



United States Department of Agriculture

CUSTER GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST

Forest Plan Revision



Forest Service

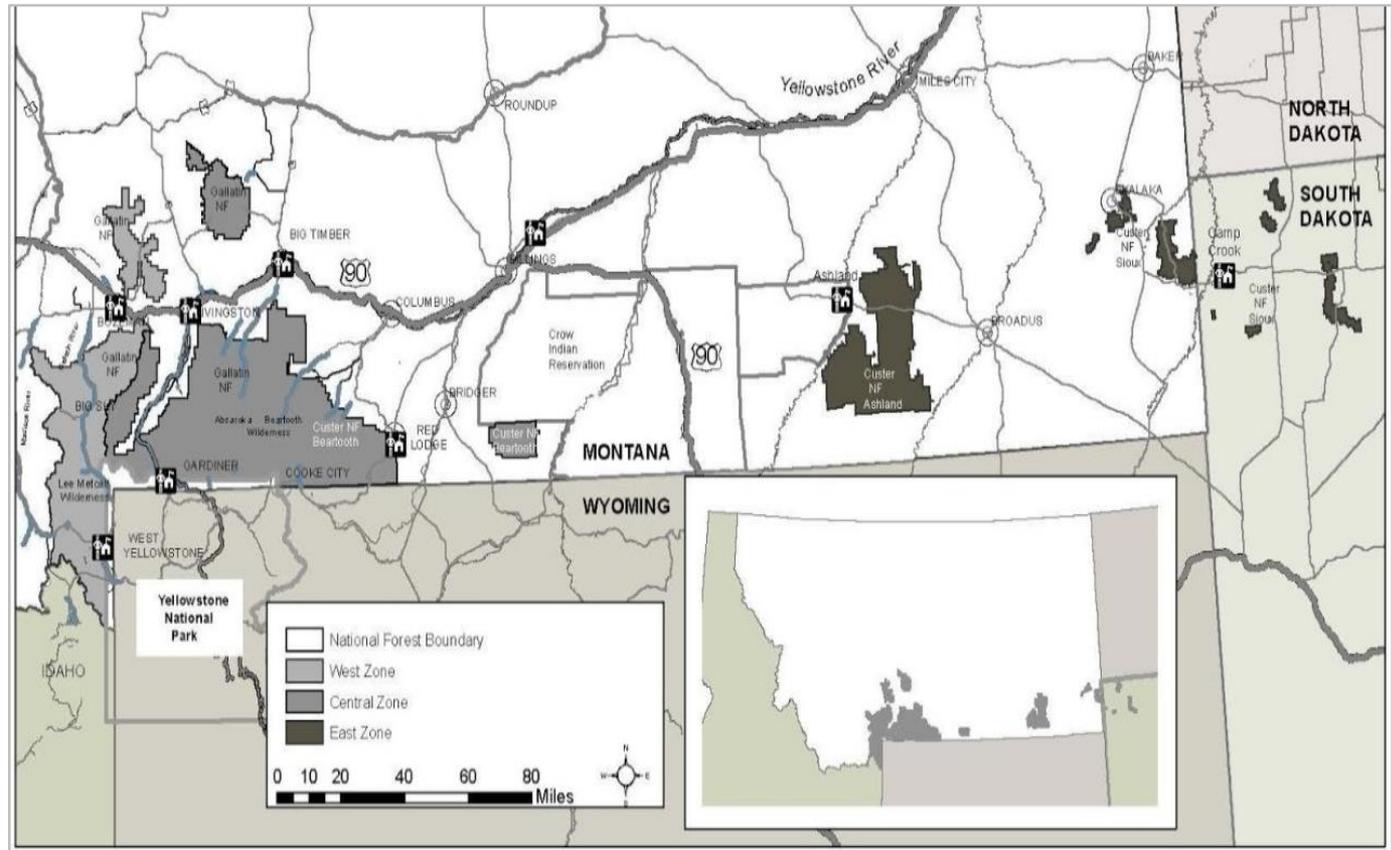
March 2016

Topics



- ❖ Custer Gallatin National Forest
- ❖ What is a Forest Plan?
- ❖ Why does a Forest Plan Matter?
- ❖ Why Revise the Forest Plan?
- ❖ Plan Revision Steps and Schedule
- ❖ Public Engagement

