

Forest Plan Revision Process and Timeline

Forest and Tribal Workshops

January 27-30, 2014

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A Need for a New Way

Criticisms of the 1982 Planning Rule

- Took too long – 6-8 years
- Difficult for public to stay engaged
- Analysis paralysis
- Cost too much per forest plan
- Plans weren't regularly updated

The Vision of Adaptive Planning

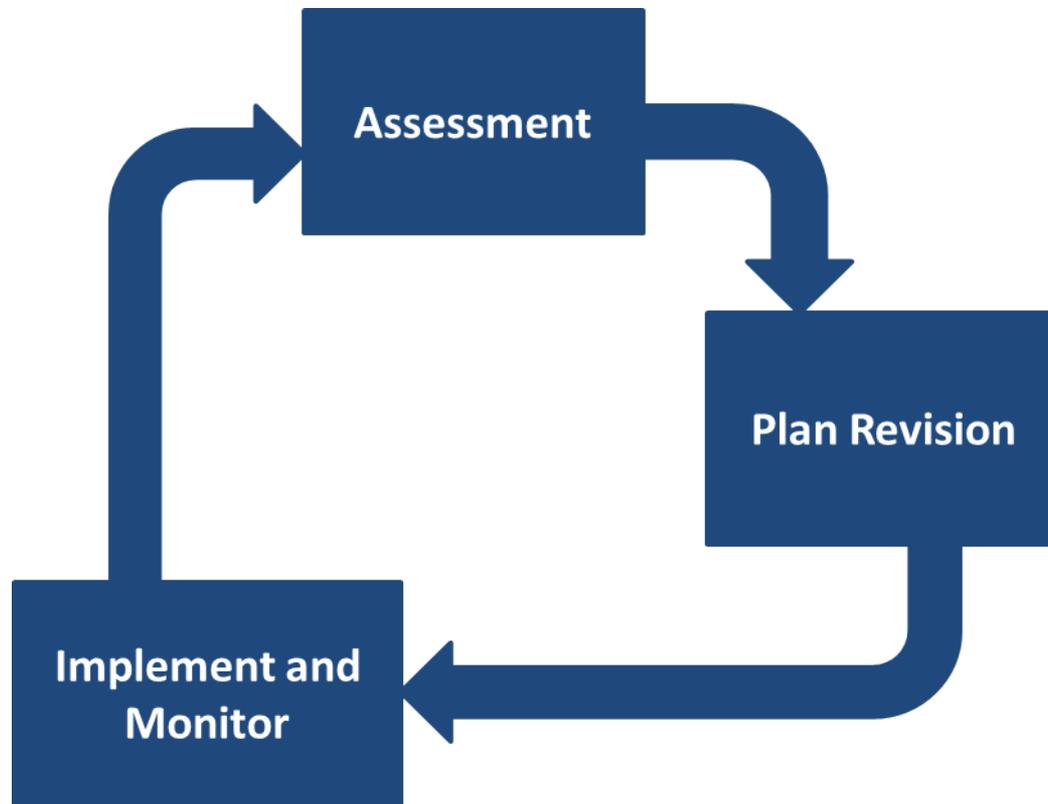
Desired Planning Condition

- Plans are continually evaluated and adjusted - not static or pinnacle documents.
- Adjustments driven by changed situations and new opportunities at a variety of scales (project, plan, and region/state/national)
- Plans are adaptive and learning based – there is no ultimate knowledge or ultimate solution.
- Plans react to the “ripeness” of an issue.
- Plans are realistic; objectives are implementable.

Early Adopter Approach

- The Forest Service Chief identified the Inyo, Sierra, and Sequoia National Forests as 3 of the 8 nationally selected “Early Adopter” forests.
- Currently 17 National Forest units are now beginning the revision process.

Three Phase Planning Process that is Continuous....



Planning Process in Region 5

- The Pacific Southwest Region (Region 5) is moving towards developing one Environmental Impact Statement (EIS),
- Three Records of Decision (RODs), and
- Three separate Plans for the Sierra, Sequoia, and Inyo National Forests.

