

CARA and Public Comments

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires public agencies to make diligent efforts to invite and solicit comments from the interested and affected public when planning significant actions that could affect federal lands. CARA (Comment and Analysis Response Application) is a database the Forest Service uses to collect, analyze and archive public comment on NEPA projects.

The Nez Perce-Clearwater Forests released a proposed action for forest plan revision in July 2014. As of May 2015 the forests have received about 13,800 public comments.

Collecting Comments

Comments were submitted to the forests as letters, postcards, email to the forest plan revision inbox, by an online mapping tool, and posted directly to CARA. All public comments received for this project have been uploaded to CARA.

Analyzing Comments

CARA has two interfaces; one for internal use, and another for the public. The public interface (the reading room) allows the public to access and view all submitted comment letters. The internal interface allows forest service planners to categorize and archive letters for further review.

Forest plan revision IDT team members read the letters and coded them by subject, using subject codes that allowed planners to categorize letters and compile summaries. The comments were then directed to the appropriate resource specialists, who generally read all the letters that relate to their resource area. Public comments were used to identify significant issues, which will be used to develop alternatives to the proposed action.

Viewing Comments

Comment letters on the proposed action for forest plan revision can be viewed at the CARA reading room at:

<https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/ReadingRoom?project=44089>.

This site will be updated as the project moves forward. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be uploaded to CARA as well as soon as the DEIS is released and comments become available.