



United States Department of Agriculture

CUSTER GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST

Forest Plan Revision

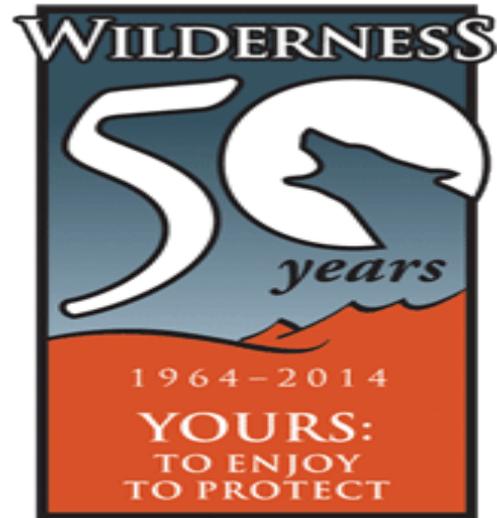


Forest Service

July 26, 2017

Webinar topic:

Wilderness Inventory and Evaluation

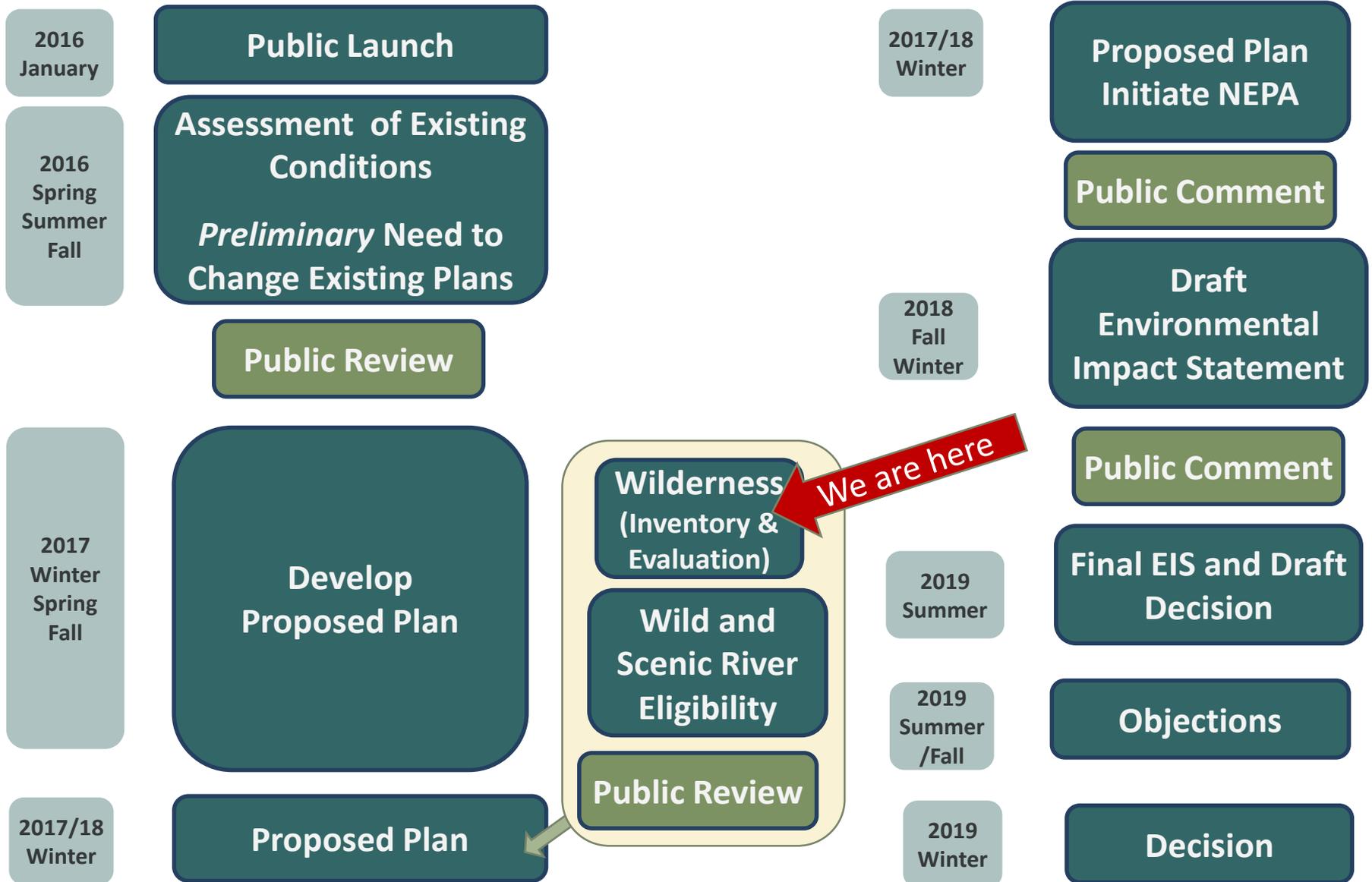


Agenda



- Overall Forest Planning Background and Timelines- where are we now?
- The Four Steps of the Wilderness Process
- Step 1: The Wilderness Inventory: a Broad and Inclusive Starting Point.
- Step 2: Coming Next- Wilderness Evaluation-
