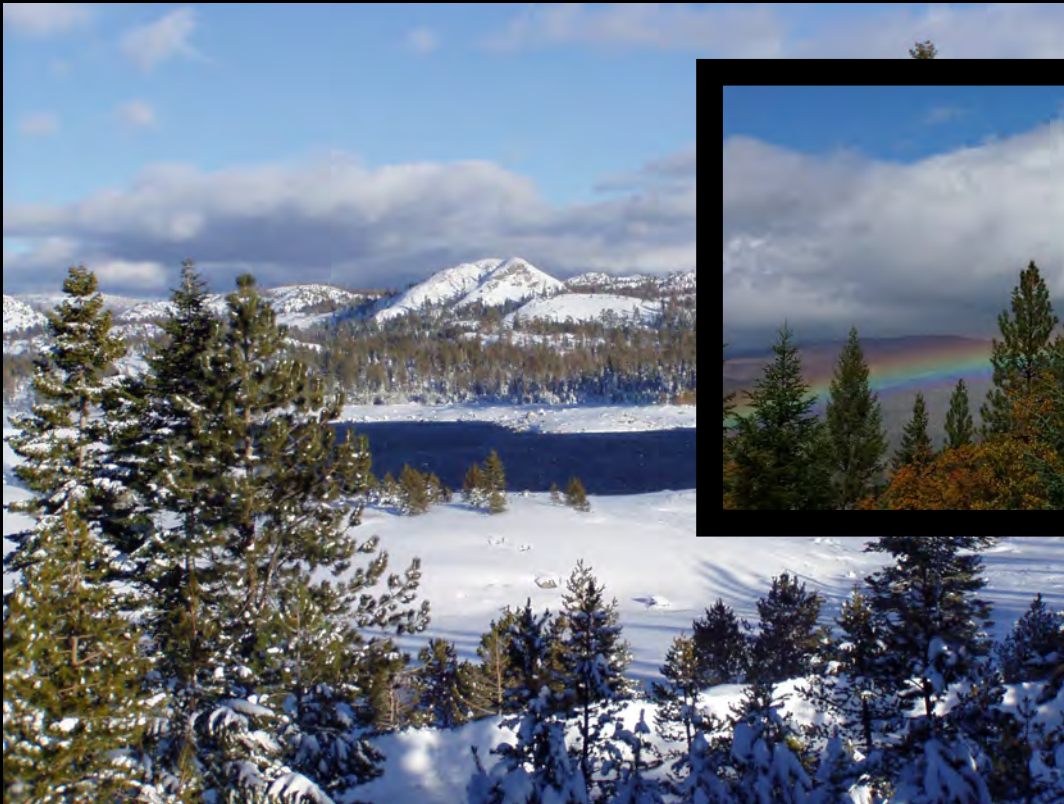




United States Department of Agriculture

NoCo Partners Meeting

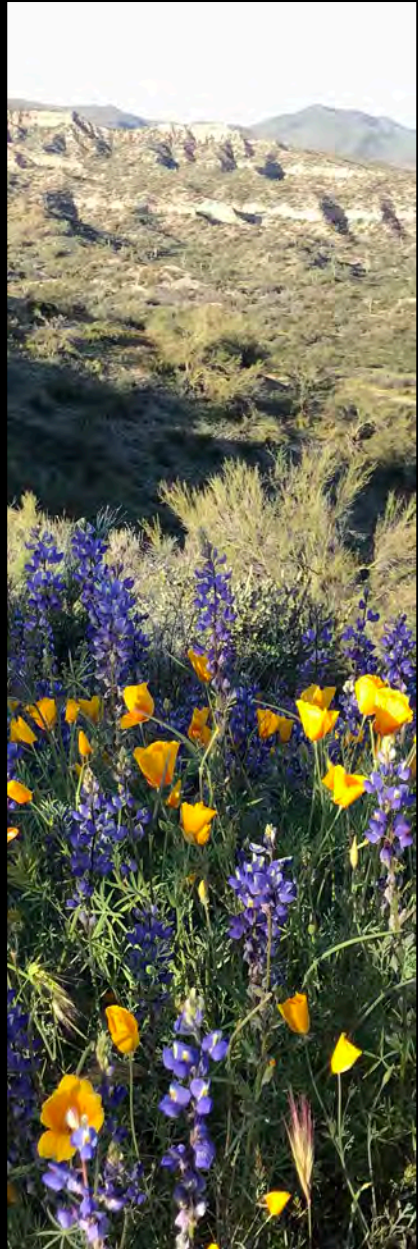
Introduction to Land Management Planning for the Forest Service



Mountain Planning Service Group

January 2024

What is a Land Management Plan?



