and a determination will be made regarding how they can be used as a basis for many of the effects analyses and/or whether they should be prescribed for future use on a project level, within the updated Forest Plan. In the development of the package of Forest Plan updates and alternatives, the ID Team will give consideration to the following questions:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on these considerations, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the entire ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.9 Invasive Species Emphasis

4.9.1 Background

Non-native species, particularly invasive ones, are a growing national concern. These species, which can include fish, wildlife, and plants, have historically not been as large a concern on the Tongass because of the low abundance of non-native species and disturbed habitats relative to other areas nationally. However, the Forest Plan does not specifically address “invasive species” at all. Even though the use of the term “invasive species” is not used, it is clear that the intent of the Forest Plan is to manage for native and desired non-native species. This can be seen in the overall Goals of the Forest Plan, in the Biodiversity portions of the Plan, and in the Forest Health sections

of the Plan. Nevertheless, the Plan needs to be updated to specifically address these species in all appropriate places and in all appropriate ways.

4.9.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

A small group of Forest and Regional experts (including the National Marine Fisheries Service) relative to invasive species (including plants, fish, and wildlife) will be organized. A 2-4-day working session will be convened and the participants will produce general recommendations regarding the standards that should guide the Tongass relative to invasive species.

Science consistency reviews will occur for this work item to verify that recommended standards and guidelines integrate the best available science for the assessment of relative risk of invasion.

4.9.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates:

The working session recommendations will be reviewed by members of the ID Team and appropriate updates to the Forest Plan will be identified. The following questions will be considered in this assessment:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.10 Young-Growth Management

4.10.1 Background

A number of opportunities have been identified relative to silvicultural modifications of young growth, including thinning for commercial and other resource purposes. Young growth also has the potential to begin contributing volume to satisfy timber demand.

4.10.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

Organize a small group of Forest and Regional experts relative to young-growth management and resource effects and hold a 2-4 day working session. Considerations will include wildlife habitat management, scenery management, riparian management, silvicultural, and economic product opportunities. Young growth treatments on both regulated and unregulated lands will be considered. A small report including a set of recommendations will be produced from this working session.

Science consistency reviews for this item will be conducted by Pacific Northwest Research Station scientists. The reviews will address to what extent current science supports the recommendations relative to young-growth management.

4.10.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

Based on the report from the working session, ID Team members will consider the following questions relative to the Forest Plan:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.11 Sensitive Plant Survey Protocols

4.11.1 Background

The Forest Plan and the Tongass Plan Implementation Team (TPIT) clarifications identified protocols for surveying sensitive plants. There is concern that the protocols sometimes result in more effort and the production of more information than is necessary by line officers for informed decision-making and to support planning.

4.11.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

A small group of Forest and Regional botanists will be organized. A 1-2 day working session will be convened and the participants will produce general recommendations regarding Forest Plan adjustments or updates relative to sensitive plant survey protocols.

4.11.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

The working session recommendations will be reviewed by members of the ID Team and appropriate updates to the Forest Plan will be identified. The following questions will be considered in this assessment:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.12 Fish and Riparian Updates

4.12.1 Background

A number of issues have been identified for consideration in the Forest Plan Adjustment and Update process regarding fish and riparian resources and their standards and guidelines. Fish considerations include the standards and guidelines and monitoring related to fish passage and culverts, and the applicability of Essential Fish Habitat consultation and/or assessment to the process. In addition, cutthroat trout are identified in the 1997 Forest Plan FEIS (page 3-52) as an

MIS. However, the Forest Plan failed to identify this species because of an oversight. The Forest has been monitoring cutthroat for the last 5 years along with Dolly Varden char.

Relative to riparian resources, a number of refinements to the riparian standards and guidelines have been suggested. These are related to monitoring of buffer windfirmness, buffers on Class III streams, protection of Class IV streams, riparian thinning, and others.

4.12.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

A small group of Forest and Regional experts relative to fish and riparian resources will be organized. A 2-4-day working session will be convened and the participants will produce general recommendations regarding Forest Plan adjustments or updates relative to fish and riparian resources.

4.12.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

The working session recommendations will be reviewed by members of the ID Team and appropriate updates to the Forest Plan will be identified. The following questions will be considered in this assessment:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.13 State Transportation and Utility Routes and the TUS LUD

4.13.1 Background

The goal of the Forest Plan Transportation and Utility System LUD (TUS) is to provide for, and/or facilitate the development of, existing and future major public Transportation and Utility Systems, including those identified by the State of Alaska and the Alaska Energy Authority. The objective of the TUS LUD prescription includes application to existing major system corridors, as well as, future major corridors. Major systems are defined by the Forest Plan as state and federal highways, railroads, powerlines 66 KV or greater, and pipelines 10 inches or greater in diameter. ANILCA Title XI provides specific requirements for transportation and utility systems within designated conservation system units such as wilderness.

ANILCA, and subsequently the Forest Plan, recognized that the transportation and utility network for Southeast Alaska is largely undeveloped. Both provide for the planning, construction and operation of essential or major transportation and utility systems across nearly all lands on the Tongass, including designated wilderness. However, none of the plans currently include crossing of designated wilderness.

