



U.S. Forest Service  
Pacific Southwest Region



July 2017

# Aquatic and Riparian Conservation

## *Inyo National Forest*

### Overview

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The changes we made to the Inyo National Forest's draft land management plan for aquatic and riparian resources respond to comments we received from the public. We heard that the Aquatic Management Strategy established in the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment was difficult to find in the draft Inyo plan. We also heard concern about the number of Critical Aquatic Refuges (CARs) and that national planning efforts use a landscape approach such as key watershed or conservation watershed. Commenters also pointed out that priority watersheds for maintenance or restoration were not clearly identified in the Inyo's draft plan.

Some public comments provided analysis of specific areas that could benefit from additional protection and questioned why we proposed protections in other areas that already had protections. Other comments suggested that management requirements for CARs were too restrictive, not allowing forest use even where there was no degradation to aquatic resources. In response we improved the Aquatic and Riparian Conservation Strategy using best available scientific information. Comments on CARs helped us focus aquatic and riparian resource conservation on maintaining and restoring ecosystem functions, connectivity and dynamic processes across large scales. All updates meet our planning regulations related to water, watersheds, aquatic, and riparian resources (§§219.6- 291.12).

Highlights of the updated aquatic and riparian strategy include:

- Clearer and more cohesive plan direction for aquatic and riparian conservation, ensuring clearer links to other resource areas such as range, wilderness management and animal and plant species.
- An integrated approach to conserving water resources, watersheds, aquatic and riparian systems that identifies the most important areas for biological diversity conservation and aquatic restoration.
- Replacing CARs with conservation watersheds to accomplish goals at appropriate scales in the face of unpredictable events.
- Ensuring headwaters continue to provide high quality water by designing conservation watersheds to complement benefits provided through other designated lands.

Visit our [website](#) for more information, frequently asked questions, plan components and maps.

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