Custer Gallatin National Forest



Custer and Gallatin Forests
combined in 2014



Custer Gallatin National Forest *Fast Facts*



- ❖ 3.1 million acres
- ❖ Highest peaks in Montana; 12,799' Granite Peak
- ❖ Dinosaur Fossils
- ❖ Only US palladium and platinum mine
- ❖ Among the nation's largest Forest Service grazing programs (Sioux and Ashland Districts)
- ❖ Native wildlife still roam

Custer Gallatin National Forest *Fast Facts*



7 Districts

9 Forest Offices in two States:

- West Yellowstone, MT
- Bozeman, MT
- Gardiner, MT
- Livingston, MT
- Big Timber Work Center, MT
- Billings, MT
- Red Lodge, MT
- Ashland, MT
- Camp Crook, SD

500 road miles from west to east offices



What is a Forest Plan?



- Comprehensive plan guiding forest management for 15+ years
- Guides **what** we do, **where** we do it and **how** we do it.
- Land allocations (“Zoning”)
- Identify areas that are or may be suitable for special designations.
- Maintain and restore forest land and water ecosystems
- Provide for ecosystem benefits and multiple uses.

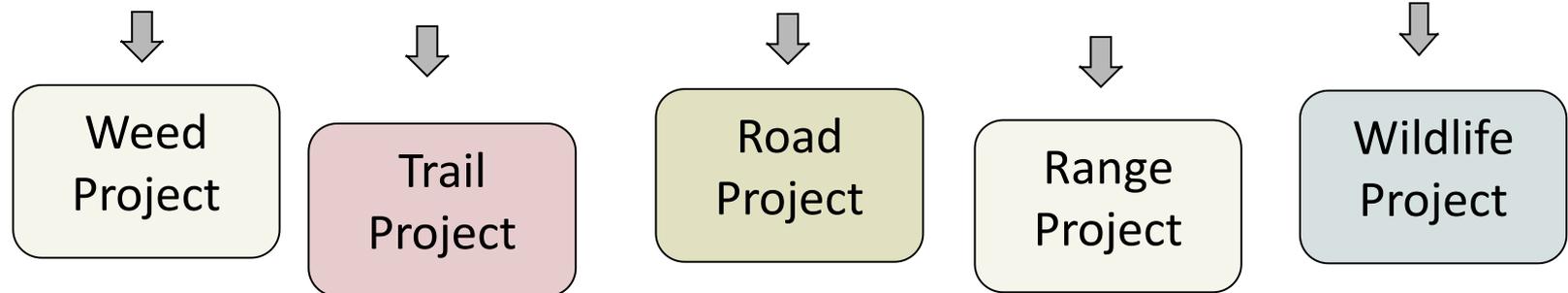
Why Does a Forest Plan Matter?

Forest Plan

- Creates a vision for the Forest
- Sets overall Forest management direction for years to come
- The Forest Plan does not authorize site specific activities or prohibitions
- All subsequent proposals and projects must comply with the approved forest plan

Project

New Projects comply with the Revised Forest Plan and with Project NEPA



Why Revise the Forest Plans?



- It's the law
The **National Forest Management Act (1976)** requires a Forest Plan, and that it be periodically revised.
- Two existing Plans for one Forest
- A lot has changed: increased population, bigger fires, new invasives, land exchanges, new technology, uses and interests.

Who Approves the Revised Forest Plan?

Decided by Forest Supervisor Mary Erickson

Forest Service Chief (Washington DC)



Regional Forester (Missoula)
(9 Regions Across the Country)



