



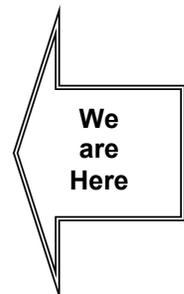
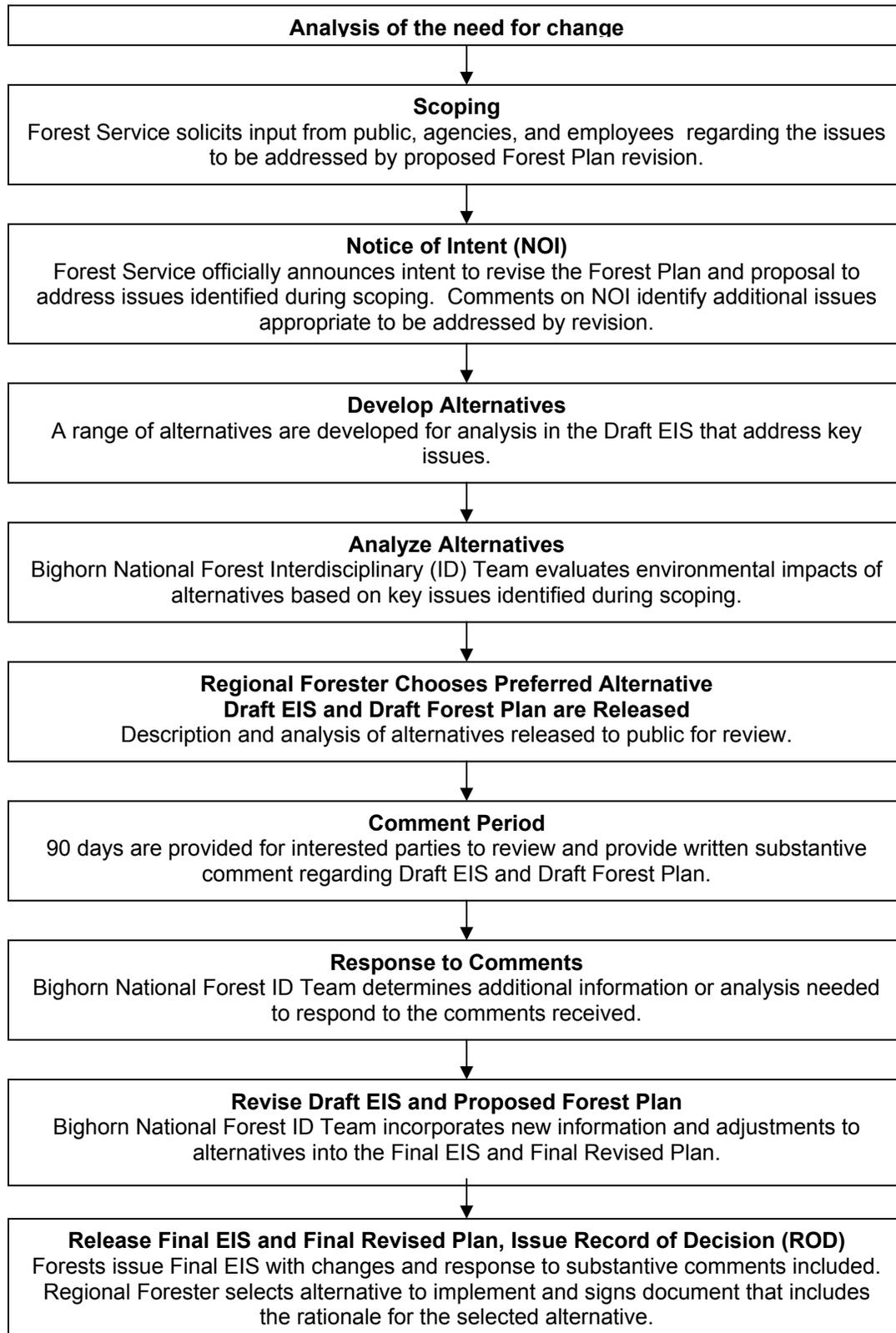
United States
Department of
Agriculture
Forest Service
Rocky Mountain
Region

BIGHORN NATIONAL FOREST

Draft Revised Land and Resource
Management Plan
Reviewer's Guide

June 2004

The Road to a Revised Forest Plan...





