

Synthesis of Public Comments on the Process of Revising Forest Plans in the Northwest Forest Plan Area

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Regions 5 and 6

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Preamble

This report is a synthesis of public feedback gathered in early 2015 for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to consider in determining the process for revising forest plans in the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) area. Comments addressed the topics of 1) designing the process of revising forest plans; 2) engaging the public in the forest plan revision process; and 3) incorporating science into the forest plan revision process. These comments were received in two ways: 1) through 36 phone interviews with a broadly representative group of forest interest groups conducted by a neutral, third-party facilitator, Triangle Associates, in February and March 2015; and 2) through three large public listening sessions, attended by more than 300 individuals (combined), which were held in Portland, Oregon on March 17, Seattle, Washington on March 18) and Redding, California on March 25.

Comments at these listening sessions were provided by individuals handwritten and typed, as well as through ideas captured on flip charts by USFS facilitators during roundtable discussions. These comments, and key themes from these comments, are summarized in this report based on each of the three topic areas for which the USFS sought input. Whenever possible they were paraphrased into categories and themes.

When reviewing this comment synthesis, it is important to keep in mind the approximate representation of attendees from different interest groups at the listening sessions¹: 29% from conservation groups, 26% with unidentifiable affiliations, 12% from recreation groups, 9% combined from state or federal government agencies, 8% from local governments, 5% from timber industry-affiliated groups/companies, 2% from tribes, and a combined 9% from other interests including academia, the media, private companies and professional organizations.²

¹ Based on an assessment of sign-in sheets.

² Due to rounding, these totals add up to slightly over 100%.

Executive Summary

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) embarked on this preliminary stage of the revision of the forest plans in the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) area because it was clear there is a considerable amount of public interest, concern and passion around these plans which can inform the management of our forest resources. To hear more about the public's interests and ideas, a series of three listening sessions was held. Listening session participants provided comments in many forms, including detailed and meticulously researched reports, handwritten notes with extensive detail about issues of interest around forest resources and forest planning, phone interviews and interactive roundtable discussions. Based on this preliminary assessment of public input, these thoughtful comments come from years of personal experience by those who care for, live around and work and play in our national forests.

Comments were received from students, residents, representatives of recreational and industry groups, academic institutions, local governments, state and federal government agencies, non-profits, companies, and tribes, as well as individuals unaffiliated with any larger organization.

Key Takeaways

Process of Revising Forest Plans in the Northwest Forest Plan Area

In responding to questions about ideas for the USFS to consider in the revision process, comments were generally framed from the perspectives of 1) those who believed the NWFP is working, 2) those who believed the NWFP is not working, and 3) those who had a specific issue/issues of concern they would like the USFS to be aware of and consider. While some comments focused on specific issues in specific forests, others focused on the overall process of revising forest plans or the NWFP itself. A substantial number of comments focused on different aspects of the NWFP framework, including the aquatic conservation strategy, late-successional reserves, and timber harvest levels. Other comments focused on a broader range of forest management issues; for example, recreation. Based on the wide range of responses to this topic area, it is clear that the question was interpreted in significantly different ways by different people.

Public Engagement in the Forest Plan Revision Process

The majority of commenters saw the need for a wide array of information-sharing tools and opportunities to provide input back to the USFS. However, most see the specific methods used as dependent on a few different factors, including 1) whether the topic at hand is relevant region-wide or at the forest scale, 2) whether the topic is focused on the overall revision process or the revision of a specific forest plan, and 3) the most relevant audience for the issue being discussed. Regardless of the methods of public engagement, there is: a strong desire for a central source of information for the revision process; clarity over what the public can provide input on; a reliable and concise foundation of background information on the NWFP, Forest Service 2012 Planning Rule, and forest planning in general; and an overall more cohesive and strategic approach to public engagement by the USFS for the revision process.

Incorporation of Science into the Forest Plan Revision Process

Commenters were asked to provide input about the incorporation of science in the revision process and the development of a science synthesis. Comments addressed questions the USFS should consider about

science, ways for the USFS to build trust in science, the scope and timing of science considered, and additional types of analysis and studies that could benefit the revision process. Commenters additionally had input on specific types of science to consider, including science addressing socioeconomics, animal species, habitat, climate change and water quality/quantity.

Detailed comments for each of these three topic areas are outlined in the remainder of this report.

Background and Introduction

Background on Forest Planning and the Northwest Forest Plan

Under the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976, every national forest is required to maintain a forest plan that provides a framework for decision-making on a wide range of forest issues such as travel management, grazing, wilderness protection, timber sales and many others. The NFMA requires forest plans to be amended based on changing conditions, trends or new science requiring a “need to change” existing forest plans every 10-15 years. The process for revising forest plans is outlined in USFS regulations called “planning rules” and is currently guided by the 2012 Planning Rule. More background on the 2012 Planning Rule is found here: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/planningrule/101>.

The Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) was adopted in 1994 with the intent of protecting the critical habitat of the northern spotted owl, while maintaining a viable forest products industry in the Pacific Northwest. It established standards and guidelines to pursue an ecosystem management, scientifically-supported approach to forest management. The goal of this approach was to maintain healthy forest habitat to support native species, watershed health and function, and a sustainable supply of timber and other forest products, and to preserve the stability of local and regional economies. The complete NWFP Record of Decision from 1994 is found here <http://www.reo.gov/riec/newroda.pdf>.

In total, the NWFP amended 26 land and resource management plans, including 19 Forest Service and 7 Bureau of Land Management land and resource management plans within the range of the northern spotted owl. The 19 Forest Service land and resource management plans amended by the NWFP are listed below.

USFS Region 5 National Forests in NWFP Area:

- Klamath
- Lassen
- Mendocino
- Modoc
- Shasta-Trinity
- Six Rivers

USFS Region 6 National Forests in NWFP Area:

- Deschutes
- Gifford Pinchot
- Mount Baker-Snoqualmie

- Mt. Hood
- Okanogan
- Olympic
- Rogue River
- Siuslaw
- Siskiyou
- Umpqua
- Wenatchee
- Willamette
- Winema

Preliminary Revision Process Outreach

USFS Region 6 (Oregon and Washington) and Region 5 (California) are preparing to revise all 19 forest plans in the NWFP area. The Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest had begun plan revision but has paused that effort as the regional plan revision strategy is developed, including consideration of feedback from the public. A number of questions have surfaced about the approach the USFS should take to do this, including how the agency will address ecosystem-wide standards and guidelines in its new planning process; how the plan revisions will contribute to social and economic wellbeing; and how they will incorporate new science, both in the plans and in the monitoring program. Additionally, questions have arisen about the scale, sequence and timing of the revision of forest plans. In order to answer these questions, the USFS is gathering public input on the process for revising land and resource management plans, ways to effectively involve the public in that process, ideas for incorporating science into the revision process, and any questions that need to be answered or issues to be aware of for the revision process.

To assist with this preliminary revision process outreach effort, the USFS requested that the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (U.S. Institute) provide design and facilitation services for three public listening sessions intended to gather public input about this process. The U.S. Institute contracted with a neutral third-party consultant, Triangle Associates, Inc. (Triangle) in January 2015 to provide these services to USFS Regions 5 and 6.

Triangle began its work by interviewing a wide range of stakeholders who had an interest in management of national forests or the forest plan revision process. These included local governments, state and federal agencies, recreation and conservation groups, timber industry representatives and academic interests. The purpose of this assessment was to help the USFS design listening sessions by hearing some initial ideas from broadly representative interest groups and individuals. Triangle conducted 36 interviews for this assessment between February 10 and March 6, 2015, totaling 51 individuals. This report incorporates input received from those interviews.

