



Land Management Plan Revision

Draft **Public Engagement & Participation Strategy (PEPS) Summary**

Updated November 14, 2022

USDA Forest Service

1. Background and Goals

This document provides a summary of the draft Public Engagement and Participation Strategy (PEPS) for the Lolo National Forest Land Management Plan Revision. This information is intended to solicit input on how the revision team should engage with you during this process. Please refer to our [Lolo Revision Website](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/lolo/planrevision) (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/lolo/planrevision>) for more information about plan revision. Our goal in obtaining your input is to:

- Clarify opportunities and expectations for the public to be involved in the process;
- Identify methods to be used to inform the public, seek input, and how input will be used;
- Identify opportunities to build and maintain relationships, trust, and capacity; and,
- Identify opportunities for shared learning and understanding.

You will find question prompts throughout this document designed to solicit your ideas. You may utilize these prompts to help formulate your input; however, feel free to offer any suggestions that are relevant to you. We are listening – we want to know how best to reach out to you during this important work. Please submit any input or ideas you may have to our Lolo Plan Revision email address:

SM.FS.LNFRevision@usda.gov.

The optional prompts for feedback that you will find in this document include:

1. Who are we missing in our identification of interested parties?
2. What additional platforms and opportunities for feedback are needed?
3. What engagement tools and materials work best, or what are we missing? Where should we host workshops, field trips, and/or post information?
4. What topic areas are of the highest interest to you to provide input via in-person or virtual workshop opportunities?

1.1 Leader's Commitment

The leader's commitment from the responsible official, Lolo National Forest Supervisor Carolyn Upton, is that the Lolo Forest Plan Revision will:

- Be informed by external engagement that is inclusive, respectful, and transparent.
- Meet all the requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule.
- Acknowledge the dynamic, complex, and evolving nature of both human society and the physical and biological environments.

1.2 Desired Outcomes Public Engagement & Participation

Forest Service staff intends to immediately and continually set a tone of broad and transparent engagement, in recognition of the wide array of interests that are likely to be involved in plan revision. Agency staff will employ engagement strategies designed to meet people where they are. The following broad outcomes are desired from public engagement:

- Meet the requirements of the 2012 planning rule and other relevant regulations;
- Result in a well-informed and comprehensive land management plan; and,
- Maintain and build relationships that carry forward to plan implementation and monitoring.

1.3 Principles and Practices

Table 1 displays the principles and practices we intend to incorporate into public engagement efforts.

Table 1—Principles and associated purposes for public engagement & participation

Principle	Purpose
Transparent and Inclusive	Increase the integrity of the revision process and decision
Implementable	Build efficiencies using existing personnel and leveraging partnerships and agreements
Flexible	Respond to emerging needs, opportunities, and concerns
Relevant	Reflect the diversity of stakeholders and resources included in the planning process
Consistent	Provide opportunities early and throughout the process
Accessible	Provide a range of options to reflect the diversity of skills, interests, and availability
Solution Oriented	Facilitate creative problem solving by supporting constructive dialogue and debate

This plan draws upon the concepts presented in the International Association of Public Participation’s public engagement spectrum, in which the Forest Service is a member (Figure 1).





Level	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
				
Goal	To provide balanced & objective information in a timely manner.	To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives & decisions	To work with the public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered & understood	To partner with each aspect of the decision-making

Figure 1—Spectrum of Public Participation (adapted from the International Association of Public Participation)

1.4 Roles and Responsibilities

The Lolo plan revision process will be coordinated by a dedicated plan revision team in the Northern Regional Office and the staff on the Lolo National Forest. Public engagement roles and responsibilities emphasized for the regional revision team include providing education, outreach tools and materials, facilitating, building relationships with Lolo staff and the public, managing revision processes, and conducting analysis. The Lolo National Forest leadership and staff will form the engagement strategy and support processes with local knowledge, maintain and build relationships, and participate in engagements. We hope interested stakeholders; members of the public; state, local, and federal agencies; and Indian

tribes will help guide engagement opportunities that best meet their interests and abilities while sharing the following principles:

- Be respectful and accountable; listen and respect divergent views.
- Share knowledge and information; be honest.
- Value each other's time; provide timely feedback and keep the process moving forward.
- Be inclusive of all stakeholders.
- Be grounded in the best available scientific information and indigenous traditional ecological knowledge.
- Be flexible and adaptive; think innovatively and creatively.
- Focus on interests rather than positions.