In 1999, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities published the Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan. Additional transportation routes and utility corridors have been

proposed by the Southeast Conference and cities and boroughs. Many of these routes/corridors are not identified in the 1997 Forest Plan Transportation and Utility System (TUS) LUD.

4.13.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

No technical work group will need to be convened specific to this item. However, all state, Southeast Conference, and city and borough proposals relative to transportation and utility corridor routes will be collected and summarized on maps. In addition, Forest Transportation Planners and Forest Planners will be interviewed relative to any related changes to the TUS LUD that are advisable at this time.

4.13.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

Then the following questions will be considered relative to the Forest Plan:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the Interdisciplinary (ID) Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the project Web site.

4.14 Karst standards and guidelines

4.14.1 Background

For the past 12 years the Forest Service has worked to identify, inventory, explore, and manage the extensive karst resources found on the Tongass National Forest. Fueled by the requirements of the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988 and the Tongass' interpretation of that Act, internal regulations, and recommendations of a Karst Expert Panel convened in 1993, a strategy was developed that was intended to protect the karst resources. The Forest gathered ideas, borrowed concepts, and sought help from karst management specialists in the U.S., Tasmania, and British Columbia. These standards were published in the Tongass Land Management Forest Plan in 1997; however, one form or another of these guidelines have been implemented since 1991. Effectiveness monitoring of the implementation of these karst management standards have shown their strengths and weaknesses.

In 2002, the Forest once again convened a panel of karst experts to independently evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of the current karst management standards and guidelines and to analyze the appropriateness of proposed changes to those guidelines. The proposed changes focus on clarification of the karst vulnerability assessment definitions, on the design and effectiveness of non-harvest buffers adjacent to karst features, sinking streams, etc., addressing wind-throw salvage and second-growth timber management, catchment area management, qualifications of inventory and resource specialists, and establishment of long-term monitoring sites.

4.14.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

In this case there is no need for a technical work group assessment, since it has already been conducted.

4.14.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

First, draft materials will be collected from the Forest Geologist and interviews will be conducted with the Forest Geologist and other Forest karst specialist(s) regarding the proposed updates or adjustments to the Forest Plan. Then the following questions will be considered relative to the Forest Plan:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the Interdisciplinary (ID) Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the project Web site.

4.15 OHV Emphasis

4.15.1 Background

The effects of Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) on many resources are becoming more of a concern across the Forest, indicating a need for more specific management strategies. Nationally, OHV use is a major concern, as exhibited by the 2004 Advanced Notice of Rule-Making, which suggests changing areas on NFS lands that are open to cross-country travel to the requirement of staying on roads and trails. The rule suggests that Access/Travel Management plans make the decisions regarding areas that should be open to cross-country travel by OHVs. Concern has been expressed about the fact that OHVs are not specifically addressed in the Forest Plan

The Forest Plan, (page 4-36) provides basic policy and guidance for OHVs. The Plan basically says that the off-road use is available to OHVs throughout the Forest unless site-specific closures are in effect. The Plan indicates that OHV plans and temporary designations should be reviewed periodically, and that other access and travel management plans should be developed as the need arises. There appears to be adequate guidance in the Forest Plan to address resource damage issues by OHV use in the short term, especially using adaptive management approaches. However, and as noted above, OHV use has become a National issue and Agency-wide policy and regulations are under review and are expected to result in changes to those policies and regulations. For example, Agency-wide policy and regulations are likely to propose that all NFS lands be designated closed to OHV use, except in areas designated open. This may be in conflict with current Forest Plan OHV guidance.

4.15.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

Assemble background information that defines the issues related to OHV use on NFS lands, both nationally and on the Tongass (e.g., existing Plan strategy, national OHV policies, and recent Access/Travel Management Plans and issues), into a package. Assemble a small team of Forest managers and recreation specialists knowledgeable about OHV issues and have them review the information package. The team will assemble for 1-2 days and identify needs to coordinate, consolidate, or otherwise promote consistent application of OHV policies across the Forest. It will identify the needs to strengthen OHV policies and make recommendations as applicable. In

addition, it will identify all areas that are/would likely be open to cross-country travel by OHVs, so that effects can be assessed. Results of the working session will be developed into a report.

4.15.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

The working session report will be reviewed by members of the ID Team and appropriate updates to the Forest Plan will be identified. The following questions will be considered in this assessment:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.16 Wilderness Updates

4.16.1 Background

The Wilderness Act and Forest Service Policy restrict commercial enterprises, such as outfitter and guide operations in wilderness except for the minimum necessary for recreation and wilderness purposes. Section 4d (6) of the 1964 Wilderness Act, and 2323.13g of the Forest Service Manual states that Forests should address the need for and role of outfitters in wilderness in the Forest Plan. Tongass Forest Plan guidance indicates that if there is a demonstrated need for the service(s) and they are deemed appropriate for the area proposed, they may be authorized. However, the process for determining a demonstrated need on a Forest-wide basis is not well established and is inconsistent. The Outfitter Guide Administration Guidebook describes the process for assessing commercial needs.

Also, the standards and guidelines for the third of the Tongass that is designated wilderness are very general. The monitoring questions in the plan ask if they are effective and being implemented. The standards and guidelines may be too broad to be applied to these landscapes. Wilderness management has evolved to the point that specific monitoring indicators for both social and resource impacts may be available to implement.

