



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

2005

Hiawatha National Forest

Reviewer's Guide to the

- ▶ Draft Environmental Impact Statement
- ▶ Proposed Forest Plan



"The vast possibilities of our great future will become realities only if we make ourselves responsible for that future." Gifford Pinchot, 1st Chief of the Forest Service

Steps in Revising the Forest Plan



Welcome

Thank you for participating in revising the Hiawatha National Forest’s Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan).

It is not necessary for you to read every page of the Draft EIS and Proposed Plan to understand and comment on the contents. It is important to understand the purpose behind Forest Plan Revision, the relationship between different sections in the documents and how the Forest Service responds to comments.

This guide provides an overview of Forest Plan revision, will help you navigate the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Proposed Forest Plan and provides guidance on commenting. This guide is not a substitute for the information in the Draft EIS or Proposed Forest Plan.

What you’ll need:

- ▶ This review guide (optional)
- ▶ The Draft EIS or Executive Summary
- ▶ The proposed Forest Plan
- ▶ Map package
- ▶ Blank paper to take notes on and/or comment form (enclosed)
- ▶ Internet access (optional)
- ▶ Approximately 1 day (+8 hours)

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Speak the language

If you are entering unfamiliar territory as you prepare to review the Draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plan, you are not alone. There are many key terms that are peculiar to National Forest planning and have specific connotations. Here are a few key terms for revision. Additional terms can be located in Chapter 6 of the DEIS.

Proposed Action. The project (revising the Forest Plan), set of activities, or decision that a federal agency intends to implement, as defined in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations.

Purpose and Need. This is a general statement of what, where, how, when and why the agency is proposing an action. It sets the scope and range for issues and alternatives carried forward for analysis.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A statement of environmental effects required for major federal actions under NEPA. After release of the Draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plan, an interdisciplinary team will review public comments and may modify the Proposed Forest Plan and the supporting analysis described in the Draft EIS. The Final EIS will then be issued along with a Record of Decision.

Issue. A subject or question of wide-spread public or internal discussion or interest regarding management of National Forest System.

Indicators. In the analysis of alternatives, indicators are used to measure the effects under resource issues expected to result from implementation of alternatives.

Alternative. An option for responding to the purpose and need.

Management Area. The Forest is generally divided into areas that carry common management objectives and specific management direction.

Collaborative Planning. The Forest Service works with the public, state and

local agencies, tribal governments, regulatory agencies, other federal agencies and others to assure the most efficient and effective management possible.

Ecosystem Management. An ecological approach to natural resource management to assure productive, healthy ecosystem by blending social, economic, physical and biological needs and values.

Range of Alternatives. Options for addressing the proposed action. Issues raised by the public, management concerns and resource opportunities determine the appropriate range of alternatives.

Preferred Alternative. The alternative initially preferred by the Regional Forester, selected from the range of alternatives and effects identified in the Draft EIS. It is the alternative that he believes best resolves the management problems for the National Forest within the context of the mission and priorities of the Forest Service. This selection will be based on the completed analysis of alternatives that is disclosed in the Draft EIS with a description of all alternatives and associated environmental effects.

Proposed Forest Plan. The Proposed Forest Plan is based on the preferred alternative, and is described in the Draft EIS. The Proposed Forest Plan results from extensive analysis and considerations addressed in the draft EIS.

Selected Alternative. The alternative that is ultimately selected by the Regional Forester to become the Final Revised Forest Plan. The selected alternative is described in the Record of Decision (ROD) along with the rationale for its selection.

Final Revised Forest Plan. Based on the selected alternative, a final revised Forest Plan will then be issued. This plan will guide Forest management for the next 10 to 15 years.

Planning for the Future

Forest management is a long journey. Forest Plans define the goals and objectives for management for a 10 to 15-year time span. Near the end of the period, it is important to evaluate the present situation, review the desired conditions, and consult with specialists and the public to determine the best course to take into the future. This is why Forest Plans are revised.

Hiawatha National Forest's current Forest Plan was implemented in 1986, and was the first effort to formalize direction for management decisions pertaining specifically to the Hiawatha National Forest.

Why Revise Forest Plans?

National Forest Management Plans are generally revised on a 10 to 15 year cycle. (National Forest Management Act, 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 219.10[g])

Forest Plans are revised to address:

- ▶ Monitoring and evaluation results from implementing the current plan.
- ▶ Forest plan and project-level appeal issues and decisions.
- ▶ Lawsuit issues and decisions.
- ▶ New scientific information.
- ▶ Changed conditions of the land.
- ▶ Changing public demands and public input.

Re-Vision

The Forest Supervisor has determined that while current forest conditions are good, some changes have occurred since the existing Forest Plan was release. It is time to refine the vision for future management.

