# Public Access to Draft Forest Plan Geospatial Data

Forest Planning MapServer

In the process of drafting forest plan revisions for the Superior and Chippewa National Forests, the University of Minnesota is working with the USDA Forest Service to implement a delivery tool for geospatial information about the proposed management alternatives.

The Superior National Forest MapServer includes seven proposed management plan alternatives and relevant information about how each alternative might alter the vegetation types, scenic integrity, and recreational opportunities in the national forest.
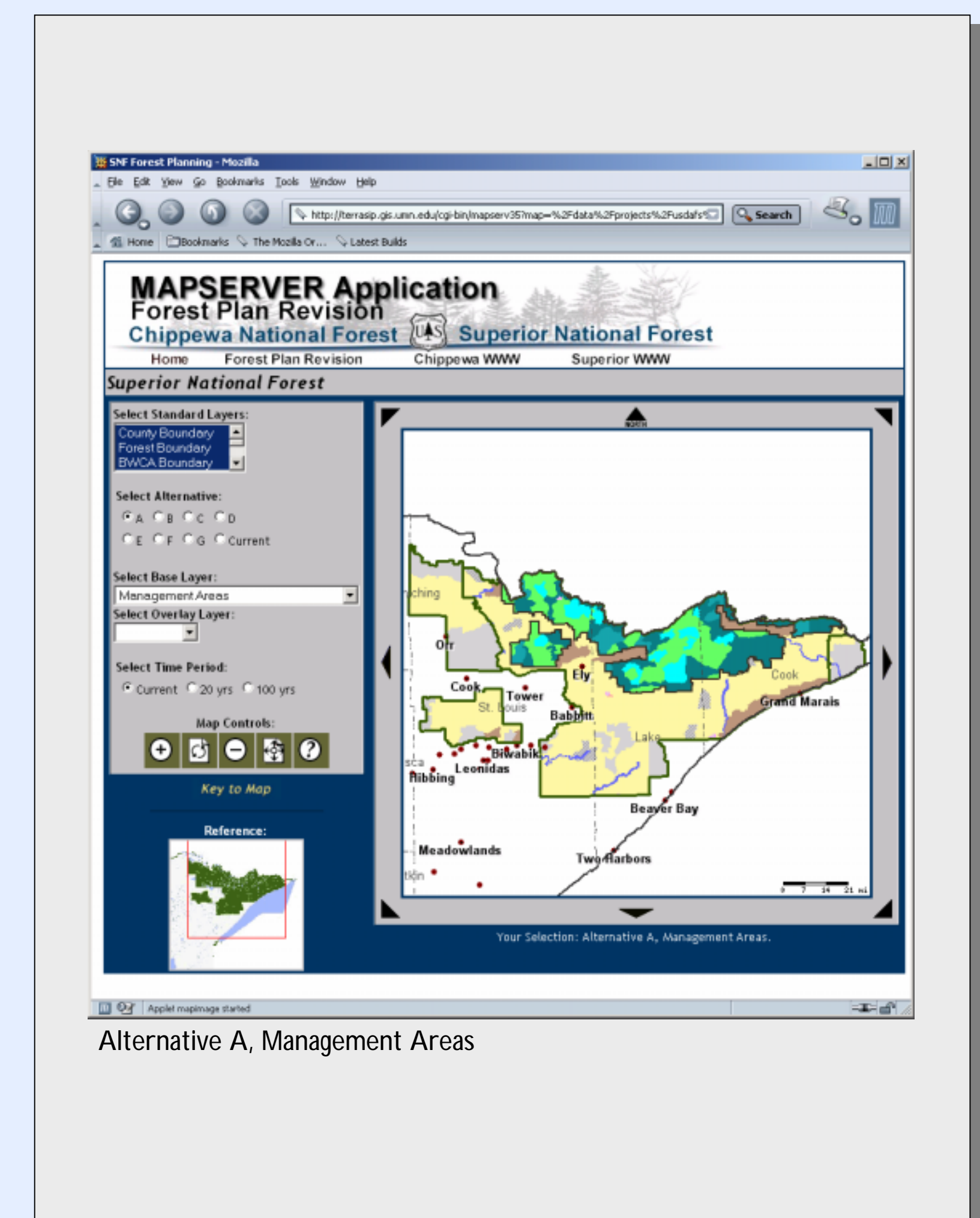