4.16.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

Forest recreation planners will assemble for a 3-4 day working session to review and refine the updated ROS mapping, as described under Recreation and Tourism Updates. Using the Outfitter Guide Administration Guidebook, they will also explore opportunities to consistently apply demonstrated need determinations across the Forest. In addition, this group will make recommendations regarding related updates to the wilderness monitoring strategy, or other Forest Plan sections where updates seem appropriate relative to current recreation use levels or needs. There may also be a need for standards and guidelines updates to match some of the requirements (e.g., fire management in wilderness) with the 10 Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge requirements. A working session report will be developed.

4.16.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

The working session report will be reviewed by members of the ID Team and appropriate updates to the Forest Plan will be identified. The following questions will be considered in this assessment:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.17 Recreation and Tourism Updates

4.17.1 Background

Recreation and tourism continue to grow on the Tongass. The 2003 SEIS identified the fact that these industries now represent 39 percent of the jobs in Southeast Alaska. Such increases in use are resulting in higher recreation uses in localized areas. Such use may not be compatible with the ROS guidelines associated with the LUDs in which the localized areas occur.

The Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) has been used as a guideline in the Forest Plan and provides a framework of settings and experience opportunities to define the capabilities of NFS lands to meet identified recreation needs and services. This reflects that ROS is more of an inventory tool. Forest Plan implementation projects and increases in use of localized areas have created the need to change the inventory since 1997. Project planning often has updated the ROS inventory for a given area, but this updated information has not consistently been updated into the corporate GIS library. As part of the SEIS closeout, the 1997 ROS layer was updated based on existing roads and harvest units and the entire layer was made more consistent across the Forest. However, the updated layer needs to be closely reviewed by Tongass recreation specialists to refine the mapping based on site-specific knowledge about recreation use.

4.17.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

Forest recreation planners will assemble for a 3-4 day working session to review the updated ROS mapping and make refinements to it based on local knowledge. Other recreation and tourism issues will also be addressed. A working session report will be developed.

4.17.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

The working session report will be reviewed by members of the ID Team and appropriate updates to the Forest Plan will be identified. The following questions will be considered in this assessment:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.18 Scenery Management Updates

4.18.1 Background

The Tongass National Forest is in the process of transitioning from the Visual Resource Management System (VMS) to the Scenery Management System (SMS) as the framework for integrating scenery management data at all levels of Forest planning. The SMS was released in 1995 (as Agriculture Handbook 701) and evolved from and replaced the VMS, which was released in 1974 (and is defined in Agriculture Handbook #462).

Tongass accomplishments toward the transition to SMS include:

- Landscape Character Types – descriptions and maps completed
- Scenic Attractiveness Classes – descriptions completed
- Existing Scenic Integrity Levels – Existing Visual Condition GIS layer from the VMS was updated and the Existing Scenic Integrity layer can be a straight conversion

In addition to mapping the Scenic Attractiveness Classes and producing the Existing Scenic Integrity layer, several other tasks need to be completed in order to fully transition to the SMS. These relate to Concern Levels, Scenic Integrity Objectives, and Visual Absorption Capability (VAC).

Even if a full transition is not completed, the Concern Levels, which relate to the Visual Priority Travel Routes and Use Areas (VPRs) need to be addressed. VPRs were originally derived from the Sensitivity Levels associated with the VMS and serve as the viewing platforms from which scenery assessments are done. Since adoption of the Forest Plan, a few new cabins, trails and recreation use areas have been constructed and some have been or will be decommissioned based on the Forest's Recreation Facilities Master Plan. These changes should be incorporated and the VPRs fully mapped.

4.18.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

Forest Service landscape architects with assistance from contractors will create the Existing Scenic Integrity GIS layer, map the Scenic Attractiveness Classes, and complete the updated VPR and Concern Levels GIS layers.

The Scenic Integrity Objectives equate to the Forest Plan's Adopted Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) identified for each Land Use Designation/Viewing Distance (as seen from the VPRs) combination. Because the Forest Plan's Adopted VQOs went through the planning process, consistent with and complementing the Desired Future Condition of the Land Use Designations (LUDs), the transition to the Scenic Integrity Objectives may be a direct conversion, provided the same protocols are adopted by the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update. Should the ID Team propose to change protocols, LUDs, or Desired Future Conditions, then Scenic Classes should be mapped from the other inventory information. The Scenic Classes map and Existing Scenic Integrity map will serve as the scenery resource input to the interdisciplinary planning process

Finally, VAC has historically been mapped on a project-by-project basis and is a component of the Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines for determining appropriate unit sizes and timber harvest

prescriptions. It was also used in determining the cumulative effects via the FORPLAN Percent Allowable Disturbance model. The continued use of VAC maps should be recognized with mapped in the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update process, with refinement of the information at the project level.

