The USDA Forest Service recently adopted a new planning rule for the development of land management plans (plans) for National Forest System (NFS) lands that includes the provision of ecosystem services as a major objective:

“Plans will guide management of NFS lands so that they... have the capacity to provide people and communities with ecosystem services...”

Also key, the Planning Rule requires each National Forest to provide, “meaningful opportunities for public participation throughout the plan revision process” (36 CFR § 219.4).
This case study describes current forest plan revision efforts for three national forests in the Pacific Southwest Region. These forests are the Inyo, Sierra, and Sequoia National Forests.
Three Phase Planning Process that is Continuous....
Sierra Cascades Dialog

The Sierra Cascades Dialog brings people with diverse viewpoints together to discuss and think about issues of importance in managing national forests and grasslands across the Sierra Nevada and Cascades mountain ranges. Dialogs provide an opportunity for learning, shared meaning, aligned action, mutual respect and understanding different perspectives. The Dialog is a rare opportunity to discuss issues as a region. The outcomes of the dialog influence the management strategies of the Pacific Southwest Region of the Forest Service.

Dialog Goals
- The mission of the forest service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Participants
- All meetings are open to the public. Everyone is welcome to participate. The Dialog strives for age, cultural, geographic and socioeconomic diversity among participants.

Who Attends
- County Governments
- Environmental Organizations
- Fire Safe Councils
- Industry
- Land Managers, including Forest Service staff and leadership
- Private Landowners
- Recreation Groups
- Rural and Urban Communities
- Scientists
- State Government
- Tribes
- Water Agency
- Youth

More Information:
DEB WHITALL, Forest Service
707-562-8823 | email: dwhitall@fs.fed.us
www.fs.usda.gov/pnro/15/SierraCascadesDialog

Steering Committee
The Steering Committee guides the dialog process, helping to frame discussion topics and the meeting format.
- Deb Whitall, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region (Regional Leader)
- Jin Budworth, Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- Steve Bink, California Forestry Association
- George Carr, Board of Forestry
- Peter Driscoll
- Robert Wood, Region 5 Tribal Programs
- Amy Crater, California Off Road Vehicle Association
- Stacy Pepper, Regional Council of Rural Counties
- Trinidad H. James, Region 5
- Jon Zaring, N.C Cooperative Enterprise
- Caitlin McCaw, O.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution
- Jen Pugh, Region 5 Planning
- Frank Stamped, California Fire Safe Council
- Diana Streed, Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- Edmund Sullivan, Placer County Planning Department
- Craig Thomas, Sierra Forest Watch
- Stan Van Velzen, Wilderness
- Reid Mawen, Sustainable Forest Action Coalition
- Steve Wilson, Colusa County Supervisor
- Denise Yacso, Region 5
- Gene Bartos, California Center for Collaborative Policy

National Ecosystem Services Partnership Federal Resource Management and Ecosystem Services Project
Sierra Cascades Dialog

Dialog on Reaching Common Ground through understanding Positions, Interests, and Values using Interest-Based Problem-Solving (IBPS) techniques.
Years 1 & 2 – Science Synthesis, Assessments and Public Involvement Plans

Science Synthesis Report

Bio-Regional and Forest Scale Assessments

Internal and External Capacity to Collaborate Plan
Public Involvement Plans

Science Synthesis Report

Bio-Regional and Forest Scale Assessments

Internal and External Capacity to Collaborate Plan
Public Involvement Plans

National Forests will use input to develop Public Involvement Plans
Creating a Public Involvement Model

National Ecosystem Services Partnership Federal Resource Management and Ecosystem Services Project
Why is this important?
Successful Public Engagement

Forest Service + Stakeholders = Shared Expectations

ABOUT National Ecosystem Services Partnership Federal Resource Management and Ecosystem Services Project
Successful Public Engagement

Forest Plans: Responsive and Widespread Support
**Planning & Public Involvement Milestones**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| **YEARS 1&2** | Science Synthesis  
Bioregional & Forest Assessment  
Forest Resources, Capacity, and Stakeholder Analysis  
Initiate Tribal Consultation  
Brief Local Elected Officials |
| ![Collaboration & Communication Plan](image) | Introductory Workshops & Meetings |
| **YEAR 3** | Need for Change  
Desired Conditions  
Alternatives Development  
Analysis  
Draft EIS  
Public Review & Comment |
| ![Collaborative Planning Workshops](image) | Briefings  
Tribal Consultation  
Ongoing Communication |
| **YEAR 4** | Final EIS  
Objection Process  
Decision |
Science Synthesis

