



United States Department of Agriculture

COLVILLE AND OKANOGAN-WENATCHEE NATIONAL FORESTS

FOREST PLAN REVISION UPDATE

CHANGES UNDERWAY TO THE TWO-FOREST EFFORT

A MESSAGE FROM THE FOREST SUPERVISORS



We'd like to update you on the status of the Northeast Washington Zone Forest Plan Revision project. In 2003-2004, the two forests began a combined effort to revise their respective land management plans (aka Forest Plans). The current plans (signed in 1988, '89 and '90) are being revised to address substantial resource and social changes and to include new scientific information. A joint team of natural resource specialists (IDT) was established, and over the next several years numerous public meetings were held to gather comments and ideas about how the national forests should be managed over the next planning cycle of 10-15 years.

In June 2011, the Forests released their proposals for the new plans based on what they'd heard from public involvement efforts. The Summary of Public Comments report posted on the project websites documents the comments received on the proposed action from the public meetings and from letters received. Comments on the proposal varied widely across the two forests.

As the planning team worked on assimilating the public input, it became apparent that the issues and concerns facing management of the Colville NF were distinctly different than those facing the OWNF. Between 2011 and 2014 they made solid headway in refining the issues and developing several management scenarios for both forests, all of them to varying degrees reflecting what we heard from the public over the years. They also began to lay out the initial analysis work and identified resource data gaps and information needs for developing the draft environmental impact statements (DEIS). They also started the work on piecing together two draft revised forest plans documents.



Left to right: Laura Jo West - Colville Forest Supervisor, Jason Kuiken - Okanogan-Wenatchee Deputy Forest Supervisor, and Christine Frisbee - Okanogan-Wenatchee Acting Forest Supervisor

COLVILLE FOREST PLAN NEXT IN LINE FOR COMPLETION

The Forests have since been coordinating with our Regional Office on a strategy for moving their plan revision efforts forward separately. In August 2014 the two Forests split their efforts and embarked on revising each of their plans along different timelines, with the Colville NF moving to the head of the line as the regional priority for completion of a revised plan.

The Colville NF has established a separate IDT that is now working towards releasing a DEIS and draft Forest Plan this summer. Amy Dillon, Colville NF Environmental Coordinator, is serving as the project team leader (see Team photo).



*Colville Forest Plan Revision Team (January 2015)
Pictured L-R Back row: Ben Curtis-Fire/Fuels; Karen Honeycutt, Fisheries/Aquatics; Alicia Beat, Heritage; Kathy Ahlenslager, Native Plants/ Botany; Jon Day, Silviculture; Bill Gaines, Wildlife Biology; Travis Fletcher, Range/Invasive Plants; Eric McQuay, Recreation/Wilderness. Middle row L-R: Rick Newton, R6 Regional Planner; Kate Day, Hydrology; Barbara Jackson, Scenery; Mary Jo Bendickson, GIS Analyst; Craig Newman, Engineering/Access. Front row L-R: Laura Jo West, Colville Forest Supervisor; Amy Dillon, Team Leader/Environmental Coordinator; Debbie Kelly, Public Affairs Lead. Not available for photo: Franklin Pemberton, Colville Public Affairs; Jason Jimenez, Soils*

2014 marked a year of change for the shared Planning Team with the retirements of several of our longtime team members including the Team Leader - Margaret Hartzell; Barbara Kenady-Fish, Writer Editor; Rod Clausnitzer, Forest Botanist; and Mark Loewen, Forest Silviculturist. We'd like to thank them for their years of public service and wish them well in their retirements!



Forest Plan Revision Team (December 2013)
Pictured Back row L-R: Rod Clausnitzer, Botany; Eric McQuay- Colville Recreation; Mary Bean, OWNF Recreation; Mark Loewen, Silviculturist; Barbara Kenady-Fish, Writer-Editor; Margaret Hartzell, Project Manager; Bill Gaines; Wildlife Biology;
Front Row L-R: Mary Jo Bendickson, GIS Analyst; Emily Johnson, Fisheries; Debbie Kelly; Public Affairs

OKANOGAN-WENATCHEE FOREST PLAN REVISION EFFORTS ON-HOLD

The Okanogan-Wenatchee NF plan revision effort is currently on hold while the Pacific Southwest (California) and Pacific Northwest (Oregon/Washington) Regions determine how to best move forward on revising all the remaining forest plans within the area of the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan Amendment. These regions and forests are in the processing of hosting "Listening Sessions" to seek public input on how to revise land management plans within that area. The Listening Sessions will help the Regional Foresters determine how best to move forward with revising the remaining 19 forest plans in Oregon, Washington, and California, within the NWFP area, under the 2012 Forest Planning Rule.

A series of three initial Listening Sessions were held in Portland OR, Seattle WA, and Redding CA in mid-March 2015.

There will be a listening session on May 5, 5:30-8:00 pm, at the Wenatchee Convention Center.

Plans are in the works to hold additional listening sessions throughout Region 6, check here for meeting dates and locations:

WWW.FS.USDA.GOV/GOTO/PLANREVISION

Although the Okanogan-Wenatchee NF is one of several Region 6 forests who have been working on their plan revision for a number of years, a majority of the Okanogan-Wenatchee NF falls within the Northwest Forest Plan Amendment area. More information on next steps for the OWNF project will be shared when available.

NEXT STEPS COLVILLE PLAN REVISION - PLEASE STAY TUNED

We appreciate the time, effort, and thoughtful comments that many of you have provided over the years to assist us in this complex effort, and we need you to remain engaged as we work through the next steps of these planning processes.

Over the next few months the Colville NF is looking forward to further engaging with local governments, the tribes, and the public as the draft Forest Plan and its associated Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is released later this summer for review and comment. More information about the plans for public meetings and comment process will be available soon. Separate plan revision web pages are being established, so please check the projects websites periodically for new information and announcements.



PREPARATIONS FOR DOCUMENT REVIEW AND COMMENT PROCESS

In an effort to reduce printing and mailing costs, we plan to post the project documents online and make available on CD for reviewing. In addition, we will be utilizing the Forest Service's new online comment tool to encourage the submission of online comments, which will help facilitate the comment analysis process. Paper copies of the documents will be available for viewing at local Forest Service offices and public libraries. Please note, a limited number of printed copies will be made available by special request. Let us know your preference by returning the enclosed response card, or by calling 509-664-9247 or email: COLVILLEPLANREVISION@FS.FED.US

NEW ELECTRONIC MESSAGE PROGRAM FOR RECEIVING PROJECT UPDATES

To help streamline the maintenance of our project contact lists our Plan Revision teams are transitioning to the USDA Forest Service's new electronic messaging program for communicating with the interested parties about projects. As a result you will now be able to self-manage your subscriptions to electronic mailing lists for many of the projects that interest you.

To update or validate your contact information and subscribe to the Colville Forest Plan Revision project, please visit this page:

WWW.FS.USDA.GOV/GOTO/COLVILLE/PLAN

If you would like to continue to follow the Okanogan-Wenatchee Forest Plan Revision project, you can subscribe to that list also:

WWW.FS.USDA.GOV/GOTO/OKAWEN/PLAN

PLAN REVISION CONTACT INFORMATION

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