



Forest Plan Revision Webinar – Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests

June 28, 2016, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Online Webinar of the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region
Hosted by the Center for Collaborative Policy, Sacramento, California

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Introduction

The Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region held a public webinar as part of the forest plan revision process for the Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests. On May 27, 2016, the Forest Service officially released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and draft land management plans (forest plans) for these three forests. The 90-day comment period on these documents closes August 25, 2016. This webinar is one of a [series of public meetings](#) that the agency is hosting during the comment period.

This webinar summary, including the questions and answers section, will be included in our Comment Analysis and Response Application (CARA) database. This database tracks all the comments the Forest Service receives during the 90-day public comment period associated with this phase of forest plan revisions. The public is welcome to review all comments in the “public comment / objection reading room” of the project [website](#).

The purpose of the webinar was to:

- Introduce participants to the DEIS and draft forest plans for the Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests.
- Provide information about how the public may access and comment on these documents.
- Respond to participant questions about the plan revision process.

The Forest Service is revising the plans because 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 forests manage nearly 4.6 million acres of national forest system lands in the southern Sierra Nevada of California and parts of western Nevada.

This meeting summary focuses on addressing participant questions submitted during the webinar. To access opening presentations by Forest Service staff about the DEIS, national forest draft plans, and public engagement opportunities, please refer to the webinar [slide show](#) and [recording](#).

Webinar Agenda

The following table provides the webinar agenda including times, agenda items, and presenters.

Time	Agenda Item	Presenter
12:00 – 12:15 p.m.	Welcome and Orientation	Juliana Birkhoff and Al Olson
12:15 – 12:30 p.m.	Draft Environmental Impact Statement	Don Yasuda
12:30 – 12:45 p.m.	National Forest Draft Plans	Sonja Lin
12:45 – 12:50 p.m.	Public Engagement Opportunities	Debra Whitall
12:50 – 1:20 p.m.	DEIS and Forest Plan Process: Questions and Answers	All Presenters
1:20 – 1:30 p.m.	Summarize How to Participate	Al Olson
1:30 p.m.	Adjourn	Juliana Birkhoff

Presenters

- **Al Olson**, Director Ecosystem Planning, Pacific Southwest Region, Forest Service
- **Don Yasuda**, Regional Analyst, Pacific Southwest Region, Forest Service
- **Sonja Lin**, Regional Strategic Planner, Pacific Southwest Region, Forest Service
- **Debra Whitall**, Assistant Director Ecosystem Planning, Pacific Southwest Region, Forest Service
- **Beth Boyst**, Pacific Crest Trail Program Manager, Pacific Southwest Region, Forest Service
- **Christina Boston**, Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Program Leader, Pacific Southwest Region, Forest Service
- **Juliana Birkhoff**, Facilitator, Center for Collaborative Policy, Sacramento State University

Questions and Comments

Participants submitted online written questions and comments during the webinar. This section lists all participant submissions, grouped by theme, and answers to questions. Given the limited time on the

agenda, Forest Service staff was able to answer many, but not all, questions submitted during the webinar. In preparing this meeting summary, the Forest Service has responded to those questions that were not addressed during the webinar. In addition, where appropriate, further elaboration is provided for some questions that were answered during the webinar.

In the section that follows, answers that were addressed during the webinar are noted in *italics* and include the name of the responder in parentheses.

Definitions

1. There are many questions about definitions of concepts and terms. (Facilitator, summarizing multiple questions)
 - *A: Please refer to the DEIS or the plan glossaries. Many of the questions about definitions are addressed there. (Debra Whitall)*
2. How has the Forest Service defined “sustainable?” (Submitted by Amy Granat)
 - The 2012 Planning Rule at §219.8 describes the requirements to provide for sustainability in terms of ecological sustainability and social and economic sustainability. Note that sustainability is in context of being within Forest Service authority and consistent with the inherent capability of the plan area.
 - The 2012 Planning Rule also defines sustainable recreation as “The set of recreation settings and opportunities on the National Forest System that is ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable for present and future generations.”
 - In the draft forest plans and DEIS glossary, sustainability is defined as “The capability to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. For the purposes of the land management planning regulation at 36 CFR part 219, ecological sustainability refers to the capability of ecosystems to maintain ecological integrity; economic sustainability refers to the capability of society to produce and consume or otherwise benefit from goods and services, including contributions to jobs and market and nonmarket benefits; and social sustainability refers to the capability of society to support the network of relationships, traditions, culture and activities that connect people to the land and to one another, and support vibrant communities.”

Wildlife

3. What is a “target cell” for fisher? (e.g., only green, or includes yellow and pink cells in Sierra National Forest draft plan, Figure 10, p. 37.) What are “marten core habitat areas?” (Sierra National Forest draft plan, p. 98.) How will they be designated? How will “focused landscapes” be identified on the ground? Will most logging projects be in these areas? What are “fisher strategy areas?” (e.g., Sierra National Forest draft plan, p. 98.) (Submitted by Sue Britting)
 - *A: These terms are all defined in the glossary. (answered online)*