The Draft EIS meets the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirement for analyzing potential environmental effects for actions proposed on national forests.

The Proposed Forest Plan is based on the alternative preferred by the Regional Forester after consulting with the Hiawatha's Forest Supervisor. The Proposed Forest Plan was developed to provide insight into what the final revised Forest Plan might look like.

A New Look

The revised Forest Plan will look different and will function differently from the current Plan. The current Plan includes detailed direction that often duplicates another source and can actually limit the options that may be considered for a project.

The revised Plan is more strategic, and will not repeat direction included in Forest Service handbooks or manuals, Memorandums of Understanding and regional or national directives.

About the Forest Plan

Forest Plans are also known as **Land and Resource Management Plans**. The Forest Plan assures coordination of multiple-uses including outdoor recreation, timber, watershed, wildlife and fish, wilderness, and sustained yield of products and services. Multiple use allows for a range of activities to occur across the Forest. A forest plan does not make site-specific decisions, but it does provide a hierarchy of direction.

A Forest Plan makes six key decisions for managing a national forest on a landscape-scale in the long-term. (36 CFR 219, 1982 regulations):

1. **What.** Desired conditions, multiple use goals and objectives are identified for the Forest.
2. **When.** Measurable steps are defined with a time-frame towards accomplishing goals and objectives (Generally 10-15 year time period of the Forest Plan)
3. **How.** Standards and guidelines provide more detailed direction.
4. **Where.** The entire Forest is allocated among management areas that have different management emphasis. Lands are determined to be suited or unsuited for timber management.
5. **Feedback loop.** Monitoring and evaluating requirements are addressed.
6. **Additional action needed.** Recommendations may be made to Congress (i.e. for wilderness designation, etc.)

Hierarchy of Forest Plan Direction

Forest-wide Goals and Desired Conditions. These are broad statements describing how the Forest should look and function with successful implementation of the Forest Plan. All of the other levels of management direction are linked to the forest-wide desired condition. **Example:** *“Reduce the impacts from invasive species by restoring the forest’s health in order to be resilient to the effects of invasive insects, pathogens, plants, animals and other pests.”*

Forest-wide Objectives. Statements of measurable and planned biological, physical, social and economic outcomes that move the Forest towards achieving desired conditions. **Example:** *“In this planning period, identify and map areas of non-native invasive species concentration on the forest.”*

Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines. Standards are specific **required** actions that must be incorporated into future decisions to help achieve the desired conditions.

Example: *“Vegetation will be managed within the ecological capabilities of the forest.”*

Guidelines are specific **suggested** actions to help achieve desired conditions. **Example:** *“Vegetation management activities should encourage intrastand diversity and mast producing species.”*

Management Area Direction. Desired conditions, goals, objectives standards and guidelines identified for specific management areas that will help achieve forest-wide desired conditions. **Example:** For MA 1.2, one of the desired conditions is: *“A mix of aspen, hardwoods and conifers will be managed to provide diversity for a variety of wildlife species....”*

Project Decisions. Natural resource managers develop site-specific decisions that contribute to achieving the Forest-wide desired condition. **Example:** *“A timber sale project would be designed to meet all of the above direction while meeting all other applicable regulatory requirements and Forest Service directives.”*

Points of Interest

The analysis in the Draft EIS and the direction in the Proposed Forest Plan are driven by the Purpose and Need and defined by issues and regulatory requirements identified at the early stages of revision. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an analysis of potential environmental impacts for Federal activities that pose a significant environmental effect. In the Proposed Forest Plan, each stated desired condition and goal addresses the Purpose and Need as it relates to one or more resource issues. Each objective, standard and guideline provide direction on the “how” and “when” to reach the desired condition.

Purpose & Need *(the starting point)*

See Chapter 1 of Draft EIS

Issues relating to the Purpose & Need include requirements and concerns to be addressed by Forest Plan Revision identified by interested individuals and other government agencies.

Questions to ask:

- ▶ *What is the stated Purpose & Need?*
- ▶ *Are your issues accurately represented?*
- ▶ *Are all key issues included?*

(Remember, to be considered appropriate, issues must fit within the stated Purpose & Need for revising the Forest Plan.)

Alternatives *(based on issues)*

See Chapter 2 of Draft EIS

Range of reasonable, different ways to address the issues by altering the frequency, approach, or amounts of management activities.

Questions to ask:

- ▶ *Are there other alternatives that better meet the Purpose & Need?*
- ▶ *How could alternatives be revised to better address the range of issues?*
- ▶ *Is there at least one alternative or parts of alternatives that addresses your concerns?*

Analysis *(based on issues)*

See Chapter 3 of Draft EIS

Potential environmental effects of each alternative.