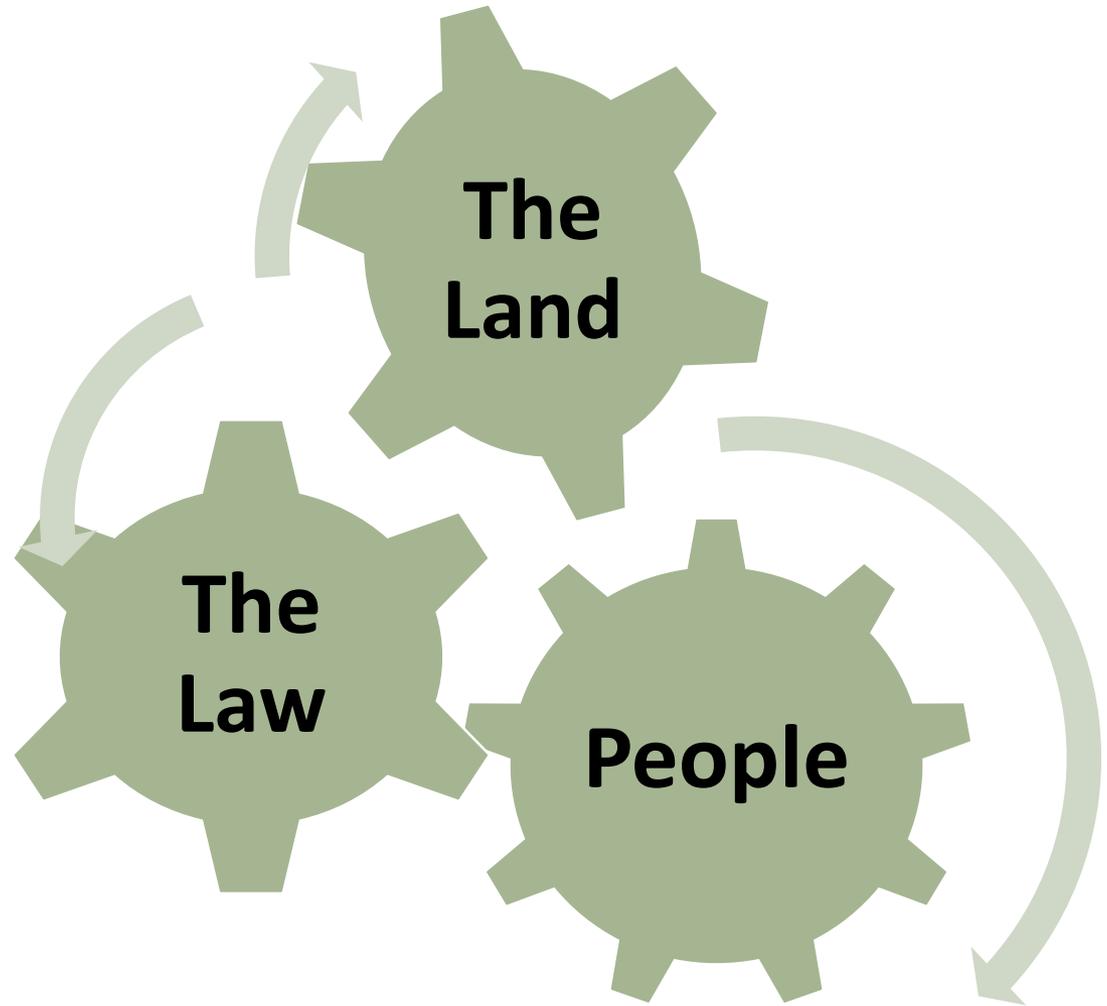
Forest Supervisor Mary Erickson



District Ranger
(7 Rangers on Custer Gallatin NF)



Cogs to a Forest Plan



The Land



- Soils
- Elevation
- Terrain
- Steepness
- Rainfall
- Climate
- Streams, springs
- Vegetation



The Law



“The Principal Laws Relating to Forest Service Activities”



US Mining Laws
Endangered Species Act
National Historic Preservation Act
National Environmental Policy Act
National Forest Management Act
Clean Air Act Wilderness Act
Clean Water Act
Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
National Trails System Act



The Law



National Forest Management Act (1976)

USFS Planning Rule (1982, then 2012)
Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR219)

Forest Service Planning Directives (2015)

Forest Land Management Plan

Possibly Intermediate Plans
(e.g. Wilderness Plan)

Project or Activity Decision



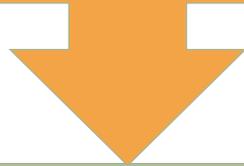
The Law



National Forest Management Act (1976)



