



**U.S. Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region**



June 2016

Overview Guide to Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Forest Plans

Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra National Forests

- Every national forest managed by the Forest Service is required to have a land management plan, or forest plan, by the National Forest Management Act of 1976 and other laws. Forest plans guide how we manage National Forest System lands, but do not compel any action, authorize projects or activities, or guarantee specific results.
- We are revising the Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra National Forests' plans because they are more than 20 years old. Economic, social, and ecological conditions have changed since they were written; new laws, regulations and policies are in place; and new information based on monitoring and scientific research is now available.
- Together, the Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra National Forests manage nearly 4.6 million acres of national forest system lands located at the southernmost extent of the Sierra Nevada mountain range of California and portions of western Nevada. Although we are completing one environmental impact statement (EIS) in this process, three unique forest plans will result from it.
- There are three main natural resource topics we are focusing on to revise these forest plans, including fire management, ecological integrity, and sustainable recreation and designated areas. The alternatives we used in our analysis - found in the draft EIS - vary in the ways they address these important issues.
- The purpose of revising these forest plans is to:
 - Reduce risk of large high-intensity wildfires to communities, recreation sites and infrastructure
 - Increase our ability to manage wildfires to meet resource objectives and reduce smoke impacts to communities
 - Restore the resilience of vegetation and aquatic and riparian ecosystems
 - Restore wildlife and plant habitat and diversity
 - Reduce risk of large high-intensity wildfire to wildlife and their habitats
 - Provide sustainable and diverse recreation that considers demographics, reflects local communities desires, avoids overcrowding and use conflicts, minimizes resource damage and protects cultural resources

- Update our management of wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail
- The draft EIS explains why we are proposing plan revisions, presents a full spectrum of different management alternatives, and analyzes the environmental effects of the alternatives. Based on this analysis and comments that the Forest Service receives on these draft documents, we will prepare a final EIS and proposed forest plans.
- We considered four alternatives in the draft EIS, based around the three revision topics. The alternatives present a range of options for addressing the issues the public, local tribes, groups and other agencies raised throughout the public involvement process as well as the purpose and need for revising these forest plans. See the attached table for how the revision topics are addressed across alternatives.
- To begin your review of the draft EIS and draft forest plans, we suggest first reading the draft EIS Summary (a separate document on the project website: <http://tinyurl.com/r5earlyadopters>) to help get oriented. The draft EIS consists of three volumes of analysis, including maps. There are three forest plans (one for each forest).
- The draft EIS, draft forest plans and supplemental information are available on-line at the project website: <http://tinyurl.com/r5earlyadopters>. Please note that some of the supplemental information will be posted shortly after the draft EIS and draft plans are released. The documents are arranged by headings and can be located on the project website as follows:
 - The draft forest plans are located under the “Forest Plan” heading.
 - The draft EIS is located under the “Analysis” heading.
 - The public engagement schedule, including public meeting details can be found under the “Analysis” heading.
 - Supplemental reports (formerly known as specialist reports) can be found under the “Supporting” heading. Topics include: Economics, Fire Ecology, Fire-climate, Old Forest, Vegetation Resilience, Vegetation Ecology, Terrestrial Connectivity, Complex Early Seral Forests, Carbon Stability, Botany, Air Quality, Insects and Pathogens, Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystems, and Fire Management.
 - Wild and Scenic Rivers supplemental information can be found under the “Supporting” heading.
 - Wilderness supplemental information can be found under the “Supporting” heading.
 - Species of Conservation Concern supplemental information can be found under the “Supporting” heading.
 - Monitoring Program supplemental information can be found under the “Supporting” heading.
- The draft EIS and draft forest plans will be open to a public comment period for 90 days. Please submit your comment(s) only once using one of the following methods. You may request a confirmation response if you submit your comment via the project web-site.
 - Project web-site comment form: <http://tinyurl.com/r5earlyadopters>
 - Postal mail: Planning Team Leader, Forest Plan Revision, 1323 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA 94592

- E-mail: r5planrevision@fs.fed.us
- We are seeking your specific comments on how to improve the alternatives and anything you think we missed in our analysis.
- The most helpful input provides:
 - Modifications or corrections to the information in the draft EIS or draft forest plans
 - Missing environmental or socioeconomic information not already listed in the draft EIS or draft forest plans
 - New information about laws, regulations, or guidance that apply to forest management
 - Missing scientific research or errors in the Forest Service's analysis
- For more information on forest plan revision, the draft forest plans or the draft environmental impact statement, please contact the Project Team Leader at 707-562-9121 or:
 - Inyo NF: Leeann Murphy lbmurphy@fs.fed.us; 760-873-2404
 - Sequoia NF: Brenda Ehmann behmann@fs.fed.us; 559-784-1500 ext. 1138
 - Sierra NF: Judi Tapia jetapia@fs.fed.us; 559-297-0706, ext. 4938
 - Project web-site: <http://tinyurl.com/r5earlyadopters>
 - Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZmEPivjC1g&feature=youtu.be>

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Comparing Alternatives

This table shows a comparison of how each alternative addresses the revision topics

Revision Topic	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Fire Management	Two distance-based zones around the wildland urban intermix: wildland-urban intermix defense zone; wildland-urban intermix threat zone	Four risk-based fire management zones: community wildfire protection zone, general wildfire protection zone, wildfire restoration zone, wildfire maintenance zone	One distance-based zone around the wildland urban intermix: wildland-urban intermix defense zone; 1 risk-based fire management zone: wildfire maintenance zone; remainder in general wildfire zone	Same as alternative B
Ecological Integrity	Prescriptive vegetation management emphasis on short-term retention of habitat for California spotted owl, Pacific fisher and Sierra marten. Vegetation and fuels management treatments prioritized in the wildland-urban intermix and elsewhere in a roughly geometric pattern of strategically placed area treatments;	Emphasis on restoration towards specific desired conditions based on natural range of variation and habitat, concentrated in focus landscapes; strategically located treatments to support larger landscape-scale prescribed burning and greater opportunity to manage wildfires to meet resource objectives. Focused restoration of sage-grouse habitat. Adds some critical aquatic refuges.	Emphasis on short-term habitat protection for California spotted owl, Pacific fisher, and Sierra marten. Vegetation and fuels management treatments focused on the wildland-urban intermix defense zone; limited mechanical treatment elsewhere; emphasis on managing wildfires to meet resource objectives where feasible. Increased restoration of sage-grouse habitat. Adds most critical aquatic refuges.	Same approach as alternative B, but more focus on increasing the area treated to improve the long-term sustainability and resilience of forests and watersheds.
Sustainable Recreation and Designated Areas	No additional recommended wilderness areas	Additional recommended wilderness areas identified on the Inyo National Forest only.	Additional recommended wilderness areas identified on all forests	No additional recommended wilderness areas