Land Management Plans:

- Provide strategic and programmatic guidance and management direction for national forests & grasslands.
- Do not commit any specific actions:
 - Establish sideboards or constraints within which FS makes project decisions
 - Direct the Forest Service, not the public
 - Provide long-term vision, and strategy to guide future on-the-ground activities
 - Focus on the “what” not “how”
- Do not need to repeat law, regulation, or policy.

Requirements for Planning



- Must meet the requirements of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) & 2012 Planning Rule.
 - One integrated plan for each forest or grassland
 - Plans revised at least every 15 years
 - Public participation throughout the planning process
 - All projects must be consistent with the land management plan
 - NFMA established planning regulations that provide procedures for developing plans (i.e., we must have a planning rule)

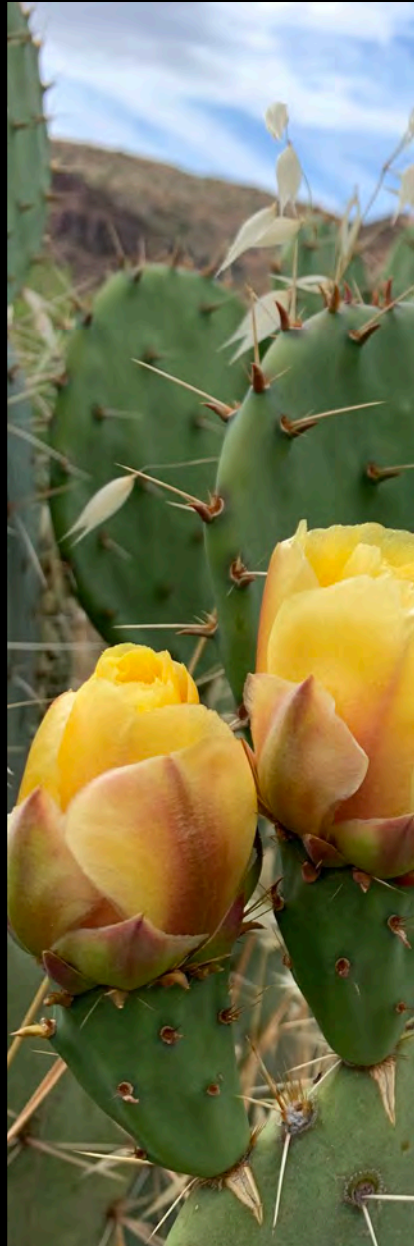
Requirements for Planning



Plans must:

- Focus on an outcome-based planning
- Assessing trends and risks to sustainability
- Meet requirements for integrated resource management:
 - Sustainability ([§219.8](#))
 - Plant and animal diversity ([§219.9](#))
 - Multiple use ([§219.10](#))
 - Timber management ([§219.11](#))
- Set limits on management limitations on timber management and constraints the amount sold
- Identify lands not suitable for timber production
- Set continuous monitoring and assessment of management actions

Public Engagement Requirement



Robust public involvement [§219.4\(a\)](#) is required throughout plan revision:

- Assessment (BASI, areas of tribal importance, assessment report, preliminary need to change, wilderness inventory, wild and scenic rivers eligibility, potential species of conservation concern)
- Plan development (timber suitability, land allocations, plan components, wilderness evaluation, outstandingly remarkable values, monitoring plan)
- Environmental analysis (draft and final EIS, draft and final ROD)

Refer to: 1909.12 Chapter 40 Public Participation

Land Management Planning Process

Pre-Assessment

- Data Preparation
- Science Synthesis
- Communication & Collaboration Plan
- Wilderness Inventory Prep
- Timber Suitability
- Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Prep
- Species of Conservation Concern Prep

Opportunities for Tribal, Government, & Public Engagement

Notice to Start the Assessment

Assessment

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Existing Conditions & Trends for Topic Areas (15 Areas in Total)

Notice to Start Plan Development

Plan Development

- Species of Conservation Concern
- Evaluation of Wilderness & Other Designations
- Proposed Plan Components & Draft Monitoring Program

Need to Change

NEPA Process

Notice to Start Objection Process

Objection Process

- FEIS, Draft Record of Decision, & Plan Available to Public
- Objection Filing Period (60 days)
- Reviewing Official Responds to Objections (90 Days)

Notice of Intent to Prepare EIS

DEIS Development

- Proposed Action
- Cooperating Agency List
- Review Scoping Comments
- Identify Significant Issues
- Develop Alternatives
- Refine Proposed Action / Draft Plan
- Describe Affected Environment & Environmental Effects
- DEIS / Proposed Plan

Notice of Availability (90-Day Comment Period)

FEIS Development

- Content Analysis of Comments
- Identify changes needed between Draft and Final
- Develop an alternative to be final preferred / selected
- Respond to comments

Notice of Availability (30-Day)

Record of Decision
Includes Final Plan

Notice of Plan Approval

Planning
NEPA
Federal Register Notices



Forest Plan Revision Phases:



- Pre-Assessment

- Data and scientific information is gathered and prepared for assessment.
- Communication and engagement plans are prepared.
- The purpose of this phase is to prepare for assessment and to begin working on time intensive task.

