

Forest Plan revision and NEPA 101

WELCOME!

This looping presentation is designed to provide basic background information for people who are new to Forest Planning.



Who are we?

We are the Forest Service, a federal agency in the US Department of Agriculture.

- Our mission, as set forth by law, is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.



We are a “Multiple-use” agency

Multiple-use



Photo by Evan Wolf



Forest
Service

Pacific
Southwest
Region

What are we talking about today?

We are in the process of updating the Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) for the Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests.

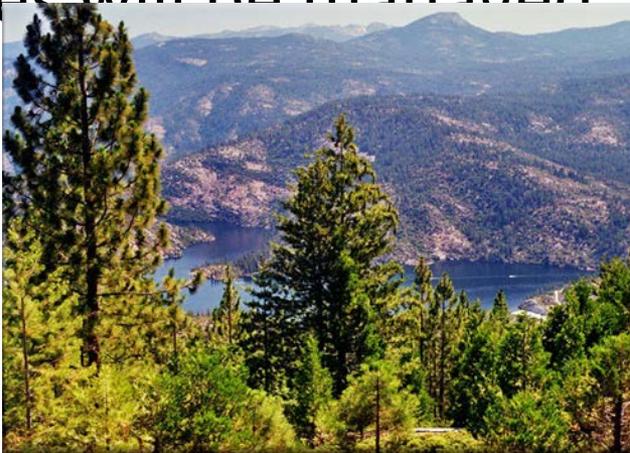


Forest planning 101



What is a Forest Plan?

Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) provide broad guidance for how natural resources, projects, and activities will be managed



- Cultural uses
- Ecological restoration
- Fire response
- Grazing
- Infrastructure
- Recreation
- Timber harvest
- And more!

National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NMFA)

NFMA requires Forest Plans and directs the Secretary of Agriculture to create regulations (Planning Rule).

Every National Forest has a land management plan (Forest Plan).



NFMA requires us to revise forest plans

- Every 10 to 15 years
- When conditions or demands in the Plan area have changed significantly
- When changes in agency policies would significantly affect forest management
- When monitoring and evaluation indicate that a revision is necessary



Programmatic plans

Plan Revisions are programmatic, meaning that they give guidance for the overall program of Forest management.

The Forest Plan does not make site-specific (project-level) decisions.

Therefore, this plan revision will not address specific roads, trails, campsites, etc.



Why do we need to update the forest plans?

Reason #1: The current Forest Plans in our area are old.

Forest plans were previously approved for the Inyo and Sequoia* National Forests in 1988, and the Sierra National Forest in 1992.

They have since been amended, but never revised overall.



* A note on the Giant sequoia national monument

Planning was completed for the Giant Sequoia National Monument in 2012. That area is not being updated with this Plan Revision effort.

The Monument Plan will be incorporated by reference into the Sequoia National Forest Plan.



Why do we need to update the forest plans?

Reason #2: The Forest Service adopted a new Planning Rule in 2012.

All National Forests nationwide will be updating their Forest Plans according to the new rule.



Why did we need a new planning rule?

