

June 2005
 Issue 6
 R1-04-76
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USDA FOREST SERVICE

Forest Plan Revision News

Next Public Meetings Scheduled!

Our next round of public meetings is about to start! We have a number of new products and information to share with you. On May 12, 2005, the Regional Forester made a decision that our two Forests would use the 2005 Planning Rule to finish our revision process. While some of the details of our planning process have changed because of the new Rule, our commitment to working with all of you has not. The information you have provided us over the past two years has been very valuable in developing the Starting Option and other draft components of the revised Forest Plans.....and so our process of involving YOU continues!

We hope you can join us at some of the meetings listed below. We will introduce you to the **Starting Option**. The Starting Option is a proposal by the Forests that attempts to balance what we have heard from everyone so far through past workgroup meetings and other comments, while meeting our legal responsibilities. In addition to sharing the Starting option map, we will be sharing information about the Uses Allowed within the Management Areas, which are distributed across the Starting Option map; and the 2005 Planning Rule.

This is your chance to be involved before the Draft Forest Plan is released— working collaboratively with others to discuss and validate what is in our Starting Option proposal and to identify potential changes you would like to see to the Starting Option. The District Rangers will be leading these meetings and compiling the suggested changes and rationale. Any suggested changes will be collected by the District Ranger by **August 31st**.

The District Rangers will then share potential changes, and other changes that may be submitted from the Tribes and other Agencies, with the Forest Supervisors and Forest Leadership Teams, who will review all of these changes and identify which changes should be made to the Starting Option. The Revision Team will then analyze this information and use it to write the Draft Forest Plan, which is expected to be released for a 90-day public comment period in February of 2006.

Idaho Panhandle National Forests Meetings

<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>
July 11 6:30-8:30	Spokane, WA—BLM Office at 1103 North Fancher	Dave O'Brien 208-765-7319
July 12 6:30-8:30	Bonnars Ferry, ID—Bonnars Ferry Library	Mike Herrin 208-267-6701
July 13 6:00-8:30	Priest Lake, ID—Priest Lake Elementary School	Kathy Murphy 208-443-6801
July 14 6:30-8:30	St. Maries, ID—St. Joe Ranger Station	Chuck Mark 208-245-6001
July 20 6:30-8:30	Sandpoint, ID—Sandpoint Ranger Station	Dick Kramer 208-265-6601
July 21 6:30-8:30	Moscow, ID—Best Western University Inn	Chuck Mark 208-245-6001
July 26 7:00-9:00	Coeur d'Alene, ID—Forest Supervisors Office 3815 Schreiber Way	Randy Swick 208-769-3001
July 27 7:00-9:00	Kellogg, ID—Dept. of Labor on Wildcat Way	Linda McFaddan 208-556-5101

Kootenai National Forest Meetings

<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>
July 7 6:30-9:00	Eureka, MT—Eureka High School Auditorium	Betty Holder 406-882-4451
July 11 7:00-9:00	Thompson Falls, MT—Senior Center	Julie Molzahn 406-827-0714
July 12 6:00-8:00	Troy, MT—Troy High School Auditorium	Mike Balboni 406-295-4693
July 13 6:00-8:00	Yaak, MT—Upper Yaak Work Center	Mike Balboni 406-295-4693
July 13 7:00-9:00	Noxon, MT—Noxon Fire Hall	Julie Molzahn 406-827-0714
July 14 6:00-8:00	Libby, MT—Forest Supervisors Office	Malcolm Edwards 406-283-7598

2005 Planning Rule

The "2005 Planning Rule" supersedes direction published in 1982. It has four primary purposes:

1. Streamline and improve the planning process by making plans more adaptable to changes in social, economic and environmental conditions;
2. Strengthen the role of science in planning;
3. Strengthen collaborative relationships; and
4. Emphasize the contributions to social, economic, and ecological sustainability.

What Does It Mean?

Under the 2005 Rule, Forest Plans will provide strategic and programmatic direction rather than specific direction for projects. For example, Forest Plans will classify all National Forest System (NFS) lands as either suitable for motorized uses or suitable for non-motorized uses for both summer and winter seasons. Through subsequent Travel Management planning and public involvement, decisions will be made regarding individual road and trail management.

Strategic Forest Plan decisions include the identification of suitable uses and special areas, as well as the determination of desired conditions, management objectives, guidelines, and monitoring.

A New Look for Forest Plans

Forest Plans will consist of a **Vision, Strategy, and Design Criteria**.

The **Vision** provides management direction and explains the roles and contributions of National Forest System lands. It describes the desired conditions of the land, disturbance processes (e.g., fire, floods, insects-and-disease, etc.), the benefits, and experiences the land can supply and monitoring measures.

The **Strategy** describes how the forests intend to achieve desired conditions. It includes a discussion of suitable uses and key objectives for the various uses and activities. Special area designations (e.g., wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, etc.) are included in this section. It also defines monitoring measures related to implementation.