Alternative A, Management Areas
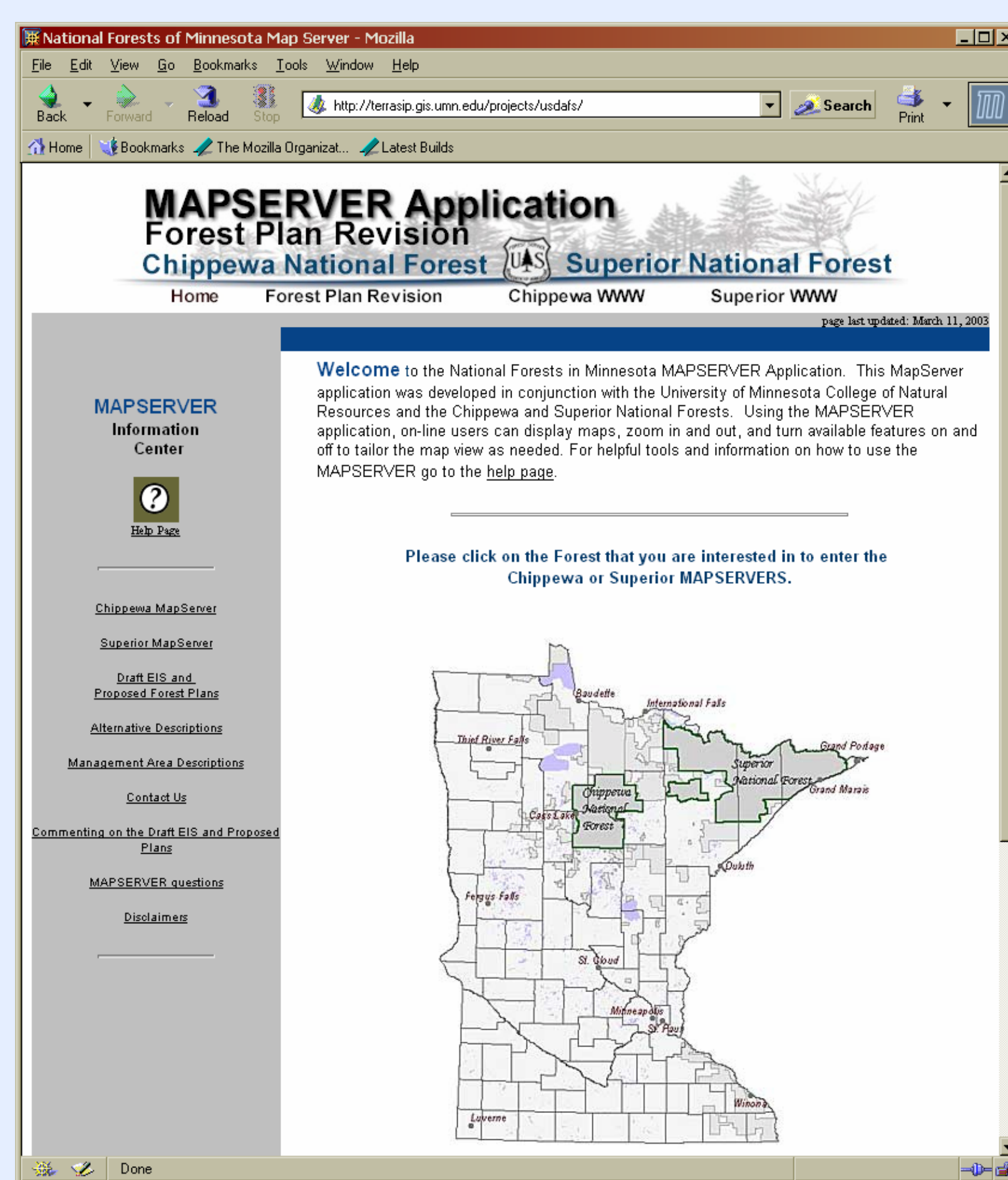
The Forest Planning MapServer was developed to provide access to geospatial data for Chippewa and Superior National Forests.

