



# Preparing for the Need to Change Workshop

## Welcome

We are excited you will be helping us identify essential ideas to be used in the development of the need to change document. The upcoming in-person workshop on **Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>** is one of many opportunities you will have to help us develop the revised land management plan. To be fully prepared, please complete the following before the workshop:

1. Read the need to change Frequently Asked Questions (page 2).
2. Review statement examples so you are familiar with how these statements may appear in the need to change document (page 3).
3. Take time to think through the questions on the need to change worksheets and jot down your input so you can use it in the in-person group discussions for this workshop on March 11<sup>th</sup> or submit your thoughts if you can't attend the workshop in person.
4. This is an informal opportunity for all of us to better understand each other's perspectives of what needs to change or remain the same and why. **Please submit your worksheets by Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>**, even if you are unable to attend the in-person workshops, to the Forest Service revision team:
  - a. At one of the in-person workshop venues
  - b. Scanning and emailing to [SM.FS.CCNGRevision@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.CCNGRevision@usda.gov)
  - c. By mail to Pike-San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands Supervisor's Office, in care of the Grasslands Plan Revision, 2840 Kachina Drive, Pueblo, CO 81008.

## Workshop Objectives

- Create a structured, intentional, and respectful opportunity for the public to discuss diverse perspectives across the Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands
- Continue to identify and gain shared understanding of how the public values the grasslands
- Identify and understand the areas that need to change or remain the same from the 1984 plan
- Identify some main themes for the need to change document
- Inform on next steps and opportunities to continue to share experiences and feedback for preliminary plan development - the vision and desired conditions of the grasslands
- Develop and strengthen relationships amongst all participants

Thank you for taking the time and for being thoughtful and respectful in your responses.

# The Need to Change the Land Management Plan

## Frequently Asked Questions



The first step in the plan revision process is to complete an assessment of the plan area. The assessment is a report that was developed with the public on the collective understanding of existing ecological, social and economic conditions and trends in the plan area. The following frequently asked questions are the next steps in the plan revision process moving from the Assessment phase to the Plan Development and Environmental Analysis Phase.

### Now that the Assessment is completed, what happens next?

The next step in the plan revision process is to identify what needs to change in the plan. Using the assessment, along with information from forest or grassland biennial monitoring reports, information from the public, and changes to laws, regulations, and policy, a document with need to change statements is drafted. The process of creating this document is called “Need to Change”, and it sets the foundation for the new land management plan, the purpose and need for the action, and the decision framework for how the environmental impact statement is developed.

### What is in a Need to Change Document?

The Need to Change document has brief, general statements about what in the current plan needs to change. Think of this document as a framework of topics that will be addressed in next phase of plan development. This document does not identify solutions or draft plan components such as desired conditions or objectives. Instead, this document clearly outlines the topics for which solutions and plan components will be developed in the next phase of the planning process.

### What is the goal of the Need to Change process?

The goal of the Need to Change process is to collectively identify with Tribes, governments, and the public, what is working and what is not. There may be portions of the current plan that, based on the findings in the assessment or other information, do not need to change at all, or only need to change to address new regulations such as revising to meet the requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule. Other areas of the plan may not be sufficient in providing guidance to Forest Service staff for managing new recreation trends or degrading ecological conditions, or in providing the level of flexibility needed to adapt to changing conditions. Each plan area will have different issues, conditions and trends, and public information that will influence the statements of each Need to Change document.

## Example Statements

Below are some examples of statements that may be found in a need to change document

### Example 1

Some things are either outside the scope of plan revision, or the current management direction is working well and are not expected to change in the revised plan. Those are:

- A. The plan cannot change the boundaries or purposes of areas that are statutorily designated, including examples such as historic trails or national scenic byways.
- B. The plan cannot designate Wilderness or Wild and Scenic Rivers. The plan revision process may yield recommended areas, rivers or river segments for inclusion to the National Wilderness Preservation System or the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. While these places may be recognized in the plan and may influence management through plan components, only Congress can formally designate these areas.
- C. The plan will not include site-specific travel decisions, such as selection of roads, trails, and areas where motorized or mechanized vehicle travel will be allowed, restricted, or prohibited.
- D. The plan will not include site-specific decisions for land management activities.
  - a. For example, the plan may determine suitability of lands for oil and gas exploration and development, but it does not provide site-specific authorizations for energy leases.
  - b. The plan will establish desired conditions and other guidance in which permitted activities must comply. But determining parameters for permitted grazing (like type and number of animals) and other types of permits is done at a site-specific project level.

