



File Code: 1920; 1500
Date: January 22, 2024

Dear Interested Parties:

On January 26, 2024, the Ashley National Forest is releasing our revised land management plan, final environmental impact statement, and final record of decision. Since July 2016, the Ashley National Forest has worked closely with our state, local, and tribal government cooperating agencies, as well as with other Federal agencies and the public. The land management plan is the result of that collaboration and includes perspectives and language developed by a broad range of forest users and interested parties.

The revised land management plan is the comprehensive, overarching document that guides forest management for years to come. The plan provides for a wide array of multiple uses; promotes long-term ecosystem sustainability, providing habitat for plant and animal species; recognizes the unique role and perspectives of tribal partners and our cooperating agencies; protects the existing character of areas that contain special, exceptional, or unique values; and provides sound scientific guidance with appropriate management flexibility for managing these lands into the future.

Key aspects of the land management plan include:

1. Forestwide, designated, and management area plan components that meet the requirements of the 2012 planning rule, providing for social, economic, and ecological sustainability; diversity of plant and animal communities; terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems connectivity; and multiple uses within the inherent capability of the Ashley National Forest.
2. Management direction for areas of tribal importance that focuses on the importance of the integrity and interconnectivity of cultural landscapes, sacred sites, traditional cultural properties, and other culturally significant areas to provide tangible links to historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices of tribal members.
3. Plan components that maintain the forest's ecological integrity and resilience to key stressors such as climate change.
4. Fire and fuels management direction that emphasizes active vegetation management around highly valued resources or assets while recognizing the role that wildfire can play in moving toward resilient ecological conditions.
5. Plan land allocations that include backcountry recreation management areas, general recreation management areas, destination recreation management areas, and eligible and suitable wild and scenic rivers. Plan land allocations do not include any additional recommended wilderness areas.
6. Plan objectives that reflect a mix of resource enhancement that is moving toward forested vegetation desired conditions; sustainable timber and wood products volume; hazardous fuel treatment; road, trail, and facility maintenance; and new recreation facilities.
7. A monitoring program that provides feedback for the planning cycle by testing assumptions, tracking relevant conditions over time, measuring management effectiveness, and evaluating



effects of management practices, forming a basis for continual improvement and adaptive management.

8. An estimate of the long-term sustained yield and projected timber sale quantity. The sustained yield limit is estimated to be an average annual volume of 21,446 hundred cubic feet (CCF). The timber suitability analysis used in plan development identified about 109,819 acres on the national forest suitable for timber production.

All documents can be found online at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=49606>.

The Ashley National Forest is grateful for the thoughtful, respectful, and diverse public dialogue and comment that has been displayed throughout the plan revision process. The level of engagement truly helps to build a more robust and comprehensive plan. We thank you for your time and dedication.

Sincerely,

SUSAN EICKHOFF
Forest Supervisor