

National Forest Service, Forest Plan Revision
Preliminary “Need To Change” January workshops
Tribal Input Report
Sequoia National Forest Tribal Meeting
January 28, 2014

Prepared by the Center for Collaborative Policy

Contents

Introduction 1

Input by topic area2

 1. Vegetation, resilience, wildlife and fire2

 Refinements.....2

 Project / activity specific input.....3

 2. Wildland Urban Interface3

 3. Meadows3

 4. Aquatic and Riparian3

 5. Sustainable Recreation3

 Project / activity specific input.....3

 6. Other / Overarching3

 Missing4

 Desired conditions4

 Project / activity specific input.....4

Conclusion / Major Themes.....4

Introduction

The Sequoia National Forest (SQF) Tribal Meeting regarding the Forest Plan Revision preliminary “Need to Change” was held on January 28 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Bakersfield, CA. Eight individuals representing five tribes (Dunlap Band of Mono Indians, Kern Valley Indian Council, Tubatulabal Tribe,

Tule River Tribe, and Wuksachi Tribe), and one tribal organization (Kern Valley Indian Community) attended.

The meeting opened with a welcome from Western Divide District Ranger Rick Stevens on behalf of Sequoia Forest Supervisor Kevin Elliott, who could not attend the meeting due to a death in his family. The agenda included opening remarks by Region 5 Tribal Coordinator Bob Goodwin and Sequoia National Forest Tribal Liaison Dirk Charley; followed by presentations, discussion, and questions and answers regarding Forest Plan Revision, the preliminary “Need to Change” document, desired conditions for the Forest, and the unique roles and contributions of the Forest. The presenters were members of the Regional Planning Team Deb Whitall, Acting Director of Planning for Forest Service Region 5; Jo Ann Fites-Kaufman, Ecologist, U.S. Forest Service; Mary Cole, Landscape Architect, Sequoia National Forest; and Mark Metcalfe, Economist, U.S. Forest Service. Meeting materials and presentations are posted to the Region 5 Planning website:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r5/landmanagement/planning>.

The purpose of this report is to assemble input received during the meeting, either verbally (as captured by staff note-takers) or on comment cards. Comments sent via email or post before or after the workshop will be assembled in a separate report.

Input by topic area

Input received at the Sequoia Tribal Meeting is organized by the 5 topic areas from the preliminary “Need to Change”, plus a category for “other / overarching” input. Within each section, comments are subdivided as either **refinements** to the Need to Change, **clarifications** of text in the Need to Change, **“missing”** from the Need to Change, statements of **desired conditions** for the Forest, or **project / activity specific input**. Subcategories in each topic area are only listed if input pertaining to that subcategory was received.

No written comment cards were received at this meeting; all input is derived from notes taken by Forest Service staff and the meeting facilitator.

This report was prepared by the Center for Collaborative Policy with the intent to neutrally categorize and summarize the input generated at the meeting.

1. Vegetation, resilience, wildlife and fire

Refinements

- Climate change is very important to tribes and its coming impacts can't be stressed enough.

Project / activity specific input

- Desire to practice sweat lodge ceremonies and other ceremonies that use fire on Forest land, sometimes in fire season. Fire is of high importance to cultural uses. Tribal members can be trusted not to start wildfires. Put conditions in the permit if needed. This has been successfully done in some places in the Forests.
- It is a hassle to have to obtain permits each year for each type of plant gathered. Tribes have been gathering the same plants for years and years.

2. *Wildland Urban Interface*

3. *Meadows*

4. *Aquatic and Riparian*

5. *Sustainable Recreation*

Project / activity specific input

- Tribal members need access to sacred sites and sites of cultural importance, even when they are in wilderness areas such as Rockhouse Basin. Some tribal members cannot walk long distances due to age or infirmity. Consider issuing special use permits or using other regulatory mechanisms to make exceptions to the motorized vehicle policies to allow tribal access to sacred and cultural sites, such as the exceptions that are allowed for grazing.

6. *Other / Overarching*

- Must consider the impacts and interconnections with the Inyo National Forest too.
- Understand that in addition to federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes, there is a third category of “disenrolled” tribal members, who, though cut from the rolls of particular tribes, still deserve to practice their culture.
- Instead of focusing on what needs to change, also talk about what is working. How can we make recommendations for change if we don’t know what’s working?
- What happened to data and research from decades ago? Why reinvent the wheel when so much knowledge is in your filing cabinets? There’s been lots of money invested in research, but where is the implementation?

Missing

- There should be a category for cultural resources, separate from recreation.

Desired conditions

- Interest in promoting and educating about traditional Indian place names, perhaps in interpretive signage that gives both Indian and official place names.

Project / activity specific input

- Better staff training is needed regarding “courtesy cards” that allow access for cultural uses. Tribal members sometimes feel disrespected or harassed. Have handouts for staff and public to educate.
- For projects that impact cultural sites, there is a lack of qualified professional staff (archeologists, botanists, minerals, etc.) to oversee and sign off on the project plans. It should not be a tech or an assistant. Too many mistakes are made. Forests should have specialists for “aboriginal resources” which includes traditional plants and landscape management as well as cultural and ceremonial resources.

Conclusion / Major Themes

At this Sequoia Tribal Meeting, most of the input concerned day-to-day management of the Forest including staff expertise and training, permitting, public education, and ease of access to cultural sites and cultural activities. While some of these may not be issues that are addressed through Forest Plan Revision, they remain important concerns for Tribes. For long-range Forest planning, the importance of planning for climate change was mentioned. One commenter suggested that the Need to Change should have a topic area for Cultural Resources.