Background

The USDA Forest Service has been a leader in federal forest planning since the late 1800's. With the new Forest Service in 1905, plans were devised for managing the 150 million acres of national forest system lands. At the national forest level, grazing plans were written and enacted in the 1910's and 1920's. After the end of the second world war, a great expansion of the Forest Service timber program necessitated the need for better timber/working circle plans. The Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960 set into motion plans for timber, recreation, grazing, mining, and many other resources. Passage of of the Wilderness Act of 1964 set up another planning process (called RARE). In 1974, the Resources Planning Act (RPA) established a long-term analysis and evaluation process to collect and interpret data from across the U.S. The National Forest Management Act of 1976 instituted a process for devising regional plans (guides) and national forest plans. This leads us to the present emphasis on large-scale planning projects like the FEMAT, Sierra, ICBEMP, Southern Appalachians, and others.

Today, planning is proceeding once again into an unknown arena, that of collaborative stewardship. It is unclear how collaborative planning will hold up in the courts, especially when national special interest groups argue that they have been left out of the process.
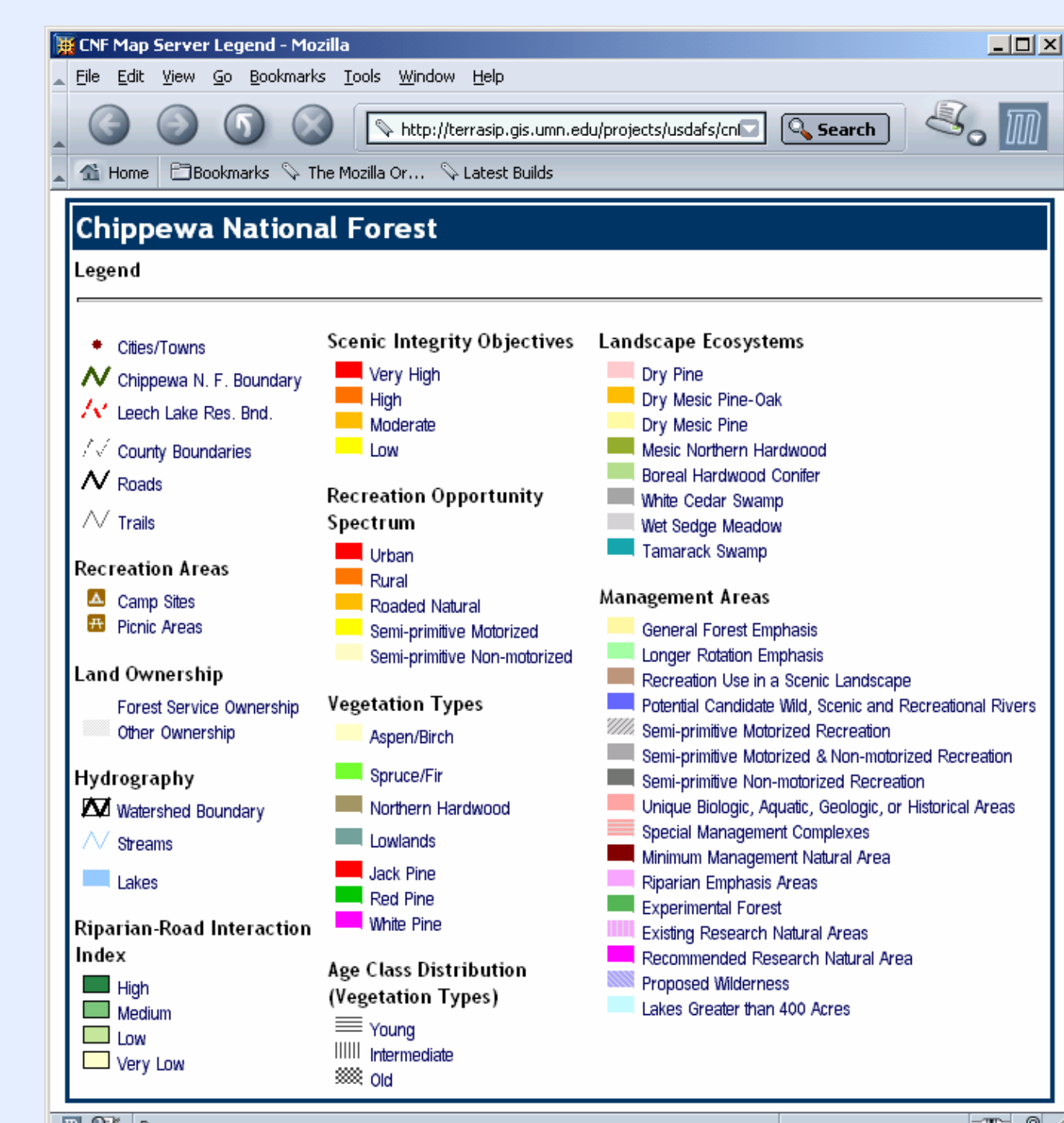
The legend was kept in a separate window from the main application window to reduce clutter.
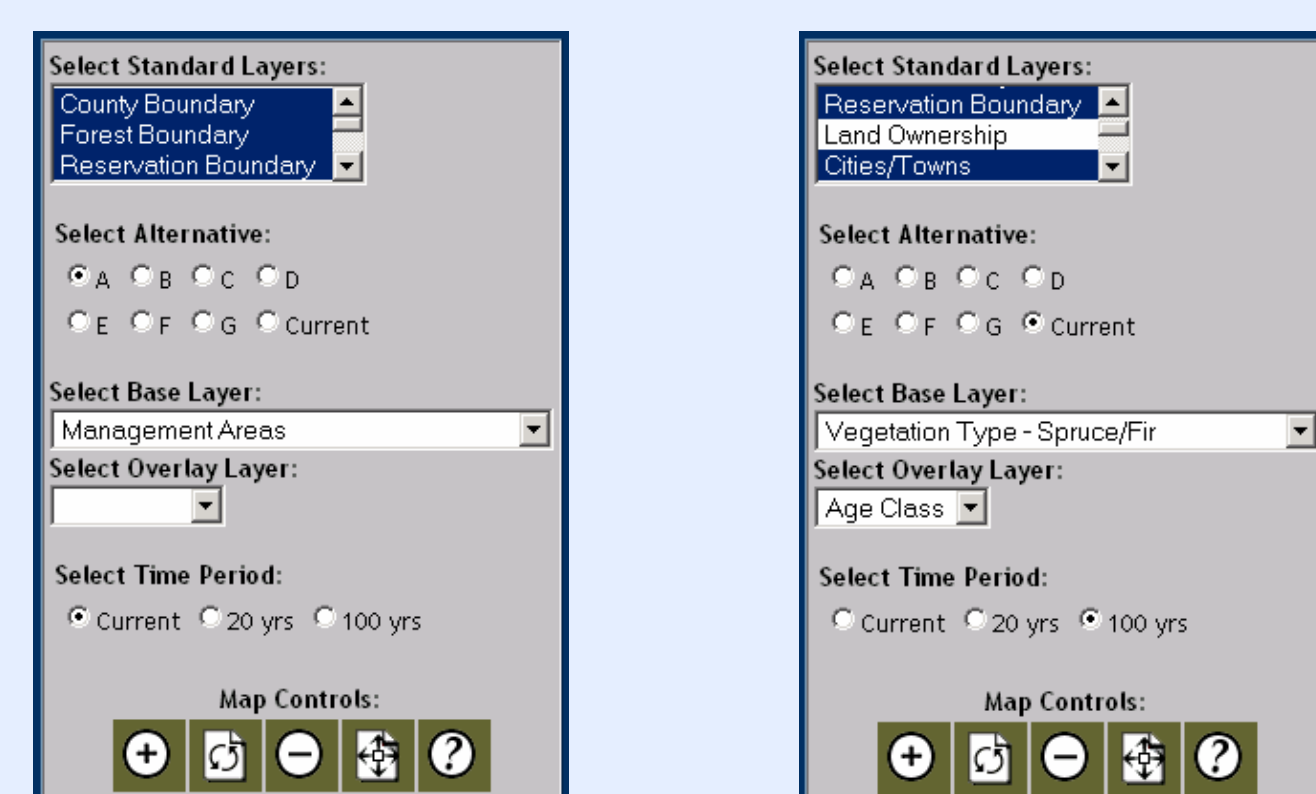

The interface has been categorized into logical groups to hide the very large number of available layers.

The Forest Planning MapServers for Chippewa and Superior National Forests are accessible from
http://terrasip.gis.umn.edu/projects/usdafs/
and
http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/revision/draft/index.shtml

How The Applications Are Used

1. As an internal communication tool where employees from the two national forests use the application to gain a better understanding of how the alternatives are responding to issues in their own particular programs.