- The terms are defined in the draft forest plan glossary but most are missing from the glossary of the DEIS. We will look to ensure more terms are defined in both the final forest plans and final EIS where appropriate.
- The following examples use the Sierra National Forest as an example because it is the source referenced in the question, but fisher direction also occurs in the Sequoia National Forest draft forest plan. Marten direction occurs in the Inyo and Sequoia National Forest draft forest plans. The Potential Management Approach of focus landscapes is used on the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests but not the Inyo National Forest since it has different vegetation patterns and different needs for managing wildlife habitats.
- Fisher target cells are defined in the draft plan glossary as composed of fisher target habitat which is also defined on page 165 of the Sierra National Forest draft forest plan glossary. The fisher target habitat glossary states it is defined as “fisher target cells defined as ‘suitable’ and ‘potentially suitable’.” This corresponds to cells colored green and yellow in Figure 10 on page 37 of the Sierra National Forest draft forest plan.
- Marten core habitat areas are defined on page 168 of the Sierra National Forest draft forest plan glossary and footnotes that they are defined by the 2012 scientific report by Spencer and Rustigian-Romsos.
- Focus landscapes are defined on page 165 of the Sierra National Forest draft forest plan and the definition includes the conditions that are considered in identifying them during project-level planning. A Potential Management Approach for Terrestrial Ecosystems describes a principal strategy that the forest intends to use to carry out projects emphasizing vegetation treatments in focus landscapes on page 86 of the Sierra National Forest draft forest plan. Appendix B of the Sierra National Forest draft forest plan describes a Proposed and Possible Action that uses potentially larger scale planning to increase the pace and scale of ecological restoration on page 135.
- Please note the term “logging” is not used in the DEIS alternatives because it is a broad term that has traditionally been associated with harvesting trees for industrial forest management or primarily with harvest of large size trees with an emphasis on economic returns. The ecological restoration or vegetation treatments described in the alternatives are designed to achieve multiple benefits, but typically primarily to increase the resilience and sustainability of treated areas as described by vegetation desired conditions. While the principal strategy for treatment is to use focus landscapes to prioritize restoration activities, vegetation treatments would not be restricted to focus landscapes.
- The Fisher Strategy Area is defined on page 165 in the Sierra National Forest draft forest plan glossary. It is the mapped area that was developed and is the basis for the Southern Sierra Fisher Conservation Strategy and is shown in Figure 9 on page 36 and Figure 10 on page 37 of the Sierra National Forest draft forest plan.
- See also the following questions.

4. There may be definitions for the areas in the draft plan, but there is no indication when the areas will be delineated or in some cases how they would be delineated. Especially for marten core areas and focused landscapes. (Submitted by Sue Britting)
 - *A: We define focused landscapes in the glossary of the draft plans for the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests. They are defined based on management approaches and desired conditions. The Alternatives Section in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS also describes our approach to using the focused landscapes concept. As far as how these are defined on the ground, projects are designed to be consistent with the forest plan. Very site-specific descriptions of how you would design these on the ground would occur at the project level. (Don Yasuda)*
 - As indicated in the Glossary, marten core areas are identified in the maps provided in the scientific report by Spencer and Rustigian-Romsos 2012.
 - For focus landscapes, see also the response to question 5 below.
5. Focused landscapes: It is still not clear how much the focused landscapes will come into play in project implementation. This is important since focused landscapes are much less restrictive and impacts to wildlife are more extensive. (Submitted by Sue Britting)
 - The draft plans include guidance on the use of focus landscapes as a potential management approach, which is a principal strategy the forests intend to employ to carry out projects and activities under the land management plan. As a principal strategy, most, but not all of the fuels and vegetation management focused project would likely be designed using a focus landscape approach.
 - For the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests, there are a few species-specific plan components for California spotted owl and Pacific fisher that provide guidance when planning certain activities within or outside of focus landscapes. The extent of specific consequences to wildlife would be evaluated as site-specific projects are proposed.
 - Projects developed using focus landscapes would consider the full suite of applicable desired conditions, standards, and guidelines as well as other relevant potential management approaches. For example, direction for riparian conservation areas would be applied near streams, rivers, and meadows and direction to consider recreation and scenic character would be incorporated into project design and alternatives when projects are being designed and evaluated, as appropriate.
6. Does the fisher strategy area include all cells/hexs or only green, or green and yellow? (Submitted by Sue Britting)
 - See the definition in the Glossary and the response to question 3 above. As shown in Figure 10 of both the Sequoia and Sierra National Forest draft plans, the fisher strategy area encompasses hexagon grid cells that are currently suitable (green), potentially suitable (yellow), and unsuitable or low site potential (pink).
7. In the Fisher Conservation Strategy, habitat conditions in a specific number of target cells were to be maintained and this number increased overtime. The draft plans are not clear

about how many or which target cells must maintain habitat conditions at any point in time and does not address increasing suitable habitat over time. This is a significant disconnect with the Fisher Conservation Strategy. (Submitted by Sue Britting)

- *A: You will find a brief summary of our approach in the DEIS, Chapter 2, in the discussion of Alternatives. We also refer to the Fisher Conservation Strategy itself, which contains more detail on the technical nature of how those areas were defined and how they will be updated over time. The analysis section in Chapter 3 also explains some of the differences between the alternatives and our approaches to implementing the Fisher Conservation Strategy. (Don Yasuda)*
 - *A: Another place to look is in the plans, where we outline the sideboards for standards and guidelines that apply to that area for fisher management. (Sonja Lin)*
 - The Glossary explains that the Fisher Conservation Strategy is designed to manage for a desired number of target cells but these are not all mapped and because the environment is dynamic, they may shift over time. The Fisher Conservation Strategy, by design, is intended to be periodically updated.
8. How large is a spotted owl territory in Alternative C? (Submitted by Ben Solvesky)
- DEIS, page 35 explains that a territory is an 800-acre circular area surrounding the activity center.
9. DEIS page 373 says, “Limits on acres of spotted owl protected activity centers treated to 5 percent per year and 10 percent per decade (SPEC-CSO-GLD-07).” However, SPEC-CSO-GLD-07 in the draft forest plan states: “Within community buffers and focus landscapes, mechanical treatments in protected activity centers should not exceed 10 percent per year and 30 percent per decade of total acres of California spotted owl protected activity centers.” Which is correct? (Submitted by Ben Solvesky)
- DEIS Table 84, page 373 is in error for the 2 left columns (In Community Buffers and In Focus Landscapes). The guidance provided in the draft forest plans is correct. Within these 2 areas, treatments within protected activity centers should not exceed 10 percent per year and 30 percent per decade. Elsewhere, the amount of treatment within protected activity centers should not exceed 5 percent per year and 10 percent per decade.
 - This increase in the amount of California spotted owl protected activity centers within the community buffers and within the focus landscapes was needed to give flexibility during project development to design an effective pattern of vegetation and fuels treatments, especially in strategic locations that would facilitate management of fire, particularly larger landscape prescribed burns and future wildfires that could be managed to meet resource objectives.
10. Regarding the Sierra National Forest draft plan and DEIS: Are great gray owl (GGO) protected activity centers (PACs) being retained? DEIS p.49 Table 5 says NO; but DEIS p.361 says YES, “All alternatives retain ...GGO PACS.” (Submitted by Darca Morgan)

