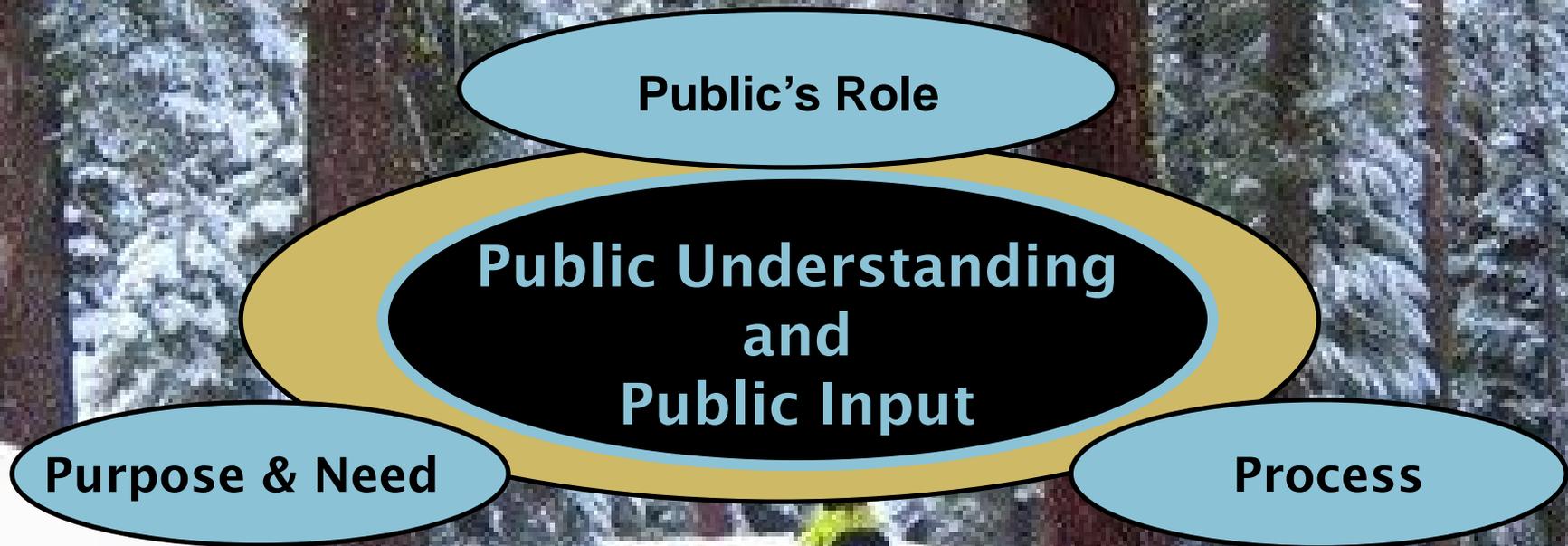


Pacific Southwest Region Five-Forest Over Snow Vehicle Use Designation Analysis



Pre-NEPA Public Open House
Region 5 - California
Lassen, Eldorado, Stanislaus, and Plumas National Forests
November 3-6, 2014

USFS Measures of Success Tonight



Tonight's Meeting Objectives

PROVIDE THE PUBLIC WITH

- ❖ Project Background
- ❖ National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA Process)
- ❖ Preliminary Purpose and Need for Action for the Project
- ❖ Opportunities to provide concerns and solutions with current OSV management prior to a USFS Proposed Action for the Project

FOREST SERVICE COLLECTION OF

- ❖ What the public feels will help you engage on the project
- ❖ Input on public concerns and possible solutions to those concerns generated by participants.

