

Forest Plan Implementation

Introduction – Forest Plan Implementation involves staged decision-making. This involves going from programmatic resource allocation direction in the Forest Plan to site-specific projects that may be implemented to achieve or maintain the desired conditions specified for management areas in the Forest Plan.

Sources of Desired Condition

- Forest-wide goals and objectives (Chapter 2 Forest Plan)
- Forest-wide standards and guidelines (Chapter 2 Forest Plan)
- Management Area Prescriptions (Chapter 3 Forest Plan)
 - Ecological Systems desired condition
 - Social Systems desired condition
- Description of the Preferred Alternative (Forest Plan)
- Record of Decision



Steps in the Forest Plan Implementation Process

1. Locate an area. This may be a Forest Service proposal or one from a member of the public. Someone may request a special use permit to use a specific area or we may identify an area where the existing condition is different from the desired condition.
2. Compare the desired condition with the existing condition to identify opportunities. (What needs to be done or what is wanted?) Example 1: Fuel loading is very high around the community of Hope. The desired condition specified in the Forest Plan is reduced fuel levels around communities, public roads and other public use areas. Example 2: A member of the public requests a special use permit for heli-hiking and heli-skiing. Using the Forest Plan CD one can quickly determine where this activity could be considered.
3. Identify possible management activities that are consistent with the Forest Plan. (How do we do it?) Example: The management area prescription applied to the area around Hope is "Forest Restoration" (314). Refer to the activities matrix to determine which

management activities are allowed in the Forest Restoration prescription to deal with the fuels build-up. Both, vegetation management and management ignited prescribed fire are allowed.

Note: Project plans need to be collaboratively developed and must be consistent with the best available science. This may involve review by public advisory committees and/or science advisory boards.

What the 1982 Planning Regulations say:

*(e) **Plan implementation.** As soon as practicable after approval of the plan, the Forest Supervisor shall ensure that, subject to valid existing rights, all outstanding and future permits, contracts, cooperative agreements, and other instruments for occupancy and use of affected lands are consistent with the plan. Subsequent administrative activities affecting such lands, including budget proposals, shall be based on the plan. The Forest Supervisor may change proposed implementation schedules to reflect differences between proposed annual budgets and appropriated funds. Such scheduled changes shall be considered an amendment to the forest plan, but shall not be considered a significant amendment, or require the preparation an environmental impact statement, unless the changes significantly alter the long-term relationship between levels of multiple-use goods and services projected under planned budget proposals as compared appropriations.*

What the Final Planning Rule says:

[Sec. 219.10 Site-specific decisions.](#)

*To the extent appropriate and practicable and subject to valid existing rights and appropriate statutes, the responsible official must provide opportunities for collaboration consistent with Sec. 219.12 through Sec. 219.18, follow the planning framework described in Secs. 219.4-219.6 and comply with Sec. 219.11 to make site-specific decisions. All site-specific decisions, including authorized uses of land, **must be consistent with the applicable plan.** If a proposed site-specific decision is not consistent with the applicable plan, the responsible official may modify the proposed decision to make it consistent with the plan, reject the proposal; or amend the plan to authorize the action.*

[Sec. 219.11 Monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management.](#)

(a) Plan monitoring strategy. Each plan must contain a practicable, effective, and efficient monitoring strategy to evaluate sustainability in the plan area ([Secs. 219.19-219.21](#)). The strategy must require monitoring of appropriate plan decisions and characteristics of sustainability.

Planning Documentation

[Sec. 219.30 Plan documentation.](#)

A plan is a repository of documents that integrates and displays the desired conditions, objectives, standards, and other plan decisions that apply to a unit of the National Forest System. The plan also contains maps, monitoring and evaluation results, the annual monitoring and evaluation report, and other information relevant to how the plan area is to be managed. Planning documents should be clear, understandable, and readily available for public review. Plan documents should be updated through amendments, revision, and routine maintenance (Sec. 219.31). Plan documents include, at a minimum, the following:

