

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)**  
**Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, San Juan National Forest, Colorado.**

**AGENCY:** USDA Forest Service

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in conjunction with revision of the land and resource management plan for the San Juan National Forest, located in Archuleta, Conejos, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Mineral, Montezuma, Rio Grande, and San Juan Counties, Colorado.

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**SUMMARY:** The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement in conjunction with the revision of its Land and Resource Management Plan (hereafter referred to as Forest Plan or Plan) for the San Juan National Forest.

This notice describes the specific portions of the current Forest Plan to be revised, environmental issues considered in the revision, estimated dates for filing the environmental impact statement, information concerning public and tribal participation, and the names and addresses of the agency officials who can provide additional information.

**DATE:** Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by January 31, 2000. The agency expects to file a draft environmental impact statement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and make it available for public, agency, and tribal government comment in the spring of 2001. A final environmental impact statement is expected to be filed in the fall of 2002.

**ADDRESS:** Send written comments to:  
Thurman Wilson, Team Leader  
Forest Plan Revision Team  
San Juan National Forest  
15 Burnett Court  
Durango, CO 81301

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Thurman Wilson, Planning Team Leader, (970) 385-1246.

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:** Lyle Laverty, Rocky Mountain Regional Forester at P.O. Box 25127, Lakewood, CO 80225-0127.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Pursuant to Part 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 219.10 (g), the Regional Forester for the Rocky Mountain Region gives notice of the agency's intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for the revision effort described above. According to 36 CFR 219.10 (g), land and resource management plans are ordinarily revised on a 10- to 15-year cycle. The existing Forest Plan was approved on September 29, 1983, with a significant amendment on May 15, 1992.

The Regional Forester gives notice that the Forest is beginning an environmental-analysis and decision-making process for this proposed action so that interested or affected people can participate in the analysis and contribute to the final decision.

Opportunities will be provided to discuss the Forest Plan revision process openly with the public. The public is invited to help identify issues and define the range of alternatives to be considered in the environmental impact statement. Forest Service personnel and/or neutral facilitators will lead these discussions, helping to describe issues and the preliminary alternatives. They will also explain the environmental analysis process and the disclosures of that analysis, which will be available for public review. Written comments identifying issues for analysis and the range of alternatives will be encouraged.

The United States has a unique legal relationship with Indian tribal governments, as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, statutes, Executive orders, and court decisions. As part of the overall effort to uphold the federal trust responsibility to tribal sovereign nations, the Forest Service will establish regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal nations on a government-to-government basis. The Forest Service will work with tribal governments to address issues concerning Indian tribal self-government and sovereignty, natural and cultural resources held in trust, Indian tribal treaty and Executive order rights, and any issues that significantly or uniquely affect their communities.

The public and tribal governments have already identified a number of issues. Additional issue identification (scoping) and alternative-development meetings will be held in early 2000. Specific dates, times, and locations for the meetings will be posted on the San Juan National Forest's web site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/srnf/> and announced in mailings to those on the forest plan revision mailing list. Requests to be on the mailing list should be sent to: Forest Plan Revision Team, San Juan National Forest, 15 Burnett Court, Durango, CO 81301.

Forest plans describe the intended management of National Forests. Agency decisions in these plans do the following:

- Establish multiple-use goals and objectives (36 CFR 219.11).
- Establish forestwide management requirements (standards and guidelines) to fulfill the requirements of 16 USC 1604 applying to future activities (resource integration requirements, 36 CFR 219.13 to 219.27).
- Establish management areas and management area direction (management area prescriptions) applying to future activities in that management area (resource integration and minimum specific management requirements) 36 CFR 219.11 (c).
- Establish monitoring and evaluation requirements (36 CFR 219.11 (d)).
- Determine suitability and potential capability of lands for resource production. This includes designation of suitable timberland and establishment of allowable timber sale quantity (36 CFR 219.14 through 219.26).
- Where applicable, recommend designations of special areas such as Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers to Congress.

The authorization of project-level activities on the Forest occurs through project decision-making, the second stage of forest land management planning. Project-level decisions must

comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures and must include a determination that the project is consistent with the Forest Plan.

In addition to the programmatic decisions described above, the Forest is considering:

- making site-specific decisions on travel management through identification of specific management for individual roads and trails, and
- analyzing currently vacant range allotments for potential closures.

Any site-specific decisions made from the analysis in the Forest Plan would be in a separate decision document and the responsible official would be the Forest Supervisor.

**NEED FOR CHANGES IN THE CURRENT FOREST PLAN:** It's been approximately fifteen years since the current Forest Plan was approved and almost seven years since the completion of a significant amendment. Experience and monitoring have shown the need for changes in management direction for some resources or programs. Several sources have highlighted needed changes in the current Forest Plan. These sources include:

- Public involvement that has identified new information and public values.
- Tribal government involvement that has identified new information and American Indian values.
- Monitoring and scientific research that have identified new information and knowledge gained.
- Implementation of the current Forest Plan, which has identified management concerns to find better ways for accomplishing desired conditions.
- Changes in law, regulations, and policies.

