



Colville National Forest

Forest Plan Revision Update June 2016

Draft Forest Plan Comment Period Closes on July 5

We are quickly nearing the end of our official comment period on the Colville National Forest’s draft revised Land Management Plan (also referred to as the Forest Plan), which ends on July 5, 2016. To date we’ve received about 53 comment letters, and I anticipate that we’ll be receiving an outpouring of comments from people throughout the Tri-County area (and beyond) during that final week.

You may be asking yourself... **“Why should I take the time to comment?”** The Forest Service is responsible for managing public lands **in the public interest**, please read that as “your interest”. **The comment period is your opportunity to be involved in the Forest Plan revision process.** We need to hear your voice, and specifically your thoughts on what we have proposed (see **Alternative P-** which is the **Preferred Action**, and the alternative that the draft forest plan is based on).

I invite you to offer thoughts on the 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 keeping in mind the needs of our communities for enhancing social and economic vitality and resilience. Your comments bring forward the social and economic side of the picture. We’d like to hear about the things you value about the national forest, and how those interests might be effected by what we are proposing. This is information that we need to consider along with the needs of the land and resources.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process “... 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 (EIS) 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 revised 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 Forest Plan.

The comment letters received to dated are located on the plan revision website and can be accessed by clicking on the **Comment Reading Room** link:

<https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//ReadingRoom?Project=45826>

How will my comments be used? The public comments received during the 135-day comment period public comments will help to finalize the forest plan and EIS, and may be used to modify alternatives, develop new alternatives for consideration, improve the analysis of effects, or to make factual corrections.



Rodney Smoldon,
Colville National Forest
Supervisor



for the greatest good

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 Forest Plan is more strategic in nature than the current Forest Plan (which was signed back in 1988) and **will not** repeat direction included in Forest Service handbooks or manuals, memorandums of understanding, law, or regulation.

Where to Submit Comments: The preferred method for submitting your comments is directly submitting comments to the electronic comment system: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=45826>.

Please be aware that all comment letters and contact information are included in the project record for this project, and will be posted to the **Reading Room** for public viewing. Comments can also be submitted via email to the email address below, or by postal mail, also to the address below.

Again, I would love to see your comment letter among those that we've already received- expressing **your** views on the draft forest plan and the Preferred Alternative-P, and the DEIS; and how they might be improved.

Listening Sessions—the first two listening sessions were held on June 1 in Colville, WA and June 2 in Cusick, WA. There are two more planned: one in Spokane, WA on June 6, and one in Republic, WA on June 7. Listening Sessions to provide a way for those interested to share their verbal comments on the draft plan and DEIS. Comments will be recorded for the project record. Three of the sessions will be livestreamed (and recorded); the recordings will be posted to the project website. The session in Republic will not be livestreamed because we could not obtain a strong enough bandwidth, so the session will be recorded and posted to the project website.

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/colville/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd500418>

How can I Learn more about the Draft Plan & Alternatives?

Just Getting Started? Explore the Project Webpage- There are several information resources on the project website that provide brief overviews of the plan revision process and information public engagement opportunities to learn more, and ways to provide comments. Note that you can quickly navigate between pages by using the “**Quick Links**” menu to the top right. Check out the documents and maps that are being reviewed, and other reference material. Project Website: fs.usda.gov/goto/colville/plan-revision

Online Open House Page: The online open house provides an quick and easy way to digest highlights about the comparison between alternatives and draft plan, much like you would see at an “in-person” informational meeting, and it’s available 24/7 online, so you can check it out at your own convenience:

<http://colvilleplanrevision.publicmeeting.info/>.

Recordings and Notes from Recent Online Meetings/Topical Webinars:

In May the Forest held three topical webinars to provide an opportunity for members of the public to clarify their understanding about a specific forest plan revision topic, and to ask questions to the resource specialists. Forest Service Resource Specialists presented Information about: **Forest Access by Roads** (May 16), **Forested Vegetation Management** (May 23), and **Social Economic Concerns** (May 23). There was time allotted during each session for the public to ask questions and have the Forest Service respond. The three webinars were recorded and are available for viewing on the Plan Revision website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/colville/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd500452> .

Notes from Informational Meetings now Posted to Project web page: A variety of informational meetings have been held to share information about the draft plan, analysis and alternatives. There have been a variety of meetings where the Forest Service were available to share information and answer questions about the draft forest plan and analysis. . **Summaries of these meetings are now posted to the project website:**

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/colville/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd490436>

Interested in an Information Meeting? If your group or organization would like to request a short briefing to learn about the draft plan....pending availability of staff and scheduling, etc., please contact Debbie Kelly and Amy Dillon to inquire about scheduling. See contact information below.

Comment Reading Room- If you'd like to see what comments other groups and individuals have submitted to date, you can **View Comment Reading Room** at <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=45826>

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Subscribe to the Mailing List

To receive bulletins via email the public is invited to sign up for our electronic messaging system:
<http://fs.usda.gov/goto/colville/plan>



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