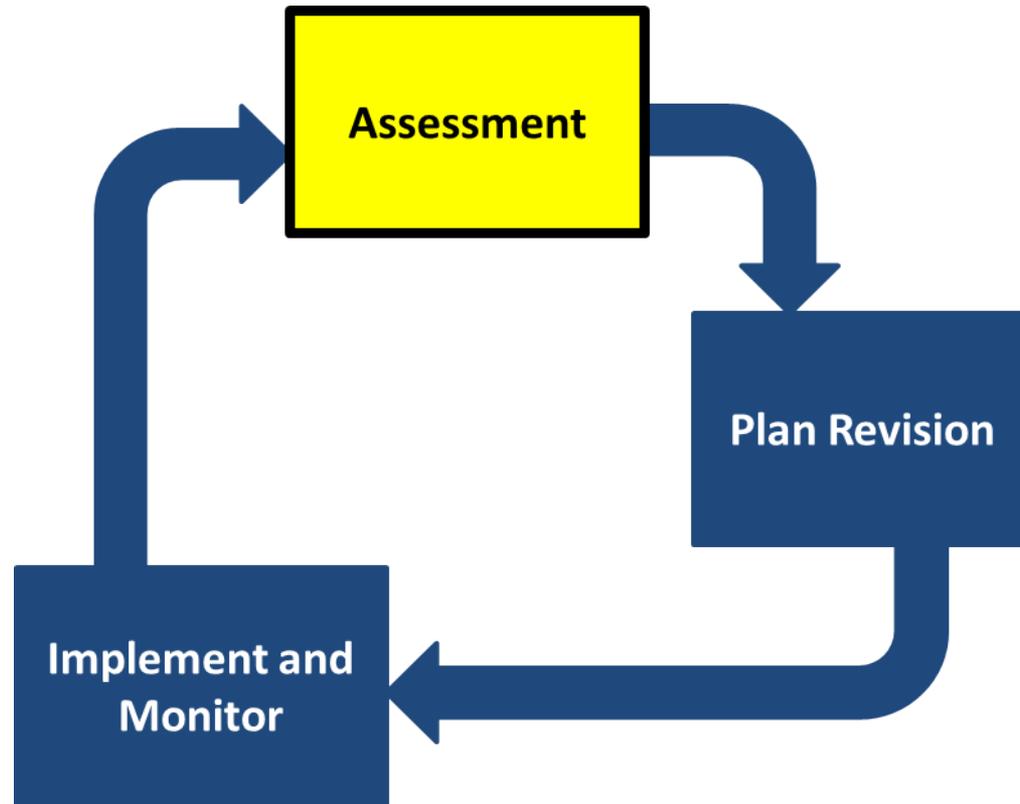
Even though there is only one EIS, each Forest Supervisor will remain the responsible official with the authority and responsibility to oversee the planning process and to approve a plan revision on their forest.

Planning Timeline

- The Forest Service has made a commitment to streamline its planning process.
- To this end:
 - The assessment phase was completed in December 2013.
 - The plan revision phase is currently scheduled to be completed in two years, by the end of December, 2015.
- In so doing:
 - more cost effective, and
 - more time and energy into “on-the-ground” efforts.