**Forest Land Management Plan
Includes “zoning”**



**Project or Activity
Decision**

**Montana Growth Policy
Subdivision and Platting Act**



**County Growth Policy
(optional)**



Subdivision Decision

People's Interests

Clean water and fresh air

Economic opportunities

Wood products

Minerals and energy resources

Recreation

Grazing

Fish and wildlife habitat



Integration: the Land, the Law, People



**Provide for
Ecological
Sustainability
and
Contribute to
Social and
Economic
Sustainability**

scenery social wildlife
cultural soils tribal
ecosystem services
linkage nature air diversity timber
plants fish integrity economic
minerals riparian species
forage land water historic
energy recreation vegetation trails

Integration and Sustainability



**Provide for
Ecological
Sustainability**

**Caring for
the Land**

and

**Contribute to
Social and
Economic
Sustainability**

**Serving the
People**

**For the
long term**

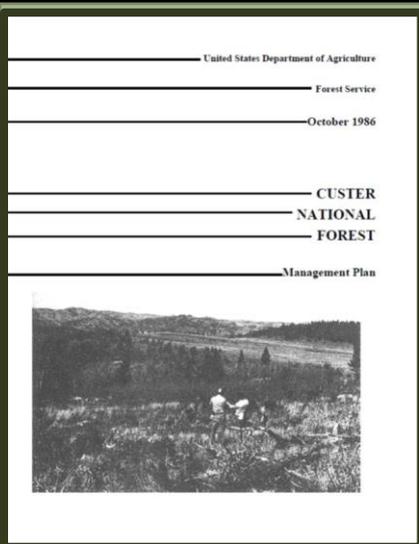
Revised Forest Plan Components



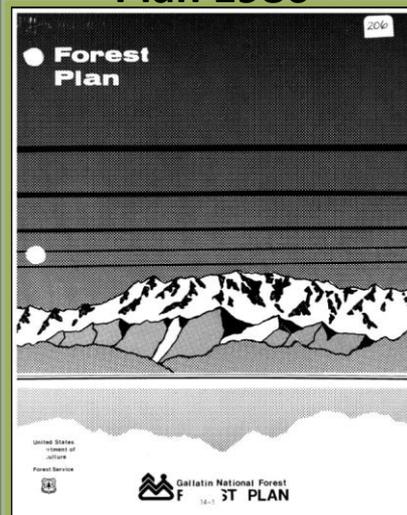
- Desired Conditions
- Objectives
- Standards
- Guidelines
- Suitability of Lands
- Goals (optional)

- Management Areas **or** Geographic Areas **or** both (“zoning”)

Custer Gallatin Forest Plan *Fast Facts*



**Custer Forest
Plan 1986**

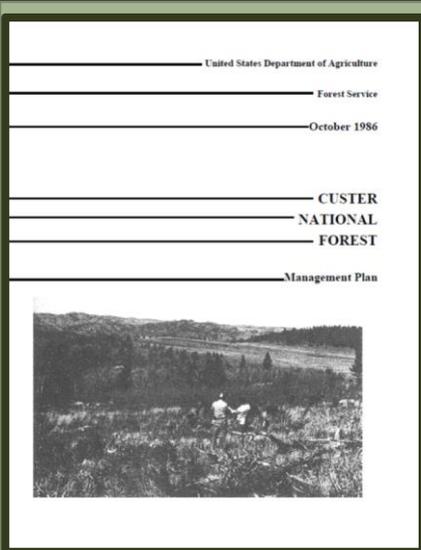


**Gallatin Forest
Plan 1987**

- ❖ Two Plans for one consolidated Forest
- ❖ Both plans developed under 1982 Forest Service planning regulations
- ❖ Custer Plan published in 1986
- ❖ Gallatin Plan published in 1987
- ❖ 34 amendments to the Custer Plan
- ❖ 50 amendments to Gallatin Plan