Based on input from the initial situation assessment interviews and Triangle's own background and experience, Triangle then advised the USFS on the design of the three public listening sessions to gather input from a much broader swath of the public. Three listening sessions were then held in March 2015 in Portland, Oregon, Seattle, Washington, and Redding, California and attended by more than 300 people (combined) who gave input to USFS staff, including USFS regional leadership and forest supervisors. The chart below shows an approximate share of different interest groups represented at the listening sessions. This chart is based solely on the 312 individuals who signed in at each listening session. Some attendees did not sign in. Any illegible affiliations are included in the "other/unidentified" category. Additionally, due to rounding, these total slightly over 100%.

Process of Revising Forest Plans in the Northwest Forest Plan Area

Commenters were asked variations on the following question about the process of revising forest plans in the NWFP area: As we revise forest plans within the NWFP area...what would you like the USFS to consider?

With this question, the USFS sought feedback on how the agency might update individual forest plans while maintaining the integrity of the NWFP and its key principles. However, many commented on the NWFP itself, as well as specific outcomes and issues they would like to see addressed in the revision of individual land and resource management plans.

Commenters provided a wide range of suggestions about what the USFS should consider in the process of revising land and resource management plans in the NWFP area. The majority of commenters fell into three types:

1. Those who felt the NWFP is working and that the framework for spotted owl and ecosystem recovery, laid out through the forest plan amendments, should continue and be enhanced. Commenters who felt the NWFP is working indicated the USFS needs to:
 - Stay on track with the standards and guidelines established for ecosystem recovery over a 100-year time frame;
 - Maintain the late successional reserves and aquatic conservation strategy of the NWFP;
 - Work with independent and external scientists, experts, and partners in a transparent approach to develop guidance for the individual forest plan updates; and
 - Maintain or build on the 2012 Planning Rule.
2. Those who felt the NWFP is not working, largely due to agreed-upon harvest levels in many plans not being met and thus having economic impacts on communities that rely on timber harvest. Commenters who felt that the NWFP is not working indicated the USFS needs to:
 - Explain why the timber harvest outlined in the NWFP is not being met;
 - Outline how the USFS will use this round of forest plan updates to address the economic needs not being met under the NWFP; and
 - Work to develop a transparent, iterative approach with local interests to design the NWFP area-wide revision approach.
3. Those who made suggestions for other issues or concerns that should be addressed in the forest plan updates and that are not currently being addressed either on an individual forest or regionally. Some of these issues and concerns are related to the NWFP and some are not.

Regardless of their perspectives on the NWFP, a majority of commenters had input on the forest plan revision process and the NWFP itself, including suggestions and expectations for how to approach the

process of updating land and resource management plans in the NWFP area. Many comments were in response to:

- The USFS explanation that it needs to make these revisions throughout the region covered by the NWFP plan and ideas for how this should be approached;
- Specific elements outlined in the amendments that make up the NWFP;
- Timber harvest and its relationship to local economies;
- Interest in recreation and access;
- Specific issues related to forest management;
- The use of science and other information in the revisions; and
- Working with other governments, stakeholders and the public.

Comments on the Revision of “Plan” or “Plans”

Some commenters made suggestions that seemed to refer to an actual revision of the Northwest Forest Plan. Others clearly referred to the overall process and the results of revising land and resource management plans within the NWFP area. Some comments seemed to refer to the upcoming forest plan revision process as resulting in a single “plan,” and others recognized the results as a group of forest “plans.” Regardless, many noted the need for clear, measurable goals and outcomes provided on a timetable for effective implementation. Many also felt that new land and resource management plans needed to be more dynamic—that there is a need for more revision flexibility in order to adapt to changing circumstances. Others felt that the “plan” should have a compelling set of values that are also implementable, and an agency commitment to necessary funding.

Comments Regarding a Region-Wide Approach for Plan Revisions

Some commenters had suggestions for how land and resource management plans in the NWFP area should be revised. They recommended this be conducted consistently across the region and that the USFS maintain the current approach to project implementation and management under the amendments that make up the NWFP. Commenters provided the following, sometimes opposing views on a NWFP area-wide revision of forest plans.

- Updates should be led across the region using local forest collaboratives and other groups that are most familiar with the existing land and resource management plans being revised. While these comments were not mutually exclusive, they generally came from different people and not together as one comment. Additionally, commenters did not always agree to this general perspective. For example, some indicated that while they did not want to see the loss of the NWFP components, they did not want it delegated solely to the collaboratives.
- Late successional reserve connectivity and threatened and endangered consultation need to be done on a regional scale. This is because issues cross land ownership and state boundaries.

- Have a transparent approach to USFS decision-making. In particular, the approach should be clear, iterative and inclusive for both the overall revision approach and individual land and resource management plans. This idea came from a wide range of interest groups and perspectives.
- Consider how land and resource management plans impact the region as a whole.
- Look at forests that have not been litigated for successful strategies to move forward with collaborative efforts.
- Ensure coordination with other land use and wildlife management plans, such as the Bureau of Land Management's Western Oregon plan revisions.

Consideration of Existing Elements of the NWFP Framework and Amendments

A number of commenters spoke to specific elements of the NWFP framework and amendments. Some outlined their interest in maintaining or expanding the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, late successional reserves and the current standards and guidelines. Others noted that it was unclear if the NWFP was in fact recovering the species it was intended to recover, and that the NWFP was not achieving its goals for allowable sale quantity. Comments paraphrased below demonstrate variations on these themes:

- Don't scrap the good work that has been done;
- The NWFP needs to be strengthened for ecological protection, not weakened;
- The NWFP has not saved the spotted owl so stop harvesting owl habitat. Also, it ignored early seral habitat;
- Do not touch survey and manage requirements or, conversely, scrap survey and manage – it is outdated;
- Meet allowable sale quantity from NWFP;
- NWFP's 100-year recovery goals should be maintained; and
- Continue or expand aquatic protections. One comment focused this issue on healthy watersheds.

Aquatic Conservation Strategy

A number of comments focused on elements of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy that are working and should be maintained or protected, and several also highlighted aspects of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy that should be expanded or strengthened. Many comments addressed the need to retain the Aquatic Conservation Strategy and related buffers, as well as to carry forward enforceable Aquatic Conservation Strategy and survey and manage standards from the NWFP. Some also mentioned the need for clear standard and guidelines, particularly those that are legally enforceable. Some specific comments addressed keeping management indicator species and riparian goals.

Commenters additionally had the following specific ideas about aspects of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy that should be considered, particularly those that should be maintained or protected:

- Implement elements of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy consistently and use stewardship contracting to assist with restoration activities;
- Species riparian reserves;
- Focus on 1st and 2nd order upstream storage “ponding”;
- Revise and augment the key watershed network;
- Do not limit the range of treatments; and
- Do not lose the balance between aquatic and terrestrial resource values.

Late-Successional Reserves and Habitat

A few comments specifically addressed the way late successional reserves and their habitat is dealt with in the revision process. They are listed and paraphrased here:

- Extend late successional reserves to create a more contiguous reserve area and reduce fragmentation;
- Incorporate other conservation biology principles (e.g. connectivity corridors);
- Maintain riparian standards such as survey and manage;
- Consider all seral stages; and
- Meet late successional reserve riparian goals.

Timber Harvest and the Connection to Economics and Local Economies

A number of commenters described frustration with NWFP harvest levels not being met and the impact to local economies. Others noted that more socio-economic analysis is needed to help understand those impacts and to find new and creative ways to address the challenges.

Timber Harvest Issues to Address

Commenters requested that the NWFP deliver on the rural community health and economic wellbeing components they strongly perceived to have been negatively impacted by NWFP implementation. They asked for more predictable and sustainable forest products and timber revenues which are important to funding services within counties that have national forests inside their borders. However, some commenters were concerned that promised timber outputs should be conservative and not beyond the capability of the land.