Assessment Phase

completed December 2013

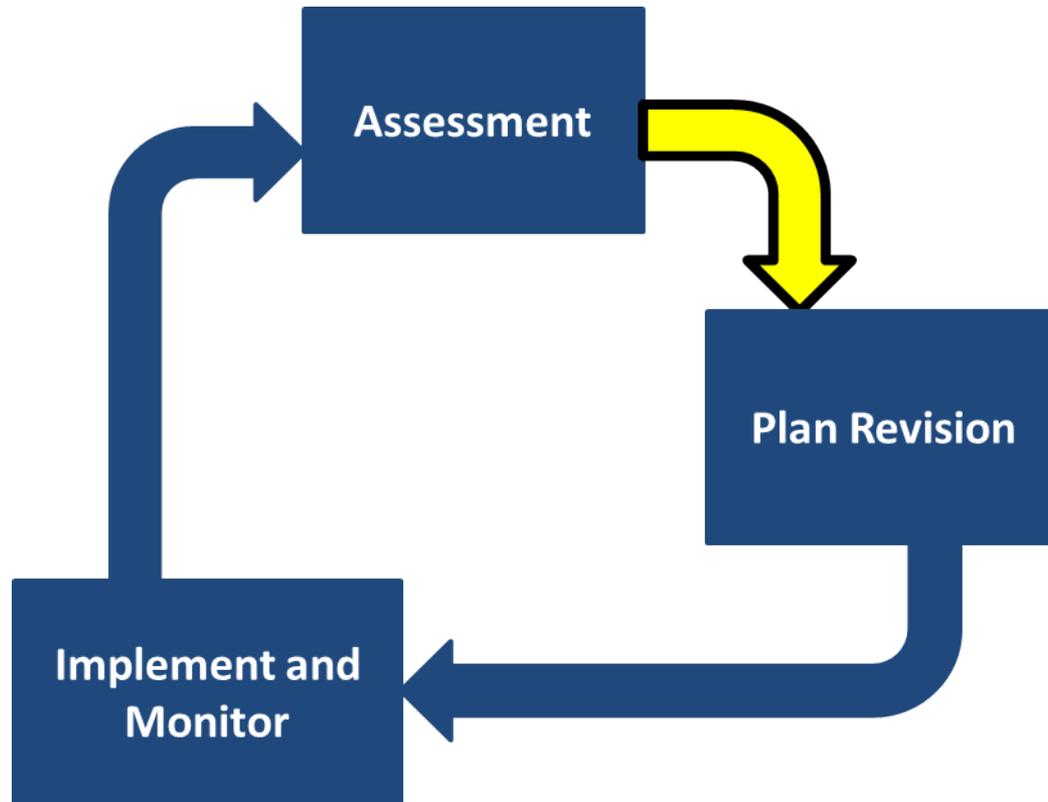


What is an Assessment?

- A report synthesizing existing information related to social, economic, and ecological conditions and trends
- Conducted rapidly, using readily available information and existing data
- Identifies knowledge or information gaps
- Provides a source of information and context for plan revision

Pre-NEPA Preparation Phase

January 2014 - March 2014



What is Pre-NEPA Preparation?

- Need to Change existing Forest Plans
- Desired Conditions
- Proposed Action
- Preliminary Alternative Development

Need To Change Process

- **IS:**

- A rapid criteria-based approach to identify the most likely emphasis areas ripe for improvements during **THIS** plan revision.
- Based upon information and insight highlighted in Assessments along with professional insight into opportunities for improvement of plan components.

- **IS NOT:**

- A comprehensive review of all possible areas that **COULD** change.

Need to Change Criteria

- The emphasis area is important to many people, and provides many benefits to people.
- There is a threat to losing benefits if the Forest Service doesn't act within the near future. This includes changes in demand for the benefit.
- Trends: social, economic, or ecological sustainability are at risk in the mid- and long-terms.

Need to Change Criteria (continued)

- Current management direction as described and implemented does not provide benefits sustainably. This could include new science, monitoring, or changed conditions. There is substantial controversy over current management and general agreement among most people on approaches to improve current direction.
- Forest plans have the ability to do something substantial about the condition in the next ten years. Alternatives and plan components can be developed within the timeline (April-May 2014).