- *A: Great Gray Owl PACs are retained. Table 5 is in error. Great Gray Owl PACs are defined in the Plan glossary. Thanks for pointing this out. (answered online)*
11. Will there be great gray owl PACs or not? There is conflicting information in the documents. Even if there are PACs, I couldn't find any plan components that limit any activities within them, so it's not clear what purpose they would serve, which makes me think there won't be Great Gray Owl PACs. (Submitted by Ben Solvesky)
- *A: The three forest plans continue to retain PACs for great gray owls. The PACs are defined in the glossary. There is an error in Table 5 of the EIS where it says for Alternatives B& D, they are not retained. That is an error. PACs will be retained in those Alternatives. (Don Yasuda)*
 - See response to question 10 above. The Sequoia and Sierra National Forests have 2 guidelines for great gray owl. SPEC-GGO-GDL-01 describes the maintenance of herbaceous vegetation to provide for prey species and SPEC-GGO-GDL-02 provides for a limited operating period during the nesting season. This direction is essentially the same as the current direction.
 - There is also a Potential Management Approach for great gray owl in the Sequoia and Sierra National Forest draft forest plans that indicates the forest intends to conduct additional surveys to follow up on reliable sightings of great gray owls and if a nest were discovered, would establish a protected activity center as defined in the draft forest plan glossary.
12. Where is the wildlife section? (Submitted by Marilyn Jasper)
- The DEIS has information about wildlife species in a few places. In Chapter 3, it is under Revision Topic 2: Ecological Integrity in the subsection on "Wildlife, Fish and Plants." We refer to at-risk species, which includes federally listed species and species of conservation concern. There are separate subsections on "At-risk Terrestrial Wildlife Species", "At-risk Aquatic Species", and "At-risk Plant Species." Those are all keywords that relate to the discussions on wildlife, aquatic species, and plants. Also, in each of the three draft forest plans, there are relevant sections within each of the plan components (i.e. desired conditions, standards, or guidelines). Under each component, there is a subheading for "Animal and Plant Species." In addition, we talk about wildlife habitat in other sections of the plan, such as the terrestrial ecosystem section and aquatic ecosystems section.
13. How do forest plans address wildlife needs, and how can you find that information? (Facilitator, summarizing multiple questions)
- *A: There are several specific and detailed questions from webinar participants about how forest plans address wildlife needs and where to find that information in the documents. In general, the draft forest plans provide direction to maintain the diversity and persistence of plants and animals within each of the forests. Our plan components are designed to look at ecological habitat needs for species and groups of species. In the animal and plant species section, there is some direction for individual, specific species, particularly those listed or considered as federally listed (Threatened or Endangered*

Species) and some of the Regional Forester Species of Conservation Concern. You can also look at how different alternatives considered different approaches to provide for the habitats of species. There are several detailed questions about different aspects of the fisher conservation strategy and interim recommendations for the management of the California spotted owl. There is also recent information, which we talk about in the DEIS, for the Sierra marten. Each of the alternatives takes a slightly different approach to balancing the needs and the costs in managing those habitats. The alternatives take different approaches to balance habitat management with the need to increase the pace and scale of restoration to reduce the risk of large, high intensity wildfires. (Don Yasuda)

Recreation

14. My particular interest pertains to Inyo National Forest planning. The Reds Meadows Hot Springs facility, part of the recreational geological environment, should be restored and reopened to the public. (Submitted by Farid Watson)
 - Forest Plans are programmatic documents that do not make decisions to open or close specific recreation sites such as the Reds Meadows Hot Springs facility. This would be a project-level decision that is not made through the forest plan revision process.
 - If you find direction in the draft forest plan that might conflict with what you believe to be important to manage this particular site or if you believe there are aspects of any of the alternatives that would have bearing on your desired management, please provide more specific information on what draft plan language or what aspects of the alternative should be explained better or adjusted.

