



File Code: 1950
Date: August 19, 2016

Dear Planning Partner:

We are starting the next phase of revising the Land Management Plan (plan) for the Francis Marion National Forest (Francis Marion). After four years of a public collaborative process, we are releasing the draft Record of Decision, Francis Marion Revised Plan, and the associated Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) next week. A summary sheet on the revised plan is attached to this letter. These documents will be posted on the Francis Marion Forest Plan Revision website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/scnfs/fmplan> early next week. Printed and electronic copies of these documents are available upon request by calling 803-561-4000.

Last summer, the Francis Marion released a draft plan and associated draft environmental impact statement that went out for a 90-day public comment period that officially began on August 14, 2015 with the publication of the **Notice of Availability** in the *Federal Register*. Over the last year, my staff and I have carefully considered your comments and modified the plan and associated environmental impact statement. Changes to the revised plan include, but are not limited to: extensive reformatting to improve readability and remove duplication; clarifying the integration of ecosystems, management areas and resource integration zones in the introduction of chapter 2; and adding standards and guidelines to maintain and restore habitat for “at risk species,” preserve water quality and quantity, conserve riparian management zones and limit the spread of non-native invasive species in chapter 4. Future decisions on projects to implement the revised plan will be made on a site-specific basis using appropriate analysis and documentation in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The decision to approve the revised plan for the Francis Marion is subject to the Objection process identified in 36 CFR 219 Subpart B (219.50-219.62). While the Federal Register Notice ran on Wednesday August 17, the Objection process officially begins the day after the publication of the **Notice of Objection Period** in *The State* newspaper’s legal ads (anticipated the week of August 22). This phase is an opportunity for people who have provided “substantive” comments to request an administrative review on the draft Record of Decision, revised plan and FEIS. Please see the Francis Marion Forest Plan Revision website for more information on the objection process and how to submit objections.

The Responsible Official for the Francis Marion Revised Plan is the Forest Supervisor. If you would like more information or have questions relating to the draft Record of Decision or the revised plan, please contact Mary Morrison by email mwmorrison@fs.fed.us or by phone at 803-561-4000.

Sincerely,

JOHN RICHARD LINT
Forest Supervisor

Enclosures