### Example 2

Overall, there is a need for more integrated management that balances the needs of multiple resources during project planning. An integrated approach allows for more opportunities to consider multiple use objectives and benefits, enhancement of habitat that promotes species diversity, opportunities for economic growth and stability for local communities, and ensure ecological sustainability. In the plan area, there is a need to:

- A. **Enhance Tribal relations:** The plan area has been occupied by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial and continues to hold significance for many tribes. The previous plan was written without Tribal consultation or engagement. There is a need to identify areas of Tribal interest through consultation and engagement, opportunities for potential co-stewardship, and incorporate Indigenous knowledge.
- B. **Protect cultural resources:** The plan area contains diverse cultural resources that support social values such as local identity, sense of place, etc. as well as economic opportunities through heritage tourism. There is a need to protect, preserve, and continue to identify and survey these resources.
- C. **Manage traditional resource uses:**
  - a. Oil and gas production is an important and longstanding economic driver in the area, contributing to jobs, income, and economic outputs for the surrounding regions.
  - b. Livestock grazing is a traditional use that has been an important part of the local economy, lifestyle and culture for a century. There is a need to ensure rangelands are healthy and productive, and resilient to drought, fluctuations in climate and precipitation patterns, conifer encroachment and invasive species. The current plan components for rangeland management are outdated and insufficient to address management changes.

- D. **Enhance rural economies:** Livestock grazing, oil and gas production, recreation and heritage tourism are contributors to the local economy. The new plan should focus on maintaining these resources and uses while exploring options to enhance the rural economy through sustainable uses and tourism.
- E. **Manage for sustainable recreation:** The plan area offers unique recreational opportunities, specifically through wildlife (viewing, hunting, fishing) and historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources. These opportunities contribute to the local economies and quality of life. The current plan did not address visitation increases or provide direction to address modern recreation infrastructure and trail management concerns related to climate change and ecological integrity.
- F. **Manage and enhance resilient ecosystems and watersheds:**
  - a. Manage and direct juniper communities in relationship to non-forested communities. Current plan management inadequately addresses the need to manage conifer encroachment in the shortgrass prairie and sand-sage to restore and maintain these ecosystems.
  - b. Manage ecosystems to ensure future carbon stocks are protected through species regeneration, diversity, and rangeland health.
  - c. Manage invasive species.
  - d. Maintain habitat quality and connectivity for TESP, At-Risk species, and Species of Conservation Concern. The current plan does not identify SCC, nor does it provide specific direction for wildlife habitat management.
  - e. Increase ecological integrity of water sources and the watershed by adding plan components that protect water quality and quantity and monitor the effects of water use that can affect groundwater flows. Include adaptive strategies that respond to drought and climate and precipitation changes.

# Need to Change Worksheet Instructions

This worksheet helps structure the brainstorming of ideas for the need to change so you can actively participate in the workshops. Sources of information that you may want to use include your own personal experience; documentation of new information, changed conditions or changed circumstances (i.e. County or state management plan, resource or topic report); law, regulation, or policy changes; biennial monitoring reports; and the plan assessment. For each of the discussion topic areas, use these guiding questions:

## Worksheet Guiding Questions

When coordinating with the Forest Service, in terms of how you interact with or on the landscape, the projects you work on, the communities you represent, and implementation of your agency or organization management plan:

