

Changes between the Draft and Revised Forest Plan

Changes in revised forest plan formatting and components were made to address public and internal comments on the draft forest plan. Below is a highlight of major changes, followed by a detailed list of changes.

Some of the major changes from the draft forest plan to the revised forest plan are:

- All maps were updated.
- There are now 5 chapters in the body of the forest plan and a new Appendix H with information on each RIZ.
- Some people found Chapter 2 Vision and Strategy difficult to follow and suggested that the organization by the public themes made it overly complex, so this chapter was reorganized and objectives moved into another chapter.
- Standards, guidelines and objectives were updated or added to address human health and safety, ecological sustainability, at-risk species, land ownership adjustment, NNIS, RMZs and water quantity.
- Some people found that the duplication between the chapter on monitoring and appendix F on monitoring was confusing, so the duplication was deleted and is more streamlined to improve readability.
- Clarifications were made throughout the FM forest plan that BMPs refer to National and SC BMPs.
- Forest plan direction was added to the revised forest plan on land ownership adjustments.

Specific changes made by revised forest plan chapter and appendix are:

Chapter 1 –Purpose and Need

Changes were made to content:

- Some of the details on the themes were removed.
- Language on goals was added.
- Clarification that management direction applies only to NF land.

Chapter 2 – Vision

- To simplify chapter 2, Desired Conditions are now organized by resource areas and labeled to reflect the new organization.
- The introduction and overview were rewritten to better describe how the different “layers” of forest plan direction are interconnected.
- Management Areas 1 and 2 are downplayed in the forest plan direction, since Desired Conditions focus on outcomes and not activities.
- In the desired conditions for each ecosystem, there was some language that open road densities are moderate (<1 mile/sq. mile). However, it be difficult to implement changes on Open Road Density by ecosystem, so now this language just mentions that Open Road Densities are moderate.

- Maps on priority watershed and some designated areas that were in Appendix E were brought into Chapter 2.
- Minor edits were made to the desired condition for the Santee Experimental Forest. A map on the ecosystems of the Santee Experimental Forest has been added to the Santee RIZ.
- The detailed introductions on the RIZs were moved into Appendix H. Now each RIZ has a summary description and goals unique for that RIZ.
- Desired condition language was added to the revised plan to address concerns related to the controlling the transmission of diseases that affect public health.
- Photos of desired conditions were added.
- An objective was replaced with a desired condition to address non-native species in recreational areas
- Desired condition language for forest open associates was updated in the revised plan to clarify forest openings are for a wide range of wildlife species.
- Dwarf palmetto was replaced with sabal palmetto in revised forest plan desired condition statements for the composition of maritime ecosystems and a management strategy was added for maritime forests.
- Desired condition statements for oak forests and mesic hardwood forests in the revised plan were modified to clarify shortleaf pine is found primarily on dry sites whereas spruce pine is a component of mesic hardwoods.
- The fire return interval for ponds and pond ecotones (in the revised plan) was changed to 1-6 years (average fire return interval 3) to address the greater possible variation in fire regimes for these ponds.
- Bald cypress was added to the description in the River and Streams ecosystem in the revised plan.
- The desired condition for old growth was changed to state that old growth conditions for longleaf pine ecosystems are promoted within 0.5 mile foraging partitions for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker in Management Area 1 (53% of the total ecosystem extent).
- We changed the Desired Condition for MA2 to management of active red-cockaded woodpecker clusters, rather than foraging habitat, due to the likelihood of prescribed burning limitations in MA2.
- We clarified the DFC for Special Forest Products Collections to include authorization when consistent with FSM 2409.18 Chapter 80 and sustainable (36 CFR 223.219).
- The Desired Condition for the Broader Landscape was edited to better address land ownership adjustments.
- The desired condition on other forest products was edited to allow the district to issue special use permits for the collection of sweetgrass.

New Chapter 3 – Objectives

- Objectives are now organized by resource area and moved to a new Chapter 3.
- Objectives are labeled to reflect the new organization.
- New objective was added on Broader Landscape that addresses land ownership adjustment strategy.
- Removed sweetgrass from objective on special use permits to allow for management of sweetgrass if needed.

