

# CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST *PLAN REVISION*



## SPRING 2015 · NEWSLETTER

*"Keeping the Public Up-to-date"*

### A Message from the Forest Supervisor

I'd like to provide you an update on our forest plan revision efforts. Forest plan revision is the process we are following to develop a vision, strategy and design criteria to guide the uses and activities on the Chugach National Forest over the next 15 years. Our revision is applying a national framework adopted in 2012 that consists of interrelated tasks organized among three broad planning phases (assessment, revision, and monitoring).

#### Our public engagement process:

- Began in 2012 prior to the assessment phase where we held 10 community meetings seeking public feedback on Forest values and uses, and a dialogue about the Forest Service's unique landscape role and contribution within southcentral Alaska.
- Continued in 2013-2014 with the assessment phase which gathered existing information that included 15 focus areas covering social, economic and ecological topics relevant to the plan area. We sought your feedback on initial findings through a series of 18 community workshops. Additionally, we conducted a series of targeted outreach efforts to federally recognized Alaska Native Tribes and Corporations, youth, new audiences, permittees, and neighboring landowners, including the State of Alaska, to capture stakeholder input.
- Integrated public, stakeholder and forest employee input in collecting and synthesizing the best available information about current forest conditions and evaluating emerging trends and issues which resulted in the publication of our "Assessment of Ecological & Socio-Economic Conditions and Trends".
- Notified the public of the completion of the Assessment Report on the Chugach National Forest Web page in November 2014, using the plan revision mailing list and news release.

Simultaneously in 2014, forest specialists began several concurrent tasks required under our national framework as part of the revision phase. These include review of the existing Forest Plan content to identify preliminary need to change themes/topics which informs the scope of the proposed revision. In addition, two reviews have been completed and are available for public release: review of changed conditions of eligible wild and scenic rivers and inventory and evaluation of potential wilderness areas. These 3 analyses are available on the Chugach National Forest Web page and will be discussed at the spring public meetings.

In April and May 2015, we are hosting several community meetings. We will share and discuss what is changing and what is not with the 2002 Forest Plan. This newsletter includes a few of those highlights. Please join us – we welcome your feedback and continued engagement as we continue to develop and narrow our scope of this forest plan revision.



**Terri Marceron,**  
Forest Supervisor

### 2015 Forest Plan Revision Meeting Schedule

#### Cordova

- Monday, April 27  
6-8pm, USFS Court Room

#### Valdez

- Tuesday, April 28  
5-7pm, PWSCC Sugarloaf Training Hall

#### Girdwood/Whittier

- Thursday, April 30  
6-8pm, Girdwood Comm. Room

#### Seward

- Wednesday, May 13  
6-8pm, Rae Bldg.

#### Moose Pass

- Wednesday, May 13  
6-8pm, Community Hall

#### Soldotna

- Thursday, May 14  
6-8pm, Sports Center

#### Cooper Landing

- Thursday, May 14  
6-8pm, Community Hall

#### Hope

- Saturday, May 16  
10am-12pm, Social Hall

#### Anchorage

- Tuesday, May 19  
6-8pm, Supervisor's Office

#### Share Your Comments!

Email comments to [chugachplanrevision@fs.fed.us](mailto:chugachplanrevision@fs.fed.us), or submit your comments online by [clicking here](#).

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# FOREST PLAN REVISION 2015

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## **Preliminary Need to Change the Plan:**

As part of the plan revision process, the Chugach National Forest planning team gathered and evaluated information from many sources over the last two years to determine:

- What about the 2002 Forest Plan (as amended) is on track and will stay the same?
- What needs to change?

To answer these questions, the planning team compared the content of the 2002 Forest Plan (as amended) with information from the 2014 assessment report, annual forest plan monitoring data, public comments, applicable laws and regulations, and the requirements for a land management plan as specified in the 2012 Planning Rule. The results of this evaluation are a list of several topics that constitute the preliminary need to change the 2002 Forest Plan.

## **What Have We Determined?**

Management direction found in the 2002 Forest Plan (as amended) doesn't need to change considerably. Much of the existing plan content will be carried forward as is. Modifications or new plan content that is needed is primarily in response to:

- Requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule and its associated directives;
- Updated guidance for the 2005 Travel Management Rule; and
- Opportunities to address needed change to the 2002 Forest Plan through corrections, clarifications or resolution of identified issues and concerns.

## **What's Staying the Same?**

- A framework of management area prescriptions that identify suitable uses and permitted activities.
- The Forest has an undeveloped and unroaded character with nearly 98% (5,277,610 acres) located within 16 Inventoried Roadless Areas.
- About 96% (5,184,000 acres) of the Forest is managed to allow natural ecological processes to occur with limited human influence.
- Maintaining ecosystem conditions, natural processes, natural disturbances patterns and productive capabilities across the Forest.
- Maintaining opportunities for subsistence activities (i.e. customary and traditional uses by rural Alaska residents).
- Offering outdoor settings and opportunities that provide outdoor recreation and tourism.
- Coordinating with tribal governments, other government agencies, and adjacent landowners regarding resource management programs across multiple jurisdictions.
- Reasonable access to lands in other ownership.
- Providing opportunities for multiple uses including mineral and other resource development.