Welcome and thank you for participating in revising the Forest Plan for the Bighorn National Forest.

It's not necessary for you to read every page of the Draft EIS and Draft Plan to understand and comment on their contents. It is important to understand the purpose behind Forest Plan Revision, how the Plan and EIS documents are related, and how the Forest Service responds to comments.

This review guide is meant to provide an overview of Forest Plan revision, help you navigate the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Draft Forest Plan and provide guidance on commenting. This guide is not a substitute for the information in the Draft EIS or Draft Forest Plan.

What you'll need:

- This review guide (optional)
- The Draft EIS for Revision of the Bighorn National Forest Plan or Executive Summary
- The Draft Forest Plan for the Bighorn National Forest
- Map package
- Blank paper to take notes on and/or comment form (option-enclosed)
- Internet access (optional)
- Adequate time to read the document sections you are most interested in and formulate comments

Contents of this guide:

Speak the language Provides a quick guide to some key Forest Service planning terms.	Page 3
Adjusting our course to the future Answers the question: "Why are we revising the Forest Plan?"	Page 4
About Forest Plans Answers the question: "What is the function of a Forest Plan?"	Page 5
Points of interest Answers the question: "What should I be looking for?"	Page 6
Deciding where to go first Answers the question "Where should I look?"	Page 7
Map (outline) of the Draft EIS Answers the question: "What's in there?"	Page 8
Map (outline) of the Draft Forest Plan Answers the question: "What's in there?"	Page 10
Tips on effective commenting Answers the questions: "How do I comment? How are my comments used? How do I make sure my comments will count? Will I see a response to my comments?"	Page 11
On your way Last minute directions and where to go for help along the way	Page 12
Acknowledgements Special thanks to our cooperating agencies at the state and local level	Page 13
Comment Form	Page 14



Speak the language...

If you are entering unfamiliar territory as you prepare to review the Draft EIS and Draft Plan, you are not alone. There are many key terms that are peculiar to National Forest planning and which have specific connotations. Here are a few more important terms for revision. See additional definitions of terms in the glossary located at the back of the Draft EIS.

Quick Guide to Key Forest Service Planning Terms

Proposed Action = The project (revising the Forest Plan), set of activities, or decision that a federal agency intends to implement, as defined in National Environmental Policy Act regulations.

Purpose and Need = A general statement of what, where, how, when, and why the agency is proposing an action. It sets the scope and range for issues and alternatives carried forward for analysis.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) = A statement of environmental effects required for major federal actions under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). After release of the Draft EIS and Draft Forest Plan, an interdisciplinary team will review public comments and, as needed, will modify the Draft Forest Plan and the supporting analysis described in the Draft EIS. The Final EIS will then be issued along with a Record of Decision.

Issue = A subject or question of wide-spread public or internal discussion or interest regarding management of National Forest System.

Indicators = In the analysis of alternatives, indicators are used to measure the effects under resource issues expected to result from implementation of alternatives.

Alternative = An option for responding to the purpose and need.

Management Area = The Forest is generally divided into areas that carry common management objectives and specific management direction.

Range of Alternatives = Options for addressing the proposed action. Issues raised by the public, management concerns, and resource opportunities determine the appropriate range of alternatives.

Revision Topics = The five topics that were identified for Plan Revision. These are the topics that were used to differentiate between alternatives that drove alternative development.