- Steps 3 and 4: Analysis and Recommendation
- Test Drive the Interactive Web Site
- Feedback Requested- August 12th
- Question and Answer

Plan Revision Steps and Schedule



Where we are going in 2017



**February -
April**

**Community
Meetings
for Desired
Conditions**

Summer

**Release draft
Wilderness
Inventory
Draft Eligible
Wild and Scenic
Rivers**

September

**Community
Meetings
Review
Standards,
Guidelines,
Objectives, etc**

Summer - Fall

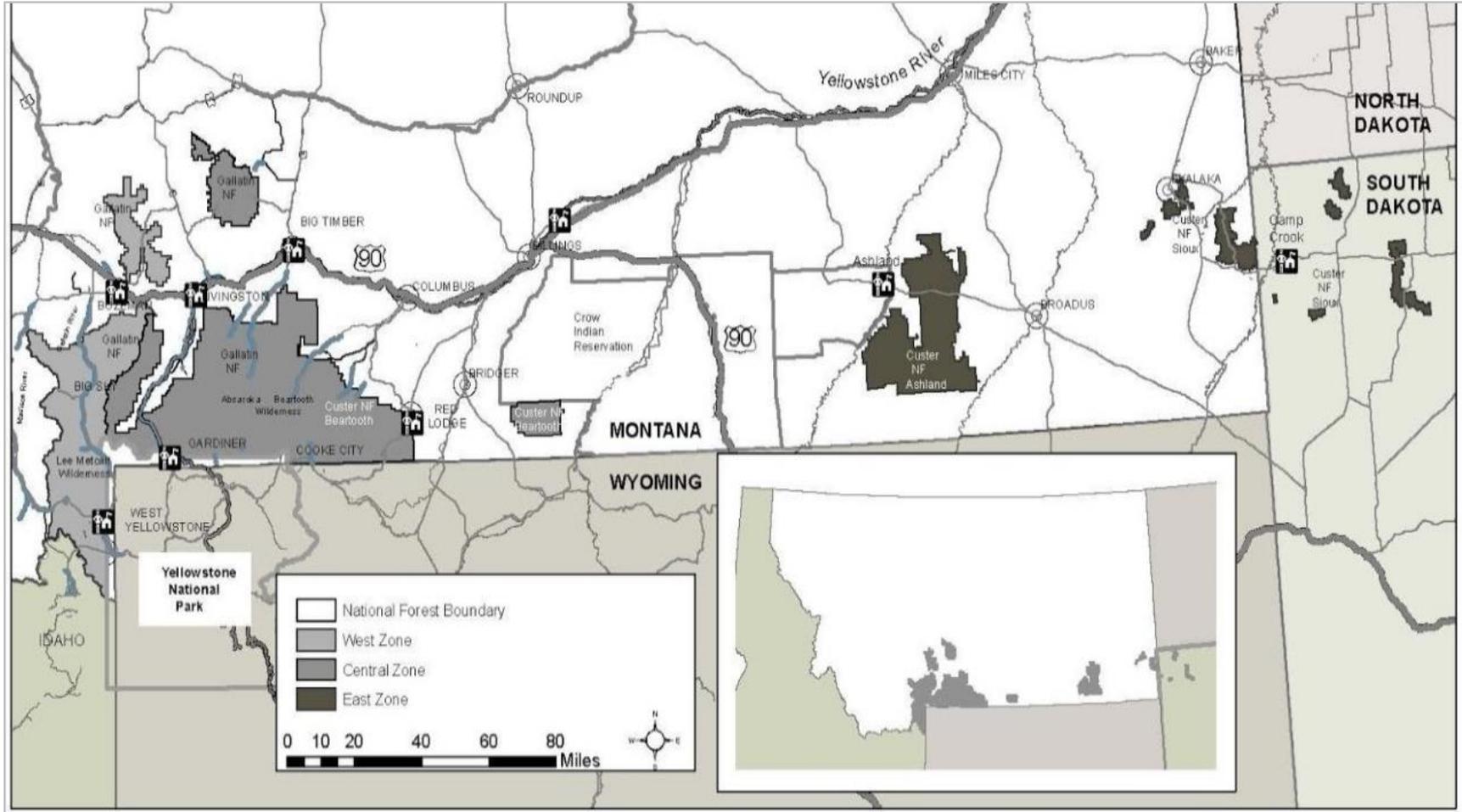
**Forest Service prepares
Draft Plan document**

