

Forest Service Planning Rule  
Tribal Workshops  
Southwestern Region 3

## Summary of Discussion

Facilitated and summarized by:

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# US Forest Service, Southwestern Region 3 Tribal Workshops on the Forest Planning Rule

To afford tribal governments in this region an opportunity to learn about and comment on the Forest Planning Rule revision process, Regional Forester Corbin Newman invited the 55 tribes in the region to an informal conversation. This was not intended to be formal government-to-government consultation, but rather an additional forum where tribes and the Forest Service could exchange information and ideas, and where communication and collaboration could be realized. The points raised during these four workshops are summarized in the following document.

## Southwestern Region 3 -- Tribal Workshops:

- April 27, 2010                      Pojoaque, New Mexico
- April 28, 2010                      Albuquerque, New Mexico
- April 28, 2010                      Phoenix, Arizona
- April 29, 2010                      Flagstaff, Arizona

This report covers the Albuquerque, NM roundtable.

**FOREST PLAN RULE, SOUTHWESTERN REGION 3  
TRIBAL WORKSHOP  
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center  
April 28, 2010, 9:00 – 11:00 am  
Summary of Discussion**

**Facilitator: Lucy Moore**  
**Recorder: Yolynda Begay**

**Participants:**

Steve Abeyta, Environmental Manager, Pueblo of Isleta  
Frank Jiron, Forestry Coordinator, Pueblo of Isleta  
Adam Ringia, Natural Resources Department, Pueblo of Laguna  
Joe Early, Laguna Pueblo, Native American liaison, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Cordell Tecube, Environmental Director, Jicarilla Apache Nation  
Nathan Schroeder, Restoration Division Manager, Pueblo of Santa Ana  
Jerald Peabody, Natural Resources Director, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe  
Harold Russell, Natural Resource Specialist, BIA Navajo Region  
Nels Roanhorse, Forester, BIA Navajo Region

**FS Staff present:**

Corbin Newman, Regional Forester, Southwestern Region 3  
Bob Davis, Director of EAP & Watershed, FS Region 3  
Yolynda Begay, Assistant to Regional Social Scientist, FS Region 3  
Cynthia Benedict, Heritage Resource Program Manager and Tribal Liaison, Cibola NF  
Nancy Rose, Cibola National Forest Supervisor

**Welcome, Introductions, Presentations:**

Lucy welcomed the tribal representatives, described the agenda and asked participants to introduce themselves.

Regional Forester Corbin Newman expressed his appreciation to the group for taking time to have this informal conversation with him and his staff. Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack and Chief Forester Tidwell both gave welcoming remarks by video. Bob Davis, Director of Planning, gave a powerpoint presentation describing the rule revision process.

**Discussion:**

Relationship between FS and Tribes:

There were questions about an apparent disconnect between the Forest Service and Tribes. There were no tribal lands identified, for instance, on the presentation map in the powerpoint. Tribes need clarification on the relationship between the Forest Service and tribes.

The Regional Forester noted that the rule revision is contemplating an “all-lands approach” that would bring the FS and adjacent landowners together to collaborate on management issues. He urged those present to make recommendations for what the rule should say regarding collaboration with tribes and an all-lands approach.

Participants asked about the regional tribal program manager, who was in Phoenix at a concurrent tribal workshop. They were concerned that they did not know him or what his function is.

In some Ranger Districts, in the Cibola for instance, the Forest Service staff are proactive and have a good working relationship with neighboring tribes.

#### Tribal Consultation and Communication:

Tribal representatives wanted to be sure that the FS understood that consulting with the BIA is not a “one stop” consultation with tribes. True consultation requires direct contact with the tribe. There may be confidentiality issues that affect a tribe’s ability to collaborate with an agency like the Forest Service. Certain sacred sites or critical cultural areas may not be able to be mapped or talked about specifically.

Because of internal tribal issues and organization, staff that need to participate in an event like this workshop may not be notified until the last minute. Tribal representatives asked that the appropriate staff be copied on all correspondence. The FS can follow the example of the Fish and Wildlife Service that keeps a current and comprehensive data base of tribal leadership and staff and their contact information. Longer comment or response periods would also help tribes participate more fully. By the time a tribal official received the CFRP letter of interest, there was only one week left to respond.

Tribal representatives asked FS staff to be aware of the historical ties tribes have to lands, both within their boundaries and outside. Their uses of the resources and the value of those resources culturally are different from other users. The activities of others on, or near, those lands can have a huge impact on tribal people.

#### Traditional Cultural Properties:

The Rule should specifically address TCPs and require a full government-to-government process that begins early on and continues to decision-making.