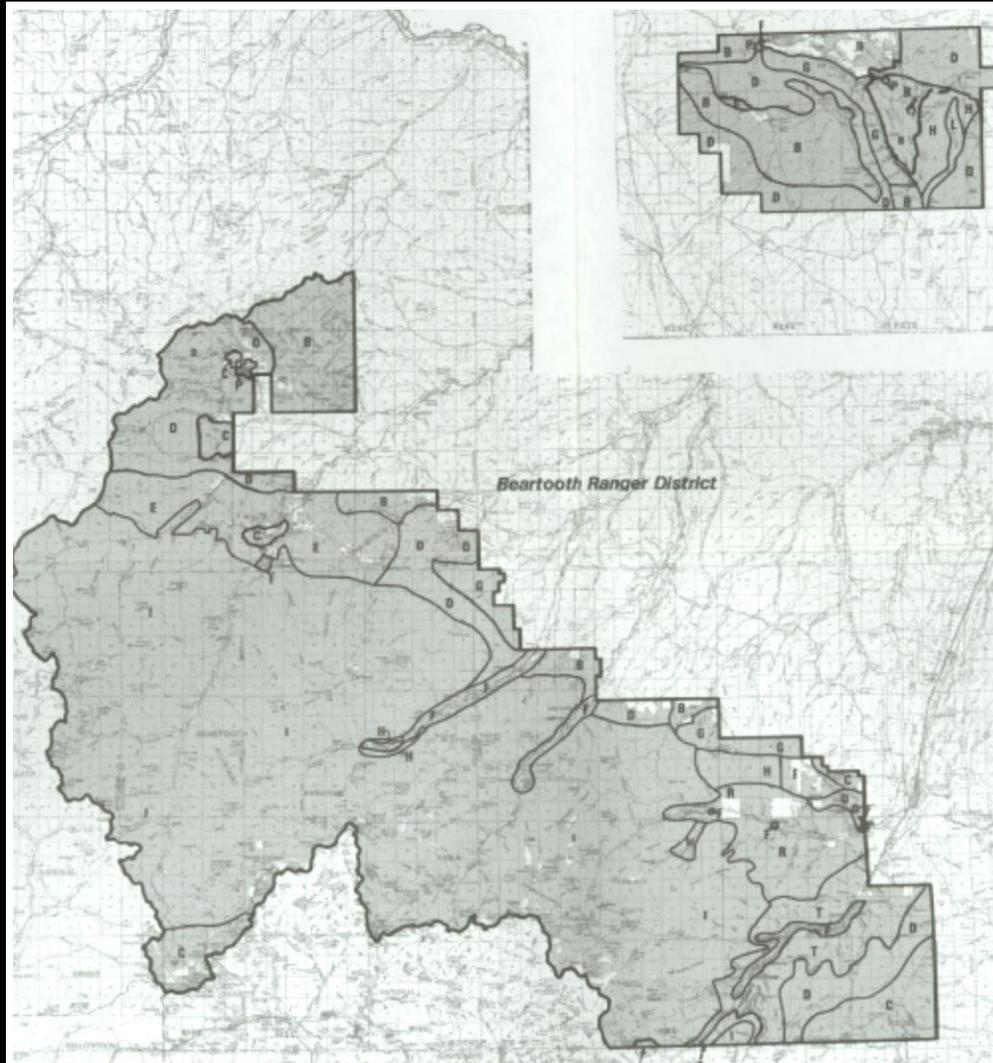


Current Custer Forest Plan *Beartooth District*



Custer Forest Plan 1986

Management
Areas (MA)
A through T



1986 Management Areas Map

MA B:
Livestock/
minerals
Emphasis

MA D:
Wildlife
Emphasis

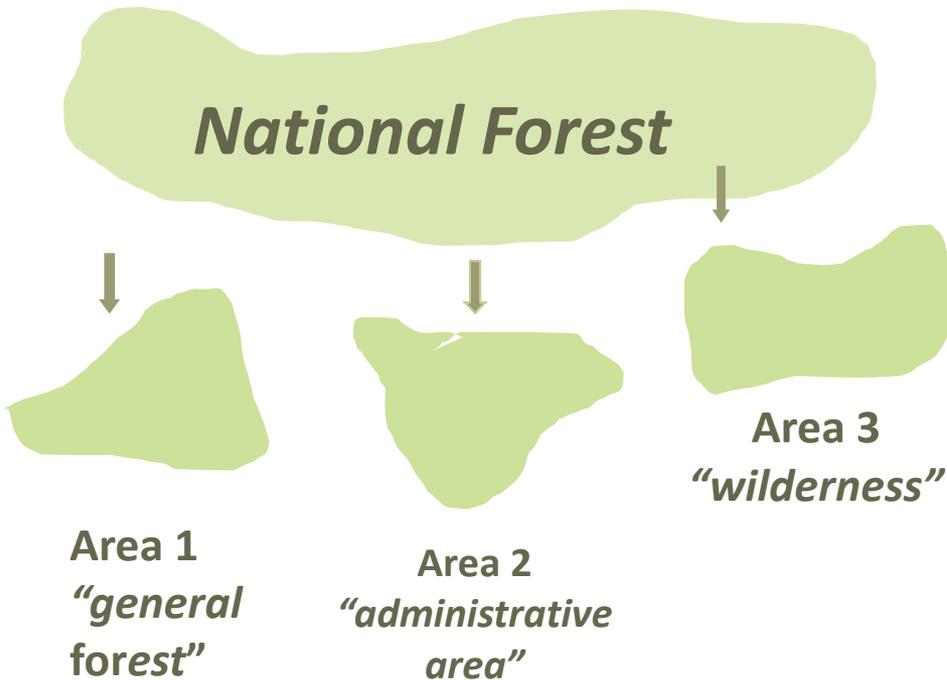
MA I:
Wilderness



How might the Forest Plan Change?

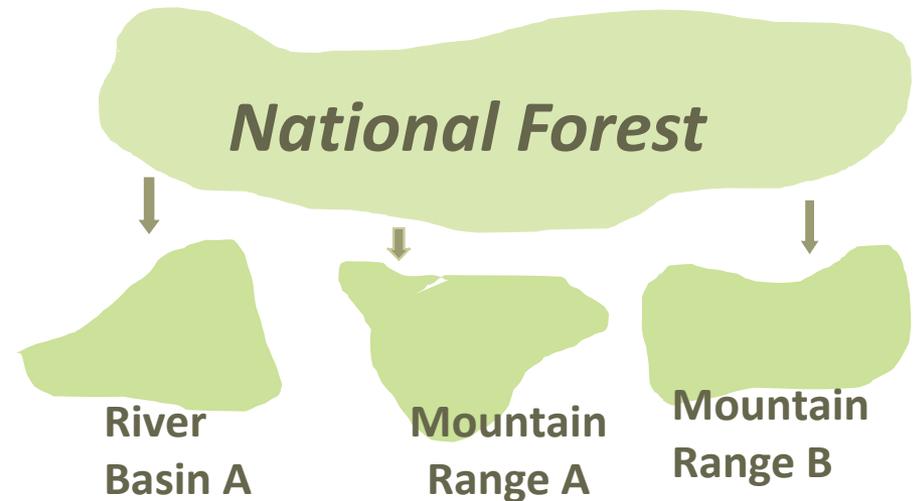
Revised Plan may use **Management Areas** and/or **Geographic Areas**
Management/Geographic Areas May Change in Location and Emphasis

Management Areas Based on Purpose

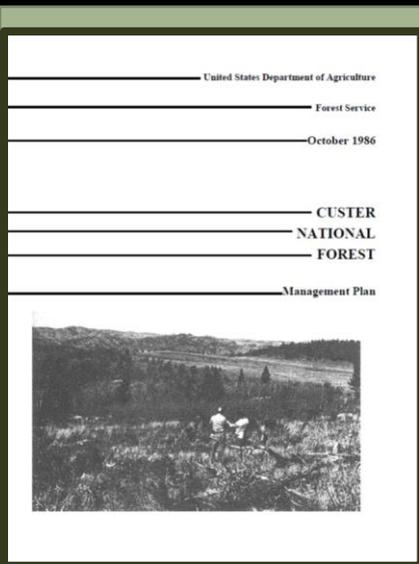


And / Or

Geographic Areas Based on Place



Current Custer Forest Plan



Custer Forest Plan 1986

Example: Current Custer Forest Plan

The **goal** of timberland management is to harvest timber within sustained-yield capability to help maintain timber dependent communities, forest health, vigor, productivity, provide vegetative diversity for wildlife, eliminate tree encroachment on selected livestock grazing areas, and provide scenic openings.

How might the Forest Plan Change?