Questions to ask:

- ▶ *How well does the environmental effects analysis consider all true effects anticipated and does it utilize the best information available?*

Proposed Plan *(based on Preferred Alternative)*

A proposed plan is developed for the Forest, based on the alternative preferred by the Regional Forester.

Questions to ask:

- ▶ *Are the management areas defined and allocated appropriately for the theme of the preferred alternative?*
- ▶ *Do the standards and guidelines address the stated goals and objectives?*
- ▶ *If implemented, are the trade-offs reasonable while meeting the most needs and concerns?*

Deciding Where to Start

You do not need to read every word or even every section to answer the questions that are most important to you, especially once you understand the connections between sections of the documents.

The following pages map out (outline) the contents in the Draft EIS and the Proposed Forest Plan. Different approaches can be used to review the documents.

Answer these Questions to Choose a Route

- Q. Do you want an overview of the Draft EIS and the Proposed Forest Plan?** See...The Executive Summary, then read the Proposed Forest Plan and view maps of alternatives.
- Q. What topics are you most interested in (water, wildlife, recreation, etc)?** See...Chapter 1 of Draft EIS for a discussion on the issues, then track individual resource issues through the effects analysis in Chapter 3 and relevant appendices. Continue on to the Proposed Forest Plan to see how management direction is provided for these resources.
- Q. Are you interested in the potential effects for specific areas of the Forest?** See...Chapters 2 and 3 of Draft EIS and the map package.
- Q. Are you interested in the proposed management for specific areas of the Forest?** See...Chapter 3 of the Proposed Forest Plan and map package.
- Q. Are you interested in specific impact analyses?** See...Chapter 3 of the Draft EIS and relevant appendices.
- Q. Are you looking for a description of the alternatives that were considered?** See...Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS.
- Q. Do you want to know what kind of management direction is proposed?** See...Chapter 2 of the Proposed Forest Plan.

Appendices are presented as background or reference information related to specifics in the main part of the documents. You will usually only go to an appendix after finding a reference in one of the chapters of the document.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (dEIS) Outline

The Draft EIS represents interdisciplinary (from many resource specialists) input and analysis, public review and comment, a defined decision process, and subsequent disclosure of the analysis and decision.

| Draft Environmental Impact Statement | What's in there? |
|---|--|
| <p>Chapter 1: <i>Purpose of and Need for Action</i></p> <p>Answers the “Who, What, When, Where, Why” questions about the proposed action (Forest Plan Revision).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Describes Proposed Action (revise Forest Plan). ▶ Discusses reasons for revision including legal requirements, changed conditions and need for change in management. ▶ Explains any other analyses that influence the proposed action. ▶ Explains decisions to be made and identifies the decision maker. ▶ Summarizes the scoping (input from interested parties) and significant issues that will be addressed or deleted from further analysis. These issues frame the development and analysis of alternatives. ▶ Previews remaining chapters of the Draft EIS. |
| <p>Chapter 2: <i>Alternatives Including the Preferred Alternative</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Describes process used to develop the alternatives. ▶ Explains range of alternatives and any alternatives considered but dropped from further analysis. ▶ Describes alternatives (potential actions including the “no action” alternative. ▶ Summarizes the environmental consequences of implementing each alternative, including projected outcomes and related mitigations. ▶ Compares projected outcomes of alternatives. ▶ Identifies the preferred alternative. |
| <p>Chapter 3: <i>Affected Environment and Environmental Effects</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Describes physical, biological, social and economic setting of the Forest. ▶ Describes the area of analysis for each issue and the expected outcomes for each alternative. ▶ Describes the relationship of short-term uses and long-term outcomes. ▶ Discloses any irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources. |

| Draft Environmental Impact Statement | What's in there? |
|--|---|
| Chapter 4: <i>Preparers</i> | ▶ Lists the people involved in preparing the draft EIS. |
| Chapter 5: <i>Agencies consulted and list of recipients</i> | ▶ Lists agencies, organizations and individuals that provided input. ▶ Lists who received a copy of the draft EIS. |
| Chapter 6: <i>Glossary</i> | ▶ Defines terms used in the draft EIS. |
| Appendices | ▶ Supports and supplies expanded information to the main document. |

Proposed Forest Plan Outline

The document often referred to as “The Forest Plan,” is actually a written strategy that is based on the alternative preferred by the Regional Forester.