4.18.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

Forest Landscape Architects will need to interact with the ID Team to determine the specific level of adjustments or updates necessary for the Forest Plan. The degree of transitioning to the SMS that can occur will depend on the overall level of changes to the Forest Plan, and whether the result is an amendment or revision. The following questions will be considered during the process of defining the changes:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

4.19 Heritage Sacred Sites Standards and Guidelines

4.19.1 Background

Recognizing that protection of religious liberty is critical to the future survival of Indian tribes and their cultures, the United States enacted the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) in 1978. This landmark legislation protects the rights of Indian people to continue their religious practices, but does not provide the administrative guidance necessary to protect the places of tribal worship, sacred sites. On May 24, 1996, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites, instructing federal agencies to: “1) accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners and 2) avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites. Specific language needs to be incorporated into the Forest Plan that addresses the additional protections afforded by the executive order.

4.19.2 Technical Work Group Assessment

Forest heritage subject matter specialists will develop draft descriptions of the needed edits or directly develop recommended edits. Representatives of the ID Team will collect and review draft materials from the heritage specialists and work with the specialists to ensure they address all appropriate places in the Plan that need updating, as well as regarding the exact wording to be used.

4.19.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

The input collected from Forest heritage specialists will be assessed and specific updates to the Forest Plan will be developed. The following questions will be considered in this assessment:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?

- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the ID Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the project Web site.

4.20 Land Adjustments

4.20.1 Background

A number of land adjustments have occurred on the Tongass since the 1997 Forest Plan was adopted. New lands that have become NFS lands during this period have not formally been given LUD designations. These specific designations need to be updated in the Forest Plan.

4.20.2 Technical Working Group Assessment

Members of the ID Team will identify all land adjustments that need formal LUD designations by interviewing the District and Forest land specialists and then proposing the most logical designations, based on adjacent lands and other factors.

4.20.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

The results of the technical assessment will be developed into a package of recommended updates and reviewed by other members of the ID Team. Consideration will also be given to developing and inserting language to allow interim LUD assignment for future land adjustments. The following questions will be considered in this assessment:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the Interdisciplinary (ID) Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the project Web site.

4.21 Cumulative Effects – Non-NFS Lands

4.21.1 Background

One of the inadequacies identified by the 9th Circuit Court was the degree to which cumulative effects were addressed relative to the harvest of high volume old growth. In particular, the Court found that: “there is no catalog of past projects and no discussion of how those projects (and differences between the projects) have harmed the environment... Moreover, there is no discussion of the connection between individual (non-federal, high-volume) harvests and the prior environmental harms from those harvests.” The Court also noted that the EIS was inadequate because it did not assess the potential impacts of reasonably foreseeable, continued “high-grading” in the future.

4.21.2 Technical Assessment

The first step in this assessment will be to document the level of cumulative effects analysis presented in the 1997 EIS and the 2003 SEIS for all resources. Then, the level of additional information necessary to respond to the Court-identified inadequacies will be identified. Finally, the appropriate level of information will be developed for past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future harvest on non-NFS lands in Southeast Alaska. This assessment will be developed in conjunction with the state of Alaska and will include all state lands, native corporation lands, and all other private lands. Consideration will be given to assessing the portion of the harvested lands that was considered to consist of high volume stands prior to harvest, if possible. In addition, consideration will be given to the need to collect additional information on the level of other resources on non-NFS lands affected by non-NFS harvest (e.g., the amount of stream fish habitat).

4.21.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

The inventory of non-NFS harvests will be reviewed by ID Team members and refined as necessary. After refinements are completed, the information will be posted on the Web site and made available for analysis during project planning document development.

4.22 Miscellaneous Updates and Adjustments

4.22.1 Background

The 5 Year Review of the Forest Plan was conducted in 2004 (<http://www.tongass-5yearreview.net/>). In addition, a list of additional concern items has been added to the Potential Concern List identified under the Forest Plan Maintenance Program (<http://www.tongass-fpmaintprog.net/>). There are also other miscellaneous topics that need to be assessed to produce information needed in subsequent phases.

Major items are addressed specifically in other sections of Phase 2. However, there are a number of miscellaneous items that also should be addressed if the Forest Plan is adjusted and updated. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- **Climate Change** – The current Forest Plan provides no recognition of global warming or climate change. There is uncertainty over what assumptions should be considered regarding climate change and on the effects of climate change on Forest planning decisions; yet they need to be made. Because of the differing viewpoints on this issue, it will receive science consistency review with Pacific Northwest Research Station scientists.
- **Ecosystem Services** – As for the climate change issue, Ecosystem Services is not addressed in the current Forest Plan. Again, there is controversy over how to assess ecosystem services, but they should be addressed in the adjustment and update process. Science consistency review with the Pacific Northwest Research Station will also be conducted.
- **Forest Plan Resource Schedule** – Appendix L of the 1997 Forest Plan is titled “Resource Schedules” and displays a tentative list of resource projects identified by the Forest Plan for the next 10 years of Plan implementation. This appendix will likely need to be updated. Areas potentially needing update include the Recreation Capital Investment schedule with consideration of the completed Recreation Program Accessibility Transition Plans and the Forest Recreation Facility Master Plans, the schedule for implementing the Scenery Management System (see Scenery Management Updates section), among others.
- **Forest Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Plan** – Chapter 6 of the 1997 Forest Plan represents the Forest Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. A variety of updates to this are

likely to occur as a result of the work items described in this section. In addition, other monitoring and evaluation items, not specifically addressed elsewhere in this section, may need to be updated.

