

Forest Service News

Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument

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Monumental Outlook Over The Horizon

(What's Happening on the Sequoia National Forest
Giant Sequoia National Monument)

By Tina Terrell, Forest Supervisor
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PORTERVILLE, CA – Hello Sequoia National Forest/Giant Sequoia National Monument Stakeholders!

This is probably not exciting news but the Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument issued a notice of intent last month to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to establish management direction for the land and resources within the Giant Sequoia National Monument (GSNM), as created by Presidential Proclamation on April 15, 2000 (that is a mouthful!).

The draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Giant Sequoia National Monument Management Plan is expected to be available for public comment in the early spring of 2009; the final EIS and record of decision (ROD) are expected to be published in the fall of 2009. A separate document representing the Management Plan in non-technical language will also be published.

The Giant Sequoia National Monument (327,769 acres) was established to provide protection for a variety of objects of historic and scientific interest, including giant sequoia trees and their surrounding ecosystem. The plan will provide for and encourage continued public access and use consistent with the purposes of the Giant Sequoia National Monument. A range of alternatives will be analyzed, including the no-action alternative, which is the current management direction.

In the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process terms, this Notice of Intent initiates the scoping period. We expect the scoping period to last up to one year during which there will be a variety of meetings and workshops. We are looking forward to engaging the scientific community and the public over the next six to eight months as we learn, ask, analyze, and question management options for the giant sequoias and the southern Sierra Nevada ecosystem. Three meetings are being planned at this time.

The first meeting will be co-hosted with The Nature Conservancy and will include stakeholders to discuss and analyze different fire and fuels treatments on the landscape. Last February (2007) we held our initial meeting to introduce the public to the Stewardship and Fireshed Assessment process. **The second meeting** will be a “dialogue with scientists” to discuss the science advisories submitted in 2003 when the Science Advisory Board concluded their report. **The third meeting** will be a Science Symposium co-hosted with Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, the Forest Service Research Station, and the United States Geological Survey. The Science Symposium will focus on six major topics dealing with the southern Sierra ecosystems and the impacts of climate change.

I know these are interesting and challenging times, so we are taking advantage of this unique opportunity to work across boundaries as we learn from and with each other. The information obtained from all three of these science meetings will help us in developing the management plan for the Giant Sequoia National Monument. We want the public engaged and participating in these science meetings, so stay tuned for more details.

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