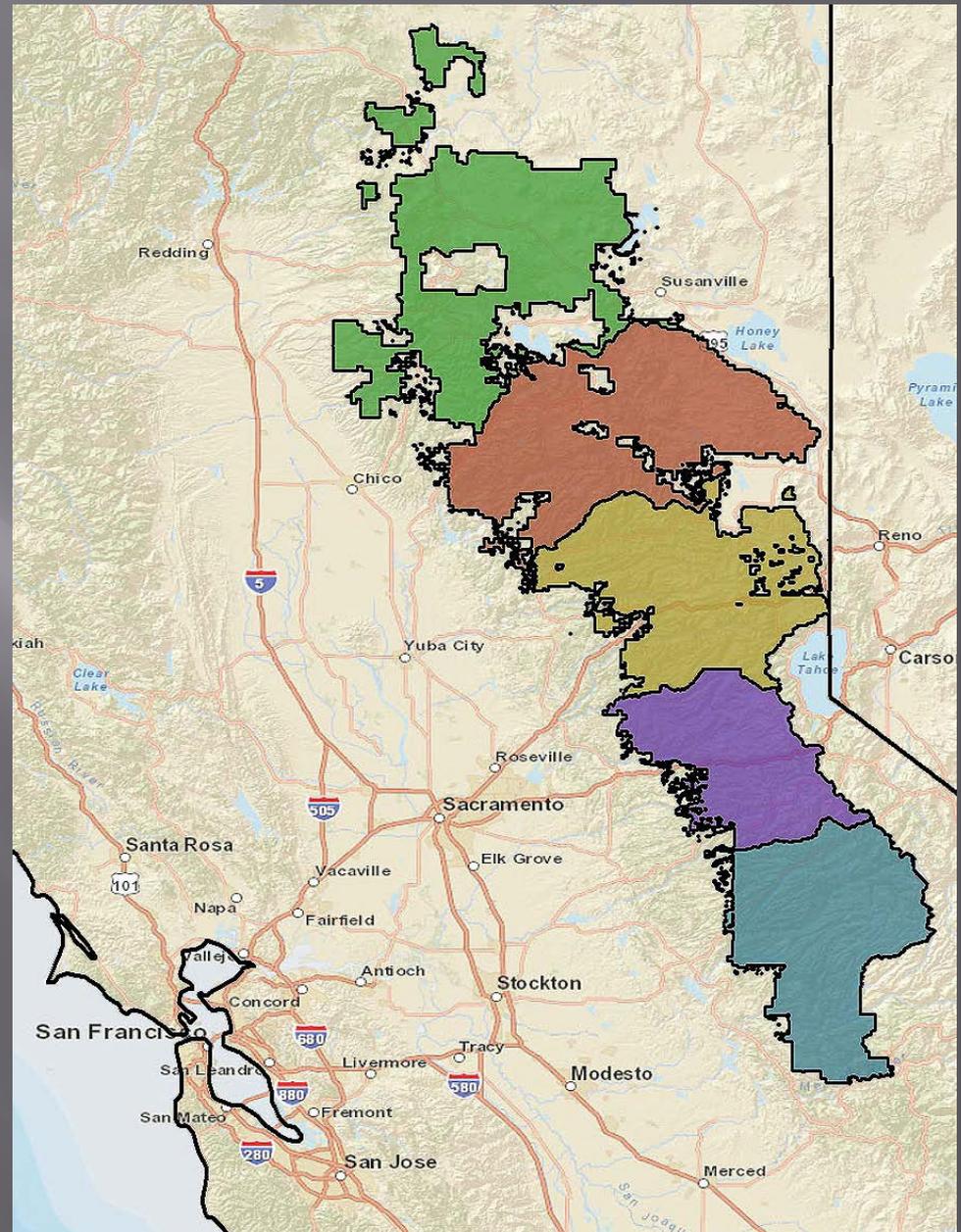
USFS R5 OSV Management Background

- ▣ For 30+ years, the Forest Service, in partnership with the California Department of Parks and Recreation, has enhanced over-snow vehicle use by grooming snow trails generally located on underlying NFS roads.



Forests Involved & EIS Release Order

Lassen
Tahoe
Eldorado
Stanislaus
Plumas



Five-Forest OSV Management Background

National Forest	Groomed Miles of Over Snow Vehicle (OSV) Trails
Eldorado	51
Lassen	405
Plumas	195
Stanislaus	59
Tahoe	326
Total	1,036

- All 5 forests manage a groomed and ungroomed OSV trail system and areas open to cross country OSV travel
- Grooming programs on all 5 forests are funded by the State Off-Highway Vehicle Trust Fund.

Plumas National Forest OSV Management Background

- The Plumas National Forest currently grooms approximately 195 miles of snowmobile trails
- OSV travel is allowed on most (97%) of the forest
- OSV travel is not allowed in Wilderness, the Wild sections of the Middle Fork Feather Wild and Scenic River and the Pacific Crest (3% of the forest is closed).