- **1979 Forest Plan Approach for Wildlife Viability** – There is a need to estimate, using GIS, the 1979 Forest Plan approach (based on retention areas) for addressing wildlife viability. This information can then be used for comparison purposes or for incorporating into the No Action alternative (which emulates the 1979 Plan).

4.22.2 Technical Assessment

ID Team members will conduct a comprehensive review of all items identified in the 5 Year Review and on the Forest Plan Maintenance Concern List to determine which other miscellaneous items need to be considered or evaluated for potential updates or adjustments to the Forest Plan. Special attention will be paid to those with Screen Categories of 3 or higher. In addition, the other miscellaneous topics that will produce important information for subsequent phases will be identified.

Each item will be presented to the appropriate Forest and Regional subject matter expert(s) and input will be solicited from them, relative to updating the Forest Plan.

4.22.3 Forest Plan Adjustments/Updates

The results of these interviews will be developed into a package of recommended updates and reviewed by other members of the ID Team. Consideration will also be given to developing and inserting language to allow interim LUD assignment for future land adjustments. The following questions will be considered in this assessment:

- What parts/pages of the Plan need adjusting or updating?
- Are there changes that are LUD-map related?
- Do the Monitoring questions or methods need to be revised?
- Are there additional information needs?

Based on the above, a specific package of proposed Forest Plan adjustments and updates will be developed. This package will be reviewed by the Interdisciplinary (ID) Team, the Joint Review Team, and the Forest Leadership Team. When the package has been reviewed and revised, it will be posted on the project Web site.

4.23 Initiate Planning Record

The significance of this effort and the high potential for appeals and/or litigation indicate the importance of a well constructed and efficiently organized Planning Record. In order to improve retrieval of information and reproduction of the record, the Planning Record will be completely electronic. All documents will be converted into .pdf files or other suitable (accessible) files directly or scanned. An electronic index will be developed in Access or Excel. The Planning Record will be initiated during Phase 2. First, a Planning Record schema will be developed, that will be used as a subject index for the Planning Record. Each item in the Planning Record will be given a code that corresponds with the appropriate subject area in the schema. Second, important documents used during this and subsequent phases will be physically added to the Forest Plan Update/Assessment Web site. Conversion of these documents to electronic files and their addition to the Web site at this stage will enable them to be available to all members of the project team, as well as available to the public. These documents will also be compatible with and available for the

pilot project for the Tongass Electronic Reading Library. The Planning Record will be updated on a regular basis during subsequent phases as well.

5.0 Phase 3 – Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Package

This phase will include the preparation of the package of Forest Plan updates and adjustments into a consolidated proposal and the formulation of preliminary alternatives to the proposal, which will be used as the basis for appropriate NEPA and associated public involvement efforts.

5.1 Develop Package of Adjustments/Updates to the Forest Plan

The analyses and refinements conducted during Phase 2 will be brought together in this stage into one package, which will serve as the proposal for updates and adjustments to the Forest Plan. This package will include reasonable alternatives that make sense to bring forward as well.

5.2 Formulate Preliminary Alternatives

One of the three inadequacies found by the 9th Circuit Court was the range of alternatives considered relative to timber demand. The Court stated that the EIS should have examined the viable alternative of setting the ASQ equal to any of the three correct market demand scenarios for Tongass timber. In addition, it indicated that the EIS should have considered an alternative that allocates less currently roadless areas to LUDs that allow development.

Therefore, this task will conduct the following efforts:

- Evaluate results of LSTA and LSTA/Falldown Assessment conducted in Phase 2 to determine the realistic timber volume capability of Development LUDs
 - Consider operability
 - Consider risk factors incorporated into LSTA
- Evaluate results of demand analysis from Phase 2
- Based on capability and demand, develop the preliminary range of alternatives to be evaluated and a corresponding potential ASQ
 - Consider pool of alternatives in '97 FEIS
 - Consider pool of alternatives in '03 SEIS
 - Consider whether other alternatives are required
- It is recognized that, if any of the alternatives bring new areas into Development LUDs, the LSTA will need to be adjusted to account for these areas in the capability determination

5.3 Public Involvement and Government-to-Government Consultation Activities

Public involvement and government-to-government activities will continue during Phase 3. Again, Communication Plans will be developed for each major announcement or event by Tongass Public Information staff in conjunction with the ID Team. The intensity and level of public involvement activity implemented will be commensurate with the degree of change decided upon in adjusting and updating the Forest Plan. The following public involvement and government-to-government activities are planned:

- Government-to-Government Consultation: After the preliminary Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Package package is developed, including the preliminary alternatives,

the District Rangers will consult with federally recognized tribal governments to inform them early and obtain any input they may have at this pre-NEPA stage. General descriptive briefing materials will be prepared and provided to the District Rangers. At a minimum, each consultation will be documented by a write-up describing the content of the consultation, the attendees, the date and place, and a summary of the input received. These write-ups will also be circulated via email to the staff working on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update and will be included in the planning record.

