

FACT SHEET-KEY POINTS

Scoping Period

R5 Forest Plan Revisions

Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra National Forests

SCOPING – THE PROPOSED ACTION

The U.S. Forest Service has announced a 30-day public scoping period that starts the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for forest plan revision on the Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra National Forests. The Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register on August 29, 2014.

The scoping period gives the public a chance to tell the Forest Service what issues and concerns they think should be addressed in the environmental impact statements (EIS) before the Forest Service begins drafting this document.

The proposed action is to revise the existing forest plans for the Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests, as amended. Desired conditions, strategies, standards, and guidelines have been developed to address the need to change areas. The detailed proposed action can be found on the Forest Plan Revision webpage at: <http://tinyurl.com/r5earlyadopters>. These needed changes are the primary drivers for revising forest plans are discussed below.

Benefits to People and Communities

Support the long term sustainability of forest benefits to people and contributions to local economies, which come as a result of the many uses of National Forest System lands: to encourage the use of partnerships with private and public entities and tribal stewardship opportunities, and to improve communication and outreach to the public, including underrepresented populations.

Tribal Relations and Uses

Help tribes maintain their culture and connection to the land, support economic opportunities in tribal communities, incorporate traditional ecological knowledge, and collaborate with the agency to meet restoration goals.

Sustainable Recreation

Improve and provide for sustainable recreation facilities, opportunities, and access, improve and protect scenic character, and proactively manage cultural resources to protect and improve the conditions of these resources and help connect people to the land.

Designated Areas

Determine if updates are needed for existing and recommended wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, include a management area for the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) corridor and associated management direction, and include management direction for national recreation trails.

For wilderness, there may be new recommendations that result from the wilderness evaluations currently underway. More information on the wilderness inventory and evaluation process can be found online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/r5/FPRWilderness>.

For wild and scenic rivers, the two newly designated wild and scenic rivers on the Inyo National Forest identify the process and timeline for finishing comprehensive river management plans. For rivers with existing comprehensive river management plans, existing management direction is being reviewed to determine if additional updates are needed.

For the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) identify the trail corridor as a management area and develop additional plan components to protect the recreation experience and scenery resources along the PCT.

Fire

Recognize the role of climate change in fire management. Modify wildfire management areas to increase the area where fuel reduction treatments occur, while increasing the opportunity to use fire as a restoration tool, and to maintain or restore fire as an ecosystem process. Analyze smoke tradeoffs to communities resulting from fire, including prescribed fire, wildfires used to meet resource objectives, and wildfires managed under suppression objectives.

Ecological Integrity

Improve resilience of ecosystems to climate change. Increase the rate and extent of the land area where vegetation is being restored, decreasing the threat of large, undesirable fires; sustain and increase local capacity to restore vegetation and reduce fuels; and to include plan direction for old forest, early seral habitat, and subalpine and alpine systems. Improve or maintain the resilience of aquatic and riparian ecosystems to climate change, fire, air pollution and invasive species, and to manage meadows holistically across individual resource areas, such as hydrology, soils, wildlife and vegetation. Identify watersheds that are a priority for restoration, and improve groundwater storage and address water shortages and climate change in riparian systems. Prevent the establishment and spread of invasive species.

Monitoring Program

Develop a monitoring program that meets the requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule and informs evaluation of the effectiveness of forest plans.

Get Involved! Public Involvement and Scoping Comment Opportunity

We are seeking your comments. Electronic, e-mail, written, facsimile and hand-delivered comments will be accepted as well. Please review the proposed action and send your comments so they may be considered in developing and analyzing alternatives. Comments on the proposed action must be received by September 29, 2014. Please identify which forest or forests each of your comments applies to.

Comments can be made on the forest plan revision webpage: <http://tinyurl.com/r5earlyadopters>.

Comments submitted with an e-mail message can be sent to r5planrevision@fs.fed.us. Please include “forest plan revision” in the subject line.

Hard copy written comments should be mailed to: Land Management Plan Revision, U.S. Forest Service, 1839 South Newcomb Street, Porterville, CA 93257.

Key Points

According to the National Forest Management Act, forest plans are to be revised on a 10 -15 year cycle.

The Pacific Southwest Region is preparing revised land management plans (forest plans) for the Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra National Forests.

The Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra are three of the initial eight national forests selected as “early adopters,” meaning they will be the first forests to revise their land management plans under the 2012 Forest Service Planning Rule.

The 2012 Planning Rule provides the framework for Forest Service land management plans on national forests across the nation. The 2012 Planning Rule asks the agency to be more efficient and streamlined, and to follow a more compressed timeframe for producing forest plan revisions. These plan revisions should also allow for ecological restoration and contemporary issues such as climate change.

Public involvement and interagency collaboration is another key component of the 2012 Planning Rule.

The plans will be revised under the 2012 Planning Rule and will provide for social, economic and ecological sustainability within Forest Service authority and the inherent capability of the plan area.

The revised forest plans will supersede existing forest plans previously approved by the responsible official on the Inyo National Forest in 1988, the Sequoia National Forest in 1988 and the Sierra National Forest in 1992.

The existing forest plans have been amended several times since their approval, including the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment.

The 2012 Giant Sequoia National Monument Management Plan, which amends the land management plan for the Sequoia National Forest, will be incorporated as a subset of the Sequoia's revised forest plan.

Provisions of the 1990 Mediated Settlement Agreement to the Sequoia National Forest Land Management Plan, applicable to National Forest System lands outside of the Monument, will be addressed in the environmental impact statement for forest plan revision.

The existing forest plans, as amended, remain in effect until the revised forest plans are approved.

These three separate forest plan revisions will be completed through the development of one environmental impact statement.

The final environmental impact statement will result in three separate records of decision for the three forest plans.

Forest Supervisors are the responsible officials for making decisions on their specific forest plans.

The responsible officials for these forest plan revisions used science-based assessments and considered public and employee input to identify needed changes to existing plans.

In the proposed action, they have identified the following areas where prominent changes are needed:

- Benefits to People and Communities
- Timber
- Tribal relations and uses
- Cultural resources
- Fire
- Air quality
- Terrestrial Ecosystems
- Aquatic and riparian ecosystems
- Water resources
- Invasive species
- Lands
- Designated areas

A detailed proposed action document is available at <http://tinyurl.com/r5earlyadopters>.

The NOI was published in the Federal Register on August 29, 2014.

Scoping comments must be received by September 29, 2014, and please identify which forest or forests each of your comments applies to. Comments may be submitted as follows:

Online: <http://tinyurl.com/r5earlyadopters>

Electronic email: R5planrevision@fs.fed.us; or

U.S. Mail: Land Management Plan Revision, U.S. Forest Service, 1839 South Newcomb Street, Porterville, CA 93257.

Tribal forums and public workshops on each of the three forests have been scheduled for the week of September 15-18, 2014.

The draft environmental impact statement and alternatives are expected to be released for public review during the spring of 2015.