Preferred Alternative = The alternative initially preferred by the Regional Forester, from the range of alternatives and effects identified in the Draft EIS. It is the alternative that he believes best resolves the management problems for each National Forest within the context of the mission and priorities of the Forest Service. This selection will be based on the completed analysis of alternatives that will be disclosed in the Draft EIS with a description of all alternatives and associated environmental effects.

Draft Forest Plan = The Draft Forest Plan will be based on the Preferred Alternative identified and described in the Draft EIS. The Draft Forest Plan results from extensive analysis and considerations addressed in the Draft EIS.

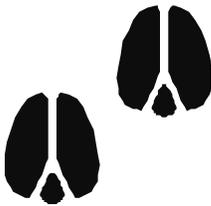
Selected Alternative = The alternative that is ultimately selected by the Regional Forester to become the Final Revised Forest Plan, which will guide future Forest Management based on public comments and further analysis after the Draft EIS. The selected alternative is described in the Record of Decision (ROD) along with the rationale for selection.

Final Revised Forest Plan = Based on the selected alternative, a final revised Forest Plan will then be issued.

Adjusting our course to the future

Forest management is a long journey. The journey on the Bighorn National Forest began with President Cleveland’s proclamation of the Bighorn Forest Reserve in 1897. Over time, Forest Plans have become more elaborate in how they have defined the goals and objectives for management along a 10 to 15-year piece of that journey. As on any long journey, we periodically check our current location, review the destination, and evaluate and consult with others to determine the best course to take to where we want to go. This is the point of the process to revise a Forest Plan.

The current Forest Plan for the Bighorn National Forest was implemented in 1985. This was the first effort under the National Forest Management Act of 1976 to formalize direction for management decisions pertaining specifically to this National Forest.



Why Revise Forest Plans?

National Forest management plans are generally revised on a 10-year cycle, or at least every 15 years. (National Forest Management Act, 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 219.10[g])

Forest Plans are revised to address:

- **Monitoring and evaluation results from implementing the current plans**
- **Forest plan and project-level appeal issues and decisions**
- **Lawsuit issues and decisions**
- **New scientific information**
- **Changed conditions of the land**
- **Changing public demands and public input**

Plan Revision

The Forest Supervisor of the Bighorn National Forest has determined that, while current Forest conditions are generally good, major changes have occurred since the current Forest Plan was published. It is time to refine our vision for future management.

The national forest will complete an **environmental analysis** and issue a **decision** and a **revised plan**.

The Forest will complete one environmental analysis, documented in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement which meets requirement of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for analyzing potential environmental effects for actions proposed on national forests.

The Draft Forest Plan is based on the alternative preferred by the Regional Forester. A Draft Forest Plan is developed at this point to provide insight into what the final revised forest plan might look like.

A New Look

The revised Forest Plan will look different and function differently from the current plan that was implemented in 1985. The current plan includes detailed direction. Often this detailed direction duplicates another source and can actually limit the options that may be considered for a project. The revised plan will be more strategic in nature and will not repeat direction included in Forest Service handbooks or manuals, Memorandums of Understanding, and regional or national directives. It will emphasize “Adaptive management,” which calls for amendment of the Forest Plan in the event of substantive resource or social change as needed.

About Forest Plans

also known as **Land and Resource Management Plans**

The function of the Forest Plan is to assure coordination of an incredibly diverse array of uses such as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, timber production, and other products and services as well as resource protection concerns regarding such issues as watershed management, wildlife and fish, and Wilderness. Multiple use allows for a range of activities to occur across the Forest. A forest plan does not make site-specific decisions, but it does provide a hierarchy of direction.

