



## Environmental Analysis and Decision Making External Question and Answers

### What is the goal of the Environmental Analysis and Decision Making effort?

The goal of the Environmental Analysis and Decision Making (EADM) 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.

### Why is the Forest Service working on improving environmental analysis and decision making?

The Forest Service must 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. To mitigate risk associated with fire and disease, the agency must move cost effectively and quickly to restore more than 80 million acres of National Forest System land. Additionally, more than 6,000 special use permits are waiting to be completed, which affects more than 7,000 businesses and 120,000 jobs.

After examining and learning from the past, we are creating a new future—one that effectively uses the skill and talent of our employees and has efficient and effective processes. Changes to improve our environmental analysis and decision-making processes and procedures are critical to sustaining the health and diversity of the forests and grasslands we steward and the viability of communities and customers we serve.

### What activities is the Forest Service working on to achieve the goal of the EADM effort?

The Forest Service is building on past and ongoing efforts to implement a comprehensive, national approach to transforming agency culture, policies, and procedures. To better manage for healthy, diverse, resilient, and productive forests and grasslands, the agency is undertaking the following six activities.

- **Train Our Employees:** Enhance training efforts to increase the efficiency of subject-matter experts as they perform work under the National Environmental Policy Act and other environmental laws.
- **Examine and Reform Forest Service Policy:** Reform compliance policies under the National Environmental Policy Act and other environmental laws by expanding use of categorical exclusions, improving process efficiency, and enhancing coordination with other agencies.
- **Improve Efficiency Through Technology:** Reform, streamline, and develop standard approaches and electronic templates for categorical exclusions, environmental assessments, and administrative records.
- **Develop New Performance Standards:** Develop measures that reflect the Forest Service's commitment to change by strengthening accountability and ensuring a focus on change implementation.
- **Improve Consultation With Other Agencies:** Form national task forces to review and make recommendations on processes associated with consultation requirements under the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act.
- **Change the Way We Do Business:** Improve efficiency by strengthening project design and implementation, focusing on environmental analysis, more effectively integrating public engagement,



incorporating innovation, and working closely with partners and agency staff to identify new ways to accomplish our mission.

### **Who's involved in the EADM effort?**

The Chief of the Forest Service and leaders from the highest levels of the agency are looking to employees to commit their passion and skills to improve how we perform environmental analysis and decision making. The goal is to improve the condition of our forests and grasslands to ensure they are diverse, healthy, resilient, and productive. Employees were recruited from across the Nation at all levels of the agency and asked to play key roles in groups—called cadres—to help develop and implement this effort. Cadres will advise, inform, and engage at all levels of the Forest Service. The cadres will share their lessons-learned and network with each other to help identify ideas, innovations, and opportunities that could be adopted nationally.

### **How can Forest Service partners be involved in the EADM effort?**

Through collective learning opportunities and other collaborative efforts, the agency will tap into the valuable knowledge, expertise, and networks of those we serve. Working with partners and tribes, the Forest Service will discover creative solutions to working more efficiently and effectively, so we all can enjoy diverse, healthy, resilient, and productive forests and grasslands long into the future. For more information and ways to contribute, visit the [Environmental Analysis and Decision Making effort](#) website.

### **How will Forest Service employees engage in the EADM effort?**

Forest Service employees will contribute innovative ideas and commit their knowledge, skills, and experiences to help the agency design and implement improved EADM processes and procedures. Employees understand that throughout the effort, the Forest Service will continue to follow the law and deliver scientific-based, high-quality environmental analyses that lead to sound land management decisions and honor the agency's stewardship responsibilities.

### **How will the EADM effort impact communities?**

Improving EADM processes and procedures will contribute to providing jobs and economic benefits for communities and being responsive to the American people in a manner that is timely and less costly. 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.