- **What is working well and why?**
  - Example: “New radio and cell towers that have been permitted and installed on different parts of the grasslands, have allowed for better connectivity and safety of county residents and communities. We should continue to look for ways of improving our communication infrastructure on the grasslands.”
- **What are the problems?**
  - Define each problem clearly! Example: “The problem is that OHVs are destroying riparian habitat because they have no limits or restrictions on where they can go or what they can do.”
  - Why is it a problem? Example: “Destroying riparian habitat is a problem because it impacts my ability to manage my grazing in my assigned allotment and it degrades the quality of the water.”
  - What is the desired condition you are comparing it to and what actions or conditions changed that desired condition? Example: “Historically these areas had very few impacts by vehicles of any kind because vehicles did not have the capability to travel into and through these riparian corridors, but since OHVs have gotten more capable for off-road or cross-country travel and there are more people, people no longer want to stick to roads and trails for recreation. Additionally, there is no OHV policy and invasive weeds have moved into the area along with wildfires occurring, which are both factors that have increased soil erosion.”
- **What needs to change to address these problems?**
  - How can we fix this? What actions are in our control to change this problem? Example: “Perhaps we can identify certain drainages that are more sensitive to groundwater impacts and are also priority to maintain water quality. If we changed the management specifically in these watersheds/drainages for how or when OHVs can access it will minimize or eliminate their impact. Additionally, it will help the Forest Service know where to concentrate education and enforcement and even road maintenance activities.”

Name and contact information (Optional, but it helps us follow up if we need clarification):

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**Discussion Topic 1: Human Use and Heritage Resources (Recreation activities, Developed and Dispersed Recreation, Cultural and Historic, Access, Scenery, Socioeconomics)**

**What is working well and why?**

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Name and contact information (Optional, but it helps us follow up if we need clarification):

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**Discussion Topic 1: Human Use and Heritage Resources (Recreation activities, Developed and Dispersed Recreation, Cultural and Historic, Access, Scenery, Socioeconomics)**

**State a problem and explain why** (*define the problem, why is it a problem, what are you comparing it to and what has changed that desired condition?*)

**What needs to be changed to address this problem**

**State a problem and explain why**

**What needs to be changed to address this problem**

**State a problem and explain why**

**What needs to be changed to address this problem**

Name and contact information (Optional, but it helps us follow up if we need clarification):

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## **Discussion Topic 2: Active Management (Fire and Fuels, Energy and Minerals, Range and Grazing, Air Quality)**

**What is working well and why?**

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Name and contact information (Optional, but it helps us follow up if we need clarification):

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**Discussion Topic 2: Active Management (Fire and Fuels, Energy and Minerals, Range and Grazing, Air Quality)**

**State a problem and explain why** (*define the problem, why is it a problem, what are you comparing it to and what has changed that desired condition?*)

**What needs to be changed to address this problem**

**State a problem and explain why**

**What needs to be changed to address this problem**

**State a problem and explain why**

**What needs to be changed to address this problem**

Name and contact information (Optional, but it helps us follow up if we need clarification):

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### **Discussion Topic 3: Habitat Management (wildlife, plant, soils, habitats for at risk, species of conservation concern and endangered species)**

**What is working well and why?**

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Name and contact information (Optional, but it helps us follow up if we need clarification):

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**Discussion Topic 3: Habitat Management (wildlife, plant, soils, habitats for at risk, species of conservation concern and endangered species)**

**State a problem and explain why** (*define the problem, why is it a problem, what are you comparing it to and what has changed that desired condition?*)

**What needs to be changed to address this problem**

**State a problem and explain why**

**What needs to be changed to address this problem**

**State a problem and explain why**

**What needs to be changed to address this problem**

Name and contact information (Optional, but it helps us follow up if we need clarification):

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**Discussion Topic 4: Water Resources (Water quality, water availability, municipal waters, wetlands, groundwater dependent systems, riparian areas, fisheries)**

**What is working well and why?**

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Name and contact information (Optional, but it helps us follow up if we need clarification):

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**Discussion Topic 4: Water Resources (Water quality, water availability, municipal waters, wetlands, groundwater dependent systems, riparian areas, fisheries)**

**State a problem and explain why** (*define the problem, why is it a problem, what are you comparing it to and what has changed that desired condition?*)

**What needs to be changed to address this problem**

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