15. A corridor for the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) should be out of the scope of this document, because the management of the PCT is contained in the still-valid PCT Management Plan. Management in or around the PCT must be changed by re-evaluating the PCT management plan - not through forest plan revisions since it violates the National Environmental Planning Act (NEPA). This is also predetermination, because PCT management changes in these forests would require the rest of the forests in California, Oregon, and Washington to adopt the same plan for continuity. No comments the public proposes could possibly change that scenario, rendering public comment for changes in PCT management irrelevant. How is this not the case? (Submitted by Amy Granat)
 - *A: The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan was signed by the Chief of the Forest Service in the early 1980s. Nothing proposed in the Forest Plan revisions is in conflict with that Plan. The Comprehensive Management Plan requires that land management planning processes produce a “strategy for 2nd level planning” that interfaces with the Comprehensive Management Plan. That is what we are doing with this forest plan revision process. Second, under the 2012 Planning Rule and subsequent Forest Service directives, National Scenic and Historic Trails are considered “designated areas.” As such, the plan can identify designated areas as management areas or geographic areas. Third, one more piece of the puzzle is which plan components may be applied to scenic and historic trails. It tracks that having a management area or a geographic area, as well as plan components that support, are indeed part of our directives. That’s the overall framework. I think there is some concern that this might tie*

to future planning. Certainly the 2012 Planning Rule and subsequent directives will impact all future planning, but what exactly will be in future forest plans is unknown at this point. (Beth Boyst)

- Forest plan decisions regarding management of the PCT on the Inyo, Sequoia, or Sierra National Forests would not set precedent for forest plan decisions on other national forests that manage portions of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. We rely on public scoping to assist with identifying issues and concerns with the PCT management on a local forest. It is possible that some of the issues brought forward in these three forests may be relevant to the next forest plans under going revision but the resolution of those issues could vary depending on local conditions.
16. How can I convince others that their comments can make a difference if the intentions in regard to the PCT, for example, have already been decided? This is making citizen comments useless if there is no possibility for change. (Submitted by Amy Granat)
- See response to question 15 above. Public comments during scoping were used to refine the proposed action in the Notice of Intent (2014) to the current draft Forest Plans. Forest plan decisions on the management approach for the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail outlined in the four alternatives evaluated have not been decided. While the approach outlined in alternative B is the current agency preferred alternative, it may be re-evaluated or adjusted based upon public comments received during the comment period.
17. Will the hiking permit system remain in place for the John Muir Trail (JMT) with this plan? I hope so! I think it keeps the wild places wild. (Submitted by Melanie Bomar)
- *A: There are not hiking permits, per se. There are the PCT thru-hiker permits, and there are Wilderness Permits. We are not making site specific decisions in these plans that would change those permits. (Beth Boyst)*
 - The plans have desired conditions and other plan components to ensure that the wilderness is managed to protect the wilderness character of each wilderness, including the qualities of untrammelled, natural, undeveloped, opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation, and other feature of value unique to each specific wilderness.
18. The vast majority of recreation conflicts I have heard from the Forest Service contain an element of discrimination against someone else's preferred form of recreation. (Submitted by Amy Granat)
- Forest plans are programmatic in nature and do not make specific decisions on creating or closing access to specific sites. Those decisions are made through separate travel management decisions. Forest plans include guidance through a suite of desired conditions and other plan components including the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classes. Site specific travel management decisions consider a variety of resources including access for the use and enjoyment of National Forest System lands, and appropriate range of motorized and non-motorized recreational experiences, all while minimizing conflicts among uses, and minimizing effects on heritage resources, ecological processes, and ecosystem health, diversity, and productivity.

19. Do you want comments on “specific locations” on the Recreation Opportunities Spectrum (ROS) maps? (Submitted by Jim Gibson)
- *A: With the ROS maps, it would be helpful to have general comments, or comments about that general zoning, because ROS is done at a broader scale than the specific site. It would be more helpful if you could translate your comment about a specific site into whether you feel that general zoning is suitable or not for the uses you are interested in (for example, motorized, non-motorized, or primitive uses). (Sonja Lin)*
 - It would also be helpful to describe the places that you are most interested in and what forest plan direction should be in place to protect those opportunities if it is absent or missing in the plan.
20. Do Recreation Opportunities Spectrum (ROS) maps apply to winter as well as summer? (Submitted by Jim Gibson)
- Yes, the current ROS maps in the draft forest plans are intended to apply to both summer and winter. Public comments addressing ROS Maps, and if they are adequate for both seasons, will be helpful in determining any necessary revisions between draft and final.
21. Is the GPS data available by download for the ROS and for the recommended wilderness? (Submitted by Laurel Harkness)
- *A: The wilderness maps are available in DEIS Volume 2: Appendices and all other maps, including ROS, are in Volume 3: Maps. These are available online at the [project website](#). Higher resolution wilderness maps are also accessible on that website. (answered online)*
 - Some geographic information system (GIS) data files to support the draft plans or DEIS, including shapefiles for potential recommended wilderness, are at the following location (link also found on [project website](#)): <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r5/landmanagement/gis/?cid=STELPRDB5327165>
22. How is the Forest Plan going to address current recreation uses (i.e., rock climbing) in proposed wilderness areas? (Submitted by Katie Goodwin)
- *A: The draft forest plans include direction for existing designated wilderness and any recommended wilderness. I would encourage you to look at the direction in the plans for designated wilderness. Generally there has not been a lot of change from the current direction. But there is some new direction, at the forest plan level, that applies to areas that were designated since the last time the plans were revised and to areas that did not have existing wilderness management plans. (Christina Boston)*
 - Areas recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System would be managed according to the direction provided in the forest plan for recommended wilderness. The Inyo National Forest has new recommended wilderness in Alternative B and plan components are found on p.54-55. Recreation uses in

recommended wilderness would comply with the desired conditions, standards, guidelines, suitability, and goals outlined in that section.

