



U.S. Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region

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Briefing Paper



R5 Forest Plan Revisions: 2016 Overview

Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

The Record of Decision for the revised Lake Tahoe Basin Land Management Plan was signed June 15, 2016. The Plan became effective July 25, 2016. The revised Plan continues to provide a balanced approach to protecting resources, sustaining local communities and providing diverse recreation opportunities to 5.7 million visitors annually.

Next Steps – Complete and implement the forest plan monitoring program in spring 2017.

Early Adopters of 2012 Planning Rule (Inyo, Sequoia, Sierra National Forests)

In May 2016, we published the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) and individual draft forest plans for the Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra National Forests; we received more than 30,000 comments. Our planning team is reviewing all letters, and identifying substantive comments to which a response will be prepared. Substantive comments provide supporting facts or information, and pertain to the proposed action. Comments may present new information relevant to our analysis, present reasonable alternatives we didn't consider in our analysis, or challenge the accuracy of our information, methodology or analysis.

Once we've determined which comments are substantive, we will prepare a response to them. The ways in which we respond to comments includes:

1. Develop and evaluate alternatives we didn't previously consider. This analysis would appear in the final EIS.
2. Supplement, improve or modify our original analysis. This would be reflected in the final EIS.
3. Make factual corrections that would appear in the final EIS and forest plans.
4. Explain why the comment does not warrant further Forest Service response. Such responses would be addressed in the final EIS.

Because of the extreme drought and the associated widespread tree mortality in the southern Sierra-Nevada range, several commenters have asked if the Forest Service will issue a

supplemental EIS and draft forest plans due to environmental conditions which have changed since the initial analysis. We are evaluating these impacts and will determine if a supplemental analysis or change in plans is warranted.

Next Steps – We will finalize the forest plans and associated EIS and initiate the public objections process; OR issue a supplemental EIS and plans for further comment. This direction will be driven by our evaluation of the impact of tree mortality and determination if a supplemental analysis or change in plans is necessary.

Next Adopters of 2012 Planning Rule (Stanislaus, Eldorado, Tahoe and Plumas National Forests)

These forest plans were last updated in the late 1980s or early 1990s. We have begun preparatory work (mostly internal) to initiate Forest Assessments for these four forests based on lessons learned from our experience with the Early Adopter Forests.

Next Steps – We will continue preparatory work including gathering information (such as land allocation boundaries, special-use authorizations, at-risk species location and status); insuring geospatial information is compiled by spring 2017; and preparing a public participation strategy for each forest. We anticipate engaging the public, tribes and local, state and federal agencies this summer to daylight timelines and points of engagement during the plan revision process.

Great Basin Science Synthesis (portions of the Modoc and Lassen National Forests)

The Lassen and Modoc National Forests are developing a science synthesis in preparation to revise their forest plans. The Great Basin Science Synthesis will focus on areas of both forests not already addressed by the Northwest Forest Plan area Science Synthesis or the Sierra Nevada Science Synthesis. The combined results of these three science-based documents will guide how the Lassen and Modoc revise their forest plans. On December 8, 2016, we held a public forum to gather input for the scope of work. More than 35 people attended, including county staff, tribal members, and members of the agricultural and ranching communities.

Next Steps – Refine the geographic and thematic scope of work, and then complete the draft synthesis which is anticipated in fall 2017. The draft document will be released for public and peer review.

Updates to Forest Plans within the Northwest Forest Plan Amendment area (Six Rivers, Mendocino, Klamath, Shasta-Trinity, Modoc, and Lassen National Forests)

Forest Plans for the 19 forests (24 million acres) in western Washington, Oregon and northwestern California were amended by the Northwest Forest Plan in 1994. In 1995, the Six Rivers, Mendocino, Klamath, Shasta-Trinity National Forests revised their forest to incorporate the amendment. A Science Synthesis has been drafted by the Pacific Southwest and Pacific Northwest Research Stations for the area covered by the Northwest Forest Plan Amendment; this draft was released for public review in November 2016, followed by a public forum in December. An independent peer review is underway by the Ecological Society of America and will be completed winter 2017. The research stations will address the peer review findings and

plan to complete the final science synthesis in spring 2017, followed by a published general technical report in late 2017. The science synthesis and 20-year Monitoring Report for the Northwest Forest Plan (released June 2015) will be used to inform updates to existing forest plans.

Next Steps – R5, R6 and the WO are completing preparatory steps including gathering relevant information, to support a Bio-Regional Assessment for the area. We plan to complete the Bio-regional assessment of 19 forests in the footprint of the NWFP amendment during 2018. The Bio-Regional Assessment will inform the status and trends of socio, economic and ecological resources influenced by these national forests and set the stage for updating the applicable forest plans. We will involve the public, tribes and local, state and federal agencies this summer to daylight timelines and points of engagement regarding updates to the forest plans.

Monument Plan Development (Angeles, San Bernardino and Mendocino National Forests)

President Obama designated three National Monuments on existing Forest Service lands in California through the Antiquities Act. The Forest Service and other federal agencies that may share the federal lands designation, are engaging the public in developing management plans for these Monuments, which may result in an amendment to the existing Forest Plans. The agencies have three years from each Monument’s proclamation date to complete the associate management plan.

San Gabriel Mountains National Monument -- (October 10, 2014) The national monument encompasses 342,177 acres of the Angeles National Forest and 4,002 acres of the San Bernardino National Forest. The area is within 90 minutes of 15 million people in the Los Angeles Basin. An Environmental Assessment has been prepared and noticed to the public to amend the existing Angeles Forest Plan. Public comment on the draft plan is being evaluated and a final decision is expected in late 2017.

Sand to Snow National Monument -- (February 11, 2016) The Monument is east of Los Angeles in southern California, and encompasses 154,000-acres, extending from Bureau of Land Management lands on the Sonoran desert floor up to 10,000 feet in the San Gorgonio Wilderness on the San Bernardino National Forest. The striking diversity of lands within this monument serve as an important recreational hub for 24 million people living within a two-hour drive of the area. The Forest Service and BLM are evaluating the objects of interest described by the proclamation, how existing management direction protects those objects, and where there may be gaps in protection that need to be filled in the development of a monument plan.

Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument -- (July 10, 2015) The 330,780-acre monument extends from nearly sea level on Bureau of Land Management lands around Lake Berryessa up to 7,000 feet through the northern Snow Mountain Wilderness and the eastern boundary of the Yuki Wilderness in the Mendocino National Forest of northern California. The Forest Service and BLM are evaluating the objects of interest described by the proclamation, how existing management direction protects those objects, and where there may be gaps in protection that need to be filled in the development of a monument plan.

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