Considerations for Addressing Timber Harvest Challenges

Some felt that NWFP socio-economics should be addressed within the forest plan revision process through realistic plans that are consistently implemented, and through investment in industry. Some also felt that the economic impact analysis used should consider ecosystem services (e.g. water and recreation) and export taxes as a timberland tax contribution. They also felt the need to consider how it relates to each state. Others felt it is necessary to factor in: other causes for job loss; that national forest lands should not be depended on solely for timber harvest volume; and that timber harvest should not be conflated with local economies because some perceive them as separate. One commenter specifically wanted to remove the fee system and subsidies for extraction.

Ideas Regarding a Transition from Logging

There were a range of ideas about logging-based economies. While some suggested bringing logging back to pre-NWFP levels (although not necessarily to the highest pre-NWFP levels) others suggested ideas about a transition from logging, including:

- Adding a 25% payment to counties and schools to stewardship contracting;
- Transition from logging to restoration;
- Expanding forest boundaries;
- Growing hemp and obtaining tax revenues from marijuana; and
- More active help from the USFS to local communities in finding a sustainable source of jobs and funds.

Additional Issues to Consider in the Revision Process

While many commenters addressed the process for revising land and resource management plans, many also suggested specific issues or content to be considered as those plans are being revised. Specific ideas for each of these topics areas are described in detail below.

Recreation in National Forests

Although recreation is not part of the NWFP, a recurring theme from a number of comments was how recreation should be considered and managed within the forest plan updates.

Recognition of the Value of Recreation in National Forests

Many commenters mentioned the need to recognize the value of recreation and the value of place, and that this should be considered early in the revision process, rather than as an afterthought. Some had ideas about utilizing user group data on the use and the value of national forests and considering the economic effects of recreation to rural counties (both positive and negative). Some also mentioned incorporating recreation into the social/economic values in the NWFP and creating revised land and resource management plans that encourage recreation and provide more funding.

Concerns about Recreation and Ways to Address Them

Concerns about recreation generally fell into three categories: 1) access; 2) user fees/permits; and 3) recreational uses.

1. **Access:** Commenters noted that recreation access was important to them and local economies. While many cited the need to keep roads and trails open for use, and some noted that there is great interest in recreation, others noted that it is important to recognize the impacts of roads and trails on habitat, water quality, and aquatic resources. Commenters also mentioned the challenges associated with emergency access, fire suppression, signage and commercial uses. Some mentioned that plans should focus on reducing road density and maintaining roadless areas as habitat for multiple species and quality hunting areas. Suggestions were also made to decommission roads in high risk areas, including riparian areas near spawning sites. However, not everyone agreed (e.g. “Don’t just abandon old roads”). Comments indicated that any roads analysis should be done transparently, and that overlapping uses on roads and trails and changing roads to trails could be considered.

2. **Fees/Permits:** A few comments reflected a concern about recreation fees, noting that these have a disproportionate effect by reducing access and public support. For example multiple fees/permits are required by different agencies (e.g. USFS, National Park Service). Some were concerned about privatizing recreation (concessions). One specifically mentioned a desire to assess the use of permits for shooting on public lands.

3. **Uses:** Some noted a need for equal consideration for all motorized and non-motorized user groups regarding access (trails and roads). Some mentioned that motorized recreation should stay the same or increase. Some also noted that the USFS should provide the public with current accurate maps noting access areas and off-limit areas.

Forest Management Approaches and Issues

Commenters suggested several specific approaches to forest management. These included the need to manage for dynamic ecosystems, to avoid using “cookie cutter” methods, and to use more current tools and models. Tailoring management strategies for different eastern and western land capabilities was another common theme, as was vegetation management that should be used in order to maintain healthy, fire resilient stands. There were differences of opinion about whether the USFS should use active or passive management styles. Some preferred passive management suggesting that nature can manage itself), and others felt that active management should be emphasized and even rewarded with rigorous public review. Collaboration should occur under active management. The following table outlines other specific categories of comments on forest management.

Additional specific categories of comments on forest management

| Enforcement | Funding and Staffing Issues | Other Management Issues |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Improved enforcement of: unauthorized recreation firewood gathering off-highway vehicles closed roads unpermitted wildlife hunting or poaching activities life-threatening public safety/bodily injury personal property destruction hazardous waste—toxic | Funding/staffing issues to address: commitment to necessary financial support capacity of USFS staff partnerships to supplement USFS staff funding for science and maintaining forest monitoring USFS staff turnover (e.g. “the revolving door”) | Landscape-level programmatic coordination with other agencies shooting on public lands (do a programmatic assessment of this) historic and protected resources: maintain historical structures manage for national scenic areas manage for historic trails invasive species management (comments that this needs to be included in land and resource management plans) |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>shooting marijuana groves and their effects</p> <p>tree poaching (and determination of impacts)</p> <p>permitted uses that are “compatible, and in harmony with the surrounding landscape and acoustic landscape”</p> | <p>keeping/improving intervention in management (e.g. grazing, mining)</p> <p>increase USFS personnel presence in forest or enforcement</p> | <p>legacy and heritage for future generations as opposed to short term financial maximization</p> <p>Bureau of Land Management needs to maintain its role in the NWFP area for a coarse filter managing for Wilderness</p> <p>there are some things only national forests provide, or provide well, including wilderness – undisturbed country and places with old growth forests and other natural undisturbed forests embrace wilderness and recommend more consider very significant designation and its impacts on the ability to manage for a more diverse landscape</p> <p>maintain protections in existing wilderness areas</p> <p>consider wilderness designation as a protection for biodiversity and water</p> <p>consider how much wilderness is enough</p> <p>forests containing wild and scenic rivers should seek wilderness designation</p> <p>stopping logging in wilderness, potential wilderness and undeveloped lands</p> <p>strengthening of USFS assessment procedures and requirements for “use and occupancy of National Forest Lands”</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Timber/Logging and Other Forest Products Issues

A number of comments focused on slowing or moving away from thinning or logging entirely. Some were particularly concerned about reducing logging, thinning or even salvage activities in certain areas including riparian reserves, late successional and old growth forests, potential wilderness, undeveloped lands and roadless areas. One comment specifically mentioned an interest in expanding and identifying new roadless areas in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Others were concerned about impacts of steep slope logging in watersheds (greater than 35 percent). While some disagreed (“stop special forest products harvest”), others felt that logging could be avoided in certain areas or limited to certain activities in areas with special designations (e.g. forest product areas).

There were many other comments clustered around a range of limits on logging that included sustainability and use of less destructive logging methods, less logging (certain types or none within certain areas), or stopping logging altogether and focusing on restoration or plantations. Several comments also focused on the need for diversity in healthy ecosystems and the need to move away from mono-cropping. One commenter suggested that the timber program should pay the USFS’ way.

The following list shows other specific categories of comments on timber/harvest and logging issues:

- Less destructive harvest methods, for example, selective harvest vs. clear-cutting, particularly in riparian zones;
- Setting diameter limits on cutting to protect large trees;
- Improving thinning programs;

- Pursuing a timber program where forest plans are more in line with 1994 NWFP allowable sale quantity levels (not necessarily to highest cut);
- Replacement of trees that have been logged;
- Expanding forest boundaries to create more trees;
- Considering the economic benefits of restoration
- Considering Canada’s reforestation program as a model;
- Only logging on plantations (and focusing restoration thinning there (e.g. more from saw log);
- Ecologically sound restoration and with small diameter and young stands; and
- Stewardship contracting to assist with restoration activities.