1.5 2012 Planning Rule Requirements

The 2012 planning rule requires public participation during the assessment, plan development, and monitoring phases of land management planning. Input opportunities are required for a variety of specific topics. For example, informal input will be invited at 1) each step of the wilderness recommendation process; 2) as part of the evaluation of potential wild and scenic river eligibility; 3) for the draft assessment; 4) identification of species of conservation concern; 5) on the preliminary need to change; 6) draft plan development (including suitability of lands, plan components, plan monitoring program); 7) best available scientific information; and 8) geographical extent of social and economic contributions. In addition, formal comment opportunities will be provided 1) when the draft plan is scoped; 2) the draft plan, draft environmental impact statement and accompanying National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents are available; and 3) at the beginning of the objection period and when approving the final revised plan. The Rule also requires outreach to specific groups of stakeholders as well as consultation with Federally recognized Indian Tribes; these are described further in section 2, below.

1.6 Recognition of the 2006 draft plan revision

A plan revision effort was previously initiated under the 2005 Planning Rule. This rule was struck down in court in 2007 and the draft 2006 plan was never finalized. Forest Service staff recognizes and values the input given during this effort. The main issues identified in 2006 included access and travel management, vegetation management, biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, roadless area management, and recreation. Tribal consultation occurred with the Confederated Salish & Kootenai, Blackfeet, Nez Perce, and Shoshone-Bannock tribes. Public contributions to the 2006 revision planning effort will be recognized and revisited; however, because the 2006 and 2012 rules differ in several key aspects, the revised plan will not look the same as the 2006 draft.

2. Engagement Strategy

2.1 Interested Parties and Scope of Outreach

Public engagement will be wide-reaching and inclusive, and the strategy will include diverse opportunities for interested parties to be involved. The Rule includes requirements for outreach to specific groups. Although some outreach efforts will be tailored to reach these groups, all members of the public will have access to the same information and have equitable opportunities to provide input. Figure 2 displays the array and relationship of some potential stakeholder groups. There is the potential for an individual or entity to be a part of multiple stakeholder groups. Individuals and entities will have multiple opportunities to engage in the ways that best reach them. In addition, the revision team and Lolo staff hope to encourage participation and collaboration amongst individuals and groups specifically interested in bringing forward best available scientific information.