So many FS activities impact TCPs. Cultural use should be considered one of the multiple uses of FS land. Climate change and FS responses will impact TCPs, as will activities in upstream watersheds.

Staff, whether or not they are tribal members, may find themselves in the dark about TCPs and sacred sites on and off tribal or FS lands. It is difficult for them to know sometimes why certain decisions are made by leadership with respect to a certain area. Some tribes have established Historical Preservation Offices to help deal with the need for protection on the one hand, and confidentiality on the other.

### Integrating traditional knowledge into IRMPs:

Tribes emphasized the importance of including traditional knowledge in the planning process. They urged contacting those with traditional knowledge early, before the project is defined. They also recommended learning from projects that have worked.

There are examples of successful incorporation of this traditional knowledge in tribal IRMPs. Navajo Nation has an IRMP that includes a project to support a Navajo rug weaving community by giving a grant for windmills for their churro sheep. Native planners can help FS planners to integrate similar traditional priorities and knowledge with scientific knowledge in their IRMPs. There are also native groups that can help, like the Navajo Medicine Man's association. The tribal subcommittee of the Southwest Strategy is also a source of information and connections.

Ideally, there would be tribal people with this kind of traditional and cultural knowledge employed by the FS. Participants recommended flexibility in job requirements to allow for more native expertise on staff.

### Economies:

Many tribes have an economic interest in forest resources. The Navajo Nation developed their timber industry as a 638 program. There is a ten year forest plan, but no money to implement it, and no market for the resource. The regional guidelines and cost analysis are no longer available. The timber stands uncut, creating a fire hazard.

The Navajo Nation also has three large greenhouses which are vacant and offer great collaborative potential with the Forest Service. The last seedlings went to the Apache Sitgreaves NF. The greenhouses are available for joint projects with the FS and could become income producers for the tribe.

The Jicarilla lands lie between two forests, and activities on the forest lands impact the management of tribal resources, like deer, and affect the economy of the tribe.

### Fire management:

The Navajo Nation has had three or four successful fire management collaborations with the Forest Service. The Southwest Coordinating Agency Group has been key in this success.

### Field trips/site visits:

Tribes emphasized the importance of agency visits to tribal lands, both to establish a working relationship and to see resources firsthand. It is also a good way for new (or old) FS staff to gain some of the traditional, ecological and cultural knowledge from tribal staff and members. These visits can help the planning process go more smoothly and build continuity for FS staff.

### Priorities:

Tribal representatives acknowledged the changing priorities as tribal leadership changes, sometimes year by year. These priorities may conflict with FS priorities.

A participant observed that fire management seems to take the lion's share of funding in the FS budget. Funds for fire are included in the restoration category, and too often restoration is short-changed. There should be a way to protect those restoration funds.

All-lands approach:

Tribal representatives observed that when FS and tribal objectives and priorities do not match, efforts can be wasted. For instance, if the FS eradicates Salt Cedar on their side of an ecological unit, but the Tribe does not, the next year the seeds from the tribal side will re-seed the FS lands with Salt Cedar. The same can be true in reverse, with a tribal priority not being supported by FS actions. A broader scale management could bring these objectives and funding into alignment for the benefit of both jurisdictions. The group recommended "Ecological Unit Projects" based on soils or watersheds, and that cross boundaries when necessary.

Endangered species/species diversity:

Some questioned whether diversity is an appropriate goal for the rule. More is not necessarily better, they said. There is not a great diversity of species in the southwest, and efforts to increase diversity may be counterproductive. Because much of their lands are undeveloped, tribes have provided habitat for many species. But they do not want to be held responsible for those species, or become habitat for additional species.

**Concluding remarks from the Regional Forester, Corbin Newman**

Regional Forester Newman said that he had learned a great deal from the conversation with tribal and BIA staff.

He understands the critical nature of tribal connections to the land – historical, economic, cultural and religious. He believes that the Traditional Cultural Properties designation must be included in the revised planning rule. He also said the rule should identify a role for the FS as facilitator of appropriate engagement with tribes, including collaboration, informal conversations, and formal consultation.

He understands that the FS needs to improve its communication with tribal leadership and staff to insure that there is ample time for response to invitations and requests. The FS also needs to update and make comprehensive its data base for tribal contacts.

Any plan, he added, should evaluate the land holistically, not just limited to FS lands, and that traditional cultural knowledge should be respected and utilized in evaluating and making decisions for those lands.

Summary prepared by Lucy Moore. Please contact her with questions or comments.  
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