

**Appendix C**

**DIRECTION FROM FOREST SERVICE MANUAL AND HANDBOOK  
APPLICABLE TO DETERMINATION OF PLAN AMENDMENT  
SIGNIFICANCE**

**DIRECTION FROM FOREST SERVICE MANUAL AND HANDBOOK  
APPLICABLE TO DETERMINATION OF PLAN AMENDMENT SIGNIFICANCE  
FROM FSM 1920**

1922.5 - Amendment. The need to amend a forest plan may arise from several sources, including the following:

1. Recommendations of the Forest interdisciplinary team based on findings that result from monitoring and evaluating implementation of the forest plan (36 CFR 219.12(k) and FSM 1922.7);
2. Findings that existing or proposed permits, contracts, cooperative agreements, and other instruments authorizing occupancy and use are not consistent with the forest plan but should be approved (36 CFR 219.10(e));
3. Changes in proposed implementation schedules (36 CFR 219.10(e)) necessary to reflect differences between funding levels contemplated in the forest plan and funds actually appropriated;
4. Changes necessitated by resolution of administrative appeals;
5. Changes to correct planning errors;
6. Changes necessitated by changed physical, social, or economic conditions; and
7. Implementation of management practices outside the scope of the forest plan.

Upon receiving advice of the interdisciplinary team that the plan requires change, the responsible official shall:

1. Determine whether proposed changes to a forest plan are significant or not significant in accordance with the requirements of 36 CFR 219.10(e) and (f), 36 CFR 219.12(k), and sections 1922.51 and 1922.52 that follow;
2. Document the determination of whether the change is significant or not significant in a decision document; and
3. Provide appropriate public notification of the decision prior to implementing the changes.

Findings of the responsible official regarding the consistency of management practices and actions with the forest plan and the determination of the significance of an amendment are an integral part of decisions. As such, they are appealable.

1922.51 - Changes to the Forest Plan That Are Not Significant. Changes to the forest plan that are not significant can result from:

1. Actions that do not significantly alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management;
2. Adjustments of management area boundaries or management prescriptions resulting from further on-site analysis when the adjustments do not cause significant changes in the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management; and
3. Minor changes in standards and guidelines.

4. Opportunities for additional management practices that will contribute to achievement of the management prescription.

The Forest Supervisor must prepare an amendment to the forest plan to accommodate a change determined not to be significant. Appropriate public notification is required prior to implementation of the amendment.

1922.52 - Changes to the Forest Plan That Are Significant. The following examples are indicative of circumstances that may cause a significant change to a forest plan:

1. Changes that would significantly alter the long-term relationship between levels of multiple-use goods and services originally projected (36 CFR 219.10(e)); and
2. Changes that may have an important effect on the entire forest plan or affect land and resources throughout a large portion of the planning area during the planning period.

When a significant change needs to be made to the forest plan, the Forest Supervisor must prepare an amendment.

Documentation of a significant change, including the necessary analysis and evaluation should focus on the issues that have triggered the need for the change. In developing and obtaining approval of the amendment for significant change to the forest plan, follow the same procedures as are required for developing and approving the forest plan (36 CFR 219.10(f) and 36 CFR 219.12).

#### **FROM FSH 1909.12 CHAPTER 5**

5.32 - Process to Amend the Forest Plan. The following actions must be taken when a proposal is not consistent with the forest plan and the proposal is to be considered further for implementation.

1. Prepare a proposed amendment to the forest plan.
2. Make a determination of the significance of the change to the forest plan under 16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(4), 36 CFR 219.10(f), and FSM 1922.5.

It is important to distinguish between significance of the change to a forest plan and significance of the environmental impacts of the proposed action as defined by Council on Environmental Quality regulations found at 40 CFR 1500 to 1508.

3. The following factors are to be used when determining whether a proposed change to a forest plan is significant or not significant, based on NFMA planning requirements. Other factors may also be considered, depending on the circumstances.
  - a. Timing. Identify when the change is to take place. Determine whether the change is necessary during or after the plan period (the first decade) or whether the change is to take place after the next scheduled revision of the forest plan. In most cases, the later the change, the less likely it is to be significant for the current forest plan. If the change is to take place outside the plan period, forest plan amendment is not required.
  - b. Location and Size. Determine the location and size of the area involved in the change. Define the relationship of the affected area to the overall

planning area. In most cases, the smaller the area affected, the less likely the change is to be a significant change in the forest plan.

- c. Goals, Objectives, and Outputs. Determine whether the change alters long-term relationships between the levels of goods and services projected by the forest plan. Consider whether an increase in one type of output would trigger an increase or decrease in another. Determine whether there is a demand for goods or services not discussed in the forest plan. In most cases, changes in outputs are not likely to be a significant change in the forest plan unless the change would forego the opportunity to achieve an output in later years.
  - d. Management Prescription. Determine whether the change in a management prescription is only for a specific situation or whether it would apply to future decisions throughout the planning area. Determine whether or not the change alters the desired future condition of the land and resources or the anticipated goods and services to be produced.
4. If the amendment is determined not to be a significant change to the forest plan, the Forest Supervisor may implement the amendment following appropriate public notification and satisfactory compliance with Forest Service environmental policies and procedures for the project or action.
  5. If the change to the forest plan is determined to be significant, follow the required 10 step planning process found at 36 CFR 219.12. Preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) is mandatory (16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(4), 36 CFR 219.10(f), and 36 CFR 219.12). The Forest Supervisor shall determine the issues, concerns, and opportunities to be addressed in the amendment and will normally concentrate on those issues that have generated the need for change.

5.4 - DECISION AND DOCUMENTATION. The analysis and evaluation of management practices and actions provide information and findings for reaching a well reasoned decision. Decisions made following analysis must be documented to: provide a public record; facilitate public notification; explain the rationale for selection of an action; and document the findings addressed above at 5.31. The process depicted in exhibit 01 is not precise in either the order or timing of events it predicts. Discretion must be used in determining consistency with and the need to change the forest plan. The following is required.

1. In order to assure the responsible official and the public that all actions are consistent with the forest plan, a finding of consistency must be a part of each decision document. The finding must indicate consistency with the general management requirements of the forest plan (36 CFR 219.27), as well as indicating consistency with the specific standards and guidelines. This finding need not be lengthy or detailed, but should briefly state why the proposed action is consistent with the particular management direction or requirements of law or regulation. The finding should include appropriate references to the pages in the forest plan, planning records, or environmental documents used in making the consistency determination. This finding is an appealable decision (36 CFR 211.18).

2. In the case of a change to the forest plan that is determined not to be significant, the Forest Supervisor documents the decision in the appropriate document and at the same time, if the activity is approved, amends the forest plan and implements the project or activity following appropriate public notification. Once the amendment is approved, permanently attach a copy of the amendment to all reference copies (36 CFR 219.6(i)(3)) of the forest plan. This finding is an appealable decision (36 CFR 211.18).

3. In the case of a change to the forest plan that is determined to be significant, follow the same procedure required for development of a forest plan (36 CFR 219.10(f)). Prepare a record of decision that accompanies the final environmental impact statement and address both the project and the change to be made to the forest plan. The decision is appealable (36 CFR 211.18) once the Regional Forester has signed the record of decision. When 45 days have elapsed since signing the record of decision, the forest plan is amended and the project or activity may be implemented.

4. Instructions for documentation necessary to comply with Forest Service environmental policies and procedures are found in FSM 1950 and FSH 1909.15.