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



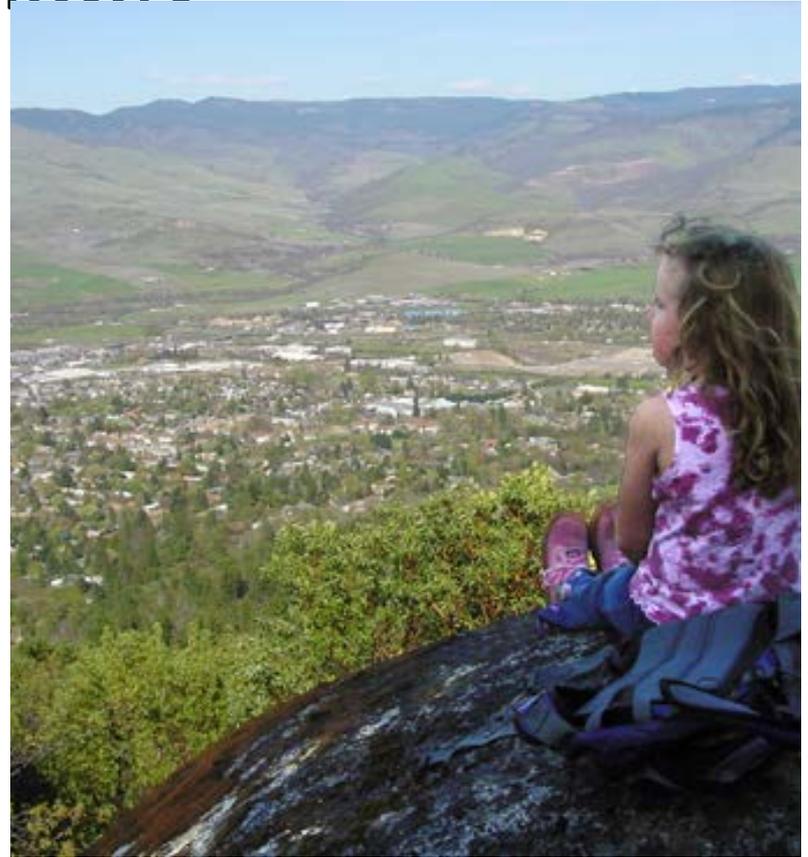
The New 2012 Planning Rule

The Planning Rule guides forests on how to develop a Forest Plan, and what must be included in the Forest Plan.

- It instructs forests to be more collaborative in their approach to Forest Planning, and to include new elements such as managing forests adaptively as conditions change.
- It instructs Forests to develop plans more quickly and efficiently, and for less money.

We are directed to manage the forest sustainably

Sustainability is the capability to meet the needs of the present generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

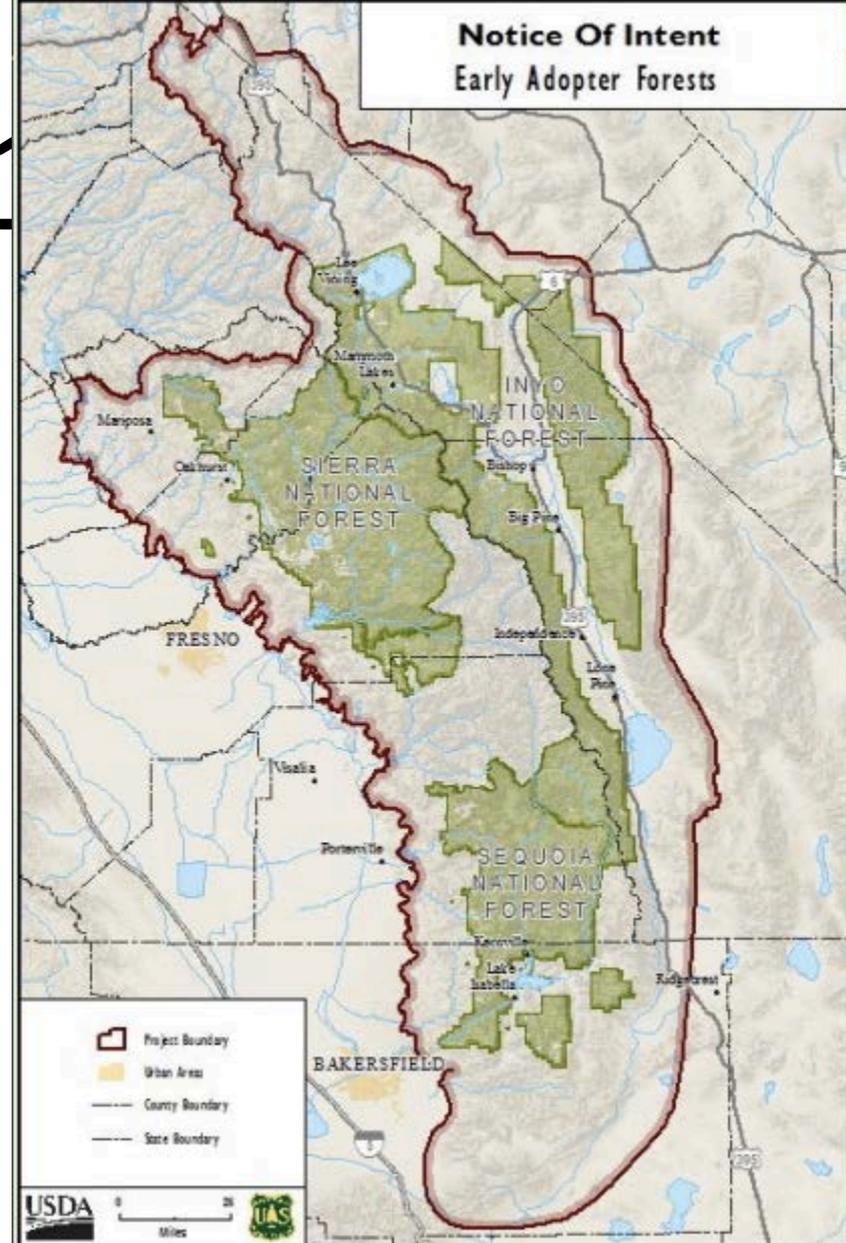


What is special about how we're doing Plan revision for our three forests?