## **What Needs Changing?**

- Descriptions of the plan area's distinctive roles and contributions to southcentral Alaska.
- New or modified plan components (desired conditions, objectives, standards, and guidelines) that provide for integrated social, economic, and ecological sustainability, and ecosystem integrity and diversity, while providing for ecosystem services and multiple uses.
- Consideration of expected climate change impacts as integrated plan components are developed.
- Identification of watersheds that are a priority for maintenance or restoration.
- Updating of the plan monitoring program including relevant questions and indicators.
- Updates to geographic or management area specific plan components. This includes review of suitable uses and activities (e.g. recreation, resource extraction or development, forest products and firewood collection, habitat improvement projects, utility and energy corridors, etc.).
- Identification of Inventoried Roadless Areas and applicable plan components.
- Recommendations (if any) of lands for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.
- Recommendations (if any) of rivers eligible or suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- Recommendations (if any) to establish additional or modify existing designated areas (e.g. Research Natural Areas, National Scenic or Recreation Areas, National Heritage Areas, etc.).
- Consistent with the guidance for implementing the 2005 Travel Management Rule, identify and separate forest plan content that designates roads, trails or areas for motor vehicle use or otherwise restricts motor vehicle use. Under a separate process, evaluate changes to the site-specific travel management decisions contained in the 2002 Forest Plan (e.g. summer and winter motorized access and the Forest Access Management Plan Appendix). Document site-specific evaluations and decision in a stand-alone Forest Access Management Plan and include opportunities for public involvement, including consideration of comments received previously as part of the forest plan revision process.

## The Planning Team



### Mary Rasmussen

Mary accepted the role of Planning Team Leader in August 2014. Most recently, she led forest planning efforts for the Prescott National Forest in Arizona.

Her background in forest resource management and fire ecology and her degrees from the University of Idaho and Oregon State University have taken her to wild and beautiful places. Her two daughters were both born at Crater Lake National Park where the snow level averages 12 to 15 feet each winter. Mary still enjoys Nordic skiing with her husband and dog, especially on sunny days.



### Kori Marchowsky

Kori found her way to Alaska in January 2014 from the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. She is the Environmental Coordinator for the Chugach National Forest with a diverse background in wildlife biology, forestry, fire ecology, planning and environmental policy. Her career began as a wildlife biologist, studying loons and peregrine falcons, and her connection to wild places is her inspiration. She likes to bake bread, make useful things and explore the backcountry.



### Torey Powell

Torey is from Houston, Texas. He has been Partnership and Community Outreach Coordinator for the Chugach National Forest since Sept 2014, focusing on community building and engagement. He serves in the United States Army Reserve and is a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom Afghanistan, where he received multiple commendations. He likes to run, explore the outdoors and collect snazzy socks!



### Karl Vester

Karl Vester is the document manager for the forest plan revision team. He transferred from the Forest Service Washington Office in fall of 2013, bringing his writing and editing skills, and experience working on 2012 Planning Rule directives and on forest plan revision teams for the Blue Mountains National Forests and Allegheny National Forest.



## REVISION TIMELINE



### Winter 2015

- Suitable uses & special area evaluations;
- Identify what needs to change

### Spring 2015

- Public meetings, project updates & pulse check

### Fall 2015

- Proposed action;
- Public scoping

## Submit a Comment!

Email comments to [chugachplanrevision@fs.fed.us](mailto:chugachplanrevision@fs.fed.us)  
or go online to [fs.usda.gov/chugach](http://fs.usda.gov/chugach) and click on the **Chugach National Forest Plan Revision Feature**. We invite your comments on these plan revision documents: **Preliminary Need to Change the Forest Plan, Wild & Scenic River Evaluation, and Wilderness Area Inventory and Evaluation.**





**Chugach National Forest  
Plan Revision 2015  
161 East 1st Avenue Door 8  
Anchorage Alaska 99501**

postage

## Preliminary Need to Change Themes:

### Ecosystems & Habitats

- Ecosystem services: integrated plan components for air, soil, carbon, water
- Habitat integrity for fish and wildlife species
- Climate change considerations: invasive species

### Multiple Uses

- Subsistence: review plan language - clarify ANILCA requirements
- Forest products: firewood, berries and moss - new plan components
- Minerals & renewable energy: review and update plan direction

### Designated Areas

- Evaluate potential Wilderness, Wild & Scenic Rivers, Research
- Develop Iditarod National Historic Trail plan components

### Recreation/Tourism

- Identify sustainable recreation settings and opportunities
- Review Outfitter/Guide capacity allocation models

### Motorized Access

- Implement 2005 Travel Management Rule guidance:
  - Keep strategic management area direction regarding suitable uses (i.e. motorized, non-motorized)
  - Identify and remove site-specific plan content that designates roads, trails or areas for motor vehicle use or otherwise restricts motor vehicle use.
  - Develop separate stand-alone Travel Access Mgmt Plan and Maps

## Plan Revision Fast Facts

### What is a Forest Plan?

- A comprehensive plan to guide forest management over the next fifteen years.
- The Plan provides the framework for integrated resource management (recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, historic and sacred sites, vegetation, mineral exploration and development, and timber) and for guiding project and activity decision making.

### Where does the plan apply?

- Management direction applies on National Forest System (NFS) lands within the boundaries of the Chugach National Forest.

### Why does the revision process matter?

- The Chugach National Forest is the backyard for nearly half of the State's population. It is a place where hundreds of thousands of people live, work and play.
- The plan will be in place by 2017 and inform management over the next fifteen years!
- We will confirm what is working with the 2002 plan, and identify where there is a need for change.

### Why revise now?

- National USFS policy requires plans to be revised at least every fifteen years.