- **Website Additions:** The preliminary package of updates and adjustments along with the preliminary alternatives developed during Phase 3, will be posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site. Key documents in the planning record could also be linked on the website, along with an updated version of the planning record index. The documents and the index would be updated approximately monthly.
- **Public Briefings and Other Contacts:** No formal public meetings are planned prior to Draft Planning Document development. Local briefings are expected to be held and could include: congressional delegations, governor's office, state and federal agencies, native groups, communities, and interested groups and individuals (e.g., environmental and industry groups). The overall strategy here will be to develop briefing materials and information (e.g., maps, display boards, power points) early on and provide these to the Forest Leadership Team (particularly the District Rangers), the Public Affairs staff, and others, to be used in the briefings.
- **Project Update Newsletter:** At the completion of Phase 3 and the definition of alternatives task in Phase 4, a project update newsletter will be prepared and posted on the Web site. Limited hard copies may also be produced. This newsletter will provide a summary of the results of the updates and adjustments that were developed in Phases 2 and 3, as well as a description of the preliminary alternatives to be analyzed in the Draft Planning Document.

5.4 Planning Record Update

Periodically, during Phase 3, documentation will be added to the planning record, which may also be linked to the project Web site.

6.0 Phase 4 – Draft Planning Document

6.1 Notice to Commence

A Notice to commence work on a Planning Document will be developed and submitted for publication in the Federal Register. The notice will briefly describe the proposed action and possible alternatives, briefly describe the public input that has been received to date and the additional planned public involvement, and will identify the person who can answer questions about the proposed action and the Planning Document.

6.2 Conduct Supplemental Scoping and Prepare Scoping Report

As determined necessary, scoping will be conducted through mailings and the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site. A Supplemental Scoping Report will be prepared to summarize the contents of any comments received prior to finalization of the alternatives. The report will be based on all comments received and will summarize the issues identified in scoping that should be carried forward for consideration in the assessment, as well as any suggestions for alternatives that should be considered prior to alternative finalization.

6.3 Develop Purpose and Need Statement

Develop a purpose and need statement that defines the underlying purpose and need the Forest Service is responding to. This statement should be developed as soon as the scope of the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update is decided.

6.4 Review and Refine Alternatives

- Review and evaluate public input and results of scoping, if conducted, relative to issues and alternatives
- Hold a Working Meeting with Leadership Team to Review/Consider Preliminary Alternatives.
- Revise preliminary alternatives, based on Leadership Team and public input, producing the alternatives to be analyzed in the Draft Planning Document.

6.5 Prepare Introductory Chapters

Prepare a preliminary draft of the introductory chapters (without the comparison section), based on the Purpose and Need statement, the issues, the Draft Planning Document alternatives, and other information. This draft will be used as a reference for the authors of the issues/resources sections of the Planning Document.

6.6 Prepare Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

This task includes the preparation of the main chapter of the Draft Planning Document. It will be prepared in a manner that builds off the 1997 Final EIS and the 2003 Final SEIS as much as possible. For example, the Affected Environment portions of each section will be tied back to the Affected Environment descriptions in these previous documents, which will be briefly summarized. Following this summary, any changes that have occurred since 2003 will be described. Those

changes believed to be most important relative to the issues of this document will be emphasized. Footnotes will be used to update information in tables, where appropriate.

The level of analysis to be conducted for individual issues/resources will fall into two categories: major issues/resources and other issues/resources. The primary analyses believed to be needed for each alternative will be described here in the next draft of the Study Plan.

6.7 Other Draft Planning Document Chapters

This task involves preparing the other chapters of the Planning Document including the List of Preparers, List of Recipients, Glossary, Index, References, and the appendices.

6.8 Assemble Preliminary Draft Planning Document for Review

Assemble 30 copies of the Preliminary Draft Planning Document for internal review. Submit copies to the Joint Review Team and selected others for review and comment. Because of the tight timeframe, there may be some numbers in the Preliminary Draft that are still being filled in during the review period.

6.9 Internal Review of Draft Planning Document

The Draft Planning Document will be reviewed by the Joint Review Team, Leadership Team, Regional Office staff, and others.

6.10 Prepare Revised Draft Planning Document

Based on comments received on the Preliminary Draft Planning Document, prepare a Revised Draft Planning Document.

6.11 Review/Edit Revised Draft Planning Document

Assemble a small review team of selected Joint Review Team members and other staff, to review the Revised Draft Planning Document and work directly with the authors to finalize it.

6.12 Assemble Camera-ready Draft Planning Document

Assemble the Camera-ready Draft Planning Document. Assemble two or three printer dummy copies along with the Camera-ready, and send the Camera-ready with a printer dummy to the printer. The transmittal letter will also be prepared and signed sent to the printer. Finally, the mailing labels will be printed and sent to the printer along with instructions for mailing.

6.13 Draft Planning Document Production and Mailing

This task includes the printing of the document. Because of the importance of the document, an editor or other representative will travel to the printer and monitor the printing, assembly, and mailing of the document. The majority of the copies will be electronic and on CDs. A short hard-copy version of the Summary will also be produced in a size and format to fit into a DVD-style case and the CDs will be distributed in these cases, along with the Summary.

6.14 Draft Planning Document Posting on the Web

When the Planning Document is sent to the printer, the document will be converted to a .pdf file and then posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site. Links will be added to the Draft Planning Document on the Web to allow email comments to be submitted directly. The Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site will be updated as new information is posted and as the status of the Planning Document changes.

