



Agency Proposes Planning Rule

Overview

As reported in a Clearwater-Nez Perce Forest Plan Revision Update dated June 2007, District Court Judge Phyllis Hamilton of the United States District Court for Northern California enjoined the Forest Service from utilizing the 2005 planning rule.

Both the Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests utilized direction from the 2005 rule to develop draft proposed land management plans.

The Forest Service is making progress addressing issues identified in Judge Hamilton's ruling.

This update is intended to provide information about the agency's proposed planning rule and public comment process.



Alternative D is a modified version of the 2005 rule which does not include requirements for an environmental management system.

Alternative E is a modified version of the 2005 rule which does not include the requirements for an environmental management system and includes timber requirements placed in agency directives in association with the 2005 rule.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is available online at http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/2007_planning_rule.html. There is also a link from the revision zone website www.fs.fed.us/cnpz.

The 60-day comment period for the National Forest Land Management Planning Rule Draft Environmental Impact Statement ends October 22, 2007.

Agency Issues Draft Environmental Impact Statement

On August 23, 2007, the USDA Forest Service issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement stating its intent to finish rulemaking on the land management planning rule issued January 5, 2005 (the 2005 planning rule).

Key elements of the agency's proposal include: (1) an emphasis on science in land management planning; (2) assurance the public has access to information and is involved throughout the planning process; (3) an assessment of environmental conditions and trends; and (4) the requirement that proposed desired conditions be sustainable.

The agency is considering five alternatives in detail, including the proposed action.

Alternative A—the proposed action—is the planning rule published on January 5, 2005, and amended on March 3, 2006. It is identified as the preferred alternative.

Alternative B is the 2000 planning rule as it existed before promulgation of the 2005 rule.

Alternative C is the 1982 rule as it existed before promulgation of the 2000 rule.

Changes in Planning Team Personnel

While issues associated with the planning rule are being resolved at a national level, the local planning team is undergoing major change.

Kris Hazelbaker, team ecologist, retired from her post in May 2007.

Cliff Mitchell, team revision specialist and recreation specialist, retired in August 2007.

Kurt Nelson, team fisheries specialist, recently moved to the Carson National Forest in Taos, New Mexico, to become a multi-disciplinary staff officer.

The Forests appreciate the hard work and dedication of these specialists. They left a solid foundation from which to resume revision efforts.

The Forests do not plan to hire new planning team members. Existing Forest personnel will be used to continue the revision effort when issues associated with the planning rule are resolved.