Fire Management

Views on fire management ranged significantly from those who saw the need for improvements to and expansion of fire management, to those who believe fire management should be curtailed or stopped.

A number of comments referred to the need to create plans that incorporate fire resiliency across large landscapes. Reference was made to the differences in east versus west side forests and to managing them differently, as well as to differences in topography. Some mentioned concerns about habitat loss to wildfire and overgrown conditions and that fuel reduction using prescribed fires would improve habitats, increase biodiversity and reduce loss of wildlife reserves. Recommendations were additionally made about the need to determine the pace and scale of hazardous fuel reduction to get ahead of fires. The use of vegetation management was noted as important to maintain healthy, fire resistant stands and to help wildlife. One comment suggested a plan for timber harvests rather than having “it all burn in wildfires.” A number of comments also focused on the re-introduction of cultural burning—since tribes were able to successfully manage the land with fire.

Some felt that the USFS’s focus on fire suppression activities needed to stop and that enforceable standards and guidelines be incorporated. One comment suggested that fire suppression justifies removal of larger trees which is seen as counterintuitive. Others mentioned that the impacts of climate change will shift the paradigm of fire management, suppression and salvage logging. It was suggested that the core principles of fire management be addressed in a cohesive strategy that incorporates recent science about burned habitat and the need for fire-adapted communities, and that fire preparedness drive what is done where. One commenter indicated that reliance on reserves in the NWFP doesn’t work in a fire-adapted ecosystem. Another suggested consideration of fire strategies and wildland fire use after a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is in place and implemented.

A few asked specific questions about fire management:

- Why can’t fire suppression activities be funded like other natural disasters—floods and earthquakes, for example?
- Can beneficial fire—low intensity—be used more extensively?

- Can burned forests be maintained for wildlife? Snag density increased?
- Can riparian buffers be flexible based on needs?
- Can smoke be converted to viable energy?

Comments Regarding Tribal Governments

There were a number of comments around tribal government engagement and consultation and the integration of indigenous knowledge into the science synthesis. Some comments have been incorporated in the sections on public engagement and the science synthesis. However, many of the comments relating to forest plan revisions were focused on who should be involved at each scale of the revision process.

Tribal Consultation

The following specific comments and ideas were raised about tribal engagement in the revision process:

- Government-to-Government consultation is more coordination than collaboration because of legal requirements;
- Hold tribal consultation sessions in forest areas where tribes already have an interest;
- Consult with tribes including those not affiliated with tribal leadership, and hear all internal tribal views, not just “official” views;
- Consult with all recognized and non-federally recognized tribes;
- Conduct a pre-assessment and coordinated planning with tribes;
- Request coordination with tribes prior to general public outreach opportunities; and
- Ensure the tribal voice/input early on in the revision process.

Other Tribal Considerations

- Incorporate indigenous knowledge;
- Consider United Nations (UN) statements on indigenous rights;
- Give special consideration to tribes, groups and entities whose lives depend on resources from forests (e.g. fish—tribal lifestyle);
- Include co-management language;
- Allow a mechanism for tribal forest management plans to be brought in;
- Allow for traditional ecological knowledge in planning;
- Use map resources with tribal land overlays;
- Incorporate tribal/local values versus “just evaluating them”;

- Consider tribal/cultural purposes to areas; and
- Ensure through outreach that tribal properties and ceremonies are respected.

Comments on Other Specific Issues to Address in Revised Forest Plans

Many comments addressed specific issues or outcomes individuals would like to see in certain land and resource management plans, as well as suggested perspectives the USFS should take to forest planning. The following specific comments do not address the process of revising land and resource management plans or specific issues related to the previously mentioned categories, and many are not directly related to one another; however, they capture other specific ideas that individuals felt are important for the USFS to consider as part of the revision process which have not been outlined elsewhere.

- Develop partnerships to restore the integrity of watersheds;
- Revise and augment the key watershed network;
- Focus on protection of riparian areas for fish/aquatic species faced with shrinking riparian reserves;
- Water is key – the Organic Act puts water above timber;
- Bring beaver dams back as part of the aquatic ecosystem to bring back the ground water table/meadow;
- Be cognizant of opposing views regarding climate change and how it relates to national forest lands—some do not agree that it should be used for biomass productions, and some believe that climate change outweighs extractive uses;
- Consider climate change over corporate interests;
- Prioritize increasing/maximizing carbon storage;
- Build adaptation to climate change into the plan revisions and support plants and animals in adaptation to climate change;
- Determine how population growth will be addressed;
- Implement treatment on specific sites that could benefit from it;
- Ensure groundwater monitoring coordination and aquifer protections;
- Consider the issue of chimneys spreading wildfires; and
- Consider the issue of managing smoke in air sheds from prescribed burns.

Public Engagement in the Forest Plan Revision Process

In its preliminary, pre-revision outreach, the USFS and Triangle asked commenters about approaches that will ensure governments, stakeholders, the public and interested parties are involved in the revision process, and what collaboration with the public looks like at the forest plan revision scale.

Commenter responses to these questions are categorized and described below. Most commenter input on public engagement addressed: 1) considerations for the design of public engagement in the revision process (both at the local and regional scale); 2) ideas for information sharing; and 3) ideas for the solicitation of public input, as well as some other public engagement ideas.

Overall Themes about Public Engagement

Outlined below are overall themes about public engagement that came from commenters during this preliminary phase of public outreach. They address the public's desire for a more strategic and cohesive, yet also customized approach to public engagement for different groups and communities. There are some differences within each major topic area based on the different interests of forest stakeholders.

Additionally, these overall themes are relevant to sub-categories described in more detail later in this section.

Based on preliminary public outreach, the following approaches by the USFS are seen as foundational to meaningful public engagement in the revision of land and resource management plans in the NWFP area.

Be as open, inclusive and transparent as possible about both the process used to engage the public and how decisions are made by the USFS. Commenters saw a transparent approach as including consistent messaging, easy access to data and information considered in forest plan revisions, and a clear connection between input received and forest plan updates. If the USFS proceeds with a different approach than what is suggested by the public, then it should explain why. Commenters saw the need for the USFS to engage a diverse range of interests and avoid a "black box" model where the USFS takes input from the public and then makes a decision with little or no explanation about how public input was used, or presents a decision/approach before seeking any public input. Some noted that the "black box" or "check the box" model is apparent when the USFS has limited time to make a decision or runs out of time. The USFS has a reputation for "going through a charade" of public and stakeholder engagement. Meaningful stakeholder engagement for the forest plan revision process could help build trust with stakeholders if it is done well.

Take an all of the above approach to public engagement and use different outreach approaches to different audiences. Given the vast differences between forests and communities in the NWFP area, there is not one approach to public engagement that will work for all forest stakeholders. A mix of techniques to reach region-wide interests and narrowly focused outreach to specific communities is needed, possibly by using a mix of both online engagement tools, in-person meetings, and more traditional methods (all described in more detail below). In choosing these engagement methods, the USFS should be cognizant of whether it is sharing information with or soliciting input from the public.

Be clear about when different phases of the revision process begin or end and the phase and scale of the revision process in which input will be used. For example, be clear when input is being sought for the preliminary design of the revision process itself, plan development, or as part of the NEPA process.

Provide a clear foundation of information on the NWFP, 2012 Planning Rule, and the purpose of the revision process. Many commenters were curious why land and resource management plans in the NWFP area need to be revised and the reason for revising them now. There was also significant confusion as to whether this process involved revisions to the NWFP itself. Given this, and the fact that so much time has passed since the NWFP was developed, most commenters saw it as important that everyone engaged in this process: 1) is working from the same baseline of policy information; 2) understands the regulatory basis for forest plan revisions; and 3) knows about any constraints the USFS is working under and sideboards that exist for decision-making. Some believe that a concise primer or summary of both the NWFP and 2012 Planning Rule would be useful. The USFS should consider this revision process as an opportunity to educate the public about forest planning.

