

Unit 8

Affected Environment



Objectives

- Understand what constitutes the Affected Environment and how it should be described
- Understand Information Needs



Affected Environment

- ⦿ **A concise description of the analysis area:**
 - ⦿ Summarizes the relevant physical, biological, social and economic environments of the analysis area.
 - ⦿ Issues help to focus scope of Affected Environment for each resource.
 - ⦿ The analysis area varies depending on the range of effects for each resource.

Importance

- Provides the benchmark for environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives.



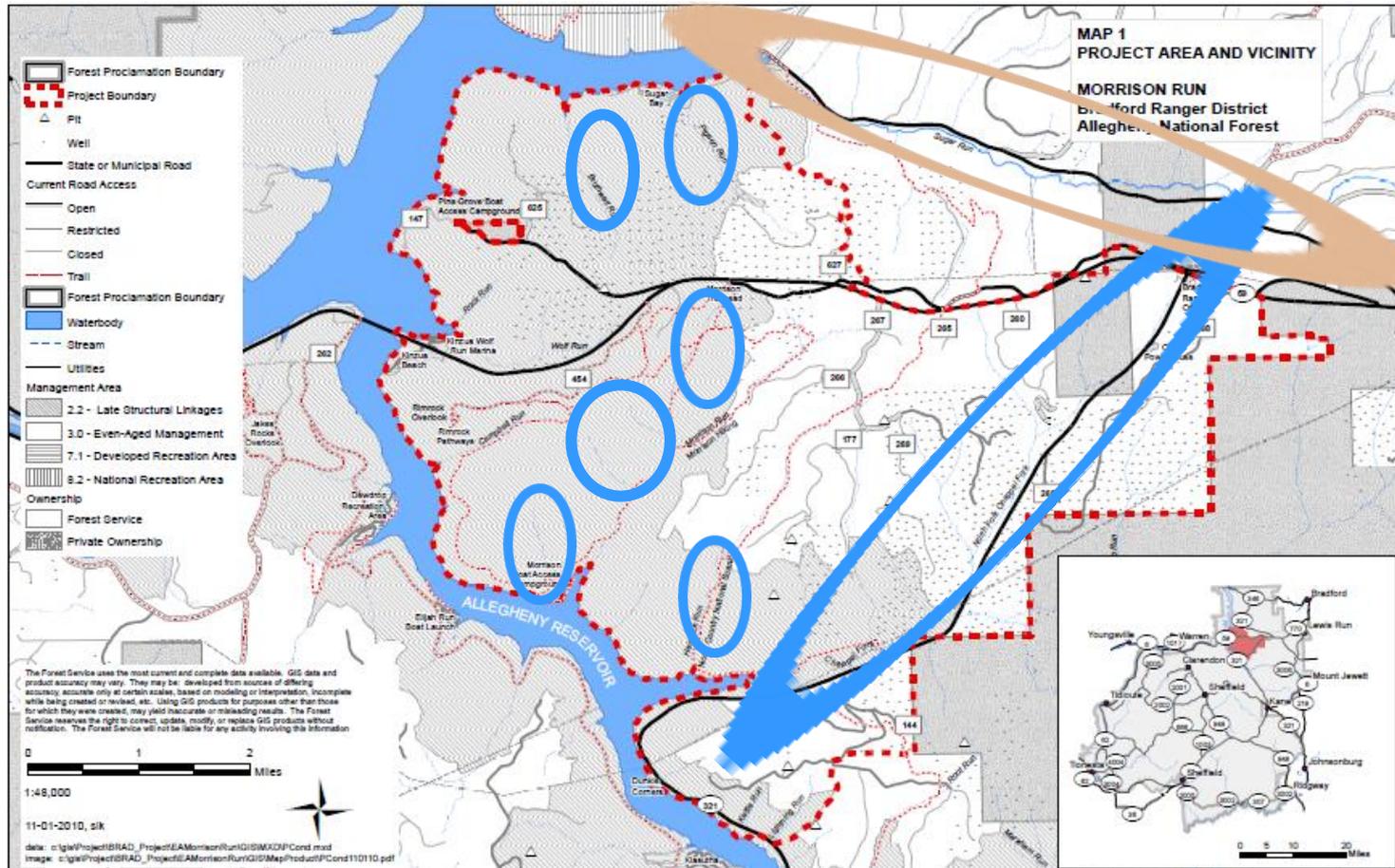
Affected Environment

- ⦿ **40 CFR §1502.15:** describe the environment of the area(s) to be affected or created by the alternatives under consideration.
- ⦿ The description shall be no longer than is necessary to understand the effects of the alternatives.
- ⦿ Data and analyses in a statement shall be commensurate with the importance of the impact, with less important material summarized, consolidated, or simply referenced.
- ⦿ Verbose descriptions of the affected environment are themselves no measure of the adequacy of an environmental impact statement.

Typical Information

- Wetlands
- Soils
- Water quality and quantity
- Habitat/Threatened and endangered species
- Land use
- Archaeological resources
- Vegetation
- Tribal cultural resources
- Facilities/Infrastructure/Utilities/Rights-of-way
- Air quality
- Social/Economic/Demographic
- Environmental protection standards
- Climate (Vulnerability to Climate Change)

Which Resources?



Information Needs for NEPA Analyses

NEPA Task Force (2002-04). Council on Environmental Quality

- Timely completion of NEPA analyses depends on the availability of and access to existing information and the ability to collect new information.
- Reducing extraneous background data and emphasizing relevant environmental issues is key to the successful use of information in the NEPA process.