- So we updated the objective on roads management to Comprehensive Road Management, recognizing that we will have to do a TAP analysis on the revised forest plan.
- The objective statements for old growth was modified and the reference to 10% was removed from both the revised plan.
- Language related to the potential for the development of wind energy on the Forest was removed from the revised plan as a result of information provided by the South Carolina Department of Energy that the potential for development of wind energy is off-shore.

New Chapter 4 –Design Criteria includes Standards, Guidelines and Suitability.

- In Chapter 4, the suitability on minerals was updated to better address commercial, administrative and personal mineral use.
- The standards and guidelines are now in Chapter 4 and reorganized so that standards are before guidelines.
- Additional standards and guidelines on ecological sustainability, at-risk species, NNIS, RMZs and water quantity were added.
- The guideline to address existing old growth was clarified.
- There is a new guideline to cooperate with Charleston County mosquito control program.
- There is a new standard about newly acquired lands need to managed in the MA and RIZ in which they occur.
- Updates were made to timber suitability to better describe the modeling assumptions.
- We shifted a standard which restricted mechanical activities within active red-cockaded woodpecker clusters during the nesting season to a guideline.

New Chapter 5- Monitoring.

- The duplication between the chapter on monitoring and appendix F was deleted to improve readability. All monitoring questions can now be found in one table at the end of the chapter.
- The criteria on the development of the monitoring questions is now summarized in one paragraph at the beginning of section 5.3 Monitoring Program.

Appendix A, Ecosystems was edited to ensure consistency between the revised forest plan and the crosswalk on ecosystem groupings.

Appendix B, Timber Suitability was updated to better describe modeling assumptions. The map on timber suitability was moved from Appendix E to Appendix B.

Appendix C, Probable vegetative management actions was not changed.

Appendix D, At-Risk Species includes detailed crosswalks on at-risk species and forest plan components.

Appendix E, Maps includes a map on rare plant communities. Maps were updated to be consistency. Some maps were moved into Chapter 2 to improve readability.

Appendix F, Now addresses the criteria used for developing the monitoring program, broad-scale monitoring and research needs.

Appendix G, Glossary was corrected to delete some duplication. Some new terms were added, including genetically appropriate and red-cockaded woodpecker clusters.

Appendix H, Detailed Descriptions of the Resource Integration Zones includes the detailed introductions for each RIZ that was originally in Chapter 2.

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Francis Marion National Forest Plan Revision

Changes in Chapter 4 (Design Criteria) between Draft and Revised Forest Plan

Draft Plan -43 Standards and 44 Guidelines

Revised Plan -56 Standards and 45 Guidelines

Changes in Guidelines:

- Added new section on Human Health and Safety; and
- Combined sections on At Risk Species and Ecological Sustainability.

Changes in Standards:

- Added sections on riparian zone management, landownership and cultural resource;
- Moved standards in prescribed burning to at risk species and ecological sustainability.
- Moved or deleted standards in roads & special uses

13 new standards by section

Vegetation management - 1 new standard specific to Santee Experimental Forest coordination

Pesticide Use - no new standards

Prescribed Burning (deleted section) – 3 standards moved to At Risk Species and Ecological Sustainability

Soil/Water/Aquatics – 3 new standards on removal of LWD, water withdrawals, state BMP compliance

Riparian Management Zone (new section) - 1 new standard on vegetation management and fire retardant application

Channeled Ephemeral Streams – no new standards

Roads and Special Uses (deleted section) – 3 standards were deleted or moved due to duplication

At Risk Species and Ecological Sustainability – 6 new standards that protect RCW cavity trees and prohibit use of soil active herbicides in rare plant sites

Recreation and Scenic character – deleted one standard

Wilderness and Inventoried Roadless Areas – no new standards

Eligible Wild & Scenic River – no new standards

Land Ownership Adjustment (new section) – 1 new standard

Cultural Resources (new section) – 1 new standard