Opportunities for Public Involvement

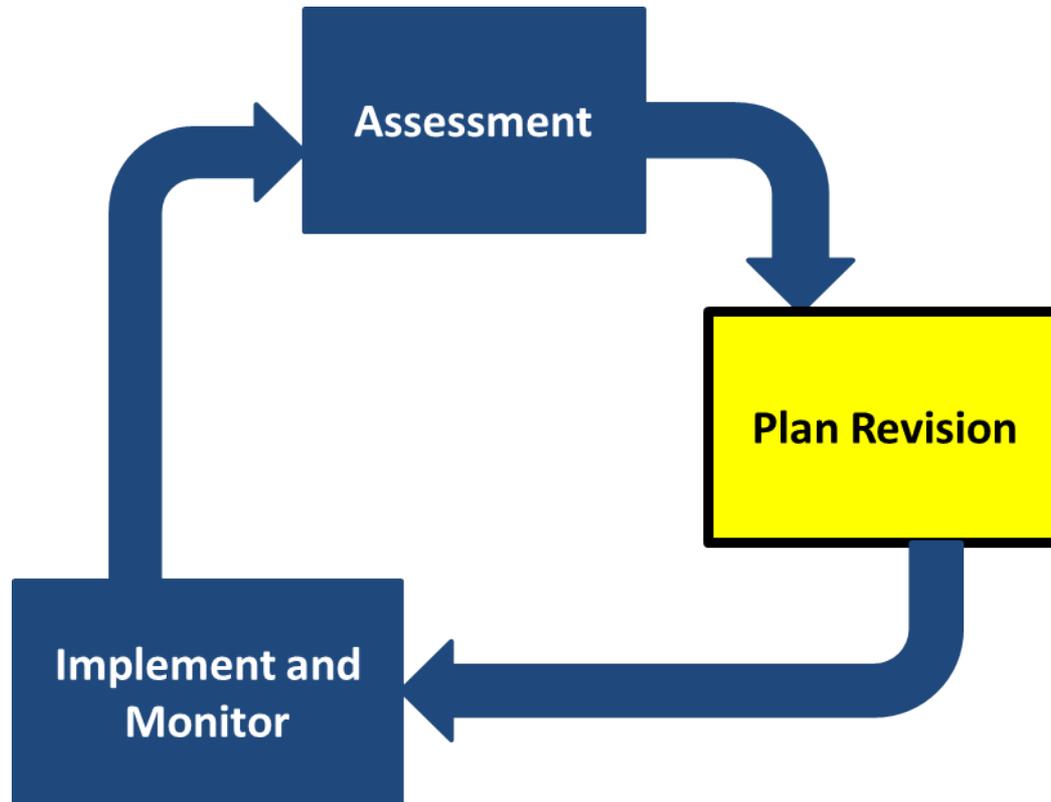
Pre-NEPA preparation: 30 days for public input, January 2014

- Public workshops January 27, 28, and 30th
- Feedback received by January 24, 2014 will be incorporated into public workshop discussions.
- Feedback can be submitted through January 31, 2014 via email or hard copy to R5planrevision@fs.fed.us
- Tribal forums January 13, 28, and 30th
- Public workshops and Tribal forums focused on:
 - Refining, clarifying, and identifying missing focus areas in the Preliminary Need to Change document,
 - Identifying desired conditions , and
 - Refining, clarifying, and identifying unique roles and contribution statements for each early adopter national forest.
- Following public input period, extended IDT will incorporate feedback and further refine Need to Change and desired condition statements. The extended IDT will use this information to draft a proposed action and preliminary alternatives (February – March, 2014).

Plan Revision Phase

Develop Draft Plans and Draft EIS

April – October 2014



Begin NEPA Process

- The “Notice of Intent” (NOI) to prepare an EIS and revised land management plan is the mechanism used by the responsible official (Forest Supervisor) to identify the scope of issues that “need to change” an existing forest plan.
- We expect to publish a NOI for the Sierra, Sequoia, and Inyo National Forest in April 2014.
- There will be a 30 day public scoping period.

Plan Content

- Plan Revisions are programmatic in nature and do not make site specific decisions.
- Forest Plans consist of one decision that includes Management Areas and five Plan Components: Desired Conditions, Objectives, Suitability of Uses, Standards, and Guidelines.