Science Synthesis Report

Bio-Regional and Forest Scale Assessments

Internal and External Capacity to Collaborate Plan
Science Synthesis

Important concepts and approaches

- Community well-being
- Sense of place
- All lands approach
- Collaboration
- Traditional and local ecological knowledge
- Social learning
Science Synthesis

Broadly considers systems in an integrated fashion

- Connects to “ecological integrity” and “social and economic sustainability” in the Forest Planning Rule
“Based on recent scientific advances, what management strategies are likely to promote resilience of socioecological systems and sustain values-at-risk in the synthesis area over the short and long term given expected stressors?”
Assessments

Bio-Regional and Forest Scale Assessments

Science Synthesis Report

Internal and External Capacity to Collaborate Plan
Assessments

Assessment of the Sierra Cascades Bio-Region consists of three critical components:

1) 15 topic papers located on the “Living Assessment,”
2) Bio-Regional Assessment, and
3) Forest-level assessments
Bioregional Assessment

SIERRA CASCADE DIALOG 10

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE
- Users and ecosystem services
- Acknowledge forest industries
- The elements together
- Water sedimentation

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE
- Liked recognition communities depend on forest

SUSTAINABLE RECREATION
- Link to health
- Demographics
- Economic link
- Partnership
- Shift in land-use recreation
- Enforcement - Recreation: Impacts, budget reduction

WATER QUALITY & QUANTITY
- Scientific basis and statistics of how info gathered
- Good emphasis on partners & collaboration
- Neutral attitude
- Start with:
- Water rights
- Grazing
- Collaboration
- Roads

ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY
- Climate, biodiversity, connectivity
- Liked - look at ecosystems beyond agency boundaries
- How to increase pace & scale
- Establish a metric

FIRE RESILIENCE
- Good sub-sections
- Benefits of fire and historical fire
- Better connections between

MISSING
- invasive species?
- What about invasive species?
- Missing
- More on fuels and even trade off

ABOUT
National Ecosystem Services Partnership Federal Resource Management and Ecosystem Services Project
“Our Forest Place” is a website designed to improve public participation in the planning process.

- Improve Transparency
- Enhance opportunities to participate in the planning process
  - Members interact with moderators...
  - Energizes innovation and creativity by connecting members in open discussion....
A “Living Assessment”
http://livingassessment.wikispaces.com/

- A Wiki-style website that informs assessments.
- Consolidates relevant existing information across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Focuses on peer-reviewed and other relevant information, scientific understanding and monitoring results.
- Identifies scales both in time and space for addressing ecological, social, and economic resiliency.
Sierra Nevada Values Mapping Project

- The **purpose of the study** was to discover, describe, and document the nature and extent of the values that the public finds within the Sierra, Sequoia and Inyo National Forests.

- The research team created a website where **participants identified the places they value** and shared their views about what they considered important about the Sierra, Sequoia and Inyo National Forests in California. The website asked participants to drag and drop markers onto a Google® Map of the national forest study area.

- The **study was confidential**. The information provided was combined with other respondents and was not individually identifiable.

- The **study was submitted as public input** to the Sierra, Sequoia and Inyo National Forests’ ongoing forest plan revision efforts.
Engaging Tribes

- Over 100 tribes, both federally-recognized and non-federally recognized, exist in California.

- In addition to formal Consultation, tribal forums are coordinated by a Forest Service Tribal Liaison quarterly.
Engaging Tribes

Key to the success of these forums is:

– attendance by a line officer,
– opening and closing with a traditional blessing,
– providing written materials,
– organizing the space so that all participants can face one another,
– encouraging active listening and storytelling, and
– following through on commitments.
Engaging Underserved Communities

- In 2013, the Region entered into a contract with Voces Inc. to develop a Latino Engagement Guide for forest plan revisions.
- This model is based on data collected from Latinos in a small focus group representing the national profile of Latinos and during in-depth, in-person interviews with nearly 50 Latinos in the San Joaquin Valley, California.
- An overwhelming fact emerged: Very few Latinos know what the National Forests are or where the nearest one is located.
Engaging Underserved Communities

- Critically, population data in the counties associated with the Sierra, Sequoia and Inyo national forests indicates the dominant population is Latino/Hispanic.
- To engage the Latino community and create awareness of National Forests, individuals who are trusted members of their part of the Latino community are being identified and recruited by the Forest Service to serve as a bridge between the Forest Service and the part of the Latino community the individual represents.
- We call these persons Trusted Community Contacts or TCCs.
Engaging Youth

- Youth have proven to be excellent TCCs within the Latino, African American, and Hmong communities in the southern Sierras.
- Initially, youth participated in Forest Service sponsored workshops designed to identify their core values and the connection of those values with a forested landscape.
- Exercise – “Gross National Happiness”
Thank You