



File Code: 1920

Date: January 26, 2012

Dear _____:

In December 2009, the Forest Service started preparing a new National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule. Throughout the rulemaking process, we engaged the public, Tribes, and Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs) in a collaborative process. This included many consultation and collaborative opportunities for federally recognized Indian Tribes and ANCs, such as Tribal conference calls and roundtables. Thank you to all of the Tribes and ANCs who participated in these consultation and collaborative efforts across the country.

The Notice of Availability for the final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the Planning Rule will be published in the February 3, 2012 *Federal Register*. The PEIS is now available on the Planning Rule website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule>. You may request printed copies of the PEIS by sending a written request to the Director, Ecosystem Management Coordination Staff, Forest Service, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-1104.

In addition to the responses to public comments provided in Appendix O of the PEIS, responses to the comments submitted by Tribes and ANCs during the public comment period are available at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/planningrule/tribalrelations>.

The National Environmental Policy Act requires the Federal Government to wait a minimum of 30 days after publication of a final PEIS before issuing a decision. A final rule and record of decision will be published in the *Federal Register* in approximately 30 days. We look forward to continued collaboration and consultation with Tribes and ANCs as individual forests and grasslands begin revising or amending their plans under the new rule. Additionally, we are developing directives to implement the new rule. You will have the opportunity to review and comment on the directives before they are finalized.

Thank you for your involvement throughout the development of the proposed rule and leading up to the preferred alternative. We greatly appreciate your input in the rulemaking process.

Sincerely,

/s/ Leslie A. C. Weldon
LESLIE A. C. WELDON
Deputy Chief, National Forest System