Hold more listening sessions in more areas, particularly in rural communities. Many commenters expressed a strong desire for more listening sessions to be held outside of large urban centers along Interstate 5. This was a recurring theme heard from a wide range of interest groups, but particularly rural residents, industry representatives, local governments and landowners adjacent to national forests.

There is a desire for outreach in rural communities to: 1) be targeted to the way people tend to communicate in rural areas; 2) work around the predominant schedules of community members; 3) allow for input on forest issues of local concern to rural communities; and 4) allow for feedback from rural communities on lessons learned. It was also noted that large, regional-scale listening sessions are not an appropriate venue for highly detailed and technical discussions about science by any audience.

Provide clarity and openness regarding any constraints under which the USFS is working and around the value of public input to the revision process. These might include any time, resource or decision-making authority constraints. Show what the USFS must complete, the sideboards for what input can or cannot be considered as part of the revision process, what issues are or are not open for discussion at meetings, and explain why not if they cannot be discussed. Address any barriers that exist to a decision being made. Also, the USFS should be careful not to over promise anything to the public about the weight of public involvement in decision-making.

Set up a central hub of information about the revision process early on. This would include a website, contact lists, a public meeting schedule and background about the revision process. This information infrastructure would likely include the following:

- Website: one central, easy-to-find, and easy-to-use revision process website with background information, a detailed schedule of public meetings, and other tools and information about ways to engage in the revision process. It may also include links for webinars, a bibliography, preliminary findings, frequently asked questions, any draft reports available for review, and up-to-date, accurate and interactive maps with different data layers to better visualize resources. This should be a “one stop shop” for information about the revision process.
- Points of contact with the USFS: some mentioned the need for information on the primary points of contact with the USFS (either at the regional or forest level) about the revision process. This could be clearly identified on a project website and on outreach material.
- Email listserv (accurate, up-to-date, and utilized): building on existing contact lists, the USFS should provide an email listserv that people can subscribe or unsubscribe to.

- Mailing list that is accurate, up-to-date, and utilized: building on existing contact lists, the USFS should maintain an address list for sending paper mailings and potentially surveys or questionnaires about the revision process.
- Social media when appropriate and for shorter communications: the USFS should identify and set up social media sources now for sharing information, and perhaps soliciting input, on the revision process. This might include Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Instagram, blogs, forums, apps, a YouTube channel (with the ability to comment on videos put out by USFS) or other online social media sites. Social media might also be used for educating the general public on issues. Note that some commenters mentioned that social media is not an appropriate tool for decision-making and would often not be appropriate for many aspects of public involvement or for some communities. It might be best for shorter communications.
- Address the overall desire for a more strategic approach to outreach for the entire revision process. This would include: 1) communication about meetings/meeting details; 2) communication about the revision process for a broad audience; 3) communication showing that the USFS heard what stakeholders had to say (with the USFS asking for clarification if unsure), and then showing reasoning for decisions the USFS makes. It would be important that USFS public affairs staff is ready for and involved with carrying out any outreach approach that is developed. Additionally, a need was mentioned to be proactive in engagement with the media.

Considerations for the Design of Public Engagement in the Revision Process

Given that the revision of land and resource management plans across two USFS regions, three states and 19 forests will be a multi-year and multi-phase effort, and additionally involve a wide range of very different interests, many different public engagement design ideas were mentioned.

Stakeholders thought the USFS should consider the following questions when designing its forest plan revision public engagement process:

At what scale is input on the revision process being sought? Regional? Local? District or forest-level? NWFP area-wide scale?

What phase of the revision process is underway? Answering this would help ensure that the right stakeholders are at the table for the right phase of the revision process.

Is information being shared or sought?

What type of information is being shared or sought?

What are the objectives of the outreach and the expectations about how the USFS will use the input? There were concerns about the USFS not using the information they collect.

What are the primary ways different stakeholder groups and communities currently receive and share information?

Who is the audience?

- Those who have been involved since the initial development and implementation of the NWFP?

- New participants to the forest planning process who feel they will be affected by but are not familiar with forest plan revisions?
- “Forest users” who don’t live near the forests but want to have a say in the management of public lands?
- Tribal governments with scientific and traditional knowledge?
- Local community members who feel the forest plans should be responsive to local needs for infrastructure, schools and other programs? Some indicated that input from those who live near or work in the forests should have more weight than those who live or work outside the NWFP area.
- Technical audiences including experts in different fields?
- Lay audiences who can provide knowledge acquired from living near, watching, and using the forests?
- Local governments?
- The public at-large?
- “Stakeholders of interest” (stakeholders who may have a more national focus) or “stakeholders of place” (stakeholders who live in the NWFP area)?

What is the importance and nature of the information (time sensitive, level of detail)?

Are there any marginalized groups, or groups on the periphery of forest issues, for which more targeted outreach from the USFS is needed? This might include a way for individuals not affiliated with an organization to provide input and for targeted outreach to such individuals.

Ideas for Information-Sharing from the Forest Service with the Public

Many commenters provided ideas on ways the USFS could share information with the public throughout the revision process, including background information on the NWFP, meeting details and other information.

The ideas listed here should be considered more passive engagement for one-way communication from the USFS to the public, as opposed to input from the public to the USFS. It would be important that USFS public affairs staff is prepared to carry out the following information-sharing techniques for the revision process.

Spread the word using an “all of the above” approach, including the use of:

- Mailings or flyers which are graphically appealing
- Newspapers
- Newsletters
- Informational kiosks – perhaps at trailheads, campgrounds or visitor centers

- TV and radio ads, clips or interviews
- Flyers, post cards and brochures
- Email listservs
- Mailing lists
- Social media primarily for region-wide, not community-specific, information sharing
- Both a central revision process website and the websites of different interest groups
- Word of mouth (neighbor-to-neighbor for some communities)
- Press conferences to summarize outcomes of public involvement
- All points of contact/interfaces between USFS staff and the public – for example, when people retrieve tree-cutting permits or recreation passes
- Public service announcements, perhaps using celebrity spokespeople
- Field trips/tours
- Open houses
- Education forums

Identify clear points of contact from the USFS to deliver information. This might include USFS liaisons for different parts of the revision process or to different communities.

Communicate with local stakeholders through:

- County commissioners/supervisors or other local-scale individuals because many stakeholders already receive information about forests from these local sources;
- Forest-level USFS staff rather than regional office staff. However, some also suggested the USFS provide stakeholders with direct USFS contacts within each region for people to reach out to with any questions/issues they may have throughout the planning process;
- Community members who are well connected with different groups and a wide range of stakeholders; and
- Liaisons from different interest groups.

Be consistent with messages in all informational material. This should be a particular focus when designing different outreach approaches in different places.

When the USFS is sharing complex technical and scientific research studies, include concise summaries or briefing papers. Such summaries should be in layman's terms and free of technical jargon. Ensure that the key takeaway messages from complex data are clear whenever they are provided. Provide easy-to-

read summaries that explain the context and importance of the information being shared (e.g. why should people care?) as objectively as possible. Data dumps of large amounts of technical information should be avoided.

Share information about public meetings as early and accurately as possible. Commenters mentioned the following ideas about information-sharing for public meetings:

- Post clear information, in a wide variety of media, about where and when meetings will take place and why it is important to show up.
- Make meeting agendas available in advance and clearly show any key questions that the USFS would like public input on.
- Show how each meeting fits into the broader forest plan revision process timeline and why it is important for people to attend and what is in it for them.
- Be clear about semantics. In communications with the public, the USFS should be clear about what is meant by certain terms and phrases such as “coordinate”, “collaborate” and “stakeholder”, among others. The term “collaboration” was specifically mentioned as having a negative connotation to some stakeholders.
- Include targeted media outreach. The USFS should reach out to media organizations about the revision process.