A Forest Plan makes six key decisions for managing a national forest on a landscape-scale in the long term. (36 CFR 219, 1982 regulations):

1. Establish goals and desired conditions
2. Establish management areas and management area direction
3. Establish standards and guidelines
4. Designate land suitable for timber harvest and establish the Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ)
5. Establish monitoring and evaluation requirements
6. Make recommendations to Congress (i.e. Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers)

HEIRARCHY OF FOREST PLAN DIRECTION

Forestwide Goals and Objectives

These are broad statements that describe overall condition the Forest will strive to achieve but are not amendable to direct measurement and there are no time frames for achieving them. *EXAMPLE: Improve the capability of the Nation's forests and rangelands to provide diverse, high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities.*

Forestwide Strategies

These provide the course of action to be taken to accomplish the goals and objectives. Strategies are generally met by implementing projects or activities. *EXAMPLE: Develop or identify one day-use trail system on a scenic byway within 15 years*

Forestwide Standards and Guidelines

Standards are specific required actions that must be incorporated into future decisions to help achieve the desired conditions. Guidelines are a preferred or advisable course of action or level of attainment. *EXAMPLE- Guideline: Provide parking, trailhead panels for trail information/interpretation, and appropriate sanitation facilities at trailheads as needed.*

Management Area Direction

Goals, objectives, standards and guidelines identified for specific areas (management areas) that will help achieve Forest-wide desired conditions. *EXAMPLE: Guideline: Manage for an adopted ROS Class of rural or roaded natural.*

Project Decisions

Natural resource managers develop site-specific decisions that contribute to achieving the Forest-wide desired condition. *EXAMPLE: A trail construction project along a scenic byway should be constructed in such a way that meets all of the above direction while meeting all other applicable regulatory requirements and Forest Service directives.*



Points of interest

The analysis in the Draft EIS and the direction in the Draft Plan is driven by the Purpose and Need and defined by issues and regulatory requirements identified at the early stages of revision. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an analysis of potential environmental impacts for Federal activities that pose a significant environmental effect. In the Draft Forest Plan, each stated “desired condition” and goal addresses the Purpose and Need as it relates to one or more resource issues. Each objective, standard, and guideline provide direction on the “how” and “when” to accomplish the desired condition.

PURPOSE & NEED-

The starting place

See Chapter 1 of Draft EIS

Issues relating to the Purpose & Need include requirements and concerns to be addressed by Forest Plan Revision identified by interested individuals, other government agencies, and

Here are some important points to consider as you review the documents.

Questions to ask:

- **What is the stated Purpose & Need?**
- **Are your issues accurately represented?**
- **Are all key issues included?**
(Remember, to be considered appropriate, issues must fit within the stated purpose and need for revising the Forest Plan.)

ALTERNATIVES –

based on issues

See Chapter 2 of Draft EIS

Range of reasonable, different ways to address the issues by altering the frequency, approach, or amounts.

Questions to ask:

- **Are there other alternatives that better meet the Purpose & Need?**
- **How could alternatives be adjusted to better address the range of issues?**
- **Is there at least one alternative or parts of alternatives that addresses your concerns?**

ANALYSIS –

based on issues

See Chapter 3 of Draft EIS

Potential environmental effects of each alternative described in relation to each issue identified above.

Questions to ask:

- **How well does the environmental effects analysis consider all true effects anticipated and does it utilize the best information available?**

DRAFT PLAN – based on preferred alternative

A Draft Plan is for the Forest based on the alternative preferred by the Regional Forester.

Questions to ask:

- **Are the management areas defined and allocated appropriately for the theme of the preferred alternative?**
- **Do the standards and guidelines address the stated goals and objectives?**
- **If implemented, are the trade-offs reasonable while meeting the most needs and concerns?**



Deciding where to go first

You do not need to read every word or even every section to answer the questions that are most important to you, especially once you understand the connections between sections of the documents.

The following pages outline the contents in the Draft EIS and the Draft Forest Plan. Different approaches can be used to review the documents.

