

Public Comments Questions and Answers: Forest Plan Revision 2016



What is a forest plan?

A forest plan provides land managers with broad guidance for managing natural resources and activities on a national forest. These plans do not authorize projects or commit the Forest Service to take action. The National Forest Management Act requires that forest plans are amended as necessary and revised every 15 years. A plan revision creates a new plan for the entire plan area.

What type of comments are most useful?

We encourage you to be as specific as possible and focus your comments on merits of the alternatives and/or the adequacy of the analysis. The more specific your comments are, the better we can respond to your comments and improve our final EIS. The most helpful comments provide:

- Modifications or corrections to the information in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or draft forest plan
- Missing environmental or socioeconomic information not already listed in the draft EIS or draft forest plan
- New information about laws, regulations, or guidance that apply to forest management
- Missing scientific research or errors in the Forest Service's analysis
- Points in the analysis that are confusing or hard to understand

What type of comments are not helpful?

Feedback that is not related to draft EIS or draft forest plan is not useful at this time. Statements of personal opinions are not helpful. For instance, saying, "The Southern Sierra Nevada is my favorite place to recreate," is not useful to improve the analysis. Also, while form letters offer public sentiments, forest plan revisions are not vote-based or by majority rule. Lastly, suggesting activities that are inconsistent with the laws and regulations that direct forest management are not helpful.

What are examples of useful comments?

Forest plans are programmatic; they do not address site-specific management. Instead, forest plans focus on broad issues and uses of the forest. Feedback that addresses a specific area may not help. Feedback that helps may look like this:

- Protecting water quality and wildlife habitat should be priorities when planning for sustainable recreation. Where conflicts arise, environmental protection should take priority over increasing recreational opportunities.
- The Forest Service needs more attention on providing recreational opportunities for under-served communities near the Inyo, Sierra, and Sequoia National Forests. Desired recreation opportunities for these communities might be _____.

How can I provide comments?

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

Will the new forest plans look different from the old forest plans?

Yes, the new plans will look different because of the 2012 Planning Rule. The current forest plans were written under the 1982 Planning Rule. The 2012 Planning Rule guides the development of forest plans that are strategic and provide a framework for integrated resource management and for guiding project and activity decision-making. The 2012 Planning Rule urges us to write all of our documents in plain language so the public can better understand the documents. It also requires us to develop a plan monitoring program that regularly assesses resource conditions and helps identify necessary plan amendments and revisions in the future.

What is the 2012 Planning Rule?

The 2012 Planning Rule is the framework for developing, revising, and amending forest management plans across the nation. It outlines what each forest is required to do during plan revisions. These requirements include identifying lands that may be suitable for special designations such as Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers; determining maximum amounts of timber removal; and planning for species of conservation concern. The 2012 Planning Rule requires us to develop a list of elements in the current plans that need to be changed. This "Need to Change" is based upon what is important to people; threats to resources; undesirable trends in social, economic, or ecological sustainability; and a need to correct current plan direction. The "Need to Change" formed the basis for the alternatives developed and analyzed in the draft EIS.