Ideas for Solicitation of Input from the Public

Stakeholders had different ideas for methods the USFS could use to solicit input from the public for the revision process. These included:

- Provide clear and adequate notice, time and opportunities to participate. Provide stakeholders with adequate notice and time for meaningful participation so they can digest information before engaging in a dialogue with the USFS.
- Use a variety of engagement methods at meetings tailored for different audiences (particularly early on in the process).
- Prioritize face-to-face meetings and communications over large public forums in rural communities. This could include face-to-face communication at small community gatherings or one-on-one at other points of interaction between USFS staff and the public.
- Use existing meetings of groups with an interest in the NWFP area and the forest plan revision process, particularly in smaller settings or at already scheduled events. Many commenters noted that the USFS should work directly with forest collaboratives for this revision process. However, others cautioned that forest collaboratives are not representative of all interest groups that would need to be involved in this process.
- For some forest plan revision issues, focus on achieving a common understanding among different interests, and not on consensus. This would involve the USFS demonstrating that it heard what a group was saying and why it might have made a decision that went against that

input. Some commenters mentioned that a “can live with” consensus decision-making model might work, and others thought consensus decision-making was not appropriate for this process.

Provide a wide range of opportunities to offer input beyond public meetings. Many mentioned better use of online platforms and social media, although some mentioned the use of traditional media. Most wanted the USFS to provide a wide range of engagement methods designed for different audiences which could include:

- Blogs or online forums where people can comment on different topics or respond to questions and also get feedback from the USFS. New questions could be posted every few days;
- Well-designed surveys, questionnaires or polls (online or hard copy);
- A place to view, post and comment on forest plan revision video clips;
- Face-to-face conversation or questions and answers at events already scheduled. These could be more casual/social and involve food;
- Virtual meetings/webinars, but only if they were well designed and particularly for information sharing and input from the broader public. Many do not consider virtual meetings appropriate for detailed stakeholder feedback. Also, for virtual meetings and webinars consider online platforms compatible with both Macs and PCs; and
- Conference calls.

Another point that was made was to ensure USFS employees have the skills sets to engage with the public at meetings.

Consider the following for the design and implementation of public meetings:

- Holding meetings outside of the 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. timeframe. However, also consider holding 2-3 meetings in the same area at different times so people all have an opportunity to attend;
- Potentially offer food, refreshments and childcare at public meetings;
- Use a mix of hearing-style meetings, roundtables, town halls (particularly prior to the fire season), panel discussions and more casual and conversational meetings (such as coffee klatches);
- Ensure there are opportunities for different voices and interest groups to talk to each other one-on-one;
- Invite stakeholders, technical experts and government representatives to provide their thoughts and ideas about the forest plan revision process; and
- Consider posting meeting outcomes publically including video and audio recordings of meetings and public input provided at meetings.

Consider these other public input opportunities not already mentioned:

- TED Tal-style events;
- Meet and greets with new USFS rangers and USFS staff;
- Local debates; and
- Open houses.

In terms of public engagement on the incorporation of science, many commenters mentioned ideas for public input on access to and the incorporation of science in the revision process. These ideas are described in detail in the science section of this report.

The following are the different types of groups that commenters mentioned the USFS should consider reaching out to for either this pre-revision process or the revision process itself:

- Academic institutions in the NWFP area
- Associations of cities and counties
- Associations of Mayors
- Local businesses and business groups
- Chambers of Commerce
- City and county council members
- Cooperatives
- County Commissioners
- Federal Advisory Committee
- Federal agencies, including the military
- Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee
- Forest collaboratives
- Forest landowners
- Forest Service employee groups
- "Friends of..." groups
- Groups associated with stewardship contracting
- Hunting and fishing associations
- Stakeholders involved in existing or previous forest planning processes

- Large private forest landowners
- Native plant societies, groups or chapters
- Non-profit organizations
- O&C Lands Groups
- Professional associations and organizations
- Recreation groups
- Research stations and institutions
- Resorts
- Resource Advisory Committees
- Schools and school districts
- Service contractors to logging companies
- Snowmobile groups
- Soil and water conservation districts
- State agencies
- State senators and representatives
- Trail restoration and maintenance groups
- Tribes (many mentioned a separate yet parallel outreach approach for tribes)
- U.S. congressional representatives from districts involved with NWFP revisions
- Watershed councils
- Washington State Department of Education
- Youth groups

Other Public Engagement Ideas

Several ideas mentioned by commenters did not fall clearly into the categories already listed. Additional public engagement ideas mentioned for the USFS to consider include:

- Find ways to engage youth, particularly in urban areas, and students (K-12) in the revision process;
- Involve university/college students, classes, and student groups;
- Find ways to involve people with disabilities and special needs;

- Consider whether voices would be weighted the same or differently in the revision process;
- Re-institute the provincial advisory committees;
- Have presentations about areas where change has occurred;
- Use community working groups at ranger districts; and
- Use sub-teams to focus on specific issues or topics.

Incorporation of Science into the Forest Plan Revision Process

USFS Regions 5 and 6 are working with the Pacific Northwest and Pacific Southwest Research Stations to develop a NWFP area-wide science synthesis that will summarize relevant science to inform the development of revised land and resource management plans. The synthesis includes ecological, social, economic and cultural components.

Commenters provided input on various aspects of science, its role in the planning process and suggestions for its inclusion. They saw a need for coordination and collaboration around data and information-gathering and for using a wide range of cultural and historical perspectives on current science, new science, tools and paradigms around science. The rich set of input from commenters about science in the forest plan revision process is described below.

General Approach to Science in the Revision of Forest Plans

Many commenters believe science is the foundational piece moving forward in the forest plan revision process; however, many had questions about how it would be incorporated. A number of comments asked about the role that science will play in this process, particularly around concepts such as highest and best use, identification of issues that need to be fixed, risk management and an understanding of natural processes. Many think that the science synthesis should use current, peer-reviewed and best available science, and that rigor should be used in establishing science. Some indicated that generally accepted scientific principles, rather than ‘fringe’ science, should be included.

Questions about Science

Commenters raised several questions about how science will be incorporated into this process. Many felt the following types of questions should be addressed early in the revision process:

- How will scientific results be measured?
- What scale will be used?
- What level of certainty is being used?
- Is the science credible?
- Is the process transparent?
- What criteria are being used?
- What is meant by terms like “science” for purposes of the science synthesis?
- How will the USFS gather and use other than peer-reviewed science (e.g. gray literature, field data, traditional ecological knowledge)?
- What will be the Environmental Protection Agency’s involvement or power in the science synthesis process?

- Is there a rigid structure for prioritizing some fields of study over others?
- Is economics a driver?