- Assessment

- Rapid evaluation of existing information about relevant ecological, economic, and social conditions, trends, and sustainability
- Results in a written assessment report that evaluates information for 15 topics and their status and trends.

- Results of the Assessment

- Facilitate relationship building
- Identify BASI
- Common understanding of conditions and trends
- Inform the need to change

See [1909.12 Chapter 10 Assessments](#)



What is the Need to Change the Plan?



- The Responsible Official for plan development, plan amendment, and plan revisions shall identify a need to change the plan to give focus to the planning process.
- The need to change the plan helps define the proposed action, purpose and need, and decision framework for the environmental analysis related to the planning process (See FSH 1909.12, ch. 40 and FSH 1909.15, ch. 10, sec. 11.2).

See 1909.12 Chapter 20, Section 21.21

Forest Plan Revision Phases:



- Draft Land Management Plan & Draft EIS Development
 - The land management plan provides a framework for integrated resource management to guide project and activity decision making.
 - Plan components and monitoring plan are developed and proposed. Species of concern, wilderness and designated areas are evaluated.
 - Development of the purpose and needs of the plan revision. Once this is done the notice of intent is prepared that kick off the EIS. During this process significant and non-significant issues are identified, alternatives are developed, and the effects analysis is begun. It is then prepared for public comment and is later released as a draft EIS (DEIS).
- Final EIS and Objections
 - Comments on DEIS are analyzed and responded. The final EIS and the draft record of decision (ROD) are prepared. FRN clearance process for Notice of Opportunity to Object (NOO) and Notice of Availability (NOA) of FEIS are completed. final plan, FEIS, draft ROD are published and distributed.



What makes up a plan?



Southwestern Region Cibola National Forest MB-R3-03-31 September 2021

Cibola National Forest Land Management Plan

Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, Lincoln, McKinley, Sandoval, Sierra, Socorro, Torrance, and Valencia Counties, New Mexico



Southwest Region / Tonto National Forest MB-R3-12-13 March 2022

Tonto National Forest Land Management Plan

Coconino, Gila, Maricopa, Pinal, and Yavapai Counties, Arizona



Tonto National Forest Land Management Plan

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Developed Recreation (REC-DEV)

The suite of developed recreation sites on the forest includes its developed campgrounds, developed boat launches, and developed picnic and day use sites. Most, but not all of these sites, are found along the shorelines of Roosevelt, Apache, Canyon, Saguaro and Bartlett lakes and along the Lower Salt and Lower Verde rivers. Developed recreation sites are characterized by high levels of development where each site contains an assemblage of amenities such as bathrooms/toilets, parking areas, trash service, running water, picnic tables and interpretive kiosks in day use sites and tent pads, running water, fire rings, bathrooms/toilets, trash, RV dump stations, and picnic tables in campgrounds. Boat launches are characterized by amenities such as paved ramps, vessel boarding docks, parking, bathrooms/toilets, trash service and more. Many of these highly developed sites are eligible for developed recreation site fees under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.

Refer to the [Recreation](#) and [Water-Based Recreation](#) sections in Chapter 2, Forestwide Plan Direction, and the sections in [Chapter 3, Management Areas Plan Direction](#) for additional applicable plan direction.

Desired Conditions (REC-DEV-DC)

- 01 Developed recreation sites provide amenities appropriate to the setting. Amenities (e.g., water systems, fee machines, showers, toilets, grills, dump stations, and fire rings) function as intended with minimum downtime and inconvenience to visitors.
- 02 Developed recreation provides accessible opportunities and valuable services to the public.
- 03 The overall capacity of developed sites across the forest meets demand in high use seasons, including the accommodation of large groups where appropriate.
- 04 Developed campsites provide opportunities for both vehicle-based camping and tent camping.
- 05 Vegetation in developed sites enhances the recreational setting, scenic value, and user safety.

Objective (REC-DEV-O)

- 01 Within one year of plan approval, complete an occupancy and use order to establish quiet hours within developed campgrounds between 10pm and 6am¹².

¹² Quiet Hours enforceable under 36 CFR § 261.4 (Disorderly Conduct), 36 CFR § 261.10 & 8 (Occupancy and Use)

Tonto National Forest Land Management Plan

Standards (REC-DEV-S)

- 01 Required amenities¹³ (e.g., toilet facilities, trash receptacles) are provided for visitor use at sites where fees are charged.
- 02 Developed recreation sites shall be operated at current health and safety standards, as outlined in the Forest Service publication "Cleaning Recreation Sites," or more recent technical report.