Possible: Revised Forest Plan

Desired conditions:

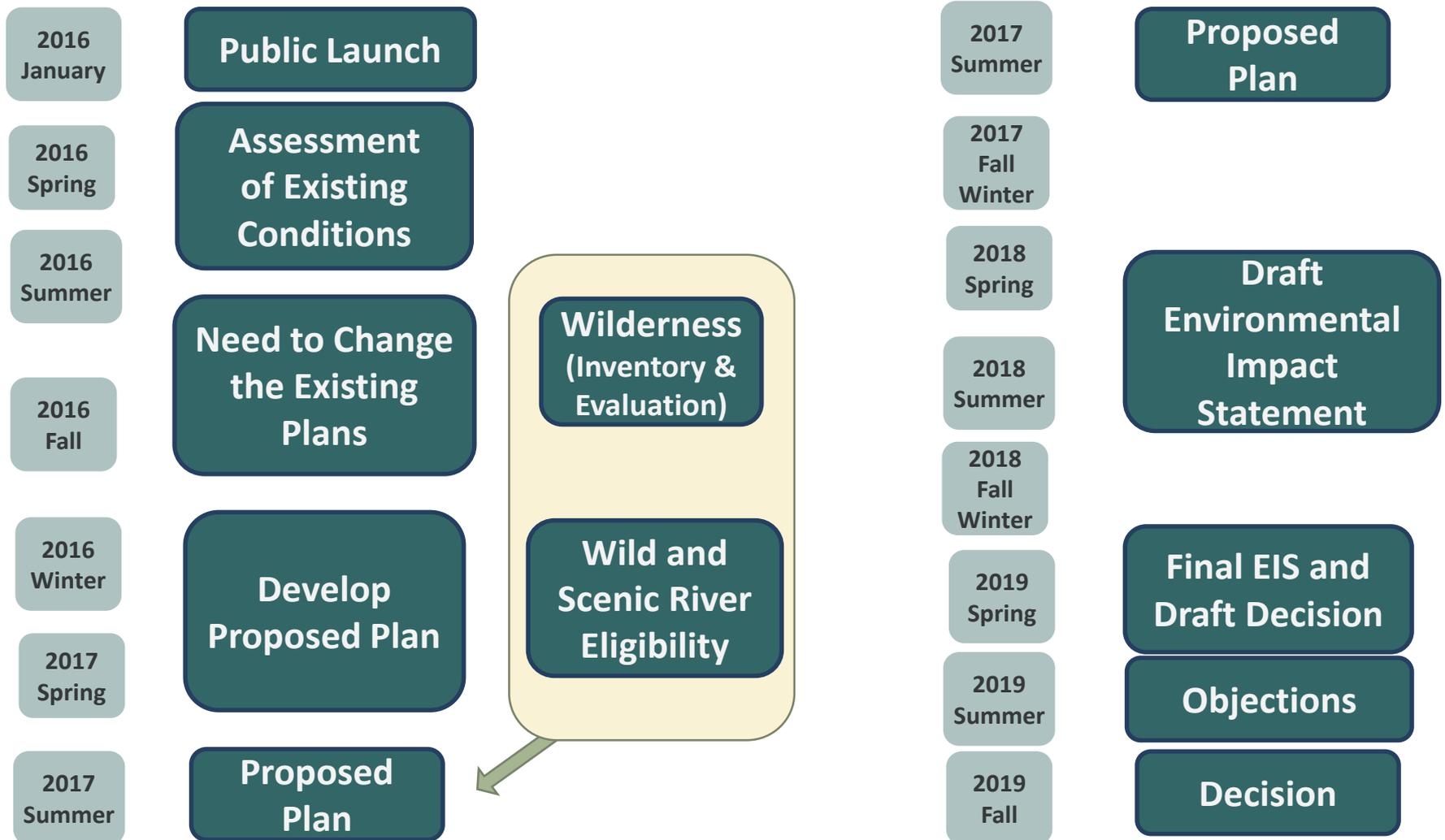
Across the landscape, diverse vegetation conditions occur, in a complex pattern of species, tree sizes, tree ages, forest densities, patch sizes, canopy layers and other structural forest characteristics.

Vegetation provides sustainable levels of timber harvest and other forest products such as wood fiber, biomass, firewood, posts and poles, mushrooms, berries for commercial, tribal, personal, educational, and scientific uses.

