

# Colville National Forest Plan Revision – 2016



## Reviewers Guide to Commenting

The Forest Service is responsible for managing public lands in the public interest. The comment period is your opportunity to be involved in the Forest Plan revision process, to offer thoughts on alternative ways for the Forest Service to accomplish what is proposed, to comment on the preferred alternative and analysis, and to work with the Forest Service in doing what is best for the land, while also enhancing social and economic vitality.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) "... is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on the understanding of environmental consequences..." (40 CFR 1501(c)). To achieve this, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) considers the effects of management actions on social, economic, and ecological resources within the planning area. You may have valuable information about places and resources you consider important and the potential effects the proposed federal actions may have on those places and resources. This is your opportunity to work with us so that we finish with a Final Land Management Plan (also referred to as the Forest Plan) that is good for the land and the public it serves.

Comments that provide relevant and new information with sufficient detail and rationale are the most useful, and are referred to as substantive comments. The Forest Service reads and considers all comments and identifies the topics that are substantive for consideration in the final EIS and Land Management Plan.

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### The Documents – DEIS and Proposed Revised Forest Plan

We are encouraging the public to view our documents through the following options:

- **Website:** <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/colville/plan-revision>
- **View in person:** documents to read are available at Forest Service offices in Colville, Kettle Falls, Republic, Metaline Falls, and Newport; documents are also available for viewing at several local community libraries
- **CD or Hard copy:** email request to [colvilleplanrevision@fs.fed.us](mailto:colvilleplanrevision@fs.fed.us) for a compact disc (CD) or hardcopy (limited numbers of printed copies are available); or call 509-684-7211.

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### How to Submit Comments

To facilitate efficient analysis of comments and information submitted, we strongly encourage you to submit comments via the electronic format (see page 5 for instructions). The draft forest plan and DEIS became available for review on February 19, 2016. **Initially the comment period was planned for a 90-day timeframe which has been extend by an additional 45-days; now ending on July 5, 2016.**

Comments must be postmarked by the last day of the comment period. If you need assistance in submitting a comment and/or working through the electronic system, please call 509-684-7211 or 509-664-9247.

**Electronically:** <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=45826>

**US Mail:** Colville National Forest  
765 South Main St.  
Colville, WA 99114



for the greatest good

## Where to Start

The following pages outline the contents in the DEIS and proposed plan. Different approaches can be used to review the documents.

### Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Outline

The DEIS 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: <i>Purpose of and Need for Action</i></p> <p>Answers the "Who, What, When, Where, Why" questions about the proposed action (Forest Plan Revision).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describes the Proposed Action (revised Forest Plan)</li> <li>▪ Discusses reasons for revision including legal requirements, changed conditions and need for change in management.</li> <li>▪ Explains any other analyses that influence the Proposed Action</li> <li>▪ Explains decisions to be made and identifies the decision maker</li> <li>▪ Summarizes the scoping (input from interested parties) and significant issues that will be addressed or dropped from further analysis. These issues frame the development and analysis of alternatives.</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 2: <i>Alternatives Including the Preferred Alternative</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Previews remaining chapters of the DEIS</li> <li>▪ Describes process used to develop the alternatives</li> <li>▪ Explains range of alternatives and any alternatives considered but dropped from further analysis.</li> <li>▪ Describes alternatives including a continuation of the current Plan (No Action)</li> <li>▪ Summarizes the environmental consequences of implementing each alternative, including projected outcomes</li> <li>▪ Compares projected outcomes of alternatives</li> <li>▪ identifies the preferred alternative</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 3: <i>Affected Environment and Environmental Effects</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describes the physical, biological, social, and economic setting of the Forest</li> <li>▪ Describes the area of analysis for each issue and the expected outcomes for each alternative.</li> <li>▪ Describes the relationship of short-term uses and long-term outcomes</li> <li>▪ Discloses any irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 4: <i>Preparers Agencies consulted and the list of recipients</i> <i>Glossary</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lists the people involved in preparing the DEIS</li> <li>▪ Lists agencies, organizations, and individuals that provided input.</li> <li>▪ Lists who received a copy of the DEIS</li> <li>▪ Defines terms used in the DEIS</li> </ul>
Appendix A	Public Involvement Summary
Appendix B	Coordination with Other Planning Efforts
Appendix C	Cumulative Effects
Appendix D	Laws, Regulations, and Policies