Guidelines (REC-DEV-G)

- 01 Recreation site overflow areas should be used during periods of high use and when the short-term nature of the site is not likely to result in long-term resource damage and will not in conflict with active closure orders.

Management Approaches for Developed Recreation (REC-DEV-MA)

- 01 When evaluating to operate or close a site, consider the volume of use and public demands,

Tonto National Forest Land Management Plan

Watersheds and Riparian Areas

Table 21. Monitoring topics, questions, plan components, indicators, and measurement interval for watersheds and riparian areas

Monitoring Topics and Key Ecosystem Services Addressed	Monitoring Question	Selected Plan Components (plan component code)	Associated Indicators	Measurement Interval (years)
1 Status of select watersheds	M-01: What are the trends in watershed condition among select watershed?	Desired conditions for proper functioning and resilient watershed conditions capable of buffering climate change impacts (WAT-DC-03, WAT-DC-04)	Watershed condition indicators related to water quality, water quantity, aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, riparian/wetland vegetation, roads and trails, soils, fire regime, forest cover, rangeland vegetation, terrestrial invasive species, and forest health.	2-15
6 Ecosystem resiliency and climate change	7 Progress towards meeting desired conditions and objectives	Desired conditions that at-risk species have good habitat conditions and are resilient to maintain viable populations (WFP-OC-01, WFP-OC-02, WFP-OC-03)	Percent of streams classified as stable or functioning properly (e.g., those in Functioning Condition or similar metrics). Changes in hydrographs, base and streambank encroachment rates, and changes in water temperature.	
1 Status of select watersheds	M-02: Are management actions effective in maintaining or improving watershed integrity in priority watersheds?	Desired conditions for the health and productivity of watersheds (WAT-DC-01, WAT-DC-03, WAT-DC-06)	Watershed condition indicators related to water quality, water quantity, aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, riparian/wetland vegetation, roads and trails, soils, fire regime, forest cover, rangeland vegetation, terrestrial invasive species, and forest health.	2
2 Status of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems	4 Status of ecological conditions for at-risk species	Objectives to improve the conditions of priority watersheds (WAT-O-01, WAT-O-02)	Essential projects implemented.	
7 Progress towards meeting desired conditions and objectives	Key ecosystem service: water for consumption	Desired conditions that ecological conditions support at-risk species and conditions support good habitat conditions to maintain viable populations (WFP-OC-01, WFP-OC-02, WFP-OC-03)		





Five required plan components:

- Desired Conditions (Vision)
- Objectives (Strategy)
- Standards (Design Criteria)
- Guidelines (Design Criteria)
- Suitability of Lands (Strategy)

Refer to: 1909.12 Chapter 20 Land Management Plan

Every project and activity must be consistent with the applicable plan components.

Plan Components



Why is Land Management Planning Important?



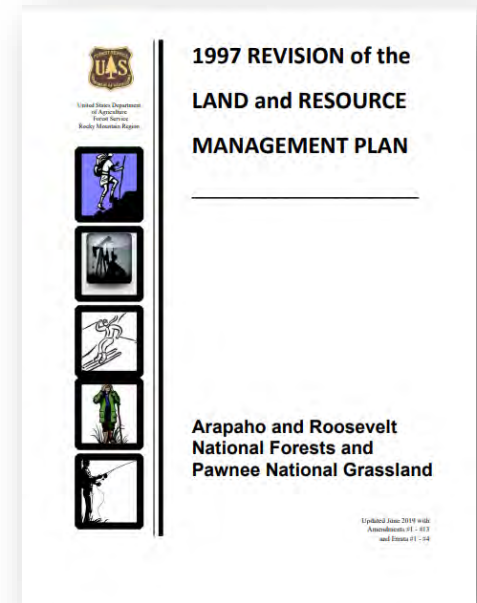
Land Management Plans are important because they:

- Provide direction for specialists for project-level implementation
- Give the public an understanding of how forest lands are managed and valued
- Incorporate cultural and traditional uses, socioeconomic values
- Serve as a social contract with public, tribes, partners to manage resources
- Develop 'all lands' approach

The Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forest and Pawnee Grasslands



- Current forest plan was written in 1997
 - [Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests Pawnee National Grassland - Planning \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/land-resource/land-use-planning/management-plans/arapaho-roosevelt-national-forests-pawnee-national-grassland-planning)
- There have been 13 plan amendments
- 4 errata
- 1 administrative correction
- The ARP is slated to start plan revision in 2027



Questions

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