The Sierra, Sequoia, and Inyo Forests are working to update their plans together in one coordinated effort with assistance from the Pacific Southwest Regional Office of the Forest Service.

- Working together, the Forests can be more efficient. This will allow us to devote more of our budget to on-the-ground projects that benefit the Forest and the people who cherish and depend on it.

Nepa



What is nepa?

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is a federal law that requires that for “any major federal action” the responsible agency must analyze the possible environmental, social and economic impacts, and study a range of alternatives to that action.



Forest Plan Revision follows nepa requirements.

Throughout Forest Planning and the NEPA analysis, the Forest Service will consult with members of the public, partner agencies and California Tribes in specific ways.

- NEPA has strict requirements for how comments must be gathered, responded to, shared, and saved as part of the “project record”.

Option to Submit Comments Electronically
The form below can be used to submit your comments to the responsible project official.

National Forests have the option to post comments for public viewing on this web site via a public reading room. Active reading rooms allow the public to read or download your letter, including your contact information. If this project has an active reading room, a link labeled "Public Comment Reading Room" will appear on the main project page. The agency may withhold letters containing proprietary information, sensitive cultural or habitat locations, profanity, etc. All letters, including those not posted, will be considered and included as part of the project record.

Organization	<input type="text"/>		
Title	<input type="text"/>	Official Representative Type	<input type="text"/>
First Name	<input type="text"/>	Last Name	<input type="text"/>
Address 1	<input type="text"/>	Address 2	<input type="text"/>
City	<input type="text"/>	State	<input type="text"/>
Province/Region	<input type="text"/>	Zip/Postal Code	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text" value="United States"/>	Email	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>	How would you like to be contacted about this or similar projects in the future?	<input type="text" value="Contact me via e-mail"/>

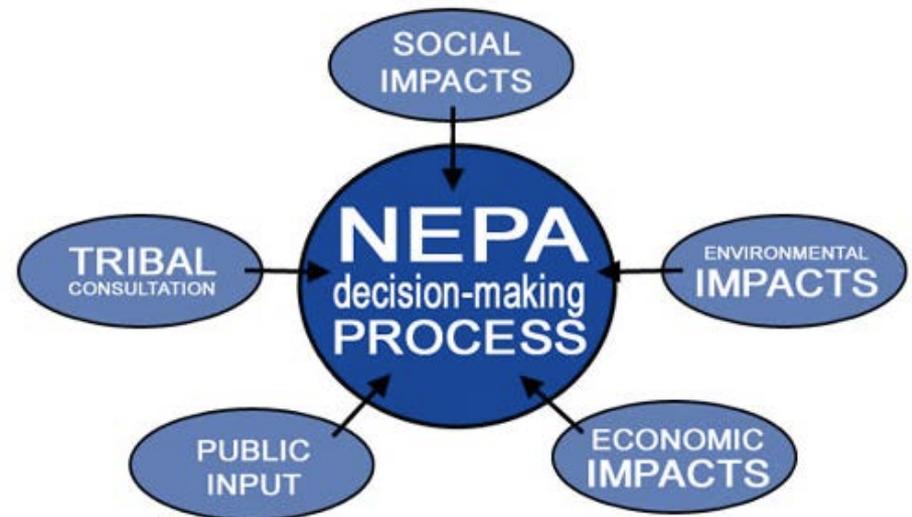
Letter Text

Attachments

File 1 No file chosen

NEPA does not require that the least impactful alternative be selected and implemented

NEPA requires that the responsible agency disclose and analyze potential impacts and consult with the public in order to make informed decisions.



What are the major phases of nepa?