| Proposed Forest Plan | What's in there? |
|---|---|
| Preface | ▶ Discusses the general purpose of the Forest Plan, the relationship of the Plan to other documents and the Plan's organization. |
| Chapter 1: <i>Goals and Objectives</i> | ▶ Goals describe the conditions the Forest will strive to achieve through implementation of the Forest Plan. Objectives are measurable accomplishments intended to move the Forest towards the goals. |
| Chapter 2: <i>Forest-wide Management Direction</i> | ▶ Presents management direction for the Forest as a whole. Provides Forest-wide standards and guidelines. |
| Chapter 3: <i>Management Area Direction</i> | ▶ Presents management direction specific to management areas. Provides desired conditions, purpose and standards and guidelines. |
| Chapter 4: <i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i> | ▶ Includes direction for implementing the Forest Plan. Presents a plan for monitoring and evaluating the effects of management practices. |
| Appendices | ▶ Supports and supplies expanded information to the main document. |

Tips on Effective Commenting

Perhaps you have already been involved in identifying issues and developing alternatives for Forest Plan revision. Now is your chance to have your say again and let the Forest Service know if we “hit the mark” on the issues and alternatives as defined in the Draft EIS and the management direction presented in the Proposed Forest Plan. There are a few important points you need to know about how the Forest Service responds to comments and how we can both get the most out of your review of these documents.

...After all, if you are taking the time to comment, you want it to count – right?

How important is my comment? Very! This is your opportunity to affect alternatives and analysis that form the basis for a final decision.

How are comments used? All comments on the Draft EIS and the Proposed Forest Plan will be considered.

As a result:

- Alternatives may be modified;
- New alternatives may be identified and analyzed;
- Analysis may be expanded, modified or adjusted;
- Factual corrections will be made.

Will I get a response to my comment?

Substantive comments and Forest Service responses will be documented in the Final EIS.

- ▶ A **substantive comment** provides factual information, professional opinion, or informed judgment that is germane to the action being proposed.
- ▶ Substantive comments are **specific, comparative or solution-oriented**.
- ▶ **This is not a voting process.** Comments are considered on basis of content not quantity.
- ▶ While all comments on the Draft EIS and Proposed Plan will be considered, we can only provide detailed responses to substantive comments.
- ▶ Substantive comments and Forest Service responses will be documented in the Final EIS.
- ▶ Substantive comments are considered by decision-maker and may be cited in the Record of Decision.

This is the kind of comment we can respond to: *“There should be more even-aged northern hardwood management in Management Area 2.3 because....”* (Example of substantive comment.)

The Forest Service cannot respond in the Final EIS to these kinds of comments:

“The Proposed Plan looks good.” (Example of non-specific comment)

“I think the Regional Forester should select Alternative X to implement.” (Example of opinion statement without supporting reasons)

Ready to Begin...

Remember these are ***draft*** documents and your input will help shape the final analysis and decision.

If you have questions or need help, please call:

- ▶ Dave Maercklein, Forest Planner ----- 906.789.3301
- ▶ Ted Schiltz, Assistant Forest Planner ----- 906.789.3346
- ▶ Lee Ann Loupe, Public Information ----- 906.789.3329

You can also e-mail us at: r9_Hiawatha_revision@fs.fed.us

After you complete your review, please send your comments to the address on the comment form.

Check out the Forest Plan Revision web page for additional information. ***[Http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hiawatha/revision/rev_welcome.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hiawatha/revision/rev_welcome.html)***.

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Comment Form

Please use the form on the following pages, if possible, to offer your views on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the Proposed Forest Plan for the Hiawatha National Forest. Please note that all comments are part of the planning record, which is public information.

Comments from the public help the Regional Forester choose an alternative for implementation. All comments will be summarized in the Final EIS.

Mail comments to:
Hiawatha National Forest
Forest Plan Revision
2727 N. Lincoln Rd.
Escanaba, MI 49829

Fax comments to: 906.789.3311

E-mail to: r9_Hiawatha_revision@fs.fed.us

Comment on the web: http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hiawatha/revision/rev_welcome.html.

Your name _____ Title (if applicable) _____

Organization (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

You may comment on any parts of the draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plan. The following topics will help you focus your comments and help us to better respond to your comments. You do not have to fill in every section in order to comment. At the end of the form, you will find a place to comment on other issues, alternatives, management direction and monitoring. Feel free to use additional pages.

Issues in the draft EIS (please check the topics you are commenting on)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Vegetation | <input type="checkbox"/> Plant Habitat | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Old Growth | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Habitat | <input type="checkbox"/> Wild & Scenic Rivers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allowable Sale Quantity | <input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic and Social |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Candidate RNAs | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation System |

Proposed Forest Plan (please check the topics you are commenting on)

- Forest-wide Management Direction
- Management Area Direction
- Monitoring Plan

Any other comments regarding the draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plan?