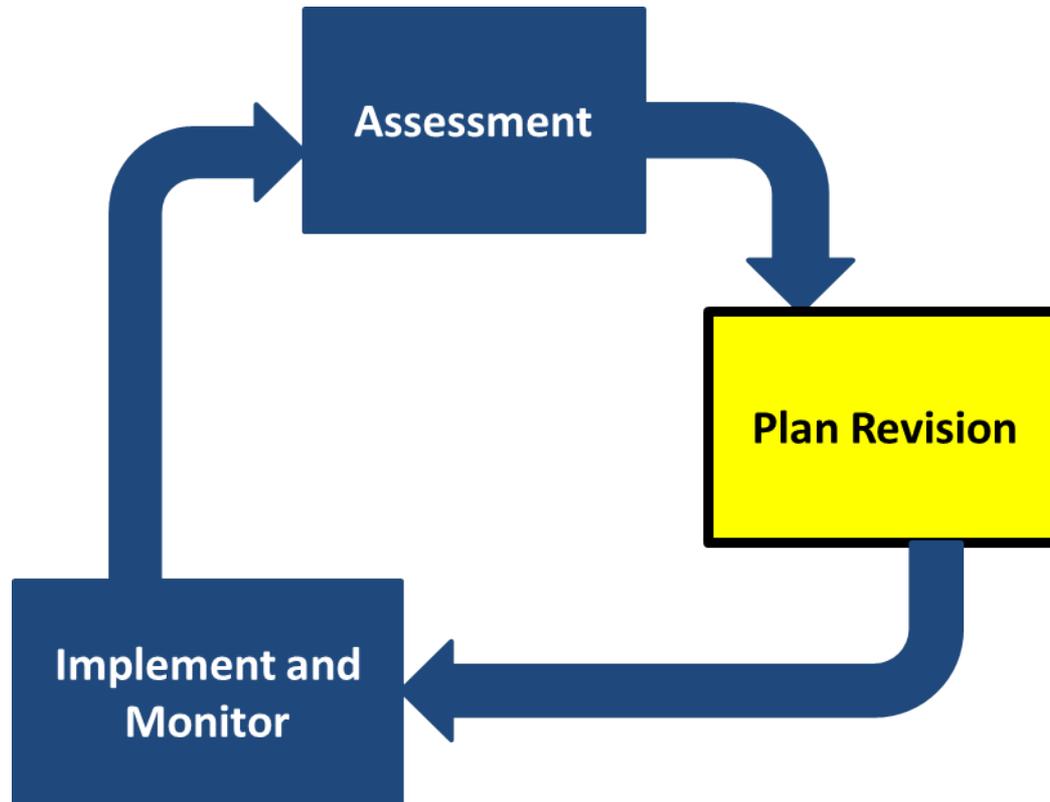
Other Items in the Plan

- Recommended Areas (Wilderness, Wild & Scenic, etc.)
- Priority Watersheds
- Species of Conservation Concern
- Timber Suitability
- Distinctive Roles and Contributions
- Monitoring Program

Plan Revision Phase

Moving from Draft to Final

October 2014 – June 2015



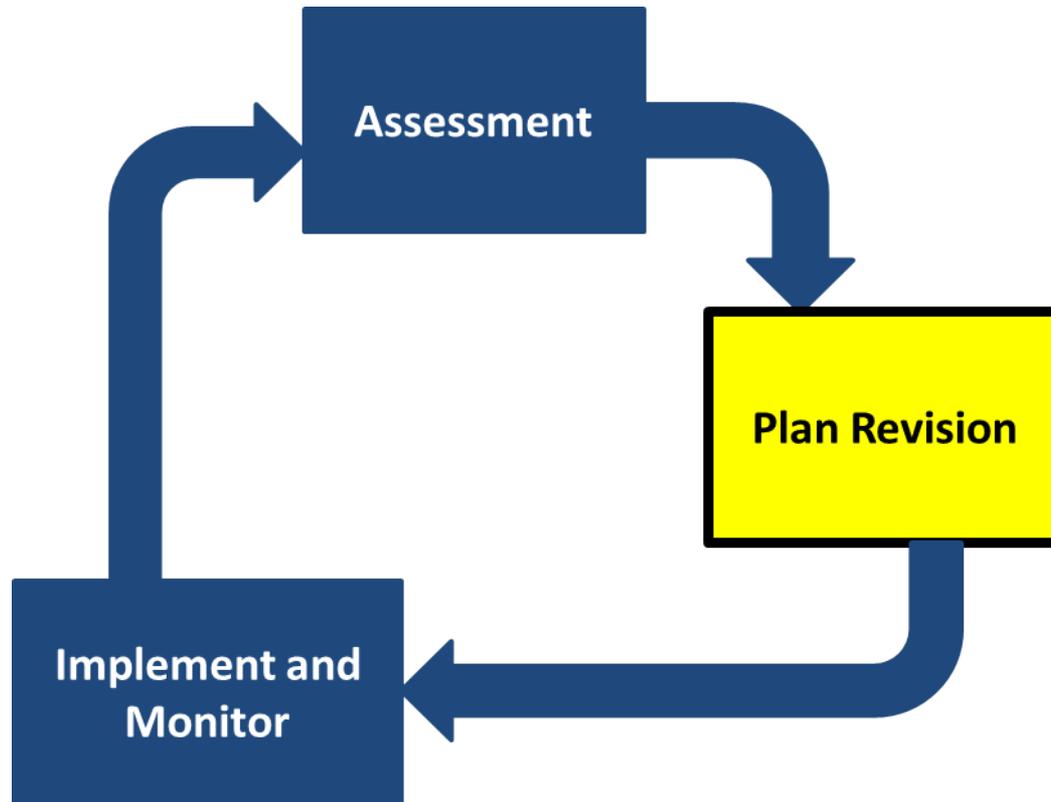
Moving from Draft EIS to Final EIS

- 90 day Public Comment period – initiated by Notice of Availability of Draft EIS
- Respond to Comments
- Revise EIS, Forest Plans, and Monitoring Programs