- Scoping: determining the range of issues and interests to be addressed



What are the major phases of nepa? (continued)

- Generating a Proposed Action and a list of Alternatives to that action



What are the major phases of nepa? (continued)

- Analyzing alternatives for their impacts (environmental, social, and economic)



What are the major phases of nepa? (continued)

- Preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which discloses potential impacts



What are the major phases of nepa? (continued)

- Releasing a Final EIS which indicates the Preferred Alternative to be implemented



public participation in nepa phase

There are three specific points in NEPA with major public meetings and outreach:

1. Scoping – The Forest Service will present a Proposed Action and seek public comments to identify key interests, needs and desires for Forest use and health (September 2014)



Public participation in nepa (continued)

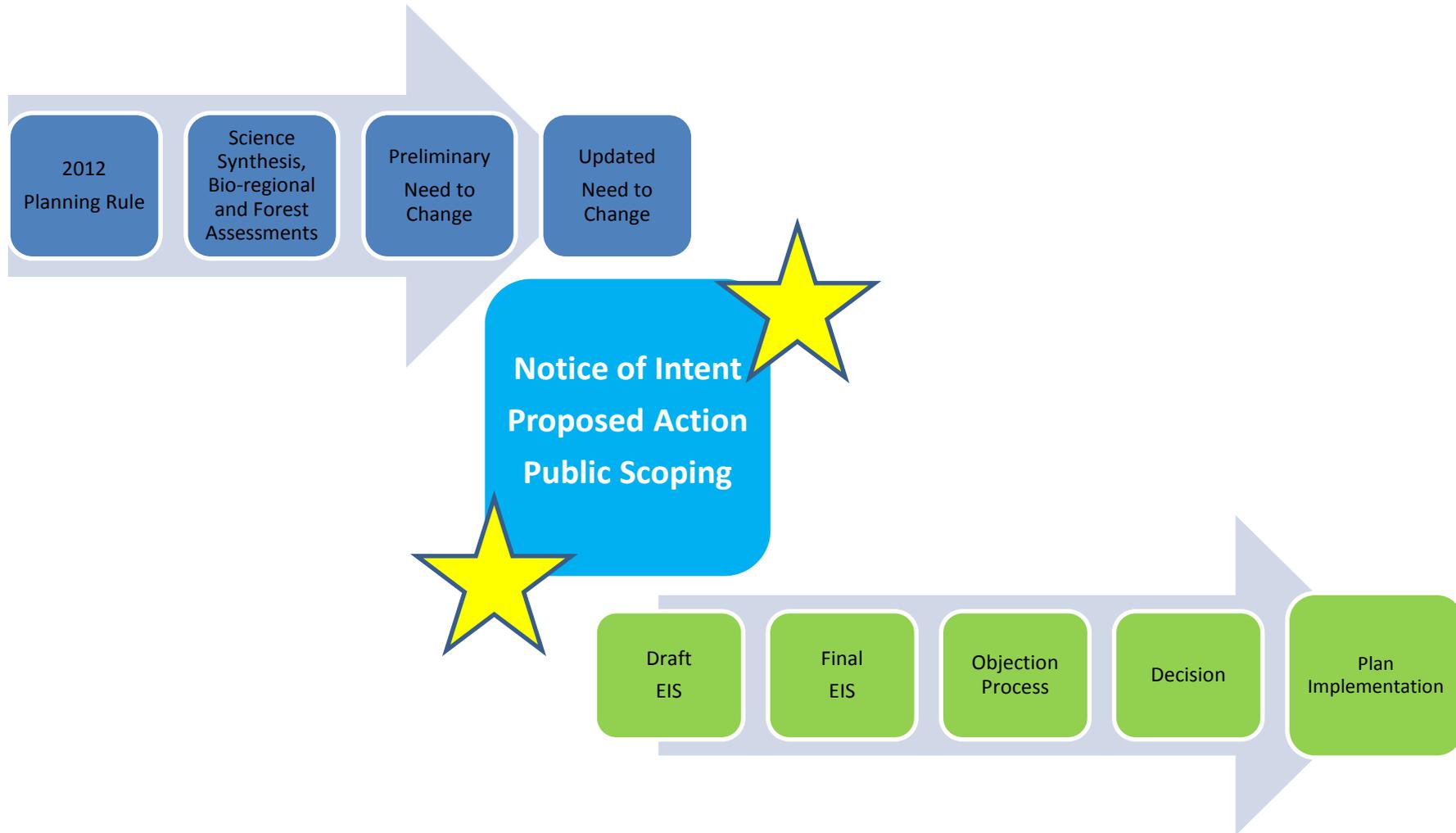
2. Refining alternatives – The Forest Service will present a set of preliminary alternatives for action, and will seek public comments to add, subtract, improve, or otherwise refine the alternatives (November 2014).



Public participation in nepa (continued)

3. Draft EIS- The Forest Service will present a complete draft Environmental Impact Statement for public review. The EIS shows which alternatives were selected for analysis, and how the Forest Service analyzed the potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of all the alternatives (anticipated April 2015)

Where are we and where are we going?



How can I learn more?

<http://tinyurl.com/r5earlyadopters>



Thank you