Wilderness Designation

23. Adding any Wilderness or Wild & Scenic areas simply is an excuse to not manage that land. Clearly the current status of the forest is clear evidence that we do not need nor should we put any more land in our inventory of untouchable areas. It is not working. Option 4 clearly is better than your preferred option 2. (Submitted by Randy Hanvelt)
- The 2012 Planning Rule requires that an evaluation of areas suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System must occur whenever forest plans are first developed or when they are revised.
 - The DEIS evaluates a range of alternatives regarding identifying areas as recommended wilderness and evaluates the consequences of the different recommendations.
 - Similarly, the 2012 Planning Rule requires evaluation of river segments that might be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System whenever forest plans are first developed or revised.
 - The DEIS does not examine a different range of alternatives for alternatives B, C, and D for areas identified as eligible river segments with assigned preliminary classifications. The process used to conduct the inventory, eligibility determination, and classification are explained in Volume 2 of the DEIS in Appendix C.
 - Suitability studies for Wild and Scenic Rivers will be completed and documented in a separate decision process as explained in Appendix C, page 379.
24. How will the new forest plans affect designation of new wilderness areas in the national forests? (Submitted by Anne Henny)
- *A: The planning process does not designate wilderness. Only Congress can designate wilderness. In the planning process we identify areas that may be suitable for inclusion as wilderness, and we make recommendations. In the Alternatives, you can see the different recommendations for wilderness. In the documents, the best place to find information about wilderness is in Volume 2 of the DEIS: the Wilderness Appendix lays out the entire process including the results and the maps. (Sonja Lin)*
25. You indicated some differences in the areas proposed for wilderness under the different Alternatives (e.g., Alternative B with wilderness proposal only in Inyo; Alternative C with wilderness proposal in all three forests). Where in the documents or maps is it easiest to identify the differences in areas proposed for wilderness under the three alternatives? (Submitted by Mike McCarthy)
- *A: The Wilderness Appendix in Volume 2 of the DEIS, contains that information, including maps. A map in the appendix shows the differences between Alternatives B & C for the Inyo National Forest. (Sonja Lin)*

26. Please elaborate on the question of wilderness designation. If areas are not recommended for wilderness in the plans, will they in effect become ineligible for wilderness designation as other uses become entrenched? (Submitted by Anne Henny)
- See response to question 23 above regarding the requirement to evaluate areas for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System whenever forest plans are revised.
 - If an area is not managed as a recommended wilderness, other activities or changes could occur provided that they are consistent with other plan direction relevant to the area. In the future, if the area still retains wilderness characteristics, it would be included in the inventory, evaluation, analysis, and recommendation process during the next forest plan revision.
27. But areas you identify as “suitable” become de facto “proposed Wilderness” and are typically left out of the management plan. That is a potential problem. We suppress fire sometimes but generally you get overgrown areas which then become areas that are not really natural or wilderness. So how are you modifying your wilderness management plans? (Submitted by Randy Hanvelt)
- The DEIS considers in Alternatives B and C different acreage for recommended wilderness. Areas not identified as recommended wilderness will be managed by other relevant plan direction. See the response to questions 24 and 26 above regarding management of areas not managed as recommended wilderness.
 - The forest plan does not directly modify site-specific wilderness management plans. Following adoption of the forest plan revision, existing plans will be evaluated to ensure they are consistent with the relevant newly adopted plan direction.
28. Given that the inventories identified vast areas of land with wilderness character, WHY do the plans recommend such an infinitesimal amount? (Submitted by Anne Henny)
- A four step process is required to be used when revising forest plans. The four steps are Inventory, Evaluation, Analysis, and Recommendation. This process is explained in Volume 2 of the DEIS, Appendix B.
 - All areas that were included in the final inventory were further examined in the Evaluation stage to evaluate the wilderness characteristics of each area. Not all areas included in the inventory contained wilderness characteristics as documented in Appendix B.
 - The analysis step was where each responsible official (forest supervisor) for the individual national forest determined which areas that contained wilderness characteristics would be included in one or more alternative for analysis in the DEIS. Please see the Analysis section of Appendix B for more information.
29. How can participants find more information about the Forest Service’s recommendation process for wilderness? (Facilitator, summarizing multiple questions)

- *A: The DEIS, Volume 2 Wilderness Appendix contains information about the recommendation process that the Forest Service followed under the 2012 Planning Rule. The Appendix has information about the inventory and evaluation and how the agency chose polygons to analyze recommended wilderness across the alternatives. (Sonja Lin)*

Tree Mortality and Forest Condition

30. What is the plan for tree conservation after this beetle infestation that is happening now?
(Submitted by Melanie Bomar)

- See the response to question 31 below.
- Forest plans are intended to provide broad guidance on the range of relevant activities that are likely to occur during the 10-15 year “life of the plan.” The extent of the tree mortality occurring on these forests has increased since the initiation of the plan revision effort. However, the underlying strategies of the alternatives evaluated remain largely the same: evaluate and prioritize restoration actions in areas with the greatest risk and highest potential loss of ecological, social, and economic values.
- The Forest Service will continue to work in coordination with California Tree Mortality Task Force to address the immediate response to tree mortality on the national forests and adjacent lands, as well as to coordinate information that will inform broader planning.