6.15 Planning Record Update

Periodically, during Phase 4, documentation will be added to the planning record, which may also be linked to the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

7.0 Phase 5 – Final Planning Document, Decision, and Adjusted/Updated Forest Plan

7.1 Draft Planning Document Review Period and Public Meetings

A 90-day Draft Planning Document review period will be scheduled. Public open houses may be held in the middle of the review period in communities throughout Southeast Alaska. Likely locations for open houses will be at Juneau, Hoonah, Sitka, Yakutat, Petersburg, Wrangell, Ketchikan, Craig, and Thorne Bay. The format of these open houses will be to display large maps showing the alternatives along with other resource and community information will be displayed. The public will be given comment forms and be encouraged to write specific comments. A short presentation may be given during the open house.

Consideration will be given to assess whether or not ANILCA public hearings are needed. If they are determined necessary, then they will occur on the same day after the open-houses and at the same place.

7.2 Comment Analysis

Written comments, including email comments, and oral comments received at public meetings will be analyzed by the Forest Service. Depending on the number of comments expected, it may be necessary to establish a separate Comment Analysis Team. This will include transcription of the oral testimony on tapes from the ANILCA hearings, if they are held. Comment analysis will be initiated as soon as a sizeable number of comments are received, probably about 2 months into the public comment period. The Comment Analysis Team will submit the first batch of “concern” write-ups as soon as possible, so that work on responses can begin early.

7.3 Responses to Comments

The Comment Analysis Team will summarize the comments into “concerns” and will submit these to the key members of the Planning Document team, who will prepare responses to the concerns. As noted above, the first batch of concerns will be submitted early so that the NEPA team can begin preparing responses early. These early concerns and responses are likely to need revision after all comments are received. All concerns and responses will be consolidated into an appendix to the Final Planning Document.

7.4 Public Briefings and Other Contacts

In addition to the public open houses, there will be a need for additional briefings. These could include: congressional delegations, governor’s office, state and federal agencies, native groups, communities, and interested groups and individuals (e.g., environmental and industry groups). Again, the overall strategy will be to develop briefing materials and information (e.g., maps, display boards, power points) and provide these to the Forest Leadership Team (particularly the District Rangers), the Public Affairs staff, and others, to be used in the briefings.

7.5 Government-to-Government Consultation

In addition to the public open houses and other briefings, there is a need to make specific government-to-government contacts with federally recognized tribal governments and corporations during this period. If requested, briefings will be made. At a minimum, each consultation will be documented by a write-up describing the content of the consultation, the attendees, the date and place, and a summary of the input received. These write-ups will also be circulated via email to the staff working on the Planning Document and will be included in the planning record.

7.6 Web Site Update

After the comment analysis is complete and the Final Planning Document alternatives are identified, a project update newsletter will be developed and posted on the Web site. If deemed necessary, hard copies will also be prepared and mailed out to those who request hard copies. The project update will include a summary of the comment analysis and a description of the changes to the alternatives.

7.7 Definition of Final Planning Document Alternatives

This task will be comprised of a number of subtasks as described below:

- **Develop New or Modified Alternatives** – After reviewing the comment analysis and with input from the Leadership Team, develop new or modified alternatives, if necessary.
- **Run Preliminary Numbers** – Using GIS, develop preliminary numbers for the major parameters that generally define the new/modified alternatives.
- **Leadership Team Review** – Present the new/modified alternatives and the Draft Planning Document alternatives, along with general numbers, to the Forest Leadership Team for review.
- **Finalize Final Planning Document Alternatives** – Revise the new/modified alternatives, based on Leadership Team input, producing the alternatives to be analyzed in the Final Planning Document.

7.8 Prepare the Final Planning Document

Revise the Draft Planning Document to reflect the Final Planning Document alternatives and to incorporate any new information identified during the comment period.

7.9 Assemble Preliminary Final Planning Document for Review

Assemble 30 copies of the Preliminary Final Planning Document for internal review. Submit copies to the Joint Review Team, Leadership Team, Regional Office staff, and selected others for review and comment.

7.10 Prepare Revised Final Planning Document

Based on comments received on the Preliminary Final Planning Document, prepare a Revised Final Planning Document.

7.11 Prepare Draft Decision and Draft Updated/Adjusted Forest Plan

Draft Decision preparation will begin following review and receipt of comments on the Preliminary Final Planning Document.

7.12 Decision Comparison Document

After the Decision document has been prepared, a comparison document will be developed which compares the 1997, 1999, 2003, and 2007 Decision documents side-by-side. The purpose of this document will be to make sure everything is addressed in the 2007 Decision that needs to be addressed. The comparison document will be revised along with each revision to the Decision document.

7.13 Review/Edit Revised Final Planning Document

Assemble a small review team of selected Joint Review Team members and other staff, to review the Revised Final Planning Document and work directly with the authors to finalize it.

7.14 Review/Edit Draft Decision and Adjusted/Updated Forest Plan

The Forest Leadership Team will review and comment/edit the Draft Decision.

7.15 Assemble Camera-ready Documents

Assemble a Camera-ready Final Planning Document, Decision, and Updated/Adjusted Forest Plan. Assemble two or three printer dummy copies along with the Camera-ready, and send the Camera-ready with a printer dummy to the printer. The transmittal letter will also be prepared and signed sent to the printer. Finally, the mailing labels will be printed and sent to the printer along with instructions for mailing.

