
COLLABORATION, TRIBAL AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

USDA Forest Service Region 5 Forest Plan Revision

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Plan is to ensure effective communication to support a collaborative and science-based Forest Plan revision process. Forest Plans guide resource management so National Forests are ecologically sustainable and contribute to social and economic sustainability of their neighboring communities. This Plan concentrates on the external communication activities the Forest Service will take at the Regional and National Forests levels regarding Forest plan revisions.

OVERARCHING COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

The national forests of California can improve their communications with the Public through effective, thorough, and transparent sharing as they complete National Forest Plan Revisions. With Public involvement, the public has ownership in the development of management affecting their national forests.

Goal 1: To promote understanding of the Forest Plan Revision process by providing accurate information to the public.

Goal 2: To encourage Public participation, to validate and identify concerns and opportunities and other information relevant to revising the forest plans.

Goal 3: To work with the Public from the beginning of the process through to the completion of each forest plan revision.

Goal 4: To provide focus on the issues that really matter and can be affected during the plan revision.

The term “Public” as used here in and throughout the document means tribal governments, citizens, stakeholders, adjacent landowners, local/county/state/other federal agencies, adjacent National Forests, interest groups, etc. Different publics lend themselves to different means of effective communication and forums/settings.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OBJECTIVES

Each public participation milestone is an important part of the entire forest plan revision process. The goal is to develop a Forest Plan that is responsive to the interests of the forest, agencies, and the public. Forest Plan revision will promote deliberations that are thoughtful and frank and include a diversity of perspectives and interests. At each stage there are specific public participation objectives the Forest Service has in mind (§ 219.16).

Public Involvement: The objective of this pre-NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) stage is to refine, clarify, and/or identify any missing key topic areas in the preliminary Need to Change document as well as to identify desired future conditions for those key topic areas.

Notice of Intent: The objective of this stage is to notify the public that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for the proposed revisions of the Sierra, Sequoia and Inyo National Forest Plans. The Notice of Intent begins the formal scoping process.

Public Scoping: The objective of this stage is to invite public comment on the proposed action described in the Notice of Intent in order to assist the responsible officials in identifying the significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the EIS.

Notice of Availability of DEIS: The objective at this stage is to invite public comment on the draft EIS (DEIS). This will begin the 90-day public comment period.

Notice of Availability of FEIS: The objective at this stage is to share the final EIS (FEIS) with the public.

Notice to Begin the Objection Filing Period: The purpose of this stage is to notify the public of the beginning of the 60-day objection filing period, during which the public can file objections to the draft Record of Decision(s).

Notice of Approval: The objective at this stage is to notify the public of the availability of the record of decision (ROD) and final revised plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN FOREST PLAN REVISION

The goal of each National Forest's plan revision process is to develop a forest plan that is responsive to those who are affected by or have an interest in the management of the national forests, consistent with legal mandates. The Planning Rule requires each National Forest to provide meaningful opportunities for public participation throughout the plan revision process (36 CFR § 219.4).

The Forest determines which public participation methods are the most appropriate depending on the phase of planning, work product being developed, budget, and staff capacity. Work products may include, for example, information on legal and regulatory requirements and the planning process; lists of available scientific information; summaries of trends in forest conditions and drivers of forest change; and alternatives for analysis. Public participation methods identified in the Planning Rule include informing, consulting, involving, and collaborating, as described here:

Informing: Providing participants and the general public with balanced and objective information, and assist them in understanding work products prepared as part of the planning process.

Consulting: Obtaining participants' feedback on draft work products at various points in the planning process.

Involving: Working directly with participants to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered in the development of work products.

Collaborating: Working directly with participants in preparing to make decisions at various points within the planning process, including (but not limited to) the development of alternatives and the identification of a preferred alternative. The Forest will create opportunities for dialogue to explore different perspectives, balance a variety of needs, and identify areas of common ground that can inform draft work products.

FOREST PLAN REVISION PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MILESTONES

Dates, times, and locations may be subject to change.

Please check: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r5/landmanagement/planning> for the most current information.

