

## Introduction

The Forest Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is currently revising many of its land management plans across the country. Often referred to as “forest plans,” these documents guide the stewardship of an important part of our national heritage - the National Forest System - by creating a “big picture” view of how a national forest will be managed.

In 2012, the Forest Service updated its land management planning requirements for the first time in 30 years with a new “Planning Rule.” A key facet of this new Planning Rule is that it emphasizes the Forest Service’s responsibility to engage with the public and to work more closely with State, local, and Tribal Governments when national forest managers amend or revise their forest plans.

Because of the important role of the public in the implementation of the Planning Rule, a Federal Advisory Committee was established to help achieve a more collaborative approach to forest planning. This Committee has been instrumental in assisting the Forest Service in developing tools and guidance for authentic, public engagement throughout the forest planning process.

## For More Information

USFS Homepage: <http://www.fs.fed.us/>

Planning Rule Information: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/planningrule/home>

FACA Committee: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/planningrule/committee>

Digital copy of the State, local, and Tribal Governments Guide: [http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd520672.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd520672.pdf)

Printable copy of the State, local, and Tribal Governments Guide: [http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd520673.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd520673.pdf)

A Citizen’s Guide to Forest Planning: [http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd520670.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd520670.pdf)

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United States Department of Agriculture

# Understanding Your Opportunities for Participating in the Forest Service Planning Process

A Guide for State, Local, and Tribal Governments



# Overview of the Land Management Planning Process

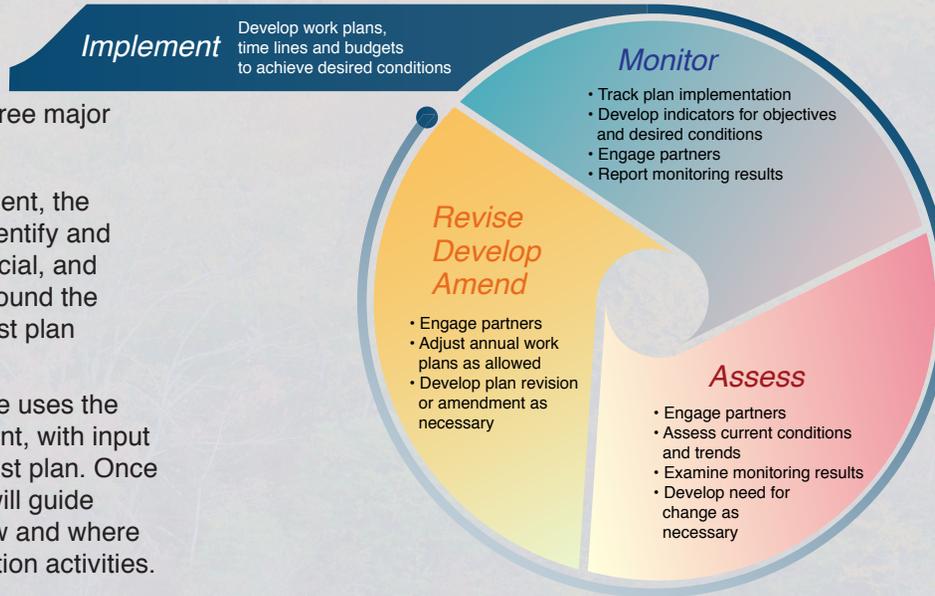
Under the 2012 Planning Rule, the planning process consists of three major phases:

- **Assessment.** During assessment, the Forest Service and partners identify and evaluate existing economic, social, and ecological conditions in and around the national forest undergoing forest plan revision.
- **Plan development.** This phase uses the information from the assessment, with input from the public, to revise a forest plan. Once the forest plan is approved, it will guide project-level decisions, like how and where to plan restoration or rehabilitation activities.
- **Monitoring.** Studying conditions on the ground helps determine whether the forest plan is actually achieving its intended desired conditions and objectives. Monitoring information helps managers determine whether they need to propose amending or revising the forest plan.

The 2012 Planning Rule emphasizes **public involvement** through every step of the planning process and also specifies working with State, local, and Tribal Governments.

## Why Become Engaged?

While the Forest Service cannot delegate its ultimate decision making authority, a goal of public involvement is to identify opportunities to contribute to mutual objectives, resolve or reduce conflicts, and achieve mutually agreeable outcomes on the land and in our communities. There are many opportunities for the State, local, and Tribal Governments to engage in the forest planning process.



## A Guide to Participation

The Federal Advisory Committee for Implementation of the National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule has developed a **helpful guide** about how State, local, and Tribal Governments can engage in the forest planning process. Web paths to printable and digital guides are on the reverse of this brochure.

These guides were developed in collaboration between the U.S. Forest Service and the Federal Advisory Committee to make it easier for anyone to understand their role before, during, and after the forest planning process.

Additionally, if you also happen to be a citizen that is curious about participation in the planning process, check out the companion Citizen's Guide to Forest Planning, a web path for which is located on the reverse side of this brochure.

*Insert information about your local National Forest in this column.*

*Possible information could include general forest overview (size, counties, etc.), interesting features (natural, recreational, etc.), and contact information (web links, phone numbers, etc.).*

*This section can be edited using the "Edit PDF" function in Adobe Acrobat DC.*