**MAJOR REVISION TOPICS:** Based on the information sources identified above, the combined effect of the needed changes demands attention through plan revision. The revision topics that have been identified so far are described below.

### **Biological Diversity**

How should ecosystems comprising the San Juan National Forest be managed in order to ensure biological diversity, long-term productivity, and ecosystem health? Humans and human activity are integral parts of ecosystems and will be considered in the analysis of this topic.

### ***Questions to Address***

- How should the full variety of life in an area including the ecosystems, plants, and animal communities' species and genes, and the processes through which organisms interact with one another and their environment be maintained?
- Should the forest be managed within the historical range of variability for characteristics such as fire size and frequency, size and distribution of openings and mix of plants and animals?

- Is the relative health and vigor of vegetation declining compared to historic levels? If so, should anything be done?
- Have ponderosa pine and mixed conifer stands changed significantly in proportion of species, tree size, and ecosystem processes?
- Is there a desired condition of the forest that management activities should focus on attaining?
- Are some species, such as cottonwood and aspen, declining significantly?
- Are there ways to affect forest health in areas with steep slopes or isolated areas?
- How much of the forest should be maintained in old-growth conditions and how should it be distributed in time and space?
- Are large, relatively undisturbed areas needed to provide adequate habitat for some species? If so, how large should they be and what conditions are needed? What human activities would be appropriate? Should reserves, core areas, and corridors be provided for wildlife? If so, what size, shape, and distribution are needed?
- Are some types of ecosystems found on the San Juan National Forest at risk of not being maintained over time?
- What threatened, endangered, and sensitive species are found on the San Juan National Forest?
- What management direction is needed to preserve viable populations of these species? What are the effects of activities such as timber harvesting, grazing, mining, and recreation on threatened, endangered, and sensitive species?
- What role should non-native species play in the San Juan's ecosystems? How is the spread of noxious weeds affected by activities such as road construction and use, livestock grazing, timber harvest, mineral development, fire, recreation, and hunting? What should be done about noxious weeds or other non-desired, non-native species?
- What management direction is needed to identify, protect, and make available the traditional forest plant and animal products that Native American people expect through exercising their treaty rights, or rights provided to them through Executive order? How do various activities occurring on the National Forest, such as prescribed fire, noxious-weed elimination, logging, grazing, recreation, road construction, mining, and oil and gas extraction, affect the availability of traditional forest products?

### **Timber Management**

How should forested areas of the San Juan National Forest be managed to maintain or improve ecological conditions while providing a sustainable and predictable supply of wood products? Developing a balance between cutting and removing trees to provide raw materials for wood

products and protecting a wide variety of other resource values is critical. People's needs for wood products, other uses of the forest, and the ecological well being of the forest must all be considered.

### ***Questions to Address***

- What lands are suitable for timber harvesting? How much should be cut? Can the Forest Service ensure a predictable supply of timber for sale? What logging methods should be used? What tree species and sizes should be cut? Should old-growth forests be harvested?
- How should timber harvesting be balanced with other considerations, such as scenery, heritage resources, water quality, soil productivity, wildlife and fisheries habitat, biological diversity, and ecosystem health (composition, structure, and function) and sustainability? What are the effects of logging and associated road construction on these desired forest conditions and uses?
- Should logging occur in unroaded areas?
- Are new roads needed for harvesting? If so, to what standards should they be built? Should roads be maintained or obliterated after logging use? Should logging roads be open or closed to the general public?
- What are the appropriate specifications and constraints (standards and guidelines) for logging? What kinds of restoration practices should occur after logging and road building?
- What are the economic impacts (jobs and income) of timber sales in the local community? Can the Forest Service offer timber sales that are financially efficient (revenues exceed costs), financially viable to prospective purchasers, and supportive of locally owned mills and contractors?

### **Grazing**

How should the San Juan National Forest's rangelands be managed to maintain or improve ecological conditions, while providing a sustainable supply of forage for both domestic and wild animals? Allowing an opportunity for ranchers to graze their herds on the forest for part of the year must be balanced with supplying habitat and food for wild animals, maintaining water quality, safeguarding heritage resources, allowing other uses, and preserving the ecological health of the forest. The potential for change in the amount, timing, and practices of National Forest grazing may affect private land development, open space, and traditional lifestyles.

### ***Questions to Address***

- What lands are capable and suitable for livestock grazing? How much grazing should be allowed? What types of grazing systems and practices should be used? Should these vary between wilderness and the rest of the forest?
- What are the appropriate specifications and constraints (standards and guidelines) for grazing? What grazing activities and levels are appropriate in riparian areas? What kinds of

restoration practices should accompany grazing? What types of range improvements are appropriate?