Answer these questions to choose a route:

- Q. Do you want an overview of the Draft EIS and Draft Forest Plan?**
See...The Executive Summary then read the Draft Forest Plan and view maps of alternatives.
- Q. What topic(s) are you most interested in (water, wildlife, recreation, etc)?**
See...Chapter 1 of Draft EIS for a discussion on the issue then **track individual resource issues** through the analysis of effects in Chapter 3 and relevant appendices. Continue on to the Draft Forest Plan to see how management direction is provided for these resources.
- Q. Are you interested in potential effects for specific area(s) of the Forest?**
See...Chapters 2 and 3 of Draft EIS and the map package
- Q. Are you interested in proposed management for specific area(s) of the Forest?**
See...Chapter 2 of the Draft Plan and map package.
- Q. Are you interested in specific impact analyses?**
See...Chapter 3 of the Draft EIS and relevant appendices.
- Q. Are you looking for a description of the alternatives that were considered?**
See...Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS.
- Q. Do you want to know what kind of management direction is proposed across the Forests?**
See...Chapter 1 of the Draft Forest Plan.

Appendices are presented as background or reference information related to specifics in the main part of the documents. You will usually only go to an appendix after finding a reference in one of the chapters of the document.

Road map for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

The Draft EIS represents interdisciplinary (from many resource specialists) input and analysis, public review and comment, a defined decision process, and subsequent disclosure of the analysis and decision.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement	What's in there?
<p>Chapter 1: Purpose of and Need for Action</p> <p>Answers the “Who, What, Where, When, Why” questions about the proposed action (Forest Plan Revision).</p>	<p>Describes Proposed Action (revise Forest Plan).</p> <p>Discusses reasons for revision including legal requirements, changed conditions, and need for change in management.</p> <p>Explains any other analyses that influence the proposed action (Roadless, etc.).</p> <p>Explains decisions to be made and identifies the decision-maker.</p> <p>Summarizes the scoping (input from interested parties) and significant issues that will be addressed or deleted from further analysis. These issues frame the development and analysis of alternatives.</p> <p>Previews remaining chapters of Draft EIS.</p>
<p>Chapter 2: Alternatives Including the Preferred Alternative</p>	<p>Describes process used to develop the alternatives.</p> <p>Explains range of alternatives, which includes alternatives considered but dropped from further analysis.</p> <p>Describes alternatives (potential actions including “No Action” alternative).</p> <p>Summarizes environmental consequences of implementing each alternative, including projected outcomes and related mitigation. Compares projected outcomes of alternatives.</p> <p>Identifies the Preferred Alternative.</p>
<p>Chapter 3: Affected Environment and Environmental Effects</p>	<p>Describes physical, biological, social, and economic setting of the Forest.</p> <p>Describes area of analysis for each issue and expected outcomes for each alternative.</p> <p>Describes relationship of short-term uses and long-term outcomes.</p> <p>Discloses any irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources and identifies unavoidable adverse effects. Includes Environmental Justice evaluation.</p>

Road Map for the Draft EIS (continued)	
Chapter 4: Preparers	Lists people involved in preparation of the Draft EIS and describes their roles.
Chapter 5: Agencies consulted and list of recipients	List of agencies, organizations, and individuals that provided input and parties that received a copy of Draft EIS
Reference	Other sources of information referenced in the Draft EIS.
Appendix A: Issues, Concerns, Opportunities	Describes the public involvement process that led to identification of Plan Revision issues.
Appendix B: Description of Analysis	Describes the analysis procedures used in the Draft EIS.
Appendix C: Inventory and Evaluation of Roadless Areas	Description, analysis and summary of Roadless Areas on the Forest.
Appendix D: Wild and Scenic Rivers Process	Discusses Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and considerations in forest plan revision.
Appendix E: Research Natural Areas	Description, analysis and summary of Research Natural Areas on the Forest.
Appendix F: Draft Biological Assessment	Addresses the potential biological effects associated with implementing any of the alternatives.
Appendix G: Glossary	Explanation of terms used in the Draft EIS.
Appendix H: Desired Future Condition	Contains a brief description of each alternative, and how the management areas define the alternative desired future condition.