- (a) *A summary of the plan. The summary is a concise description of the plan that includes a summary of the plan decisions and a description of the plan area and appropriate planning units. The summary should include a brief description of the ecological, social, and economic environments within the plan area and the overall strategy for maintenance or restoration of sustainability, including desired conditions and objectives for their achievement. The summary also includes appropriate maps, a description of the transportation system, utility corridors, land ownership patterns and proposed land ownership adjustments, charts, figures, photographs, and other information to enhance understanding. (Executive Summary)*
- (b) *Display of public uses. The plan documents must identify the suitability of the plan area for various uses (Sec. 219.26) such as recreation uses, livestock grazing, timber harvest, and mineral developments. The plan documents must identify land where timber may not be harvested and where timber production is an objective (Sec. 219.28). The plan documents also must describe the limitations on the removal of timber (Sec. 219.29) and the standards for timber harvest and regeneration methods (Sec. 219.7(c)). (Forest Plan Map and Activity Matrix)*
- (c) *Plan decisions. The plan documents must display or describe the plan decisions (Sec. 219.7).*
- (d) *Display of actions and outcomes. The plan documents must also contain:*
- (1) *An annually updated list or other display of proposed, authorized, and completed actions to achieve desired conditions and objectives within the plan area; (SOPA)*
 - (2) *A 2-year schedule, updated annually, of anticipated outcomes, which may include anticipated uses, values, products, or services based on an estimate of Forest Service budget and capacity to perform the identified program of work. The estimate of Forest Service budget and capacity should be based on recent funding levels; (2 – Year Resource Action Plans)*
 - (3) *A 2-year summary, updated annually, of the actual outcomes which may include specific uses, values, products, or services provided as a result of completed site-specific actions; (2 – Year Resource Monitoring Summary)*
 - (4) *A projected range of outcomes which may include anticipated uses, values, products, and services for the next 15 years, assuming current or likely budgets while considering other spending levels as appropriate. These projections are estimates and as such often contain a high degree of uncertainty; they are intended to describe expected progress in achieving desired conditions and objectives within the plan area. The projections are to be updated during revision of each plan; (Chapter 2 EIS – Program Levels and Budget Allocations)*
 - (5) *A description of the monitoring strategy to occur in the plan area and the annual monitoring and evaluation report; and (Chapter 4 Forest Plan – Monitoring and Evaluation)*
 - (6) *A summary of the projected program of work, updated annually, including costs for inventories, assessments, proposed and authorized actions, and monitoring. The projected program of work must be based on reasonably anticipated funding levels. Reasonably anticipated funding levels should be based on recent funding levels. The plan documents must also include a description of the total current-year budget, funded actions, projections for future budgets over the next 2 years; and a display of the budget trends over at least the past 5 years. (Chapter 4 Forest Plan – Monitoring and Evaluation – Information Needs)*
- (e) *Other components. A plan must contain or reference a list of materials, Forest Service policies, and decisions used in forming plan decisions. The information should include, but is not limited to, lists of previous decision and environmental documents, assessments, conservation agreements and strategies, biological opinions,*

inventories, administrative studies, monitoring results, and research relevant to adoption of plan decisions. (Chapter 1 Forest Plan – Introduction)

What the Tongass has done

1. Established an Interagency Standards and Guidelines interpretation team.
2. Established an Interagency Monitoring and Evaluation oversight team.

Chugach National Forest Plan implementation documents

1. In the final revised Forest Plan we will produce two maps. One will be the final preferred alternative map, which represents our management intent and our recommendation to congress for management area prescriptions to be applied within the wilderness study area. The other map will be called the **Forest Plan Implementation Map** which will be the same as the preferred alternative except for the wilderness study area will be all one color representing the wilderness study area prescription (121).
2. Display Projected and completed Forest Plan actions and outcomes:
 - a. **SOPA** - Continue with the Schedule of Proposed Actions updated annually.
 - b. **2-Year action Plans** - Each resource shop should produce a 2-year schedule, updated annually, of anticipated outcomes which may include anticipated uses, values, products, or services based on an estimate of Forest Service budget and capacity to perform the identified program of work. The estimate of Forest Service budget and capacity should be based on recent funding levels.
 - c. **2-Year Monitoring Report** - Each resource shop should produce a 2-year summary, updated annually, of the actual outcomes, which may include specific uses, values, products, or services provided as a result of completed site-specific actions.

Examples of potential Forest Plan

Implementation/monitoring/information needs projects

- We will need to monitor visitor satisfaction with expected experiences.
- We will need to monitor visitor capacity levels to help make decisions on SUP requests as related to Plan Caps specified by prescription.
- Motorized vs. nonmotorized user conflicts. This may result in modifications to the access management plan. A free brochure needs to be produced for visitors to identify routes and trails, which are designated as open on a tear-round basis or seasonally. This would include a map showing routes and trails and how they are to be managed.
- If congress designated Wilderness areas or Wild and Scenic Rivers we will need to write management plans for them.