



Forest Service/Northern Region

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News Release

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Idaho Panhandle and Kootenai National Forests Finalize Revised Forest Plans

MISSOULA, MT – Faye Krueger, Regional Forester for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service’s Northern Region, has signed the Record of Decision for the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Idaho Panhandle and Kootenai National Forests’ revised Forest Plans.

These revisions will guide forest management in north Idaho and northwestern Montana for the next 10 to 15 years.

The development of the revised Forest Plans spanned more than 13 years and is shaped by the best available science, current laws, public input from numerous public meetings and open houses, and more than 100 community-based work group sessions. These open meetings identified the core values of local communities regarding natural resource management and highlighted the many points of agreement that exist among diverse participants.

“These Forest Plan revisions mark an important milestone for the Forest Service and our region,” Krueger said. “They are the first to be completed using the Pre-Decisional Administrative Review process, which provides for tremendous collaboration between the Forest Service, state and local government officials, local communities and stakeholders. We look forward to continued collaboration as we implement these plans to effectively manage our national forests for future generations.”

“The completion of our plan is a great benefit to our national forest because it updates our guidance to better respond to the challenges the Forest Service faces in managing our natural resources today,” said Idaho Panhandle National Forests Supervisor Mary Farnsworth. “Based on the wide ranging input we have received from our communities and forest visitors, we believe this plan reflects the best possible balance for our national forest today and into the future.”

“The planning process was a great opportunity for us to learn the issues and concerns of our stakeholders and communities,” said Kootenai National Forest Supervisor Chris Savage. “The collaboration between our staff and our diverse stakeholders led to the development of a comprehensive Forest Plan. We appreciate the input we received from all who participated and look forward to continuing to work with stakeholders as we implement the plan.”

National forests face many new challenges including increasing demands for multiple uses, increasing population pressures and development of neighboring lands. The revised Forest Plans lay the foundation to address and balance the economic, ecological and social needs of forest stakeholders, while continuing the legacy of protecting water and restoring forest health. Management direction in the Forest Plans addresses needs to: supply clean water, restore and maintain ecosystems, improve the resistance and resiliency of the forest vegetation to undesirable disturbances and potential climate change effects, offer a diversity of recreation opportunities including remote settings, and utilize best available science.

The Pre-decisional Administrative Review process, also known as the objection process, began September 23, 2013 with a 60-day call for objections and was completed September 8, 2014 with the issuance of the [reviewing officer’s response to objections](#). Today’s Record of Decision incorporates the reviewing officer’s instructions from his response to objections. Implementation of the revised plan will begin after 30 days on February 6, 2015.

For more information about revised forest plans please visit:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/ipnf/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5436518>.

For information regarding the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, please visit:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/ipnf/home>.

For information regarding the Kootenai National Forest, please visit:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/kootenai>.

For information regarding the Forest Service’s Northern Region, please visit:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/r1>.

The mission of the U.S. Forest Service, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Public lands the Forest Service manages contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20 percent of the nation’s clean water supply, a value estimated at \$7.2 billion per year. The agency has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 80 percent of the 850 million forested acres within the U.S., of which 100 million acres are urban forests.