

# USDA Forest Service Region 5 Forest Plan Revision Collaboration, Tribal and Public Involvement Plan

Dated: 1/23/14

## Purpose

The purpose of this Plan is to ensure effective communication to support a collaborative and science-based Forest Plan revision process. Forest Plans guide resource management so National Forests are ecologically sustainable and contribute to social and economic sustainability of their neighboring communities. This Plan concentrates on the external communication activities the Forest Service will take at the Regional and National Forests levels regarding Forest plan revisions.

## Overarching Communications Goals

The national forests of California can improve their communications with the Public through effective, thorough, and transparent sharing as they complete National Forest Plan Revisions. With Public involvement, the public has ownership in the development of management affecting their national forests.

*Goal 1:* To promote understanding of the Forest Plan Revision process by providing accurate information to the public.

*Goal 2:* To encourage Public participation, to validate and identify concerns and opportunities and other information relevant to revising the forest plans.

*Goal 3:* To work with the Public from the beginning of the process through to the completion of each forest plan revision.

*Goal 4:* To provide focus on the issues that really matter and can be affected during the plan revision.

The term "Public" as used here in and throughout the document means tribal governments, citizens, stakeholders, adjacent landowners, local/county/state/other federal agencies, adjacent National Forests, interest groups, etc. Different publics lend themselves to different means of effective communication and forums/settings.

## Public Participation Objectives

Each public participation milestone is an important part of the entire forest plan revision process. The goal is to develop a Forest Plan that is responsive to the interests of the forest, agencies, and the public. Forest Plan revision will promote deliberations that are thoughtful and frank and include a diversity of perspectives and interests. At each stage there are specific public participation objectives the Forest Service has in mind (§ 219.16).

*Public Involvement:* The objective of this pre-NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) stage is to refine, clarify, and/or identify any missing key topic areas in the preliminary Need to Change document as well as to identify desired future conditions for those key topic areas.

*Public Scoping:* The objective at this stage is to initiate the proposed revision of the Sierra, Sequoia and Inyo National Forest Plans.

*Notice of Availability:* The objective at this stage is to invite public comment on the proposed revisions to the Sierra, Sequoia and Inyo National Forest Plans. This will begin the 90 day public comment period.

*Notice to Begin Objection:* The objective at this stage is to notify the public of the beginning of the objection period for the plan revision for the Sierra, Sequoia and Inyo National Forests.

*Notice of Any Objections:* The objective at this stage is to inform the public of any objections to the draft EIS that the Forest Service has received.

*Notice of Availability of FEIS:* The objective at this stage is to approve the final plan revisions for the Sierra, Sequoia and Inyo National Forests.

*Notice of Approval:* The objective at this stage is to announce when the plan revisions for the Sierra, Sequoia and Inyo National Forest will be confirmed.

*Plan Implementation:* The objective at this stage is to notify the public when the revised forest plans have been implemented.

## **Public Participation in Forest Plan Revision**

The goal of each National Forest’s plan revision process is to develop a forest plan that is responsive to those who are affected by or have an interest in the management of the national forests, consistent with legal mandates. **The Planning Rule requires each National Forest to provide meaningful opportunities for public participation throughout the plan revision process (36 CFR § 219.4).**

The Forest determines which public participation methods are the most appropriate depending on the phase of planning, work product being developed, budget, and staff capacity. Public participation methods identified in the Planning Rule include informing, consulting, involving, and collaborating, as described here:

- ❖ Informing – Providing participants and the general public with balanced and objective information, and assist them in understanding work products prepared as part of the planning process.
- ❖ Consulting – Obtaining participants’ feedback on draft work products at various points in the planning process.
- ❖ Involving – Working directly with participants to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered in the development of work products.
- ❖ Collaborating – Working directly with participants in preparing to make decisions at various points within the planning process, including (but not limited to) the development of alternatives and the identification of a preferred alternative. The Forest will create opportunities for dialogue to explore different perspectives, balance a variety of needs, and identify areas of common ground that can inform draft work products

Work products may include, for example, information on legal and regulatory requirements and the planning process; lists of available scientific information; summaries of trends in forest conditions and drivers of forest change; and alternatives for analysis.

## Public Involvement Milestones

Actual dates, times, and locations may be subject to change. Please check our website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r5/landmanagement/planning> for the most current information.

December 12, 2013:	Sierra Cascades Dialog #11 (Still Standing: Wildfire and Resiliency)
December 24, 2013:	Release Final Forest Assessments, Bio-regional Assessment, Preliminary Need to Change (posted to RO planning website)
<b>December 26, 2013:</b>	<b>“Notice to Initiate” published and available to all</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Notice to Initiate includes Preliminary Need to Change</li><li>• Federal Register Notice</li><li>• Legal Notice in newspapers of record</li><li>• Begin pre-NEPA public feedback period</li></ul>
January 13, 2014:	Sierra NF Tribal Forum
January 27, 2014:	Sierra NF Public Workshop 5:00-9:00 pm
January 28, 2014:	Sequoia NF Public Workshops (Tribal Forum 12:00-3:00 pm, Public Workshop 5:00-9:00 pm)
January 30, 2014:	Inyo NF Public Workshops (Tribal Forum 12:00-3:00 pm, Public Workshop 5:00-9:00 pm)
<b>January 31, 2014:</b>	<b>Close of pre-NEPA Public Feedback Period</b>
February 27, 2014:	Sierra Cascades Dialog #12
<b>April 1, 2014:</b>	<b>“Notice of Intent” (NOI) published and available to all</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NOI includes proposed plan components, proposed action, and possible alternatives</li><li>• Press Release announcing: NOI, public scoping period, and public workshop schedule</li><li>• Post on RO EP website</li><li>• Federal Register Notice</li><li>• Legal Notice in Newspapers of Record</li><li>• Begin 30 day public scoping process</li></ul>
April 7, 2014:	Sierra NF Public Workshop/Tribal Forum
April 8, 2014:	Sequoia NF Public Workshop/Tribal Forum
April 10, 2014:	Inyo NF Public Workshop/ Tribal Forum
<b>May 1, 2014:</b>	<b>End of scoping period</b>

- October 10, 2014:** **“Notice of Availability” (NOA) published and available to all**
- NOA includes Draft EIS, Draft Plans, and Draft Monitoring Programs
  - Press Release announcing: NOA, public comment period, and public workshop schedule
  - Post on RO EP website
  - Federal Register Notice
  - Legal Notice in Newspapers of Record
  - Begin 90-day public comment period
- October 20, 2014: Sierra NF Public/Tribal Forum
- October 21, 2014: Sequoia NF Public/Tribal Forum
- October 23, 2014: Inyo NF Public/Tribal Forum
- June 5, 2015:** **EPA publishes “Notice of Availability of FEIS”**
- Begin 60 day Objection Period
  - Federal Register Notice
- “Notice to Start Objection Process” published and available to all. Issue FEIS, Draft RODs, and Plans
- Post on RO website
  - Legal Notice in Newspapers of Record
  - Press Release
- August 5, 2015:** **End of Objection Period**
- August 14, 2015: Public Notice of Objections
- Post on RO EP website
  - Legal Notice in Newspapers of Record
- December 4, 2015: “Notice of Plan Approval”
- Post on the RO EP website
  - Federal Register Notice
  - Legal Notice in Newspapers of Record
  - Press Release
- January 4, 2016:** **Implement Plan (30 days after publication of Notice of Approval)**