Plumas National Forest Current OSV Management	Approximate Miles or Acres
Groomed OSV Routes	195 miles
Un-groomed OSV Routes	29 miles
National Forest System (NFS) Lands OSV Project Boundary	1,197,901 acres
NFS Lands Closed To OSV Use Within Project Boundary	34,855 acres
NFS Lands Restricted OSV Use Within Project Boundary	0 acres
NFS Lands Open To OSV Use Within Project Boundary	1,163,046 acres
NFS Lands Within Administrative Boundary	1,197,901 acres

Proposed Travel Management Rule

36 CFR §212 Sub Part C



As proposed, the proposed new Subpart C - Travel Management Rule states:

“Over-snow vehicle use... shall be designated as **allowed, restricted, or prohibited** by the responsible official... where snowfall is adequate for that use to occur.” (36 CFR §212.80(a)).

Settlement Agreement Background

- ❖ In November 2011, the USFS was litigated in *Snowlands Network et al. v. U.S. Forest Service* on OSV management on the Plumas, Tahoe, Eldorado, Stanislaus and Lassen National Forests.
- ❖ In 2013, the USFS engaged in a Settlement Agreement on the lawsuit.
- ❖ The USFS must comply with terms of 2013 Settlement Agreement (*Snowlands et al. v. U.S. Forest Service*)

Project Process

NEPA

- ▣ The project will undergo analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- ▣ NEPA provides opportunities for input from local communities, local government, and all interested parties.

PUBLIC INPUT

- ▣ Each of the five forests is currently in the “Pre-NEPA” stage
- ▣ Are considering their current OSV use and management, and examining any need for changes.
- ▣ Each forest will develop a proposed action for analysis based on those considerations.

Process

SEPARATE EISs

- ▣ Each Forest will prepare a separate Environmental Impact Statement.
- ▣ The **Lassen** will begin their analysis first, followed by the Tahoe, Eldorado, Stanislaus, and Plumas

STAGGERED TIMEFRAMES

- ▣ The start of the NEPA process for each of the five forests is separated by several months.
- ▣ The Regional Office, with the help from Forest Service employees from an “enterprise team,” will conduct the analysis in close coordination with staff from each of the five national forests.

Purpose

- ▣ **Align OSV Management with the proposed Travel Management Rule 36 CFR §212 Subpart C:**
 - Designate OSV use to protect forest resources, promote safety, and minimize conflicts among the various uses

- ▣ **Comply with terms of 2013 Settlement Agreement (Snowlands, et al. v. U.S. Forest Service). It obligates R5 to:**
 - ▣ Perform appropriate NEPA to identify trails to be groomed on Lassen, Plumas, Tahoe, Eldorado, Stanislaus

Purpose

- Align management of over-snow vehicle use as required by the proposed Subpart C.
 - To designate over-snow vehicle use as **allowed, restricted, or prohibited** on National Forest System roads, trails, and areas in the Lassen, Tahoe, Eldorado, Stanislaus, and Plumas National Forests.

Purpose, cont'd

- ▣ **To respond to the requirements of Settlement Agreement., we must:**
 - Complete an appropriate NEPA analysis to identify snow trails for grooming;
 - Analyze activities such as the plowing of related parking lots and trailheads as part of the effects analysis;
 - Consider a range of alternative actions that would result in varying levels of snowmobile use; and
 - Consider an alternative submitted by Plaintiffs and/or Interveners in the NEPA analysis

Need for Action

The differences between existing conditions and desired conditions and the Forest Service's responsibility to reduce those differences through management practices.



Need for Action

We are currently assessing current OSV management to determine if there are any site-specific issues that need to be addressed:

- Forest Plan consistency
- Resource protection
- Laws and regulations
- Other uses



Consideration of Effects

Minimization Criteria



- ▣ Natural and cultural resources, public safety, recreational opportunities, access needs, conflicts among uses, the need for and availability of maintenance [36 CFR §212.55(a)]
- ▣ Rights of access, wilderness areas and primitive areas [36 CFR §212.55(d) and (e)]

Consideration of Effects Minimization Criteria

Minimize

- Damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, and other forest resources
- Harassment of wildlife and significant disruption of wildlife habitats
- Conflicts between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational uses of National Forest System lands or neighboring Federal lands
- Conflicts among different classes of motor vehicle uses of National Forest System lands or neighboring Federal lands

[36 CFR §212.55(b)]

Current Project Status

Considering these examples and others is not yet complete and we are continuing to work with the project interdisciplinary team on this step.