(merely an example)



Plan Revision Steps and Schedule



Plan Revision Assessment Phase



- 15 important ecological, social, and economic resource topics (see handout)
 - What is out there?
 - What is the trend?
 - What is the potential for the future?
 - What is at risk?
- Use of best available science, local information, national perspectives, and native knowledge
- Identify how the 1986 and 1987 Plans need to be revised (aka “Need to Change”)

Plan Revision Assessment Topics

1. Terrestrial ecosystems, aquatic ecosystems, and watersheds
2. Air, soil, and water resources
3. System drivers and stressors (e.g. fire, invasives)
4. Baseline assessment of carbon stocks
5. Threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate species, and potential species of conservation concern
6. Social, cultural, and economic conditions
7. Benefits people obtain from the NFS planning area (ecosystem services)
8. Multiple uses (e.g. timber, grazing)
9. Recreation settings, opportunities and access, and scenic character
10. Renewable and nonrenewable energy and mineral resources
11. Infrastructure, such as recreational facilities and transportation and utility corridors
12. Areas of tribal importance
13. Cultural and historical resources and uses
14. Land status and ownership, use, and access patterns
15. Existing designated areas (e.g. wilderness and wild and scenic rivers) and potential need and opportunity for additional designated areas



Share your local knowledge and data



How will we use your input?

Scientific Information related to the 15 Assessment topics will be considered by the respective specialist(s) using criteria of: **Accuracy, Reliability, Relevance**

Observations, perceptions and trends on existing conditions will be routed to the appropriate specialist for consideration.

Site specific information may or may not be relevant to the Assessment. Information may be routed to the respective district or utilized in developing the Plan.

Opinions/ feelings will not be directly applicable to the Assessment. Where applicable, interests will be incorporated into developing the Plan.



We Need your Involvement



Actively participate in developing a future vision.

Tell us what you **want to see** on this land.

Complete the Questionnaire, tell us:

- What works and what needs to change with Forest management?
- What topics are important to you and why?

See list of information we are already using, and add your local knowledge and data.

Next Steps: 2016



February
March

Introductory
Community
Meetings

Spring

Forest Service
Prepares
Assessment
and Need to
Change the
Plans

May
June

Community
Meetings
Assessment
and Need to
Change the
Plans

August

Draft
Assessment
Available for
Review

Fall

Need to
Change the
Plans

Begin
Creating
New Plan

For more information....

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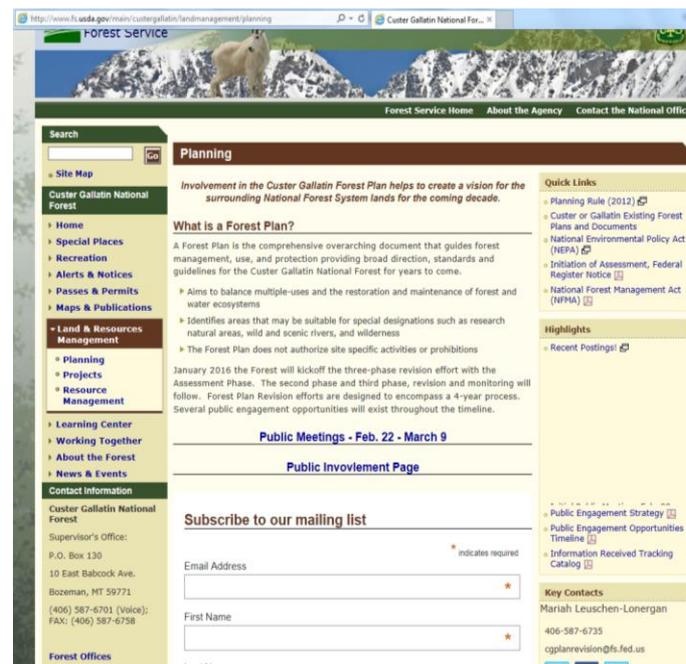
406-587-6704

Mailbox:

cgplanrevision@fs.fed.us

Website:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/custergallatin/landmanagement/planning>



The screenshot shows the Forest Service website for the Custer Gallatin National Forest. The page is titled "Custer Gallatin National Forest" and "Forest Service". It features a search bar, a navigation menu, and a main content area. The main content area includes a section titled "What is a Forest Plan?" which describes the purpose of a Forest Plan and the current revision process. It also includes a section for "Public Meetings - Feb. 22 - March 9" and a "Public Involvement Page". There is a "Subscribe to our mailing list" form with fields for "Email Address" and "First Name". The page also includes "Quick Links" and "Highlights" sections.