31. How have you dealt with the impact of overly dense forests which has a direct cause and effect to the tree mortality issues, loss of owl and fisher habitat, and reduced water in our streams, creeks and rivers? Your own silviculturists say the current policy of maintaining dense stands is not sustainable. I do not see a comprehensive correction for past errors in judgment.
(Submitted by Randy Hanvelt)

- *A: I will touch on a few activities we are doing now to deal with the present risk, and then I will talk about how the plan fits in. The Forest Service is prioritizing and implementing thinning treatments to improve vigor and reduce susceptibility to bark beetles, stress, and wildfires to our stands throughout this plan. The different alternatives show how we are doing that. The big picture need is to come up with a recipe for future success that will be able to do enough treatments in the right places to extend the resilience of our stands to prolonged periods of drought like we are seeing today. In revising the plans we are ensuring that desired conditions and vegetation types recognize the varied conditions that will provide for forest resilience in the context of a changing environment and climate change. In implementing the forest plans, the management approaches and strategies that we might consider moving forward include desired conditions that will recognize what forests are most at risk from wildfires, such as those near communities, and those stands that are most susceptible to insects and disease, especially mortality associated with bark beetle. This analysis will examine the consequences of different treatment approaches on forest sustainability while at the same time considering wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities. (Al Olson)*

32. What exactly is the vision for the forest? (Submitted by David Sharp)

- The Vision of the forest plan is described in Chapter 2 of the draft forest plans. The vision section describes the desired conditions which portray what the forest or portions of the forest should look like in the future, considering the forest's distinctive roles and contributions and specific cultural, ecological, social, and economic characteristics of the forest.
- As explained in Chapter 2 of the draft forest plans, desired conditions essentially set forth the desired landscape of the future while the other plan components give guidance on how to get there.

Management Direction: Timber, Grazing, Ecosystems, and Invasive Species

33. I am interested in the effect of each of the alternatives on invasive noxious weed management. I do not see invasive weeds listed in the index other than three short references to "invasive species." Is invasive noxious weed species management addressed in these alternatives and if so, where would I find them? (Submitted by Cathi Boze)
- *A: We have a few sections in Chapter 2 that describe the Alternatives. One section is on features common to all Alternatives or to Alternative B, C, and D. That section discusses invasive species. There are several areas where we felt our direction would not need to change. Invasive species is described there. If you want more specific information on the direction for invasive species, you can look in the direction in the draft forest plans. It may be found several sections in the draft forest plans: Desired Conditions, Standards, Guidelines, etc. (Don Yasuda)*
 - In addition to the locations in the draft forest plans mentioned above, there is direction for invasive species in plan objectives and potential management approaches.
 - Importantly, the direction for managing invasive species was expanded from the more narrow focus on noxious weeds in alternative A to include all invasive species for alternatives B, C, and D as explained in the DEIS on page 20.
34. How do the alternatives differ with respect to access to grazing allotments? Will the historic allotments that have been closed to study the effects of removing grazing as a management tool be reopened to help reduce fuel loads and improve meadow condition in any of the alternatives? (Submitted by Cathi Boze)
- See the response to question 35 below.
35. How do timber harvesting and grazing change in these alternatives? (Submitted by Gary Sack)
- *A: I can address this question generally. Livestock grazing was not identified as one of our major needs to change for forest plan revision. Largely the direction for grazing continues from the current forest plans, with some adjustment to overlay all of the other desired conditions in the plan. Chapter 2 of the DEIS addresses direction on timber harvest. There is also some specific direction in each individual forest plan, under desired conditions. The direction for timber harvest changes somewhat. We are defining a different approach for the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests that focuses treatments in concentrated areas to have a greater improvement from restoration. (Don Yasuda)*

- Since livestock grazing was not identified as a major need to change in this plan revision, the plans did not re-evaluate rangeland suitability for livestock grazing. There are no proposed changes to the existing status of active, vacant or closed livestock grazing allotments across the national forests in this plan revision.
 - The approach to vegetation treatments changes to consider a potential management approach that evaluates and designs projects looking at larger focus landscapes to improve the achievement of restoration benefits. The forest plan does not generally prescribe specific methods of treatment, which is left to site-specific project design and analysis. Timber harvest is one method of vegetation treatments that would be considered when projects are designed.
 - Alternatives B and D continue to use vegetation treatment methods similar to the methods currently used focusing on thinning over dense stands of trees to improve the resilience of the desired largest and oldest trees. A broad suite of desired conditions describe the conditions that would be used to design site-specific projects.
 - Alternative C favors the use of prescribed burning and managing wildfires to restore landscapes instead of mechanical treatments where it is safe and feasible to do so.
36. Regarding the Sierra National Forest plan and DEIS: If montane wet meadows and early seral meadows overlap somewhat, then Standard 14 p.62 for a 6" stubble height appears to contradict Standard 06 p.94 for a 4" stubble height. What is the proposed management direction for montane wet meadows and early seral meadow stubble height? And, how is 'satisfactory' vs. 'unsatisfactory' condition determined? (Submitted by Darca Morgan)
- *A: Thanks for pointing this out. We will take a closer look. (answered online)*
 - As explained in the Purpose of the Forest Plan section of Chapter 1 of the draft forest plans, project and activity decisions must be consistent with the direction contained in the forest plan or the project must be redesigned or rejected or a plan amendment could be considered.
 - The direction in MA-RCA-STD-14 is intended to apply to any condition where there is season-long grazing and provides a maximum percent grazing utilization level or minimum stubble height for early seral and for late seral status meadows. The direction in RANG-FW-STD-06 is intended to apply forest-wide wherever the montane and riparian areas and wetlands and meadow types described exist and provides for a maximum percent grazing utilization level or minimum stubble height regardless of seral stage status of meadows.
 - The two standards are essentially the same, with one exception. Standard MA-RCA-STD 14 does not account for sites in mid seral ecological status, trends in status, or account for other rangeland condition rating systems and terms such as "good-fair-poor." Standards RANG-FW-STD 6 and 7 use the terms "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" to account for different condition rating systems and measured trends in those conditions. "Satisfactory" conditions include mid seral ecological status or fair range condition which have an upward trend in that status or condition. "Unsatisfactory" conditions

would be mid seral ecological status or fair range condition with a downward trend in that status or condition.