Winter

**Release Draft Plan;
Community Meetings**



Custer Gallatin National Forest



Custer Gallatin National Forest
From West Yellowstone MT to Camp Crook SD



Wilderness Inventory, Evaluation and Recommendation Process



Why is Study Being Taken Now?

- The Custer Gallatin Forest is in Plan Revision
- The Planning Regulations require an inventory of areas that may be suitable for inclusion in the national wilderness preservation system
- All 155 National Forests and Grasslands across the country will do a study for lands with potential Wilderness Characteristics when they revise their Forest Plans
- For an area to become officially “Designated” takes an act of Congress

Current Situation



Congressionally Designated Wilderness

Absaroka Beartooth: ~920,000 ac (CGNF)

Lee Metcalf ~133,000 ac (CGNF)

Total: 1,053,000 acres

Wilderness Study Area: ~155,000 acres

Recommended Wilderness: ~34,000 acres
(7 different areas)

Four Step Process



1. Inventory- **We are here!**
2. Evaluation – late 2017
3. Analysis – 2018 and 2019
4. Recommendation – late 2019

Step One- Wilderness Inventory



Purpose:

- This step is intended to cast a wide net and be very broad and inclusive as a starting point to seek areas that may have wilderness characteristics.
- The Inventory Map is just a step along the way- the lands, features, existing management and infrastructure captured during this step will have no changes in existing use or management.

Step One- Wilderness Inventory



Initial step produces a map drawn using GIS and other data sources. Map shows polygons (blocks) of land to start looking for potential wilderness additions. Map available for public review and input.

- **Size Criteria-** Primarily seeking blocks of land greater than 5,000 acres without “improvements”. Areas smaller if attached to designated Wilderness.
- **Improvement Criteria-** Inventory lines are drawn to exclude most roads, facilities, utility corridors, areas with prior harvest, campgrounds, etc.

Step One- Wilderness Inventory



“Substantially Noticeable”

Define features that are, or are not, still substantially noticeable.

- Previous timber harvest units and their associated roads
- Abandoned mine lands
- Density of infrastructure (fences, water storage) in range improvement areas.
- Some facilities or features that are not “substantially noticeable” any longer may remain during the Inventory phase.

Step One- Wilderness Inventory



Important to note about Step One:

- The Inventory map ONLY shows a first cut of lands that fall outside of or within the process to determine which lands may or may not be suitable for new Wilderness.
- Until all steps 1 through 4 are completed, we do not know how much land, if any, will be proposed to Congress for new designated Wilderness.

Step Two- Wilderness Evaluation



Purpose:

The Evaluation is a vitally important step where the lands that fall inside polygons for Inventory are now carefully reviewed for Wilderness characteristics.

- Naturalness
- Manageability
- Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation
- Presence of Resource Values

Step Two- Wilderness Evaluation



Naturalness

Apparent naturalness-area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable:

- plant and animal communities
- ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention
- improvements included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness.

Step Two- Wilderness Evaluation



Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation

- Evaluate the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The word “or” means that an area only has to possess one or the other.

Step Two- Wilderness Evaluation



Manageability

Evaluate the degree to which an area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

- Shape and configuration of the area;
- Legally established rights or uses within the area;
- Specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics;
- The presence and amount of non-Federal land in the area; and
- Management of adjacent lands.