## Forest Plan Decisions

The Forest Plan makes decisions of several types. These are:

- Decisions that express an aspiration and form the basis for projects, activities, and uses that occur under the plan. These plan decisions are desired conditions, goals, or objectives.
- Decisions that set requirements to limit or guide the forest uses or activities that are expected to occur under the plan. These are identification of suitable uses, standards, and guidelines.
- Decisions that identify management areas that allocate zones of the forest to different desired conditions and uses (much like local municipal zoning regulations).
- Recommendations for special designations are specific decisions to establish a specific type of nationally designated area (e.g., a recommendation to create a wilderness study area).
- Decisions that identify monitoring for the implementation of the Plan.

## Proposed Land Management Plan Outline

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.

Proposed Land Management Plan	What’s in there?
Chapter 1 <i>Introduction</i>	Contains background information and describes the purpose of the plan, plan content, and plan organization
Chapter 2 <i>Forestwide Direction for landscape features, dynamics, and social systems</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifies the long term desired conditions and goals for the CNF</li> <li>▪ Identifies plan objectives and describes the environmental conditions and ecological, social, and economic functions desired of the CNF in the future</li> <li>▪ Identifies Forestwide standards and guidelines</li> </ul>
Chapter 3 <i>Management Area Direction</i>	Identifies desired conditions, objectives, standards and guidelines specific to Management Areas, and suitable uses within the Management Areas
Chapter 4 <i>Monitoring</i>	Describes the monitoring program
Appendix A	Consistency with Plan Components
Appendix B	Proposed and Possible Management Actions
Appendix C	Sensitive Species Summary
Appendix D	Scenic Integrity Objectives
Appendix E	Suitable Uses by Management Area

## How Comments will be Used

Public comments received during the 90-day comment period may be used to modify alternatives, develop new alternatives for consideration, improve analysis of effects, or to make factual corrections. Public comments will help to finalize the land management plan and environmental impact statement. As you review the revised plan, understand that it does not make site-specific decisions, but it does provide strategic direction that guides site-specific decisions. The Proposed Land Management Plan is more strategic in nature than the current Forest Plan and will not repeat direction included in Forest Service handbooks or manuals, memorandums of understanding, and regional or national directives.

## Tips on Useful Commenting

Comments on the DEIS and Proposed Revised Forest Plan are encouraged and are essential to helping us make the right decisions for the good of the land and the public we serve. Comments that provide relevant and new information with sufficient detail and rationale are the most useful and are referred to as substantive comments. Below you will find definitions and examples of what is a substantive comment and what is a non-substantive comment.

### Substantive Comments:

As defined in 36 CFR 219.62, substantive comments are written comments, or oral comments recorded by, the responsible official or his designee during an opportunity for public participation provided during the planning process (36 CFR 219.4 and 219.16) and attributed to the individual or entity providing them. Comments are considered substantive when they are within the scope of the proposal; specific to the DEIS, Proposed Revised Land Management Plan; have a direct relationship to the proposal; and include supporting reasons. Substantive comments might include providing new information, identifying a new issue (or expand upon the existing one), providing the basis or rationale for an opinion, identifying a specific flaw in the analysis, or identifying a different source of credible research which (if used in the analysis) could result in different effects.

#### Examples:

- *Please change the Desired Condition for “Water Use” to incorporate the range of possible climate change scenarios, because available water supplies vary based on the current climate conditions.*
- *In the “xxx area”, I feel strongly that Management Area 3A, which is backcountry non-motorized, should be changed to Management Area 1B, which is recommended wilderness, because there are no roads in that area, the terrain is too steep for any type of timber harvest, and it meets the criteria for recommended wilderness, even though I know the Forest Service doesn’t create Wilderness only Congress has that authority.*

### Non-Substantive Comments:

Non-substantive comments are outside the scope of the analysis; appear as a “vote” (and the NEPA process is not about voting); do not provide supporting rationale; or lack sufficient specificity to support either a change in the document or to permit a meaningful response (i.e., emotional and without rationale). These comments are not considered in the final EIS and Forest Plan.