- In general, where overlapping plan direction exists, the most restrictive direction would apply; forest plan direction does not compel action but instead provides sideboards to project activities. Since a standard is defined in Chapter 1 of the draft forest plans as providing a “mandatory constraint on project and activity decision-making” the most restrictive constraint would apply.
37. With respect to grazing management and meadows, the Notice of Intent (NOI) specifically referred to adjusting grazing management (NOI, p. 5): “There is a need to modify plan direction for aquatic and riparian ecosystems to maintain or improve the resilience of these ecosystems to climate change, fire, air pollution, and invasive species, and to manage meadows holistically across individual resources areas, such as hydrology, soils, wildlife, and vegetation.” NOI (p. 15): “Desired conditions would be updated for meadows to reflect an integration of vegetation, soils, hydrology, and wildlife conditions. Guidelines would be added to address the ecological integrity of meadows and their connection to groundwater.” Where is this addressed in the draft plans? (Submitted by Sue Britting)
- The quoted statements from the Notice of Intent do not specifically refer to adjusting grazing management. Grazing is not specifically mentioned in the Notice of Intent. A change in livestock grazing direction was not identified as a major area in need of change for this plan revision for the three national forests.
 - Direction for meadows is primarily found in the draft forest plans in the Management Area for Riparian Conservation Areas with a subsection for Meadows. Other direction relevant to overall conditions are found in the sections on Watershed Condition.
 - The Notice of Intent does mention that on the Inyo National Forest, two grazing related Standards from the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (Standards 120 and 121) have been replaced by a subsequent forest plan amendment and the current direction would continue in the plan revision for all alternatives.
38. Do the ecosystem components apply to Alternatives B, C, and D? (Submitted by Ben Solvesky)
- *A: Many of the ecosystem components for our preferred alternative, Alternative B, are displayed in the draft forest plans in great detail. We do not have draft plans written for all of the other Alternatives. In many cases, desired conditions would be the same across Alternatives. In Chapter 2, which describes the Alternatives, we do spell out where other plan direction might be different. In some cases we describe where standards or guidelines would differ between Alternatives in relation to the current plan or Alternative B. (Don Yasuda)*

Locating Data, Information, or Contacts

39. Is it possible to get shape files for the maps included in the plans? (Submitted by Louis Geltman)

- The [project website](#) has a link to our [GIS clearinghouse](#) where you can download GIS data that correspond to the maps in the document.
40. Who can we contact if we have questions about the specific content in the DEIS, draft plans, or supplemental reports? (Submitted by Sue Britting)
- We have tried to provide many of the supporting documents that may be requested in order to evaluate and provide comments on the draft forest plans and DEIS and appendices. These can be found on the [project website](#).
 - If you have questions about what is or is not included in the DEIS, draft plans, or supplemental reports that are needed to better inform your comments, you may contact the Project Team Leader by sending an email to r5planrevision@fs.fed.us . To ensure your email is addressed in a timely manner, please be sure to include the word "Question: "and provide a topic in your subject line.

Questions about Public Comment

41. Should we submit a separate comment letter for each Forest or would you prefer one letter for all Forests and the DEIS? (Submitted by Becky Mandich)
- *A: If your comment is applicable to all three forests, then you only need to submit that one. If your comment is specific and unique to a specific forest, then it helps the Forest Service to get that feedback for that specific forest. (Deb Whitall)*
 - We want to emphasize that it is important to be clear to which forest or forests your comments apply. If specific comments are applicable to multiple forest, please indicate that in your comments by noting that it applies to all three forest or list to which forests it applies. You may consider organizing your comments into sections for those common to all three forests and then those specific to each individual national forest.
42. When you were talking about "best comments" for the public to make you said, "Feedback that addresses a specific area may not be that helpful." When you answered the question regarding whether the public should make 3 different comments/one for each forest or one general comment you said that we should make site specific comments. That is confusing.
- *A: We'll take comment in any form and combination. What would be most helpful would be if you can be really specific and provide us unique comments for each forest. (Debra Whitall)*
 - The webinar slide that noted that feedback addressing a specific area may not be helpful used an example of very site specific information to demonstrate that project level planning is not helpful in evaluating programmatic direction in the forest plan. The context to when site-specific comments are helpful is if they inform the design or analysis of plan components provided in the draft forest plans or the alternatives considered in the DEIS. Other situations where site-specific information would be helpful is if it informs other required considerations, such as information relevant to plan direction, such as for species of conservation concern, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or lands suitable for timber production.

43. What have been the main themes or trends of the main comments or concerns expressed in the public meetings over the past month? (Submitted by Devon Jones)
- *A: There have been two principle themes from the public meetings: wilderness and tree mortality. (Debra Whitall)*

Webinar Process Questions

44. Can we have internet access to your slides from today's presentation? (Submitted by Randy Hanvelt)
- *A: The [slides](#) are available on the [project website](#) under the Public Engagement heading of the [Supporting] section. (answered online)*
 - A [recording of this webinar](#) can be found on-line as well.
45. What if you do not have a telephone and still want to participate in the webinar? This webinar cannot be heard online? Other USFS webinars include both successfully. That leaves out a significant portion of your rural audience or potential participants. Other entities have live audio accompanying their online presentations. Why was this choice made not to include audio as part of an online presentation? Is that an effective form of outreach? You are excluding those who do not have land lines or are trying to access from non-cell friendly areas. (Submitted by Teri Faulkner)
- *A: There will be a recording of the webinar posted online soon. However, the audio is only available by phone for the live webinar. (answered online)*
 - *A: We set it up this way because, according to our past experience, having some participants participate via computer can disrupt audio for all, if there are problems with the connection or broadband limitations. (answered online)*
 - *Thank you for your input. We will take this into consideration in planning future webinars. (answered online)*
 - See the response to question 44 above. A [recording of this webinar](#) is available on-line for those who could not connect or participate or for those that would like to hear it again.
46. The Draft Plan seems to be general policies – all seemingly very good. I am interested in the Reds Meadows area and its geological recreational resources, in particular. Am I in the right place? It's a "sustainable recreation and designated area." (Submitted by Farid Watson)
- *A: We will not be getting into that level of detail in this presentation (answered online).*
 - Yes, the analysis of consequences for recreation relevant to this question is located in the DEIS in the section called Sustainable Recreation and Designated Areas. In particular, the subsection on Sustainable Recreation.