Plan Revision Phase

Objection Process

June 2015 - August 2015

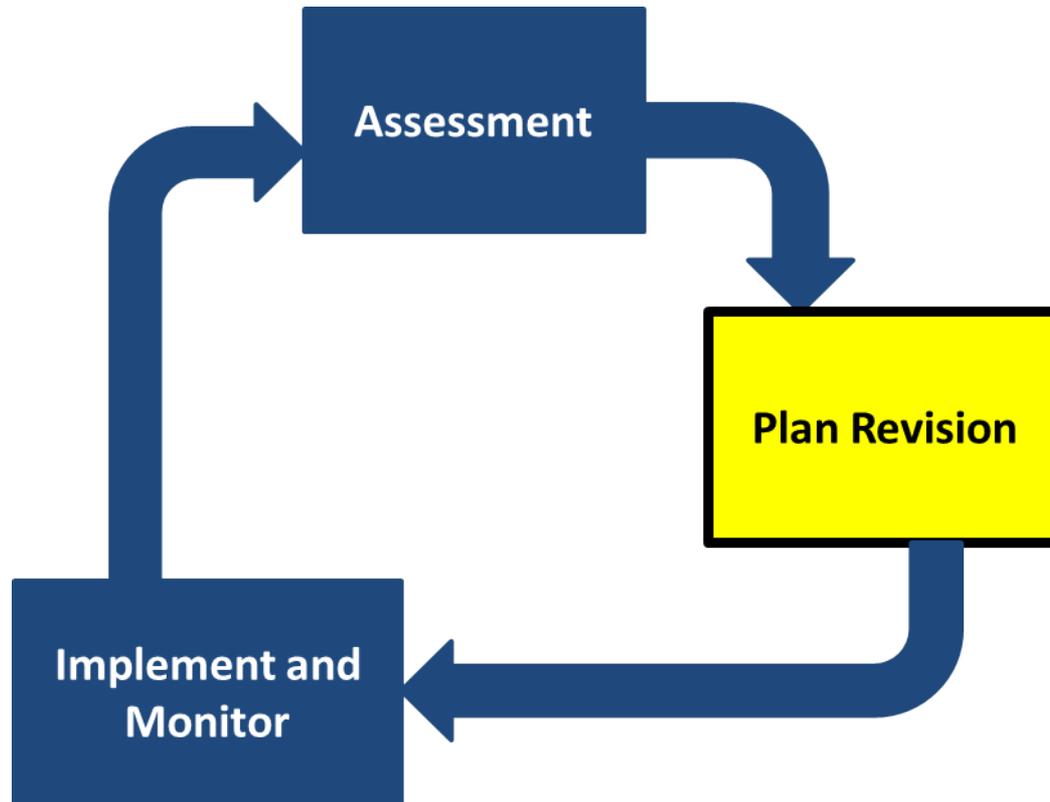


Objection Period

- Initiated by “EPA Notice of Availability of FEIS”
- Provides for public input prior to decision-making – replaces the post-decisional appeal process.