#### Examples:

- *I don’t want any backcountry non-motorized management areas. All areas should be left the way they are.*
- *I prefer Alternative D and think that should be the preferred Alternative.*
- *I do not support this project at all. It is not in the best interest of the general public.*

**Note:** *To have standing in the objection process, comments must be substantive and include the names and addresses of commenters. Anonymous comments will be accepted and considered; however will not provide standing for objection. The Forest Service will use the “pre-decisional administrative review process,” also referred to as the “objection process” described in 36 CFR 219 Subpart B of the 2012 Planning Rule (Federal Register, Vol. 7, No. 68, p 21162-21276). This process gives an individual or entity an opportunity for an independent Forest Service review and resolution of issues before the approval of a plan revision. Subpart B identifies who may file objections to a plan revision; the responsibilities of the participants in an objection; and the procedures that apply to the review of the objection (36 CFR 219 Subpart B, §219.50). Individuals and entities who have submitted substantive formal comments related to this plan revision during the opportunities for public comment for this decision may file an objection.*

All “substantive” comments must be addressed in an appendix to the EA/EIS or in the project record for a decision documented through a decision memo (40 CFR 1503.4).

### Electronic Commenting System

We are using a new system for submitting comments electronically, which is the preferred method of receiving comments versus postal mail because it is more efficient in the analysis process. All commenters, whether they submit their comments electronically or via the postal mail will be added to the Forest Plan Revision mailing list.

A National system called CARA (Comment Analysis and Response Application) provides an opportunity for the public to submit their comments electronically, and for the Forest Service to gather comments electronically, which aids in efficiency of analyzing all the comments received on a project. Following are instructions on how to submit a comment through this new system.

Go to the following web site:

<https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=45826>

There is a comment link on the right side of the screen which will bring you to the screen below:

The screenshot shows a web form for submitting comments. The form is titled "Organization" and includes several input fields and dropdown menus. The fields are: Organization (dropdown), Title, Official Representative Type (dropdown), First Name, Last Name, Address 1, Address 2, City, State (dropdown), Province/Region, Zip/Postal Code, Country (dropdown, currently set to "United States"), Email, Phone Number, and a dropdown for "How would you like to be contacted about this or similar projects in the future?" (currently set to "Contact me via e-mail"). There is a large text area for "Letter Text" and a "Browse..." button for "Attachments". A note at the bottom states "(Total file upload size cannot exceed 10 MBs.)".

Please be as detailed and specific as possible when completing this form. The “Name and Email” fields are the only two required fields; however all of the information is useful and we encourage you to include the information. By submitting a comment on this project, you will automatically be added to our mailing list. If an email is provided you will be on our email mailing list; however if you wish to be on the postal mailing list we need all of the information in the fields above. You may enter “Anonymous” into the name field if you do not wish for your name to be submitted; however realize you will not have ‘standing’ for this project if you choose to be anonymous (see information on page 4). All comment letters and contact information are included in the project record for this project.

Input your comment in the “Letter Text” space. Attachments can be included, but are not necessary if they are a duplicate of the comment itself. If you decide to attach a document, Word is the preferable format. Some types of useful attachments include maps, pictures, or supportive documents that reinforce the comment you are making. The maximum files size for uploads is 10 MBs. Prior to submitting a comment, you will have to enter the information you see in the example of the encryption box below. Once you hit “Submit”, your comment will be entered into the system.



### Decision to Be Made

The regional forester for the Pacific Northwest Region will make the final decision by selecting from the alternatives evaluated in the Programmatic Final Environmental Impact Statement. A draft Record of Decision is expected to be published in 2017 identifying which alternative will be selected and why.

### For More Information

**Attend a public meeting** in your area. Check the Forest website for updates on where and when meetings will be scheduled.

#### Contact a planning team member:

Amy Dillon  
Forest Environmental Coordinator &  
Plan Revision Team Leader  
Phone: (509) 684-7211  
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Forest Plan Revision Team  
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Website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/colville/plan-revision>

We also have planning team members that specialize in other resource areas (air, water, archaeology, range, fisheries, etc.). Contact one of the folks above, and we'll help you connect with the appropriate team member.

#### Contact the Forest Supervisor:

Rodney Smoldon, Forest Supervisor, can be reached by contacting his Executive Assistant at (509) 684-7163 or the front desk at (509) 684-7000 (877-727-8704 [Toll Free]), or TTY (509) 684-7100.

Thank you for your interest in the Colville National Forest, and for taking the time to review and comment on our planning documents.