The **Design Criteria** provide the technical and scientific specifications that must be met to create an acceptable project. They include guidelines and references to additional applicable guidance.

Other Components of the Plan

Comprehensive Evaluation Report (CER)

Since Forest Plans developed in accordance with the 2005 Planning Rule will generally be strategic without on-the-ground effects, Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) are not required.

Instead, supporting documents and analysis will be assembled into a CER. If it is determined that resulting actions will not result in significant impacts, a categorical exclusion will disclose the decision.

Environmental Management System (EMS)

The 2005 Planning Rule requires an element that is new to the Forest Service; development of an EMS.

In a nutshell, the EMS is an ongoing process designed to: 1) identify environmental goals and objectives; 2) implement management actions; 3) monitor and evaluate results; and 4) adjust management practices.

The expected outcome is a continual improvement in the environment.

Collaboration & Public Involvement

The new Planning Rule requires the forests to work with people through all phases of developing components of the Forest Plans, Monitoring and the Environmental Management System.

In addition to participating in ongoing meetings and discussions, individuals will have an opportunity to comment during a 90-day comment that will occur with the release of a proposed Draft Forest Plan.

A Formal Objection Period

Traditionally, the issuance of a Forest Plan decision was followed by a 90-day appeal period. Under the 2005 Rule, a 30-day pre-decisional review and objection period replaces the appeals process.

Objections will be considered by a reviewing officer who will render a written response prior to the release of a decision.



Starting Option Map

The Management Areas make up our proposal, which is our Starting Option Map and it best reflects what we heard from you, our legal responsibilities, and our decision space. It is our “starting point” for discussion at these meetings—for validation and possible changes.

Eventually the Starting Option map will be part of the Forest Plan, along with the Forest-wide and Geographic Area Desired Conditions and Management Direction.

In addition, we will be sharing how the past two years of public and workgroup input was used to help develop the Starting Option.



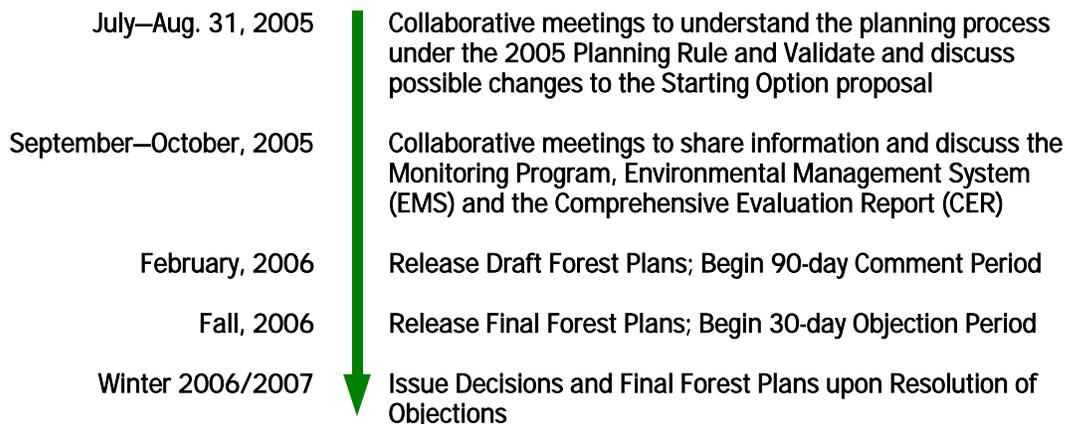
Some More Information That Will Be Shared at the Public Meetings

Activities and Uses Suitable for the Management Areas (MAs)

Management Areas (MAs) identifying suitable uses and management activities will be shared, along with how these MAs are distributed by Geographic Area across the two forests. Following is a list of our Management Areas:

- 1a = Designated Wilderness
- 1b = Recommended Wilderness
- 1c = Wilderness Study Area
- 2a = Designated Wild, Scenic, Recreational Rivers
- 2b = Eligible and Suitable Wild, Scenic, Recreational Rivers
- 3 = Special Interest Areas
- 4a = Research Natural Areas
- 4b = Experimental Forests
- 5a = Backcountry—Non-motorized
- 5b = Backcountry
- 6a = General Forest-Low Intensity Restoration
- 6b = General Forest-Moderate Intensity Restoration
- 6c = General Forest-High Intensity Restoration
- 7 = Primary Recreation Areas

Forest Plan Revision Timeline and Opportunities for YOUR Involvement



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If you are currently on our Email mailing list or would like to be, we **NEED YOU TO RETURN THIS COUPON** with your correct **EMAIL ADDRESS** and **POSTAL ADDRESS**. If you want to ensure that you receive Emails from us, make sure you are "able" to receive them—based on above reasons for the rejected emails.

Email Address: _____

Postal Address: _____

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Note: Names of individuals commenting on Forest Service proposals may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.



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