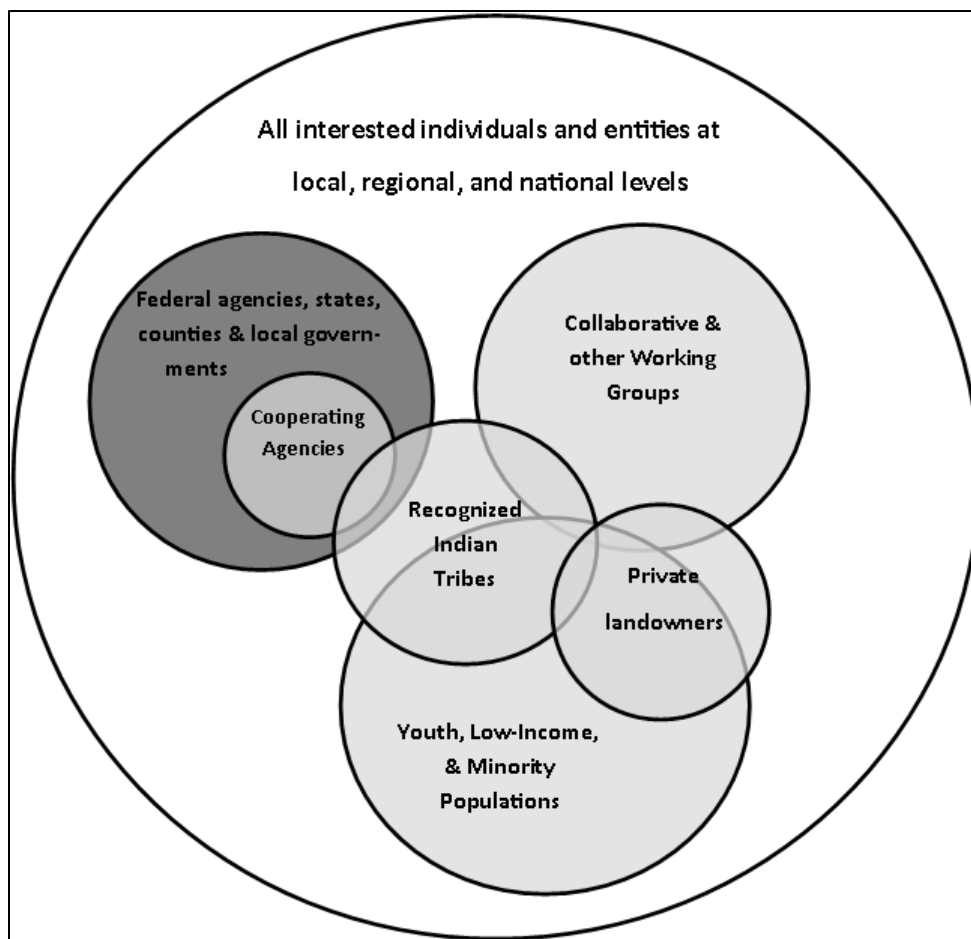


Figure 2—Potential Public outreach stakeholder groups

- Federally Recognized Indian Tribes.** Federally recognized Native American Tribes are sovereign government entities with reserved rights to federally managed lands and waters. There are formal consultation requirements to respect tribal sovereignty and associated ancestral lands. The Agency is also directed to incorporate Indigenous Traditional Knowledge into decision making. Engagement with all tribal members is important.

- **Local and State Governments and other Federal Agencies.** An array of local, state, and other federal agencies that affect, and are affected by, land management planning on the Lolo National Forest. The Rule requires the Forest Service to work with these agencies, including working toward shared objectives and consistent management across boundaries. Agency staff intend to create an Intergovernmental Working Group to reach these agencies.
- **Youth.** The revision team will tailor outreach activities to different age groups. This may include specific outreach to youth organizations and partnering with schools to encourage students to participate.
- **Collaborative Groups and Resource Advisory Committees.** The Lolo National Forest works with multiple collaborative groups and resource advisory committees. We anticipate encouraging these groups to engage in the revision process. The revision team does not anticipate an effort to convene a new or modified collaborative group; rather, we plan to encourage and accept the work that these existing groups may choose to provide.
- **Underserved communities, Low-income, and Minority Populations.** The team hopes to partner with low-income organizations, community outreach events, and community leaders and seek out appropriate venues for outreach (e.g., farmers markets, senior centers, community centers, libraries, job service centers, etc.). The engagement strategy will be rooted in [Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#) (2021) and the [Forest Service Equity Action Plan](#) (2022).