Existing Data

- Maps (geographic information system)
- Field surveys
- Historical inventories
- Universities
- Public agencies
- Non-governmental organizations
- Literature
- The public



Data Collection

- The specialists need to understand the phenology (timing) of floral and faunal events in order to plan field surveys
- Example: An endangered salamander that is only found in the Rio Sucio and is only viewable during mating season May-July.

Bolitoglossa palmata



Field Surveys

Wildlife Survey Field Form

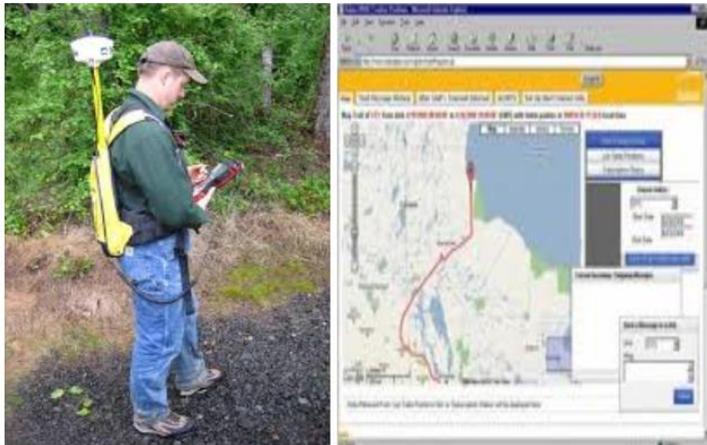
Project Name _____

Surveyor Name _____

District _____ Comp/Stand Number _____ Date _____



Item	Present/ Absent	Comment
1		Surface Boulders/Scattered Rocks
2		Rock Shelters/Complexes – House Rocks
3		Springs
4		Streams
5		Wetlands
6		Seeps – Sterile/Vegetated
7		Vernal Ponds
8		Invasive Weeds
9		Meadows/Openings
10		Stick Nests/Rookeries
11		Den Trees/Cavity Trees
12		Snags
13		Hemlock Inclusions/Understory/Midstory/Overstory
14		White Pine Inclusions/Understory/Midstory/Overstory
15		Skid trails/Old roads
16		Utility Line ROW
17		Fences, OGM, Man-made features
<u>Overstory:</u>		
Shrub Layer:		
Understory Layer:		
Other unique features:		



Documentation

- Monitoring and documenting contract work



USDA - Forest Service		1. FOREST ANF	
CONTRACT DAILY DIARY (Reference FSH 0300.11)		2. CONTRACT NO. AG-24H8-D-10-0003	
3. PROJECT Wildlife and Plant Survey Contract			
4. CONTRACTOR FORECON Inc		5. CONTRACTOR REPRESENTATIVE ON SITE Tom Erlandson	
6. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON SITE Michelle Tamez- BRD Wildlife Biologist			
7. DATE 05/11/10	8. DAY OF WEEK Tuesday	9. TIME ARRIVED 12:00	10. TIME DEPARTED 14:15
11. WEATHER rain/snow, 45 F; overcast			
12. TEMPERATURE °F Min 40 / Max 50	13. GROUND CONDITION wet		14. CONTRACT TIME 172
15. DAYS USED		16. COMPLETION DATE	
17. TIME USED (H) 4.25	18. WORK COMPLETED (H)	19. WORK ON SCHEDULE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	20. CONTRACTOR'S WORK - (X-Appropriate Box) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acceptable <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable - Explain in narrative
21. CHANGE ORDERS/AMENDMENTS ISSUED		22. WORK ORDERS ISSUED (include SUSPEND/RESUME)	
23. MATERIALS FURNISHED TO JOB SITE (Remained by: S-Govt., O-Cont., S-Subcont.)		24. USE EQUIPMENT ON SITE (Remained by: S-Govt., O-Cont., S-Subcont.)	
25. LIST CONTRACT PAYMENTS, REPORTS, CORRESPONDENCE, ETC.		26. WORKERS ON SITE	
27. GOVERNMENT PROVIDED SERVICES ADEQUATELY AND TIMELY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO - Explain in narrative		28. NARRATIVE REPORT I went out to find the Forecon folks along Sugar Run. They had been working all morning on the main stretch of the streams and they had split into two pairs, Lori and Jeff surveyed along the eastern half and Tom and Jon surveyed the western portion to Sugar Bay. I met up with Lori and Jeff and saw that they were using the GPS unit to track the distance between sampling points for width and bankfull width and they were recording the data onto Excel spreadsheets they had loaded onto their PDA. I was told that they also took water quality data at the mouths of the streams and for tributaries if the data was very different from the main stream, they would take another sample at the mouth of the tributary. We then met with the second team and headed back to the vehicles. I asked if they had any questions for me and Tom asked whether or not they needed to GPS log jams. I responded by email on 5/12/10 at 2:30pm that Chuck Keeperts did not think it was necessary to GPS these.	
29. SIGNATURE Michelle M Tamez		30. TITLE Wildlife Biologist- BRD	
31. ADDTL. SPACE NEEDED <input type="checkbox"/>		(continued on 0300-21)	

Information Synthesis

- Special report for Threatened and Endangered Species



Key Points

- ⦿ How does the affected environment help with the NEPA process?
- ⦿ How do you decide what information is necessary to complete an analysis of the effects of a project?
- ⦿ How do you collect data or information necessary for a project?