Road Map for the Draft Forest Plan

The document often referred to as “The Forest Plan” is actually a written strategy that is based on the alternative preferred by the Regional Forester.

Draft Forest Plan	What’s in there?
Chapter 1 – Introduction and Forestwide Direction	Presents management direction for the Forest as a whole. Provides Forest-wide goals, desired conditions, objectives, standards, and guidelines.
Chapter 2 – Management Area Prescriptions	Presents specific management direction for Management Areas. Provides themes, settings, desired conditions, standards, and guidelines for each management area.
Chapter 3 – Geographic Areas	Links the forest plan to management at a landscape or watershed scale.
Chapter 4 – Monitoring and Evaluation	Provides programmatic direction for monitoring and evaluating plan implementation
Appendix A – National Goals	Describes national Forest Service goals.
Appendix B – Key National and Regional Policies	Lists key national and regional policies for all topic areas.
Appendix C – Federal and State Statutes, Regulations and Executive Orders	Lists particularly relevant laws, regulations and Executive Orders pertaining to the Bighorn National Forest.
Appendix D – Forest Plan Implementation	Step-by-step summary of implementing the Revised Plan
Appendix E – Oil and Gas Leasing Stipulations	Displays the stipulations applied to oil and gas leases to be consistent with Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines, and an explanation of the reasons for the stipulations.
Appendix F – Land Ownership Analysis Guide	Lists guidelines that will be used to analyze land exchange proposals presented to the Forest.
Appendix G – Emphasis Species	Describes emphasis species for the Revised Plan, the process used to select Management Indicator Species (MIS) for the Revised Plan, and how implementation may occur under the Revised Plan.
Appendix H – Historic Districts	A map showing the Forest’s identified Historic Districts.
Appendix I: Paleontological Resources	Describes a classification system based upon the probability of yielding paleontological resources that are of concern to land managers.

Tips on effective commenting

Perhaps you have already been involved in identifying issues and developing alternatives for Forest Plan revision. Now is your chance to have your say again and let the Forest Service know if we “hit the mark” on the management direction presented in the Draft Forest Plan as well as the issues and alternatives as defined in the Draft EIS. There are a few important points you need to know about how the Forest Service responds to comments and how we can both get the most out of your review of these documents.



After all, if you are going to take time to comment, you want it to count – right?

How important is my comment?

It is your opportunity to affect alternatives and analysis that form the basis for a final decision.

How are comments used?

All comments on the Draft EIS and Proposed Plan will be considered. As a result:

- Alternatives will be modified
- New alternatives may be identified and analyzed
- Analysis will be expanded, modified or adjusted.
- Factual corrections

Will I get a response to my comment?

Substantive comments and Forest Service responses will be documented in the Final EIS.

- A **substantive comment** provides factual information, professional opinion, or informed judgment that is germane to the action being proposed.
- Substantive comments are **specific, comparative, or solution-oriented**.
- **This is not a voting process**. Comments are considered on basis of content not quantity.
- **While all comments on the DEIS and Draft Plan will be considered we can only provide detailed responses to substantive comments.**
- **Substantive comments are considered by decision-maker and may be cited in the ROD**

The Forest Service can not respond in the Final EIS to these kinds of comments:

“The Draft Plan looks good.” (Example of non-specific comment)

“I think the Regional Forester should select Alternative X to implement.” (Example of opinion statement without supporting reasons)

This is the kind of comment we can respond to:

“The management direction for recreation in the Dispersed Recreation Management Area should do a better job of promoting additional motorized access.” (Example of substantive comment.)

Refer to page 6 of this guide for some questions to consider while reviewing the documents.

See the Comment Form on page 14



On your way...

With some basic direction and “supplies”, you are ready for smooth traveling. Remember, these are **draft** documents and your input will help shape the final analysis and decision.

