



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Sequoia National Forest  
Giant Sequoia National  
Monument

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Dear Interested Parties:

It has been over a year since we provided you with a formal update on our planning efforts for the Giant Sequoia National Monument Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Management Plan. In the months that I have been here as the Acting Forest Supervisor, I have had the opportunity to speak to several of you, and I have been impressed with the passion and commitment that you have given to this effort. Your continuing engagement and support is noteworthy, and I thank you for that.

As you know, the public review period on the Draft EIS and Management Plan ended on December 10, 2010. We received over 79,000 public comments on the draft documents. Since December, our dedicated interdisciplinary planning team, regional experts, and scientists have been reviewing and developing responses to these well thought out and substantive comments. The team is working diligently to finalize the EIS and Management Plan, including making changes to the documents in response to your comments. Before finalizing the documents, a science review of the Final EIS will be completed. Any needed changes to the Final EIS from the science review will be incorporated before it is released to the public, which is planned for the spring of 2012.

The Forest Service will be using the objection procedures found in the 2000 Planning Rule, codified at Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Section 219.32 (2010), pursuant to the transition provisions of the 2000 Planning Rule, 36 CFR Sec. 219.35, Appendix A ("Interpretive Rule Related to Sec. 219.35(b)"). This process builds upon early participation and collaboration efforts, with the intention of resolving concerns before a final decision is made. When the Final EIS is completed, a notice of availability will be published in the Federal Register, which will begin a *30-day* objection period. If any objections are received, the Forest Service will work with those who have submitted objections in an attempt to resolve the issues. The Regional Forester, the deciding official, will sign the Record of Decision (ROD) and the Final Management Plan once the objection process is completed. Under the provisions of the 2000 Planning Rule, there is no administrative appeal process after the ROD has been issued. 36 CFR Sections 219.32(c) and 219.35, Appendix A.

After a tremendous effort from all of you, our interdisciplinary planning team, and other scientists who have been involved in the process, we are drawing closer to our goal of a Final EIS, Management Plan, and ROD for the Giant Sequoia National Monument. Giant sequoias have persisted on this planet for millions of years, which is a testament to their resilience. The Monument planning effort represents our promise to the American people to protect and care for this national treasure, which has been entrusted to the U. S. Forest Service to manage on their behalf.

If you have any questions, please contact Annette Fredette, Monument Team Leader, or me, at (559) 784-1500.

Sincerely,

DEBRA L. WHITMAN  
Acting Forest Supervisor