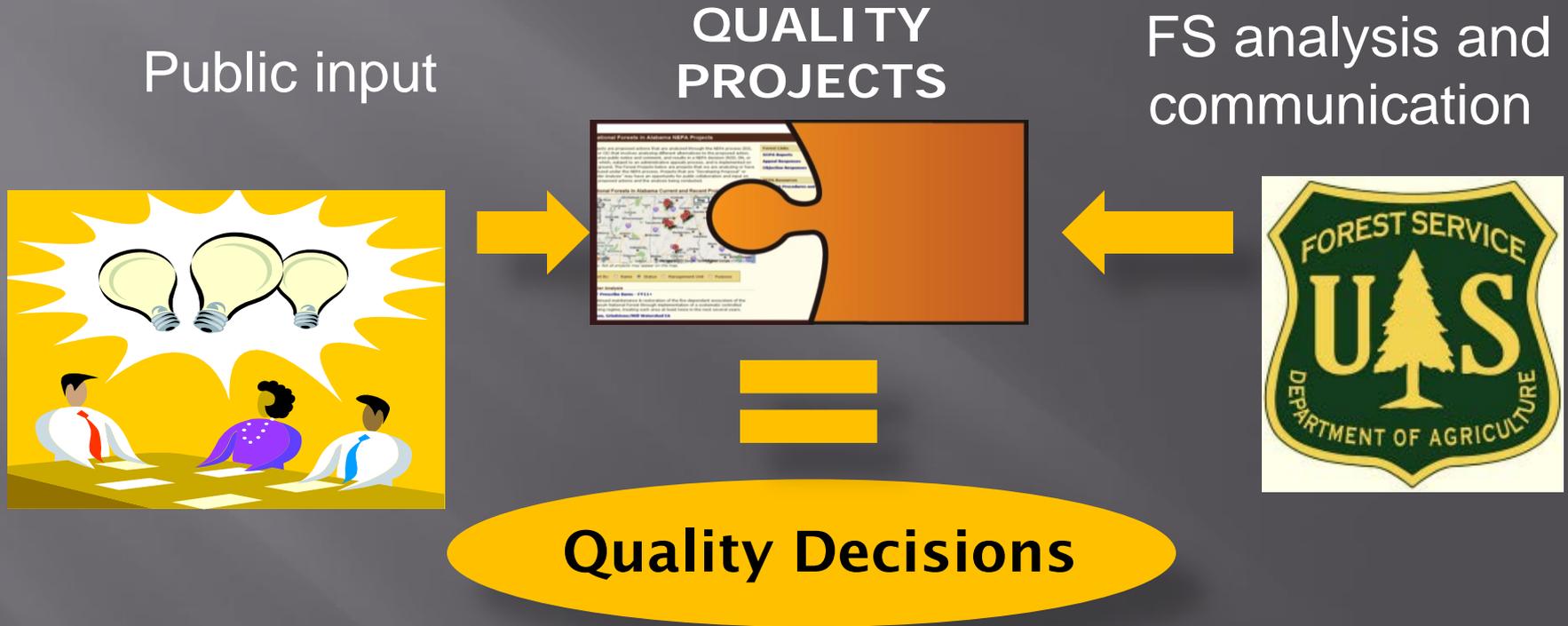
We encourage you to provide input on site-specific issues with the Plumas National Forest's current OSV management to assist us in further developing the purpose and need for action.

Proposed Project Timeline And Project Opportunities for Public Input



Why Public Involvement?

To **ADD VALUE** to our work



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION, COORDINATION & PLANNING **NOW** =
Efficient & Valuable Public Engagement & High Quality Projects **LATER**

What's Next Tonight?

- Clarifying questions on the presentation
- Concerns and solutions exercise
- Next steps
- Closing Comments
- Closing open house session

Thank You for Joining Us Today!



Plumas National Forest
“Caring for the land and serving people”