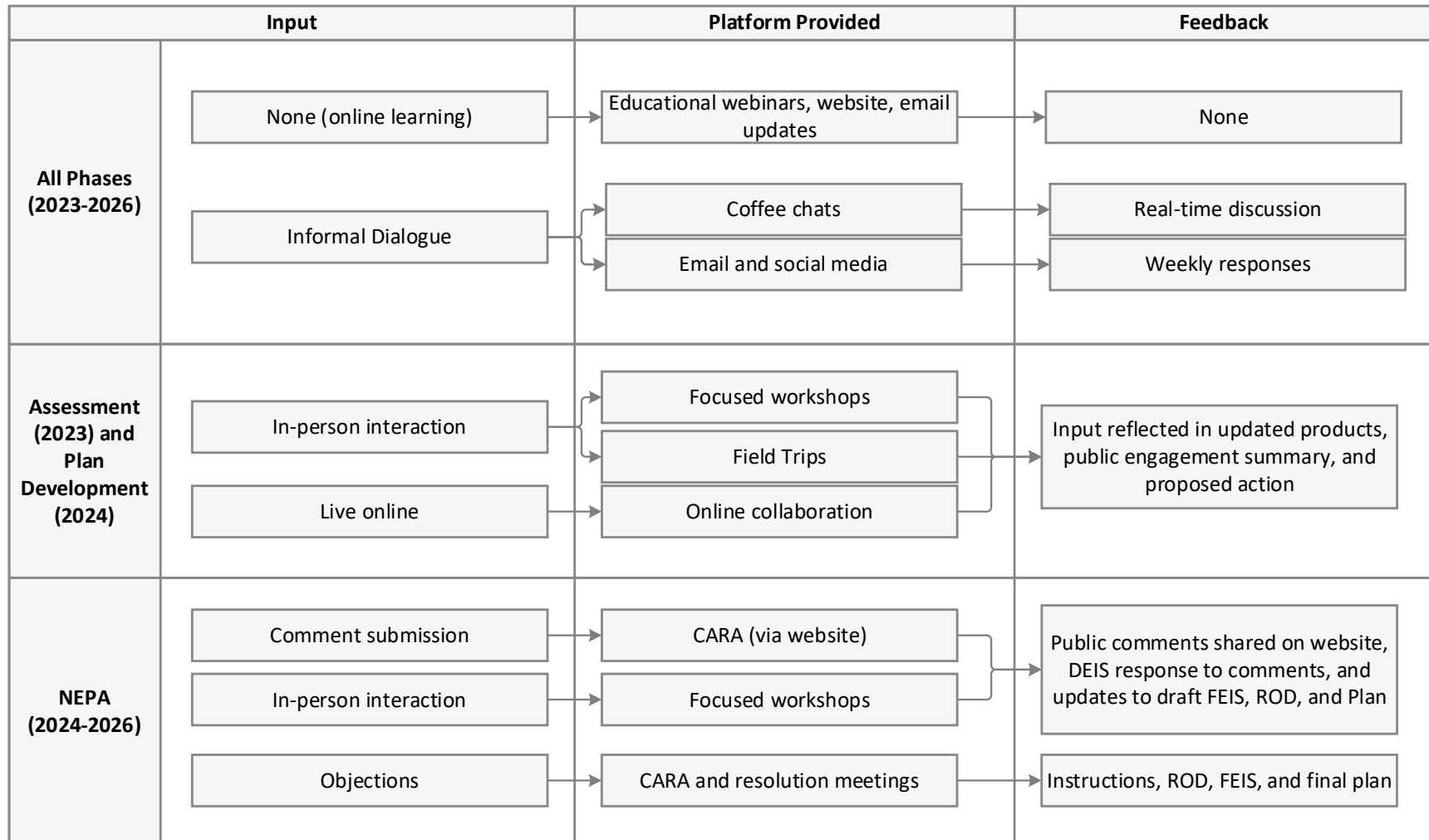
Optional Feedback Prompt #1: Who are we missing?

2.2 Public Input and Feedback Opportunities

Public input will be used to inform the decision-making process. The deciding official is the Lolo National Forest Supervisor, who has the discretion to consider all forms of input. Input into the revision process does not constitute a vote, and it will be impossible to gain consensus on every issue. Throughout the process, Forest Service staff will strive to clearly communicate sideboards and where the public can influence the decision-making process.

We plan to provide opportunities for public input using a variety of platforms to make the process accessible to a wide audience. As needed the strategy will be tailored to meet the needs of interested publics and communities if potential barriers to information availability or participation are identified. Figure 3 summarizes the information platforms that we anticipate using by planning phase, and how the public may expect to receive feedback or see their input reflected in the process. Table 2 lists potential engagement outcomes and input opportunities organized by the associated process and timing phase.

Optional Feedback Prompt #2: What additional platforms and opportunities for feedback are needed?



CARA: Comment Analysis and Response Application is a program used by the agency to receive, analyze, draft responses, and share comments received from the public.

Figure 3—Matrix of public inputs and feedbacks by revision phase and topic. (See endnote *i* for text of matrix.)

