



**U.S. Forest Service
2012 Planning Rule Proposed Directives
Press Release**

Forest Service seeks public input on planning rule directives

Comments to be accepted for 60 days

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15, 2013 – The U.S. Forest Service has released and is seeking public comment on the proposed 2012 Planning Rule Directives, the key set of agency guidance documents that will direct implementation of the 2012 Planning Rule.

Today's announcement will be followed by the publication of a notice in the Federal Register of the availability of the proposed directives for public review and comment. The Federal Register notice will begin the official 60 day comment period.

The proposed directives will help the Forest Service achieve the vision articulated in the 2012 Planning Rule – to develop, revise and amend land management plans that protect and restore National Forests and Grasslands for the benefit of communities, natural resources and the environment. The Agency's intent is to ensure an adaptive land management planning process that is inclusive, efficient, collaborative and science-based to promote healthy, resilient, diverse and productive national forests and grasslands.

The 2012 Planning Rule was developed after more than two and a half years of public input, including more than 300,000 public comments. In proposing these directives and publishing them for public comment, the Agency intends to build on this participatory and open process. Feedback from the public is sought and encouraged during the 60-day comment period. A Federal Advisory Committee has also been formed to advise the Chief of the Forest Service and the Secretary of Agriculture on implementation of the new rule. One of the Committee's tasks includes reviewing and advising upon these proposed directives.

Forest Service directives consist of the Forest Service Manual and the Forest Service Handbook which contain the agency's policies that serve as the primary basis for internal management, and provide procedures and techniques to be used by resources specialists and planning staff engaging in the detailed work of land management planning for the national forests and grasslands.

A copy of the proposed directives, along with background information, can be obtained at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/planningrule/directives>, at any regional Forest Service office, or by calling (202) 205-1449.

The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Forest Service lands contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20 percent of the nation's clean water supply, a value estimated at \$27 billion per year.

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