General Ideas about Science

Many commenters had very specific ideas for the USFS' overall approach to incorporating science into the revision process. Different commenters from a wide range of interest groups felt that access to and the incorporation of science in the revision process should include:

- A peer review process with an open process for all who have specialized knowledge to contribute, as well as a mechanism for submitting scientific literature for the science synthesis;
- An open mind to the consideration of science;
- A call from the USFS for science from entities outside the USFS, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Northwest Fisheries Science Center, tribes, the timber industry, local and state universities and community colleges, state governments and the National Council for Air and Stream Improvement;
- Inclusion of all ideas and approaches, including a focus on other agency and private land;
- Input on peer-reviewed information from tribal elders in the community (this was mentioned by tribal members). Tribal members indicated that when the elders review information and provide consistent knowledge, their input should be just as highly valued as peer reviewed literature;
- Agreement on standardized scientific methods of study and the monitoring approach for federal, state and other scientists;
- Use of more current tools and models and ensuring information is used from recent papers (e.g. Hessburg paper regarding 30% early successional);
- Create objectives around quality assurance/quality control for other agencies or non-governmental organizations (e.g. The Nature Conservancy, Klamath Bird Observatory);
- Have shared and focused scientific questions on how science can accomplish cohesive goals that meet the needs of forest users and watersheds, while creating trust as a result of that process;
- Address the challenge of constantly changing data and science;
- Consider a variety of ways to access science, as well as types of science and new science to be incorporated into the science synthesis;
- Consider having an USFS science coordinator who would transparently organize and manage science data for a revision process website; and
- Consider universities as impartial neutrals (i.e. for dissemination of research).

Some commenters also noted that questions and controversy about science should not be ignored and that this is not the time to pull back, but rather an opportunity to determine how to deal with contradictory data or results. They saw the science synthesis directing future research needs via identification of science gaps.

Building Trust in the Science

A recurring theme by commenters was a perceived distrust of science in the United States. Many question, for example, whether scientists belong to particular political parties and how this impacts their findings, whether certain fields of study were unnecessarily prioritized over others (for example, that bio-sciences are sometimes prioritized over social science); or that science is sometimes biased in other ways. The following are ideas commenters had for building trust in the science used in the forest plan revision process:

- To ensure scientific consistency, transparency and accountability, implementation should be based on best available science;
- Science should be beyond ideology, and using science without calling it “science” might address some of the distrust;
- Draw a distinction between special interests and public interests by transparently getting the message across and figuring out how to include the public in decisions about overarching data analysis questions; and
- Involve the public in the creation of the science synthesis and use “citizen scientists”. Let the public know if and when there is a science input cutoff, provide information about how to submit and share information and actually get responses from the public. This would increase trust and provide needed accountability.

Socio-Economics and the Science Synthesis

Numerous comments in all of the topic areas focused on socio-economic aspects of the science synthesis. Many requested that the basic human and economic tenets of the NWFP for rural communities remain part of the science synthesis and that the forest plan revisions deliver on these components (e.g. meet allowable sale quantity from NWFP). A few commenters felt that communities should not depend on timber harvest volume from national forest lands. One asked if there is a linkage between science and the economy. Others noted that the science synthesis should include additional concepts relating to socio-economic issues supported by case studies from social science. In total, there was clearly a desire for socio-economics to be addressed through the science synthesis.

Many requested that specific topics be addressed regarding the impacts of certain activities, the economic value of others, and new ideas and resources relating to improving economic conditions in communities.

A number of comments noted the importance of including current information.

Impact Analysis:

- Quantification of the impacts on counties where forests are located and the need for timber revenues to fund county services (e.g. Trinity County scenario: 15% are private lands and the

whole county needs maintenance compared with the past when 85% of lands created economic activities and revenues); and

- In-depth socio-economic analysis of smaller rural communities (fewer than 10,000 people). If the analysis is too broad, it will lose sight of local effects.

Value of Activities:

- Determine issues and conditions that support different communities— i.e. salmon, recreation and clean water;
- Establish findings on recreation and its contribution to stable economics;
- Include recreation in the social and economic values;
- Integrate sustainable recreation needs with landscapes;
- Incorporate research on values and tangible aspects of the forest-intrinsic value, recreation value and social values;
- Analyze the value of forests regarding ecological development, recreational capacity, and uses;
- Calculate the economic value outfitters and guides add to increasing economic resources from forests; and
- Determine the value of ecological services (water, recreation) to ecosystem benefits (and not just timber value).

Other Resources:

- Consider the economic impact of job creation from stewardship contracting (e.g. for tree planters to go into areas that have been logged);
- Determine other resources that can be made available to communities in transition from logging to help meet the need for rural community health and economic wellbeing;
- Determine the profitability of forests aside from logging;
- Develop creative ways to more actively help rural communities find sustainable sources of jobs and funding (e.g. taxes on marijuana, creative economic uses like mushroom and fungi collection);
- Research the ‘new economies’ not just timber-based economies (e.g. urban areas);
- Calculate the economic value from a 25% payment to counties and schools to be added to stewardship contracting;
- Analyze export taxes from timber sales as an economic contribution and how it is tracked by state; and
- Analyze all factors causing job loss.

Scope, Scale and Time: Sequence and Analysis

Several comments focused on recommendations for the scope, scale and timeframes for the science analysis and science synthesis. These ranged from regional to local, and some pointed out the need for analyzing ecosystems in California, Oregon/Washington differently. Comments included:

- Use a holistic "all lands" approach;
- Consider regional goals and guidance for forests to ensure consistent implementation of the NWFP;
- Incorporate an ecosystem approach into the framework of analysis and focus on ecosystem values and species;
- Use a bio-regional (landscape) assessment and mid-level assessment. It was noted that these are both measurable and that mid-level assessments are not given enough attention;
- Translate large-scale modeling to a smaller scale; and
- Develop data locally and avoid using a broad brush approach.

Some commenters also mentioned giving priority consideration to adjacent lands, and, for example, the impacts from privately-owned land. Others requested priority consideration for adjacent areas with intact habitat suitable for northern spotted owl (shared age classes), and that existing habitat should drive analysis. Additionally, commenters had a wide range of ideas on the use of different planning timeframes and scales for the science synthesis. A number of commenters also suggested consideration of time-scales from seven generations to centuries into the future and noted that this is necessary to protect generations of people, all age class forests (e.g. 80-100 years, which are the more rare age class) and to consider the effects of climate change over time.

A few general comments were made as well regarding the scale and analysis of data:

- Determine the appropriate environmental scale;
- Establish the time periods that should be used for analysis;
- Determine how the plan will affect the region as a whole;
- Include summarized science since 1994 that notes positive trends;
- Consider the fact that the NWFP fundamentals were not implemented as originally planned when evaluating the effectiveness of the NWFP; and
- Do on-the-ground analysis, not simply desk exercises.

Additional Analysis and Science Synthesis Requests

Commenters mentioned specific issues they wanted to see addressed or specific questions answered in a science synthesis, as well as additional types of information or studies to consider. Major categories of issues included science around animal species, habitat and vegetation science, water quality and quantity, and climate change. Issues within each of these four categories are listed in the following table.

Wildlife Science, Vegetation and Ecosystem Science, Water Quality and Quantity and Climate Change Issues