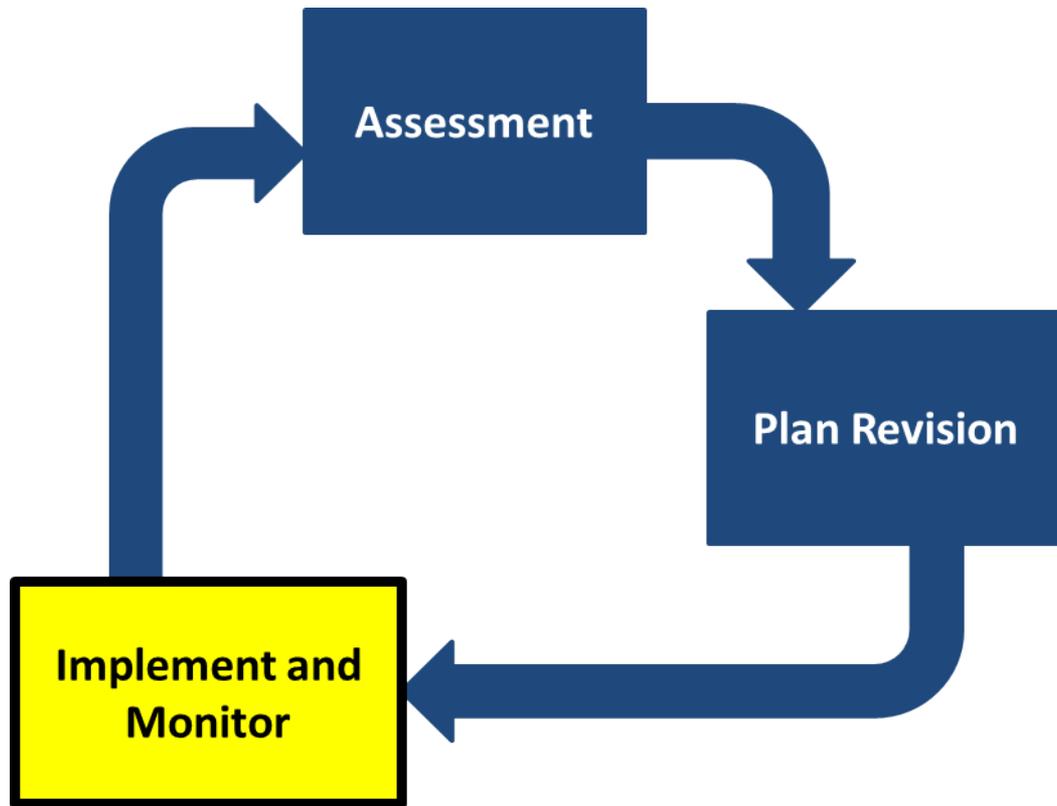
Plan Revision Phase:

Record of Decisions (RODs) Signed December 2015



Implement and Monitor Phase:

January 2016 to next Assessment



Implementation and Monitoring

- Implement new plan 30 days after publication of the Notice of Approval.
- Monitoring evaluations to be done at least every 2 years.
- Monitoring evaluations may identify a need to change the plan or may indicate a need to conduct an assessment.

Planning Timeline and associated Public Involvement Periods

- Assessments completed in December 2013
- Pre-NEPA preparation (January 2014 - March 2014; includes 30 days for input in January)
- NEPA planning phase:
 - Develop Draft Plans and DEIS (April – October 2014; includes 30 days for public scoping in April)
 - DEIS to FEIS (October 2014 - June 2015; includes 90 days for public comments October – December 2014)
 - Objection Process (June 2015 - August 2015; includes 60 days for objections)
 - RODs signed (December 2015)
- Implement new Plan (January 2016)
- Monitoring evaluations at least every 2 years (before January 2018)

Specifically for THIS Plan Revision Effort

- Handful of issues that drive alternatives.
- Other critical management direction will be “carried forward” under a status quo approach. Opportunities for major changes in direction left for later amendments or revisions.
- Focused alternatives, all of which are feasible and acceptable for selection (e.g. all alternatives are implementable).

What Will the EIS Look Like?

- Founded on science but written in plain language to be readable.
- Alternatives will defer, using adaptive decision approaches where possible, any aspect that has strong controversy or requires deep analysis.
- The affected environment will be tightly focused on information needed to understand consequences. Extraneous or distracting information will be pruned ruthlessly.
- The monitoring program will be tightly integrated with plan development – to ensure it is realistic and implementable and informs the need for amendments or revisions.

Reminder of other ways to address plan changes

- Use project-level Plan Amendments where localized and site-specific changes are warranted.
- Build some adaptive actions into projects to develop proof-of-concept demonstrations and build shared learning of new approaches.
- Use focused Plan Amendments when a common solution space and an agreeable range of change options exists.
- Use collaboration and focused learning to queue up the next emphasis areas for the next plan revision.