-
- Don't forget your maps to the Draft EIS and Draft Plan.
 - After you complete your review, send your comments into the address on the comment form.
 - If you have questions, difficulties, or take a wrong turn, call for help:
 - Bernie Bornong, Forest Planner 307-674-2685
 - David Anderson, Forest Information Manager 307-674-2659
 - John Hagengruber, Recreation Planner 307-674-2683
 - Remember to check the forest plan revision web page for additional information.
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/bighorn/projects/planrevision/>

Important Points to remember...

- **These are DRAFT documents – changes *will* be made based on public input!**
- **The preferred alternative is a template, a base, that will be used to develop the final, selected alternative.**
 - The best aspects of the other alternatives will be incorporated into Alternative D for the final, selected, alternative.
 - We did **not** develop a hybrid, ‘perfect’, alternative for the Draft EIS/Plan. Rather, we kept the ‘pure’, theme-oriented alternatives that have been developed over the past 2 years.
- **Keep in mind the difference between Revised Plan direction (see the six Forest Plan decisions on page 5) and the effects shown in the Draft EIS.** The six Plan decisions **will** guide the management of the Bighorn NF over the next 10-15 years. The effects are our best estimates of what may occur over the life of the Plan, and they help in understanding and evaluating the alternatives. However, the effects estimates are just that – *estimates*, and they may or may not occur.

Thank You...

To all of you who have participated in public meetings, field trips, or otherwise provided input to the Revision process to date. Your input has helped create a better Draft EIS/Plan!

A special thank you has been earned by the members of the Bighorn Plan Revision Steering Committee. This group of officially-recognized cooperators have attended approximately 26 meetings since early 2001, and has provided input, comments and information on all aspects of the Draft EIS and Draft Plan. They have assisted in the public meetings and field trips, and their subject area expertise has helped us better understand State agency, local government, and Forest user's perspectives.

The cooperating agencies, consisting of both local governments and State agencies, that have been involved include:

State of Wyoming

Governor's Planning Office
Game and Fish
State Parks
Dept. of Agriculture
Dept. of Environmental
Quality
Wyoming Business Council
Wyoming Forestry Division
State Historic Preservation
Office
Wyoming Highway Department
University of Wyoming

County Commissions

Big Horn County
Johnson County
Sheridan County
Washakie County

Conservation Districts

Lake DeSmet
Sheridan County
Shoshone
South Big Horn County
Washakie County
Powder River

Comment Form Draft EIS & Draft Forest Plan



Please use this form to offer your views on the Forest Plan Revision process, including the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Draft Forest Plan for the Bighorn National Forest (NF). Be aware that all comments are part of the planning record, which is public information. Comments from the public help the decision maker to choose an alternative for implementation. All comments will be summarized in the Final EIS.

Send comments to:

Forest Plan Revision
Bighorn National Forest
2013 Eastside Second St.
Sheridan, WY 82801 OR...
r2_bighorn_planning@fs.fed.us

Name _____ **Address** _____

Title _____

Organization _____

You can comment on any part(s) of the Draft EIS and Draft Forest Plan. The following topics will help focus your thoughts and help us to better address your comments. You do not have to fill in every section below in order to comment. At the bottom of the page, you will find a place to comment on topics other than issues, alternatives, management direction, and monitoring. Use additional pages if necessary. Please write legibly.

Issues in the Draft EIS (please check the topics you are commenting on)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Vegetation | <input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic and Social Sustainability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife/Biodiversity | <input type="checkbox"/> Wilderness Additions | <input type="checkbox"/> Range management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation and | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Areas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Timber | Travel Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Role of Fire | <input type="checkbox"/> Scenery | |

Draft Forest Plan for the Bighorn National Forest (please check the topics you are commenting on)

- Forest-wide Management Direction
- Management Area Direction
- Geographic Areas
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Appendices _____

(specify which ones)

Any other comments related to the Draft EIS and Draft Forest Plan? (use additional pages if needed)