Table 2—Public engagement timing, outcomes, purpose, and inputs by process

Timing	Process or Phase	Outcomes	Purpose	Comment/Input
Fall 2022	Pre-Assessment & Initial Kick-off	Build relationships; identify stakeholders; meet regulations; refine engagement strategy; gain understanding of process	Inform and Consult	30 days informal comment on draft PEPS
Winter to spring 2023	Assessment	Improve shared understanding of existing conditions; identify science	Inform and Consult	30-day informal comment
Winter to spring 2023	Preliminary need to change	Improve shared understanding of existing conditions; identify science	Inform and Consult	30-day informal comment
Spring 2023	Potential species of conservation concern	Promote understanding of process; improve potential list	Inform and Consult	30-day informal comment
Spring 2023	Wilderness Inventory and Evaluation; Wild and Scenic Rivers Eligibility	Promote understanding of processes; improve inventory and evaluation	Inform and Consult	30-day informal comment for each
Spring 2023	Draft Assessment available for review; review Preliminary Need to Change	Gather input; refine and improve the assessment and need to change	Inform and Consult	30-day informal comment for each
Summer to Fall 2023	Proposed Plan Development	Educate; gain shared vision for the landscape; gather input on components	Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate	Ongoing informal comment
Winter 2024	Proposed Plan & Notice of Intent to prepare Environmental Impact Statement	Begin scoping; gain familiarity with draft plan	Inform	Formal comment period for 30 days (scoping)
Spring 2024	Results of Comment Period	Keep public updated on process; share content analysis and draft issues; prepare for alternative development	Inform and Consult	30-day informal comment on draft issues
Spring - Fall 2024	Alternative and DEIS Development	Share and refine draft alternatives	Inform and Consult	30-day informal comment
Winter 2025	Notice of Availability for DEIS and formal comment period	Meet regulations; begin 90-day comment period. Assist public in providing comments on DEIS.	Inform and consult	90-day formal comment
Spring 2025	FEIS development	Keep public informed of process	Inform	Informal dialogue
Summer 2025	FEIS, Plan, Draft ROD; Notice of Objection Filing; Objection period	Documents available; meet regulations; keep public updated	Inform	30-day period to file formal objections
Fall 2025	Notice of Objections Filed & Objection Process	Meet regulations	Inform and involve	Formal dialogue, objection resolution meetings
Fall 2026	Federal Register Notice of Final Plan Approval	Meet regulations; begin implementation period	Inform	Informal dialogue

2.3 Possible materials and tools

Table 3 provides a menu of possible tools and materials that may be utilized to keep you informed and provide opportunities for feedback. We anticipate using technology to deliver educational content and in-person engagements for issue-specific topics to consult, involve, and collaborate with you.

Optional Feedback Prompt #3: What tools, platforms, and materials work best; what are we missing? Where should we host workshops, field trips, and post information?

Table 3: Menu of possible public engagement platforms, tools, and associated purposes

Platform	Tool or Material	Purpose
Revision Website Hub	Website hub to provide equitable and timely availability to all pertinent information. Potential content is listed below.	Inform
Revision Website Hub	Self-subscription link for email updates	Inform
Revision Website Hub	Question and answer box for informal dialogue	Inform
Revision Website Hub	Story map of revision process	Inform
Revision Website Hub	Storyboard of geographical input	Inform
Revision Website Hub	Talking Points Collaborative Mapping to capture public input on place-based topics, live during certain periods	Involve and collaborate
Revision Website Hub	Social media links (Twitter and Facebook)	Inform, Consult
Revision Website Hub	Youth landing page, social media, and information kits	Inform
Revision Website Hub	Library of recorded educational webinars.	Inform
Revision Website Hub	“Meeting in a Box”: Timeline, public engagement strategy, citizen guides, resource process papers, E-newsletter, Frequently Asked Questions documents	Inform
Revision Website Hub	Libraries of documents to review and final documents	Inform, Consult
Email updates	Email updates via GovDelivery (on website hub)	Inform
Online comment submissions	CARA Comment database open at specified periods	Consult
Educational webinars	Educational webinars presented virtually, with in-person watch parties in communities hosted by the Forest Service or other organizations	Inform
Hardcopy mailings	Postcards for key notifications	Inform
Newspapers & magazines	Feature Submissions, press releases, formal notices	Inform
Interagency Governmental Working Group	Quarterly meetings; potential for entering into Cooperating Agency Agreements	Inform, Involve, Consult
Tribal Participation	Formal consultation meetings; participation in governmental working group; additional tribal outreach activities.	Inform, Involve, Consult
Physical material postings	Flyers and materials for fair booths, community events, libraries, and other pertinent locations	Inform
In-person & virtual meeting	Coffee chats hosted by line officers, in person and online	Inform, Consult
In-person & virtual meeting	Open virtual “office hours” for listening	Inform, Consult