December 24, 2013:	Final Forest Assessments, Bio-regional Assessment, Preliminary Need to Change
December 26, 2013:	“Notice to Initiate” published in Federal Register and local newspapers
January 13 - 30, 2014:	Tribal Forums & Public Workshops: Preliminary Need to Change
February 27, 2014:	Sierra Cascades Dialog #12
April 30, 2014:	Sierra Cascades Dialog #13
June 16-20, 2014:	Tribal Forums & Public Workshops: Updated Need to Change, Draft Desired Conditions, Preliminary Wilderness Inventory, and other topics. <i>Public feedback will be accepted through June 30, 2014.</i>
August 2014:	“Notice of Intent” published. <i>Begin 30-day public scoping process.</i>
September 2014:	Tribal Forums & Public Workshops: Scoping
November 2014:	Tribal Forums & Public Workshops: Preliminary Alternatives
April 2015:	“Notice of Availability of DEIS” published. <i>Begin 90-day public comment period.</i>
May 2015:	Tribal Forums & Public Workshops: Draft EIS and Draft Forest Plans
March 2016:	“Notice of Availability of FEIS” published. <i>Begin 60-day objection filing period.</i>
September 2016:	“Notice of Plan Approval” published
October 2016:	Implement Forest Plans 30 days after Notice of Plan Approval

EXTERNAL AUDIENCES AND COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Tribes: Consultation, in-person briefings, web site, e-mail updates, tribal forums, and as local forests see fit

Local Elected Officials: In-person briefings, RCRC meetings, e-mail updates, and as local forests see fit

Region 5 Stakeholder Forum: Email updates, web sites, Sierra Cascades Dialogs. (This audience includes those interested in national and Region 5 issues, including those interested in more than one national forest.)

Regional and Statewide Media: News releases, web site, legal notices, and as local forests see fit

Cooperating Agencies: Cooperating agency letter from Forest Supervisors.

General Public: Sierra Cascades Dialogs, forest workshops, web sites, news releases, e-mail updates, Federal Register notices. (This audience includes Interested individuals and entities, including those interested at the local, regional, and national levels; youth, low-income populations, and minority populations; private landowners whose lands are in, adjacent to, or otherwise affected by, or whose actions may impact, future management actions in the plan area.)

COMMUNICATION TOOLBOX

Federal Register Notices

Public/Legal Notices (to be placed in the newspaper of record)

Fact sheets: Regional Office planning and communications staff and Forest staff working on plan revision will develop messages as a group. This will ensure that everyone agrees on the key messages. Each Forest can then tailor those messages for its stakeholder community.

Region 5 Web Site: Use the Forest Service website as a clearinghouse for all the information and materials associated with the plan revision process.

Our Forest Place: This site should reflect announcements at important milestones and drive users to the Region 5 web site for more information and documents.

E-mail:

- **Internal:** Create email distribution lists for the different groups.
- **External:** Develop and maintain an interested parties' email distribution list (e.g., Sierra Cascades Dialog group)

Key Messages: Regional Office planning and communication staff will develop key messages as a group for the Regional Forester's use. Each Forest can tailor these talking points for its stakeholder community and Forest Supervisor's use.

FAQs: Regional Office planning and communication staff and Forest staff working on plan revision will develop messages as a group. This will ensure that everyone agrees on the questions and the answers. Each Forest can then tailor the FAQs for its stakeholder community.

Talking Points: Regional Office planning and communication staff will develop key talking points as a group for the Regional Forester's use. Each Forest can tailor these talking points for its stakeholder community and Forest Supervisor's use.

Cooperating Agency Letter: This letter will be used as an invitation to an agency that partners with the Forest Service or will be impacted by the Forest Plan revision to become a cooperating agency throughout the plan revision process.

Forest Workshops: Each forest will hold public workshops to engage public at key milestones in the planning process. These workshops should be a forum for vetting and sharing information.

Sierra Cascades Dialogs: Provides a broader workshop avenue than the forest-level workshops for topics encompassing the entire Sierra Cascades region.