Step Two- Wilderness Evaluation



Presence of Resource Values

The degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical values.

Areas Less than 5,000 acres

Evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Step Three- Wilderness Analysis



Purpose:

- What are the effects or impacts if this area were managed as a Wilderness?
- Are there Alternatives to Wilderness for this area?

Note-- This step enters into the NEPA phase of Forest Plan Revision, with alternatives, formal comment and review periods.

Step Three- Wilderness Analysis



- Based on the evaluation and input from public participation opportunities, the Forest Service may identify specific areas, or portions thereof, from the evaluation to carry forward as recommended wilderness in one or more alternatives in the revised plan's EIS
- Not all lands included in the inventory and subsequent evaluations are required to be carried forward in an alternative

Step Four- Recommendation



- Forest Plan decision recommends areas, if any, to Congress for designation.
- “Recommended Wilderness” are areas managed to protect wilderness characteristics until designated as Wilderness.

Wilderness Inventory



The Interactive Website- a Test Drive!

Wilderness - Four Phases as part of Forest Plan Revision USFS Region 1 USDA US

Overview Step 1: Inventory & How to Submit Feedback Step 2: Evaluation Step 3: Analysis Step 4: Recommendation

Welcome!

The Custer Gallatin National Forest is in the process of revising their Forest Plan. Originally two separate forests that consolidated in August 2014, the Custer Gallatin National Forest will be in Forest Plan Revision from January 2016 to approximately January 2020.

The 1986 Custer Forest Plan and the 1987 Gallatin Forest Plan will be updated to reflect:

- changing conditions,
- new laws and regulations,
- policies, updated practices and
- public engagement throughout the process

The plan is being guided by the 2012 Planning Rule

As part of forest plan revision, forests are required to identify lands that may be suitable to recommend to Congress for new Wilderness designation. No Wilderness designation will be made as a result of plan revision. Congress has reserved the authority to make the final decision regarding all Wilderness designations. Detailed information on the Wilderness process is available thru Chapter 70 of the Planning Rule Directives.

The Custer Gallatin National Forest is asking for public feedback on the initial *inventory* step in **summer 2017**.

1:07 PM 7/24/2017



Wilderness Inventory

The Interactive Website- *Adjusting your screen*



Meeting Layouts Pods Audio Help

2017.07.17.IGWG.pptx Draw Stop Sharing Share 23 - Virginia Kelly

Wilderness - Four Phases as part of Forest Plan Revision USDA Region 1

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Wilderness - Four Phases as part of Forest Plan Revision USDA Region 1

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Sync



Wilderness Inventory



Feedback Requested- August 12th



Wilderness Inventory



QUESTIONS?

For more information....



Website & Social Media (fb Custer Gallatin National Forest)

www.fs.usda.gov/custergallatin and click on upper right-hand quick link labeled Forest Plan Revision, @GallatinNF, @CusterNF

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Forest Service

Custer Gallatin National Forest

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Contact Information

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Forest Offices

Employment

Contact Us

Custer Gallatin Forest Plan Revision

Updated: 20 January 2017

Custer Gallatin Forest Plan Revision: Home
Resources, Original Plans, Background Documents
Draft Assessment of Existing Conditions, Initial Documents
Public Reading Room
Public Involvement - Public Meetings Spring 2017 - Learn More
Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Forest Plan?

A Forest Plan is the comprehensive overarching document that guides forest management, use, and protection providing broad direction, standards and guidelines for the Custer Gallatin National Forest for years to come.

Involvement in the Custer Gallatin Forest Plan helps to create a vision for the surrounding National Forest System lands for the coming decade.

Forest Planning (Short version)

Fore Plan

Forest Plan Revision launched January 2016.

Public Involvement

Visit our Public Involvement Page for full details on ways to participate in forest plan revision.

Public meetings will be posted in advance of each phase. **Meeting notes and presentation recordings to follow public meetings.**

Visit the Public Reading Room to review feedback received (feedback received via mail/email will be uploaded).

Email Updates
To sign up for updates or to access your subscriber preferences, please enter your contact information below.

* Email Address

Quick Links

- Resources, Original Plans, Background Documents

Key Contacts

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Wilderness Inventory Website

<https://usfs.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=741703197c1042e78b6bf5fba7a626b7>

