

Appendix F. Visitor Management Zones

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Visitor management and recreation activities in the Headwaters Forest Reserve (Reserve) must be consistent with the primary purpose for which the Reserve was created: the preservation and restoration of old-growth forest ecosystems and related values. Because the Reserve contains site-specific, highly sensitive areas (i.e., old-growth redwood forests and other less sensitive habitats that can accommodate a higher level of visitor use), it became apparent that certain geographical zones could be delineated to provide guidance on the extent of recreation opportunities allowed within the Reserve.

Three geographical zones were identified during the early stages of the planning process. Zone 1 (3,100 acres) covers the area containing the old-growth redwood forests. Zone 2 (4,000 acres) covers the timber harvest areas surrounding the old-growth forest. Zone 3 is the Elk River Corridor (300 acres), a high-impact area that can accommodate the highest level of visitor use. These three visitor management zones are described in more detail below and are consistent throughout all the management alternatives discussed in the EIS (Figure 5-1).

- **Visitor Management Zone 1.** This zone would be managed to be essentially free of humans and human-made features (with the exception of minor edge intrusions). Strict controls would be implemented to prevent human activities. Overnight camping, mountain biking, motorized vehicle use, equestrian use, hunting, and fishing would be prohibited. A very limited amount of hiking may be allowed in 1 or more areas or seasonally, consistent with the protection and preservation of endangered species and old-growth values. Scientific studies and monitoring approved by the U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management and by the California Department of Fish and Game would be allowed on a case-by-case basis. Visitor use would not be expected to be more than 20 hikers per day, and contacts with other hikers not to exceed 10.
- **Visitor Management Zone 2.** This zone would be managed for predominantly natural or natural-appearing environments. Evidence of humans, restrictions, and controls are present but subtle. Motorized vehicle use, hunting, and fishing would be prohibited. Hiking would be allowed on designated trails only. Equestrian use and/or mountain biking may be allowed on designated trails only where support facilities and environmental considerations allow for such use. Limited facilities for the administration of visitor use would be allowed, but off-site administration is encouraged. On-site visitor management activities would stress protection of natural values, in harmony with the existing site conditions, and project designs will be rustic in nature. Backcountry use levels would be low, consistent with and dependent on maintaining and enhancing natural-appearing ecosystems.
- **Visitor Management Zone 3.** This zone would be managed to be a natural appearing environment. Evidence of humans, restrictions, and controls are present. Motorized vehicle use, hunting, and fishing would be prohibited. Hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian use

may be allowed on designated trails where support facilities and environmental considerations allow for such use. Facilities for the administration of visitor use would be allowed. On-site interpretive facilities, trails, signing, visitor use facilities, parking and staging areas would be designed with a rustic theme. Within this zone the concentration of users is moderate, and there is often evidence of others. Frequency of managerial contact would be high within developed facilities and moderate on trails.