



Forest Service



United States Department of Agriculture

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TONTO NATIONAL FOREST PLAN REVISION

UPDATES:

Next round of public meetings
Forest specialists collect data
Comment period for planning rule ended

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For more information:

Plan Revision on the Web:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto/plan-revision/index.shtml>

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Tonto National Forest plans additional public meetings for spring of 2008

The Tonto National Forest held two rounds of public meetings in each of the Forest's six districts during late winter and early spring of 2007. The meetings produced a lot of good information, and also began a dialog between planners and the public about plan revision and needs for change. The next rounds of public meetings will begin in the spring of 2008 to continue that dialog and share new insights and information.

FOREST SERVICE SPECIALISTS CONTINUE TO GATHER DATA

There is a great deal of information that specialists on the Tonto National Forest must gather for plan revision. Part of this data collection is to determine what are the conditions on the forest in a manner that is consistent with other forests, is reliable and useful, and can be easily understood. This data collection includes determining the composition and condition of different vegetation communities, what species exist on the forest, what has been the history of fires and various uses, what are the current uses and amounts, and what are the trends. Much of the data will be translated into Geographic Information System (GIS) format so that resource conditions can be mapped.

Decisions also have to be made about the temporal and geographic scale and scope of the information, as well as what to do about uncertainties and gaps.

Once all the information is gathered, validated, and mapped it will allow planners and the public to know both the current condition and trends of various resources, and then determine what management activities can and should be changed through plan revision to achieve desired conditions. This will also help everyone understand how the topics that have been identified as needing to change will be prioritized. The information that is gathered will be shared with the public.

Comment period for revised planning rule ended October 22

In response to the Ninth Circuit Court's March 2007 injunction against the Forest Service's 2005 planning rule, the Service consulted with other Federal agencies and prepared an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the rule. The 2005 rule was then again proposed, and this proposed rule, along with four alternatives and an EIS, were published in the Federal Register

for a 60-day public comment period. That public comment period ended on October 22, and the agency will analyze all the comments received. A new rule is expected to be implemented sometime this winter. During the time since the injunction, and until a new rule is in place, Tonto National Forest planners have continued to work on plan revision in a rule-neutral manner.

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