7.16 Produce Final Documents and Mailing

This task includes the production of the document. Because of the importance of the document, an editor or other representative will travel to the printer and monitor the printing, assembly, and mailing of the document.

7.17 Final Document Posting on the Web

When the Final Planning Document is sent to the printer, the document will be converted to a .pdf file (or other more accessible file format) and then posted on the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

7.18 Web Site Update

After completion of the Decision and Adjusted/Updated Forest Plan, a project update newsletter will be developed and mailed out to the mailing list. The project update will describe the decision and its rationale.

7.19 Planning Record Update

Periodically, during Phase 5, documentation will be added to the planning record, which may also be linked to the Forest Plan Adjustment/Update Web site.

8.0 Schedule

Table 1 presents the schedule for the Forest Plan Adjustment and Update process. The schedule is tied to the phases, tasks, and subtasks described above. The major relationships among these are displayed in the Task Relationships and Schedule Diagram (Gantt Chart) shown in the attachment (see Microsoft Project file).

Table 1. Estimated Schedule for Forest Plan Adjustment and Update Process.

PHASE AND TASK NAME	FINISH DATE
PHASE 1 - INITIATION AND STUDY PLAN DEVELOPMENT	
Initial Planning/Coordination Meetings	10/17/05
Final Study Plan Based on 1982 Planning Rule	11/30/05
Final Study Plan Based on 2005 Planning Rule	1/30/06
PHASE 2 – LSTA AND OTHER INITIAL ANALYSES	
Initial Government-to-Government Consultation	12/15/05
Web Site Developed	12/21/05
Letter and News Release announcing Web site and the Process	12/21/05
Integrated Timber Operability Analysis	
Draft Procedures	11/16/05
Review of Draft Pilot Areas	12/8/05
Finalize Procedures	12/12/05
Draft LSTA (1 st Submittal)	2/17/06
Draft LSTA (2 nd Submittal)	3/10/06
Draft LSTA (3 rd Submittal)	3/31/06
Final LSTA	5/01/06
Operability Analysis	5/12/06
Timber Demand Analysis	
Initial Results	2/01/06
Final and Peer-reviewed Results	3/01/06
Wildlife Management Indicator Species	2/15/06

Conservation Strategy Review	
Science Review	3/08/06
Develop Presentations	3/21/06
Workshop	4/03-07/06
Develop Workshop Proceedings	4/21/06
Post Internally Reviewed Forest Plan Package on Web	4/25/06
Small OGR Mapping	3/13/06
Deer Model	1/16/06
Vegetation Mapping Model	1/16/06
Invasive Species Emphasis	2/01/06
Young-Growth Management	2/16/06
Sensitive Plant Survey Protocols	1/23/06
Fish and Riparian Updates	2/01/06
State Transportation and Utility Routes and the TUS LUD	2/01/06
Karst Standards and Guidelines	2/01/06
OHV Emphasis	2/15/06
Wilderness Updates	2/15/06
Recreation and Tourism Updates	2/15/06
Scenery Management Updates	3/31/06
Heritage Sacred Sites Standards and Guidelines	1/16/06
Land Adjustments	2/21/06
Cumulative Effects – Non-NFS Lands	2/21/06
Miscellaneous Updates and Adjustments	2/28/06
PHASE 3 – FOREST PLAN ADJUSTMENT/UPDATE PACKAGE	
Develop Full Package of Updates/Adjustments	4/18//06
Formulate Preliminary Alternatives	4/18/06
Public Involvement and Gov't-to-Gov t	5/02/06
PHASE 4 - DRAFT PLANNING DOCUMENT	
Notice to Commence	3/15/06
Define the Draft Planning Document Alternatives	5/03/06
Prepare Affected Environment Sections	5/31/06
Prepare Introductory Chapters - 1st half	5/17/06
Prepare Environmental Consequences Sections of Chapter 3	8/02/06

Tongass Forest Plan Adjustment & Update

Prepare Other Chapters and Chapter 2 - 2nd half	8/09/06
Assemble Preliminary Draft Planning Document	8/21/06
Prepare Revised Draft Planning Document	10/11/06
Assemble Camera-ready Draft Planning Document	11/08/06
Draft Planning Document Printing and Mailing and Posting on the Web	11/22/06
PHASE 5 – FINAL PLANNING DOCUMENT, DECISION, AND FOREST PLAN ADJUSTMENT & UPDATE	
End of Draft Planning Document Review Period	2/26/07
Comment Analysis	4/02/07
Responses to Comments	4/23/07
Define the Final Planning Document Alternatives	4/30/07
Assemble Preliminary Final Planning Document, Decision, and Forest Plan Adjustment/Update	5/31/07
Prepare Revised Final Planning Document, Decision, and Forest Plan Adjustment/Update	7/09/07
Sign Decision	7/27/07
Assemble Camera-ready Final Planning Document, Decision, and Forest Plan Adjustment/Update	8/06/07
Final Planning Document, Decision, and Forest Plan Printing and Mailing and Posting on the Web	8/20/07
Planning Record Update	9/12/07