



Environmental Analysis and Decision Making

Fast Facts



The Goal

The goal of the Environmental Analysis and Decision Making effort in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service is to increase the health, diversity, resilience, and productivity of national forests and grasslands by increasing the efficiency of environmental analysis and decision-making procedures to accomplish more work on the ground. All Forest Service branches—the National Forest System, State and Private Forestry, Research and Development, and Business Operations—are fully engaged and committed to improving processes and policies that guide environmental analysis and decision making as well as working to affect change in the culture that drives it.



The Need

The Forest Service will improve processes to be more efficient and effective in sustaining the health, diversity, resilience, and productivity of forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations, with our existing capacity.

- More than 80 million acres of National Forest System lands are at severe risk from insect, disease, and wildfire.
- Environmental analysis and decision-making procedures are taking an average of 4 years to complete and costing about \$1 million a day.
- More than 6,000 special use permits are waiting to be completed, which impacts more than 7,000 businesses and 120,000 jobs.



Achieving the Goal

The Forest Service is building on past and ongoing efforts to implement a comprehensive, national approach to reforming agency culture, policies, and procedures through the following six activities: training our employees, examining and reforming Forest Service policies, improving efficiency through technology, developing new performance standards, improving consultation with other agencies, and changing the way we do business.



Increase Efficiency and Reduce Costs

The Forest Service will remain true to the responsibility of environmental stewardship by:

- Continuing to follow the law and deliver scientific-based, high-quality environmental analysis that leads to sound land management decisions and honors our stewardship responsibilities.
- Decreasing cost, increasing efficiency by 20 percent, and implementing comprehensive, national environmental analysis and decision-making improvements in 2019.



Provide jobs and Economic Benefits

The Forest Service will continue to provide jobs and contribute to the economic health of communities through improved and sustainable National Forest System land use and access opportunities.



Enlisting Field Experts and Partners

The Forest Service is enlisting the experience and skill of experts in the field and across all levels of the agency, as well as working with partners and Tribes, by:

- Encouraging employees at all levels of the Forest Service to invest and engage in the effort.
- Conducting regional and national-level round table events to tap into the valuable knowledge, expertise, and networks of agency partners and Tribes.