| Wildlife Science | Vegetation and Ecosystem Science |
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| <p>Science regarding new and at risk species (including wolves, grizzly bear, spotted owl, porcupine, beaver, birds and pollinators)</p> <p>Do long-term population studies for maximum lifespan (MLS) and listed species to determine population status, reproductive success rate, population trends, viability thresholds, and monitor populations</p> <p>Analyze owl populations across national forests and MAMU</p> <p>Determine whether species declines are connected to early seral (e.g. neotropical birds, butterflies, etc.)</p> <p>Determine what the 2011 15-year spotted owl information says</p> <p>Do a diverse species analysis (more than northern spotted owl needs to be done to determine how plan is working)</p> <p>Determine if desired species actually occupy USFS land used for U.S. Navy training and whether that training achieves its stated objective</p> <p>Manage for all species and newly-listed species</p> <p>Don't treat survey and manage species the same as ESA species</p> <p>Look at Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive (TES) species management and pick out what is working</p> <p>There should be no net loss of species</p> <p>Pest control</p> <p>Species evolution</p> <p>Study wildlife habitat connectivity</p> <p>Investigate effects of treatments on a wide variety of plant and animal species</p> <p>Clarify the present science behind northern spotted owl management</p> <p>Don't use habitat as a proxy for viability</p> <p>Consider reintroduction of native species</p> | <p>Silviculture</p> <p>Healthy soil sustainability</p> <p>Soils science and its vital role</p> <p>Fire science: Burned habitat and existing science on fire effects-spatial heterogeneity</p> <p>Logging science:</p> <p>Best type to use in which locations</p> <p>How logging improves the environment</p> <p>Best available logging science</p> <p>Evaluate the decline of early seral habitats</p> <p>Determine the long-term cumulative effects of habitat fragmentation</p> <p>Use information from habitat refugia</p> <p>Incorporate cumulative effects into extra-forest problems such as recovery plans and inventoried roadless areas</p> <p>Address seasonal protection of sensitive areas based on annual conditions</p> <p>Determine if there are higher retention rates during thinning</p> <p>Maintain healthy uplands</p> <p>Acknowledge the importance of low/mid-elevation slopes—especially north-facing</p> <p>Reduce environmental stressors</p> <p>Pursue a range of wildlife habitat—early, mid, late seral, not just old growth</p> <p>Ensure diversity of seral stages (portfolio of structures)</p> <p>Monitor fully for early seral and determine whether salvage logging helps establish early seral</p> <p>Assess insect, disease, and wildfire damage</p> <p>Bioremediation, Bioprospecting, and Biomass</p> <p>Study nutrient depletion due to biomass removal</p> <p>TEK— (for example, acorn gathering, uplands, and maintaining oak groves)</p> <p>Determine if mechanical treatments truly mimic natural ecological processes</p> <p>Include science on root rot and tree lifespan</p> <p>Study what other wilderness needs there are (e.g. low elevation?)</p> <p>Do sediment studies on hydrophobic soils (treated and untreated)</p> <p>Consider impacts from private lands adjacent to forests</p> |
| Water Quality/Quantity | Climate Change |
| <p>Consider impacts to aquifers, watershed, and stream health and do top to bottom planning</p> <p>Focus on water storage in 1st and 2nd order streams (ponding)</p> <p>Monitor feedback, especially for water quality, best management practices. This should be a structured process. Funding is necessary for effectiveness, monitoring with standards and guidelines in plans, and to ensure monitoring checkpoints.</p> <p>Include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric</p> | <p>Incorporate the latest climate change predictions that anticipate worst case scenarios</p> <p>Study contribution of carbon to the environment from decaying vs. renewing forests</p> <p>Complete carbon assessment and change</p> <p>Take a broad look at climate change models</p> <p>Evaluate forests as carbon sinks</p> <p>Address climate change on a larger scale to assess cumulative effects rather than focusing solely on individual timber sales</p> |

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| <p>Administration (NOAA) and EPA information for aquatic restoration</p> <p>Determine how fuel reduction affects water quantity and quality</p> <p>Water quality standards and protection</p> <p>Don't lose the balance between aquatic and terrestrial resource values</p> <p>Consider the importance of sound quality and air quality for wetlands</p> <p>Consider consumptive water uses and exploitation of natural resources</p> <p>Acknowledge section 401 water quality certifications on forest operations plans for mining and the need for section 402 permitting for private activities on federal land when they do not meet CWA requirements.</p> | <p>Do new studies regarding climate adaptation and resilience</p> <p>Need for a new study regarding carbon sequestration</p> <p>Need for a new study regarding climate adaptation and resilience</p> <p>Take global leadership specifically looking at carbon storage in national forests</p> |
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Data/Studies Requested for Specific Locations

In addition to specific issues commenters would like to see addressed in a science synthesis, and specific studies included, there were many requests for studies in specific geographic areas.

- Determine suggested locations for science/monitoring in the HJ Andrews Forest.
- Look at forests that have not been litigated for successful strategies to move forward with collaborative efforts (e.g. Siuslaw and Gifford Pinchot).
- Look at the Hayfork Trinity to see what worked and did not work relative to eco-health of local communities.
- Determine California's contribution to exported timber.
- Get information out about how logging in the Colville is going. Good? Bad?
- Test the USFS 70 Quarry Shooting Site (test background and data collection results, consider heavy metal contamination, consider other environmental impacts and inform the public about site concerns and their impacts).
- Western states have the most contiguous forests. Science needs to address the long-term effects of changes to that large block in a much broader national perspective.
- Evaluate species associated with early successional habitat on Mt. Hood.

Other Science Considerations

The following ideas were mentioned by commenters but do not fall specifically in any of the previous categories about science.

- 2012 Planning Rule. Quantify what is working (Aquatic Conservation Strategy) and expound on whether 2012 Planning Rule is successful.
- Applying prescriptions. Are harvest plans meeting the needs of wildlife, economic contribution to communities and meeting goals of plans (e.g. timber harvest)?

- Grazing. Look at grazing monitoring and long term impacts from cattle.
- Cloud seeding. How is it being incorporated and is there a need to decrease it?
- Soil disturbance study. Prepare a comprehensive analysis on impacts of logging across the landscape regarding soil disturbance and include topographic landslide potential due to logging activities.
- Monitoring records. Determine whether updated records on monitoring are correctly tracked.
- Pre-European landscapes. Determine what the pre-European landscape looked like and how the landscape was managed before European contact.
- Best management practices. Broadly evaluate whether best management practices are effective in mitigating impacts.
- Risk management. Should be part of the science review.

Science and Public Engagement

In addition to the numerous comments regarding public engagement in the process of revising forest plans, several comments focused specifically on how the public would like to contribute to the development of a science synthesis and how to best interact and communicate about science throughout the revision process. This section focuses on those requests and suggestions.

- Ensure that science resonates with local communities. Use less jargon and bring science to the public at the smallest scale feasible. Science summaries should, however retain linkage to original studies.
- Public forums on science are important for knowledge sharing and dialogue. Finding creative and interesting ways to do that is crucial (for example, TED talks, videos, interactive maps – not just printed words).
- Hold presentations in local areas where change has occurred. This would include site visits that allow people to see how topics unfold in real time.
- Provide interesting examples and case studies to back up USFS communications about national forest science strategies. These should explain how the theories were tested.
- Get feedback from different interest groups, such as local partners, volunteer groups, tribes, collaboratives (rounded up as a collective whole), as well as those outside collaboratives. This can help increase transparency and show clear links between science and decisions.
- Use local partners as a test group.
- Have a platform that allows local sharing of information with the USFS and vice versa. This would create a more successful collaborative approach to working together.

Many commenters indicated that the USFS website should include easily accessible science information and reflect the science being reviewed. This could include an option to upload new information, contain a library of abstracts for lay persons including references from entities outside the federal government, university data and links to journals to help determine what science is being used. Some mentioned the importance of considering how the data would be collected, stored, analyzed and accessed for independent public analysis.

Summary

The numerous comments listed and synthesized in this report reflect sharp differences on some issues relating to forest planning and the revision process. As in any complex planning process incorporating many highly knowledgeable and passionate participants, it is likely that some outcomes of this revision process will inevitably run counter to the ideas and perspectives held closely by many. However, the comments also revealed that there are many common views on how public involvement for the revision process could ultimately be more successful. The USFS should consider:

- Establish clear sideboards on the specific issues for which public input is being sought and clarify how that input is now or will be used in USFS decision-making;
- Create a transparent, strategic and comprehensive USFS approach to engaging the general public, interest groups, tribes and specific communities throughout all phases of the revision process; and
- Use an open and transparent process to gather, share, synthesize and consider scientific information for the revision process.

The initial public input captured in this report is a starting point to help the USFS think through its approach to forest plan revisions in the NWFP area.