



## NEWSLETTER January 2003

Help update your mail preferences by completing the "Request for Response" form:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/revision/documents/index\\_documents.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/revision/documents/index_documents.htm)

### National Proposed Planning Rule

On November 27, 2002, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service proposed a new land and resource management planning rule to govern the nation's 155 national forests and 20 grasslands. Management of national forests and grasslands is currently guided by a planning rule adopted in 1982.

The proposed 2002 planning rule retains the basic principles we currently follow which emphasize meaningful public involvement, sustainability, use of science, and monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the proposal provides forest managers with more flexibility to tailor analyses to the specific characteristics and challenges presented by their forests and grasslands. Much of the procedural requirement and most redundancies in the planning process will be greatly reduced. It is expected that this could allow Forest plans to be completed in a third of the time and at much lower cost than present. The bottom line is a more efficient process that is easier to understand and participate in.

The proposed 2002 planning rule provides two options to address requirements for diversity of plant and animal communities in the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA). One option retains viability as the standard while the other allows decision makers to apply a landscape approach to biodiversity.

In conjunction with the release of the proposed rule, the Forest Service is issuing a comprehensive study of the costs of land and resource management planning. The Forest Service is currently encouraging review and comment on the proposed planning rule.

Complete text of the proposed rule and related documents are available at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/index3.html>.

When the 2002 planning rule becomes final, each forest will look at the transition language in the new rule and the progress they've made under the 1982 rule and make a choice how to proceed. The Chippewa and Superior National Forests expect to complete Forest Plan revision efforts under the 1982 planning rule.

### Forest Plan Revision Alternatives – sneak preview

The complete description and analysis of outcomes for each alternative will be documented in the joint Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for Forest Plan Revision on the Chippewa and Superior National Forests. During the official comment period we will ask for your review and written comments regarding the information in these documents. In the meantime, the table on the following three pages will give you a preview of how the alternatives address various issues relating to Forest Plan Revision. Please realize that actual numbers and some details of the alternatives may still be adjusted between now and release of the complete documents.

CLICK TO VIEW TABLE of:  
Preliminary Comparison of How Alternatives Address Key Issues  
[http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/revision/factsheets/alt\\_issues\\_matrix.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/revision/factsheets/alt_issues_matrix.pdf)



## Web-wise:

If you haven't checked out the Forest Plan Revision web page lately, you may be surprised at the amount of information that can be viewed there. All through the revision process we have posted information to help interested individuals track on what we are doing along with links to related sites. In fact, the Chippewa National Forest was the first Forest in this region to dedicate a web page to Forest Plan Revision.

As you can see from our home page (to the left), there is quite a bit of preliminary analysis and background information that is available by clicking on:

### **Forest Plan Revision at**

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa>

Below is a list of documents that are posted on the "Analysis" section of the web page.

If you do not have Internet access, you may request a paper copy of any of these titles that interest you.

On the web page, under "Analysis", you will find:

### **A Series of Fact Sheets**

Notice of Intent  
Timber Benchmarks for Forest Plan Revision  
Forest Vegetation Management Objectives  
Landscape Ecosystem  
Range of Natural Variability  
Special Management Complexes and Rare and Natural Resources

Riparian Management  
Species Viability Evaluation  
Potential Wilderness Evaluation  
Recreational Motor Vehicles Management  
Scenic Quality Analysis  
Planning and Managing Water Access  
Economic and Social Sustainability

### **Interim Reports and Documents**

Species Viability Evaluation Overview  
and 2002 Panel  
Inventory and Maps of Roadless Areas

Roads Analyses  
Social Assessments  
Notice of Intent  
Current Forest Plans



## **New information:**

Several new pieces of information relevant to Forest Plan revision have become available since the last newsletter. These sources will be considered along with other information in the Draft EIS analysis.

**Inventory of Potential Wilderness Areas:** During Plan Revision, the National Forests are required to evaluate areas for possible recommendation as wilderness to be designated by Congress. A summary of the results of the inventory and evaluation of roadless areas on the Chippewa and Superior National Forests, based on existing conditions and current direction, can be reviewed on the web page and are available on CD by request.

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/revision/analyses/roadless\\_inventory\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/revision/analyses/roadless_inventory_for_web.pdf)

**Benchmark Fact Sheet:** Timber volume benchmarks for Forest Plan revision on the Chippewa and Superior National Forests were recently verified through computer modeling. Benchmarks help to define limits or “side boards” for developing a range of alternatives. Benchmarks do not constitute alternatives. Alternatives are designed to consider integrated management of all resources. In this case, the timber benchmarks help the planning team to identify the maximum volume that can be expected from any alternative when appropriate measures are included to protect resource values. The benchmark represents neither a goal nor a target for management. See the web page for a summary of benchmark analysis and outcomes. [http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/revision/analyses/dffacts\\_benchmark.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/revision/analyses/dffacts_benchmark.pdf)

**Roads Analysis Process reports for the Chippewa and Superior National Forests** These reports document an interdisciplinary analysis of the use and effects of mid to high maintenance level roads across each Forest. The Arrowhead and the Headwaters Regional Development Commissions were contracted by the Forest Service to facilitate the process. Public input regarding Forest use, experiences, perceptions, and needs of our Forest road system was solicited during the late summer of 2001. These reports, along with other information, will be incorporated into the analysis in the joint environmental impact statement for Forest Plan Revision on the Chippewa and Superior National Forests. The Roads Analysis for the Superior National Forest can be viewed on the web site. The full reports are available on CD by request. *Contact Kris Reichenbach at 218-626-4393 for a CD copy of either of these reports.*

**Social Assessments for the Chippewa and Superior National Forests:** The assessments document a description of social conditions, including economics, political, and cultural characteristics in and around each Forest. The Arrowhead and the Headwaters Regional Development Commissions were contracted by the Forest Service to conduct the assessments. These reports, along with other information will be incorporated into the analysis in the joint environmental impact statement for Forest Plan Revision on the Chippewa and Superior National Forests. The full reports are available on CD by request. *Contact Kris Reichenbach at 218-626-4393 for a CD copy of either of these assessments.*



## What's happening?

The planning team is currently completing the analysis and documentation for the joint draft EIS and developing the proposed Forest Plan for each Forest.

## What's coming?

The two Forests determined in November that a quality Draft EIS and Proposed Plan cannot be produced by the end of January 2003 as previously expected. We now anticipate releasing these documents for public review by Spring 2003. An official comment period of a minimum of 90 days will follow the release of the documents. To ensure you receive a copy, look for the mailing list update form in this newsletter and return with your response. Information about reviewing and commenting on these documents and planned public meetings will be available at the time the documents are issued or shortly after.

### Quick Guide to Key Forest Service planning concepts...

**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 regulations.

**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** = Alternative preferred by the Regional Forester, from the range of alternatives, and identified in the Draft EIS. It is the alternative that he believes best resolves the management problems for each 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 will be disclosed in the Draft EIS with a description of all alternatives and associated environmental effects.

**Proposed Forest Plan** = The Proposed Forest Plan for each Forest will be based on the Preferred Alternative identified and described in the Draft EIS. The Proposed Forest Plan results from extensive analysis and considerations addressed in the draft EIS.

**Selected Alternative** = The alternative selected by the Regional Forester to guide future Forest Management based on public comments and further analysis after the Draft EIS. The selected alternative is described in the Record of Decision (ROD) along with the rationale for selection. After release of the Draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plans, an interdisciplinary team will review public comments and, as needed, will 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.

**Final Revised Forest Plan** = Based on the selected alternative, a final revised Forest Plan will then be issued for each Forest.

#### Requests for information may be directed to:

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