

**Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest
Plan Revision Project
January 24, 2013**

The Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests are in the middle of a joint multi-year planning process covering nearly five million acres to revise their land and resource management plans (LMPs) as required by law (NFMA). The current Plans at the end of their intended 15-year life, and will be revised to address resource and social changes on the three Forests as well as new scientific information.

Key Points:

- On June 30, 2011, the Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests released their proposed actions, which initiated the project scoping phase—the first step in the formal NEPA process. There was a 90-day comment period, which ended on September 28, 2011.
- We received 27,274 comment letters, of which 889 contained unique and substantially different comments. The letters, emails, form letters, and public comment forms were received from tribes, individuals, organizations, agencies, businesses, and groups.
- Public comments helped us determine the significant issues and key public concerns related to the proposed action. From the 889 comment letters, there were 3,250 comments analyzed to identify the significant issues driving the alternatives.
- A summary of comments and identified significant issues is being posted to the project website. The planning team is using the significant issues to develop a range of alternatives to the proposal. This is also helping us determine the scope of the analysis that will be documented in the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). Additional information will be added to that draft report as we progress through the analysis process. Check project webpage periodically for updates.
- Release of the DEIS for public review is targeted late winter 2013/2014, and will be followed by a 90 day public comment period. A series of public meetings will also be scheduled to share information about the DEIS comment process.

Background:

Both public comment and new science show a need to change the existing Plans. Much has changed since the current set of forest plans were approved in the late 80s, including changes in public values and expectations from public lands, recreation demands and types of recreation uses, demographics and development patterns, and natural resource policy. Other changes have occurred on the landscape itself; and there have been advances in our knowledge about landscape processes, science and technology.

Even though amendments have been made over time to the *current* plans to adapt to some of those changes, they still do not fully reflect the current needs of the forest and neighboring communities.

That said, we expect that many aspects of the existing plans will be unchanged, such as managing recreation residences, protecting homes in the wildland urban interface, fostering rural economic development, encouraging Americans to visit their public lands, monitoring for large carnivores and maintaining watersheds for aquatic species.

Where can I get more information? Meeting notes from earlier public involvement steps, briefing papers, public comment summary and process information can be found on the plan revision website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/okawen/plan-revision>. Or contact Debbie Kelly at the number below.

Which national planning rule is being followed? The revision process has been guided by various planning rules since 2003. And although a new planning rule has been developed at the national level, the Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee Forests planning process will be completed using the 1982 provisions as provided under the 2000 planning rule. It will be consistent with themes set forth in the 2012 Planning Rule, which established a new national framework for forest plans.

Forest Plan Revision Project Timeline	
Plan Revision Process Steps	Timeframe
Scoping begins, proposed action released, public meetings held to identify issues, and comments accepted.	NEPA Phase - June 2011 90 day comment period*
Revision team considers scoping comments and identifies issues.	Fall 2011-Spring 2012
Alternatives to the proposed action are developed from issues.	Spring-Summer 2012
Revision team analyzes effects of alternatives to social, economic, and natural resources, which are documented in the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS).	Summer-Winter 2012
Draft EIS and draft revised forest plans released for public comment, public meetings held and comments accepted.	Winter 2013 90 day comment period**
Final EIS prepared, then released and objection period begins (30 day period).	Winter 2014
Final decision signed and implementation begins.	Spring 2015

* The comment period closed for this initial scoping phase on 9/28/2011

** Denotes a formal public participation phase

For more information or to be added to the mailing list contact the Plan Revision Team

Mailing Address:
Forest Plan Revision Team
1240 Second Ave. South
Okanogan, WA 98840

E-mails- can be sent to: r6_ewzplanrevision@fs.fed.us
Website: fs.usda.gov/goto/okawen/plan-revision
Plan Revision Team Contacts: Deb Kelly, Public Affairs Lead, 509-664-9247 or Margaret Hartzell, Team Leader, 509-826-3275