2. As an external communication tool where members of the Planning Team work one-on-one with members of the public to look at how Plan alternatives might affect a particular area of interest to them. Generally, the public wants to zoom in around a cabin or into an area where they camp, hunt, bike, snowmobile, etc. to see how the different alternatives will enhance or detract from the setting or change management direction.

The Forest Planning MapServers for Superior and Chippewa National Forests have been received positively by both the forest service staff and the general public.
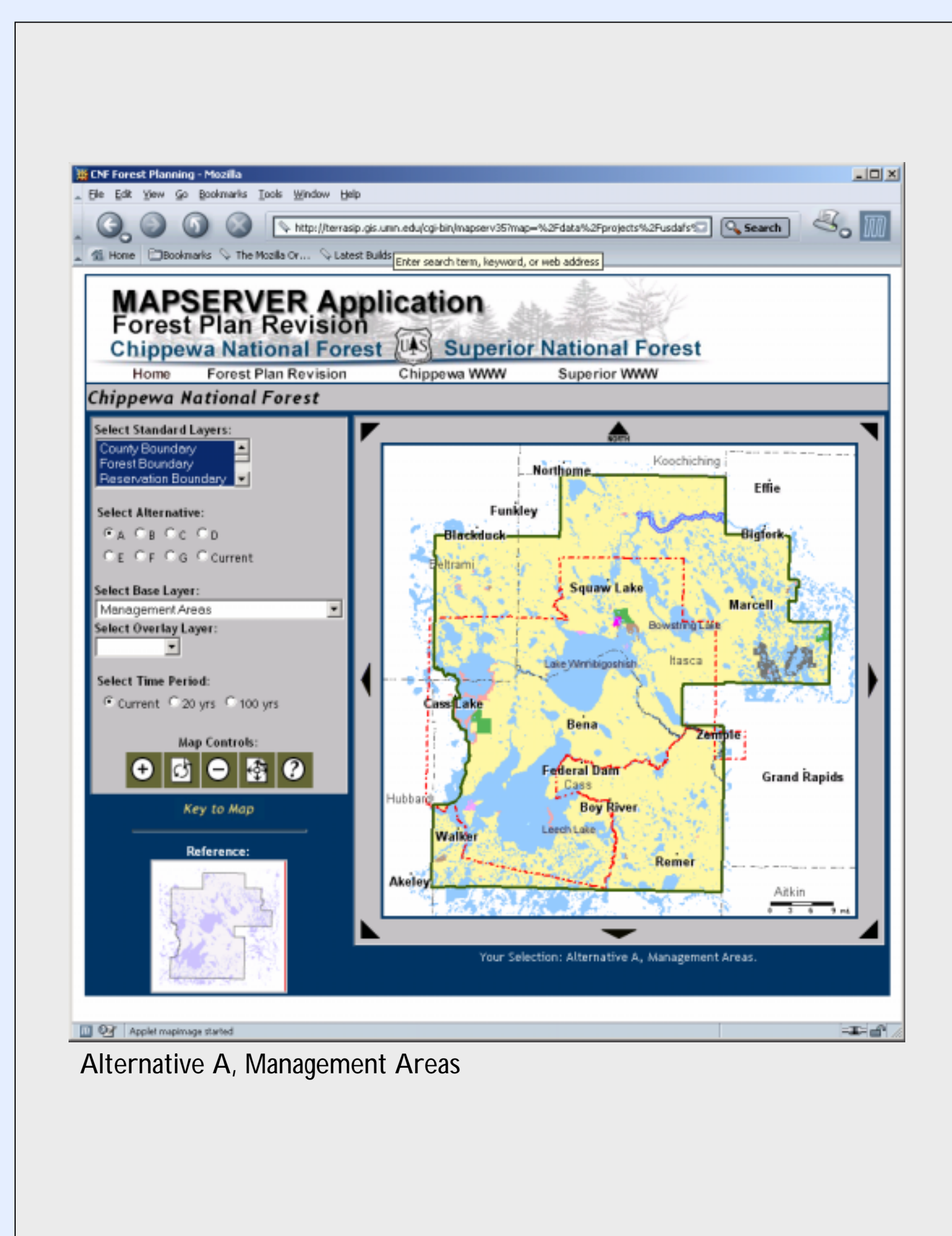
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Alternative A, Management Areas

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