Platform	Tool or Material	Purpose
In-person & virtual meeting	Field trips	Consult, Involve, Collaborate
In-person & virtual meeting	Workshops on specific topics, hosted in person and/or online	Consult, Involve, Collaborate

2.4 Potential Workshop Topic Areas

We anticipate using in-person and virtual workshops to involve, consult, and collaborate. The following list shows the topics we have tentatively identified for focused engagements:

- Draft assessment
- Preliminary need to change
- Distinctive roles and contributions of the Lolo National Forest
- Species diversity, at-risk species, and potential species of conservation concern
- Wild and scenic rivers
- Wilderness inventory, evaluation, and recommendation
- General plan content and desired conditions
- Recreation opportunity spectrum settings and scenery
- Suitability of lands, land allocations, and designated areas
- General desired conditions and vision for the landscape
- Specific science or plan component elements, such as:
 - Natural range of variation and desired vegetation conditions
 - Climate change and carbon sequestration
 - Habitat Connectivity
 - Old growth, snags, or other key components
 - Fire management
 - Vegetation, timber, and fuels management; restoration
 - Aquatic and riparian ecosystems
 - At-risk plant, aquatic, and/or terrestrial wildlife species
 - Monitoring
 - Economic contributions and ecosystem services

Optional Feedback Prompt #4: What topic areas are of the highest interest to you to provide input via in-person or virtual workshop opportunities?

3. Next steps

We value your input on this draft public engagement and participation strategy. Your input will be most helpful if received by December 31, 2022. Please send your thoughts to our Lolo Revision email (SM.FS.LNFRevision@usda.gov).

Please also visit the Lolo Revision Website (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/lolo/planrevision>) for more information and updates. On this webpage, we invite you to subscribe to our mailing list to stay informed on this process.

¹ Text of the matrix of public inputs and feedbacks by revision phase and topic

1. All phases (2023-2026)
 - a. Online learning with no public input.
 - i. Platforms provided include educational webinars, website, and email updates.
 - ii. No Forest Service feedback loop for online learning.
 - b. Input type: Informal dialogue.
 - i. Platforms provided include coffee chats, email, and social media.
 - ii. Forest Service feedback is provided during real-time discussions and in weekly responses to email and social media.
2. Assessment (2023) and Plan Development (2024)
 - a. Input type: In-person interaction
 - i. Platforms provided include focused workshops and field trips, with Forest Service feedback reflected in updated products, a public engagement summary, and the proposed action.
 - b. Input type: Live online
 - i. Platform provided includes online collaboration, with Forest Service feedback reflected in updated products, a public engagement summary, and the proposed action.
3. NEPA (2024-2026)
 - a. Input type: Comment submission
 - i. Platform provided is the CARA online comment submission database via the website. Forest Service feedback provided by posting public comments, providing response to comments in the environmental impact statement, and reflected in updates to the environmental impact statement, draft record of decision, and revised plan.
 - b. Input type: In-person interaction
 - i. Platform provided is focused workshops, with Forest Service feedback reflected in updated products.
 - c. Input type: Objections
 - i. Platform provided is the CARA online submission database and objection resolution meetings. Forest Service feedback provided in the form of instructions and the final record of decision, environmental impact statement, and the revised plan.