- The draft forest plan for the Inyo National Forest identifies a management area around certain Recreation Places. Reds Meadow-Fish Creek Place (pages 77-78) provides a general description and desired condition related to recreation activities and management in that area. Figure 12 in Appendix A of the Inyo National Forest draft forest plan displays all of the recreation places.
- Comments about desires for management of a specific recreation site are less helpful than commenting on how plan direction in the draft forest plans are clearly presented in the draft forest plans or analyzed in the DEIS or how the alternatives could be improved.

47. Why can I not see the questions from other audience members? (Submitted by Teri Faulkner)

- *A: This webinar platform does not allow that functionality. (answered online)*
- The purpose of this summary is to share with everyone the questions received and the answers that were either provided online to the original sender, provided verbally during the webinar, or answered after the webinar.

48. Can I get a recording of this webinar starting at the answer about the tree mortality? (Submitted by Melanie Bomar)

- *A: The [entire webinar](#) will be posted to the [project website](#). (answered online)*

Webinar Participants and Staff

The following table lists the names and affiliations (where provided) of webinar attendees.

Name	Organization (If Provided)
Mary Adamic	
Jane Allen	Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Eric Anderson	San Diego County Farm Bureau
Virginia Beres	United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service
David Bock	
Melanie Bomar	
Cathi Boze	Mariposa County
Tim Brick	Arroyo Seco Foundation
Sue Britting	Sierra Forest Legacy
Scott Burns	Mono County Community Development
Elliot Chasin	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Ariel Collins	The City Project
Andrea Davidson	USDA Forest Service
Heather Davis	The Wilderness Society
Philip DeSenze	USDA Forest Service
Carlyn Drivdahl	Tuolumne County
Brittany Dyer	Madera County

USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region
Forest Plan Revision Webinar Summary

Name	Organization (If Provided)
Brenda Ehmann	USDA Forest Service
Hilary Eisen	Winter Wildlands Alliance
Alicia Embrey	Sequoia National Forest
Teri Faulkner	
Pamela Flick	Defenders of Wildlife
Alison Flint	The Wilderness Society
Alissa Fogg	Point Blue Conservation Science
Louis Geltman	Outdoor Alliance
Jim Gibson	Snowlands Network
Katie Goodwin	Access Fund
Margarita Gordus	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Amy Granat	California Off-Road Vehicle Association
Ian Graves	
Matt Greene	
Noah Greer	
Randy Hanvelt	Tuolumne County
Laurel Harkness	International Mountain Bicycling Association
Staci Heaton	Rural County Representatives of California
Thom Heller	Mammoth Lakes Fire Department
Nancy Hendricks	National Park Service
Anne Henny	Sierra Club
Eric Hunter	Sierra Eastside Mountain Bike Association
Marilyn Jasper	Sierra Club
Jennifer Johnstone	Kern River Ranger District
Devon Jones	Mendocino County Farm Bureau
Steve Larson	SHARE Mountain Bike Club
Jenny Loda	Center for Biological Diversity
Becky Mandich	Southern California Edison
Ara Marderosian	Sequoia Forest Keeper
Brad Marston	
Mike McCarthy	Sierra Responsible Riders
Tom Miller	Sierra Club Volunteer
Chelsea Molina	California Farm Bureau Federation
Darca Morgan	
James Munson	United States Environmental Protection Agency
Michelle Nuttall	Southern California Edison
Beth Pfeiler	United Trail Maintainers of California
Patricia Puterbaugh	Lassen Forest Preservation Group
John Rader	American Alpine Club
Randy Rasmussen	Back Country Horsemen of America

USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region
Forest Plan Revision Webinar Summary

Name	Organization (If Provided)
Marilyn Reese	National Forest Recreation Association
Suzanne Remien	Sierra Club
Justine Reynolds	
Josh Rolph	California Farm Bureau
Gary Sack	California Farm Bureau Federation
David Sharp	
Rodney Siegel	The Institute for Bird Populations
Vera Smith	The Wilderness Society
Evan Sollberger	
Ben Solvesky	Sierra Forest Legacy
Jessica Strickland	Trout Unlimited
Pamela Sweeten	Shepard Bros.
Reed Tollefson	Audubon Society
Tony Toso	Rancher/California Farm Bureau Federation
Clark Trowell	
Rene Voss	Sequoia ForestKeeper and Kern-Kaweah Chapter of the Sierra Club
Farid Watson	
Paul Wenger	California Farm Bureau
Todd Wimmer	
Kevin Wright	

The following table lists the names and affiliations of webinar staff.

Name	Organization
Denise Adamic	USDA Forest Service
Christina Boston	USDA Forest Service
Beth Boyst	USDA Forest Service
Sonja Lin	USDA Forest Service
Al Olson	USDA Forest Service
Debra Whittall	USDA Forest Service
Don Yasuda	USDA Forest Service
Juliana Birkhoff	Center for Collaborative Policy, California State University, Sacramento
Sarah Di Vittorio	Center for Collaborative Policy, California State University, Sacramento