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## **U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region**

### **Forest Plan Revision Process**

The U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region (Region 5) has begun the process of revising the Land Management Plans for national forests in California. The revision process is guided by the framework established by the 2008 Planning Rule which is intended to be responsive to changing conditions and best available science, and provides for environmental protections for wildlife, water and other resources. The process is also intended to be open and transparent and encourages the public to be fully involved and engaged in the development, implementation and monitoring of Forest Plans.

#### ***Background***

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) is the primary statute governing the administration of national forests. NFMA requires the assessment of forest lands and the development and implementation of a management plan for each unit of the National Forest System with revisions every 10-15 years. The Land Management Plan or Forest Plan is the principal document that guides the decision making of Forest Service managers. Forest Plans guide where and under what conditions an activity or project on national forest lands can generally proceed. Each time a project or activity is proposed, the local national forest unit must ensure that it is consistent with the plan. Forest Plans are strategic in nature and do not make decisions about specific projects. Project proposals will be analyzed in subsequent National Environmental Policy Act processes.

Forest Plans provide long-range management direction such as desired conditions and objectives, the kinds of uses that are generally suitable for various areas of a national forest, the management guidelines that apply to different kinds of activities, and the designation of special areas like Research Natural Areas.

#### ***Revision Strategy***

Forest Plans for national forests in California were developed in the mid to late 1980s under the 1982 Planning Rule and most plans have not been revised since then; however, significant amendments have occurred. The Southern California forests finished their Forest Plan revisions in 2005.

The Region 5 strategy consists of revising the 14 remaining Forest Plans in approximately three years starting in the spring of 2009. This year the regional office staff is working with interested individuals and organizations to identify issues, trends, and sources of information that will provide the basis for revisions. Work will first begin with emphasis on Sierra Nevada forests and then move to the Northern California forests. The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and the Modoc National Forest are the first units to initiate the revision process.

The 2008 Planning Rule requires an open public process for long term planning for natural resource protection and recreation on national forests nationwide. It is the intention of Region 5 to work with the public to identify the issues are of most importance on a bioregional and individual forest level, and to balance those desires and needs with sound science and resource protection. Early and frequent dialogues are an effective way to



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ensure that public interests are included at all phases of plan development and that subsequent Forest Plans are based on the best available knowledge, and focused on the most important issues.

### ***Environmental Protections***

The 2008 Planning Rule ensures the protection of wildlife and other resources by providing a framework to fully comply with all resource protection laws including the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, National Forest Management Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

### ***Additional Information***

If you are interested in learning more, or becoming involved in the revision process, please contact: Ron Pugh at, [rpugh@fs.fed.us](mailto:rpugh@fs.fed.us), or (707) 562-8951.

For more information about the about the 2008 Planning Rule please visit:  
[www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/2008\\_planning\\_rule.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/2008_planning_rule.html)

