



FAQs: R&D Tribal Engagement Roadmap

Date: December 12, 2013

What is the R&D Tribal Engagement Roadmap (Roadmap)?

For the past few years, Forest Service Research & Development (R&D) has been attempting to deepen and strengthen its partnerships with Tribes, native groups and intertribal organizations. Prior to this initiative, engagement with Tribes and tribal organizations occurred mainly at the scientist level, where individual scientists pursued partnerships and projects with these groups. R&D is attempting to institutionalize a tribal research program to ensure the organization as a whole is appropriately engaging with Tribes and native communities, so that these ties are not broken if/when particular individuals leave. The Roadmap describes the priority objectives and actions that R&D has already undertaken, and that we hope to pursue over the next few years to meet this goal.

What are the priority activities for R&D?

The six priority objectives included in the Roadmap can broadly be described as:

1. Enhancing partnerships with Tribes, native communities and intertribal organizations
2. Improve policy and training
3. “Cultural Transformation” of the R&D workforce
4. Improve internal Forest Service coordination on tribal issues
5. Conduct joint research with Tribes on issues of mutual concern
6. Decision support to Tribal land and natural resource managers

Examples of each type of activity are included in the Roadmap.

Who is the intended audience for the Roadmap?

The Roadmap is intended to highlight and communicate these objectives and activities for both internal and external audiences, as well as support Administration priorities for Tribal engagement. By providing clear communication about the importance of Tribal Engagement and share examples of successes to R&D staff and partners, we hope to encourage R&D scientists and staff to conduct their own engagement efforts, as well as invite external partners to approach us about how R&D can better engage and meet their natural resource science and research needs.

Does the Roadmap change R&D policy or strategic direction?

No. The Roadmap is a communication document, not a policy document. Tribal Relations policy for R&D can be found in the USFS Directives and the USFS Tribal Relations Strategic Plan. The R&D objectives described in the Roadmap are supportive of the policies and goals contained in the agency-wide policy documents.

The USFS Tribal Relations Directives are currently being revised, and these were opened for Tribal consultation in June 2013, with the goal of finalizing them in calendar year 2014, and these include a number of policy changes relevant to R&D.

Where can I get more information about USFS research priorities?

Another part of the R&D tribal engagement effort, and a policy change included in the DRAFT Tribal Relations Directives, is the establishment of designated Tribal liaisons at each Research Station. These liaisons are available to help link you to available research results, as well as provide a conduit for providing input into the Station's research priorities and work programs. Your local liaison can be found on the R&D Tribal Engagement webpages at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/research/tribal-engagement/liaisons>

Can I still work with my local contacts in the Forest Service?

Yes. One of the Roadmap objectives is to improve our coordination internally in the agency, so we are hoping to increase our communication and collaborations with the Tribal Relations Program Managers in the National Forest System and State and Private Forestry branches of the USFS. Our R&D Station tribal liaisons will be reaching out to these individuals, so you should be able to work indirectly with R&D through these individuals if that is more convenient for you (though we of course welcome direct contact as well).

Will there be an opportunity to comment on the Roadmap?

At this time a formal public comment process for the Roadmap is not planned, as it is a communications rather than a policy document. However, we are currently inviting informal comments and we will be opening the document for Tribal consultation from January 10 to May 11, 2014. Comments, either formally from a Tribe as part of consultation or informally as part of the outreach effort, can be sent to Chris Farley (cfarley@fs.fed.us) and they will be considered before the Roadmap is finalized in 2014. All consultation comments will receive a formal response before the document is finalized.

When will the Roadmap be finalized?

The Roadmap will be opened for 120-days of Tribal Consultation beginning January 10, 2014. After that 120-day period and barring the need for significant changes due to feedback received, it is anticipated that the document will be quickly finalized in summer 2014.

Contact for More Information:

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