- How should livestock grazing be balanced with other desired forest conditions or uses, such as recreation, scenic quality, heritage resources, water quality, wildlife and fisheries habitat, timber management, and ecosystem health and sustainability? What are the effects of grazing on other uses of the forest?
- What are the relationships between domestic livestock and elk and deer? How should forage be allocated between them? What are the relationships between livestock grazing and the southwest willow flycatcher? Should domestic sheep be excluded from some areas to reduce the likelihood of spreading diseases to wild sheep?
- What types of vegetation should grazing lands be managed to produce or maintain? What are the effects of grazing on the spread of noxious weeds? How can noxious weeds associated with grazing be controlled? What are the relationships between livestock grazing and fire? Has grazing altered the role of fire in the forest's ecosystems?
- What are the economic impacts in the local community of livestock grazing? Can the Forest Service provide grazing that is financially efficient (revenues exceed costs) and financially viable to ranchers and still maintain desirable conditions for other uses of the San Juan National Forest?
- What are the relationships between grazing on National Forest and private lands? What are the potential impacts on open space and private land development of changes in National Forest grazing policies?

### **Minerals And Energy**

How can ecological conditions and other uses of the forest be balanced with providing mineral and energy products? Most of the forest is available for (hard rock) mineral exploration and development under the Mining Law of 1872, unless areas are specifically withdrawn. The Forest Service needs to determine what areas are suitable and available for oil and gas leasing and what stipulations should be placed on exploration and development.

### ***Questions to Address***

- What lands are suitable for oil and gas leasing? What stipulations should be included in leases? What lands should be withdrawn from mineral entry because of conflicts with other National Forest uses?
- What types of activities or practices are suitable? What mitigation measures are needed? What kinds of restoration practices should occur after mining and oil and gas exploration or development?
- How should mineral and energy exploration and development be balanced with other considerations, such as heritage resources, aesthetics, water quality, wildlife and fisheries habitat, human health, and ecosystem health and sustainability? What are the effects of exploration, development, and associated road construction on other uses of the forest?

- What are the effects of mining and oil and gas activities on people outside the local area?
- What kind of direction is needed for recreational panning or dredging?
- What special considerations are needed in wilderness?
- Is mining financially efficient (revenues exceed costs) for the government? Can the Forest allow mining that is financially viable to prospective purchasers? What are the economic impacts in the local community of mining and oil and gas exploration and development?

### **Watershed**

How can protecting watershed values, including soil resources, be balanced with the need for activities that potentially disturb the ground? What is the condition of riparian areas on the National Forest? San Juan National Forest lands are important watersheds that contribute greatly to both the quantity and quality of downstream water.

### ***Questions to Address***

- How do various activities occurring on the forest affect water quality and quantity, soil resources, and riparian areas?
- What is the appropriate balance between watershed protection and activities that can disturb the ground, such as road construction, logging, fire, grazing, recreation use, mining, and oil and gas extraction?
- What are the appropriate specifications and constraints (standards and guidelines) for activities that disturb the ground? What kinds of mitigation measures are needed for these activities? What kinds of restoration practices should occur after ground-disturbing activities?
- How can we identify our most valuable riparian resources? How can we protect their integrity?
- Are there areas of the forest, such as abandoned mines, needing reclamation? If so, what should be done? What are the effects of wildfires on watershed conditions? Are any special strategies needed for the prevention or control of wildfires to protect watersheds?
- Where is it appropriate to manage for consumptive uses versus non-consumptive uses? To what extent should water development occur on the San Juan National Forest?
- What are the effects of water diversion on the ecosystem? What are the effects of water storage (reservoirs, ponds, and water tanks) on the ecosystem?
- What is the importance of water produced from the San Juan National Forest in surrounding and downstream communities, including tribal communities?

## **Wildlife**

How can the habitat needs of a wide spectrum of fish and animals be balanced with a variety of other forest uses? National Forest lands are important habitat for many types of wildlife and fish, including some threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. The National Forest habitat is becoming increasingly important due to loss of habitat on private lands. Fish and wildlife, and their habitat, are affected by a variety of forest uses, such as timber harvesting, grazing, and recreation, and by natural events, such as wildfire.

### ***Questions to Address***

- How do various activities occurring on the National Forest, such as logging, grazing, and prescribed fire, affect wildlife and fish habitats? What is the appropriate balance between providing adequate habitats and allowing activities that can affect habitats, such as road construction, logging, fire, grazing, recreation, mining, and oil and gas extraction?
- What are the appropriate specifications and constraints (standards and guidelines) for activities that affect habitat? What kinds of mitigation measures are needed for activities that affect habitat? What kinds of restoration practices should occur after habitat-disturbing activities?
- What is the connection between forest and private land in providing habitat and migration corridors? What are the implications of private land development for management of National Forest lands? What kinds of cooperation are needed between the Forest Service, other agencies, and private landowners to maintain adequate habitat?
- How do wildlife affect the ecosystem? Should anything be done to affect population sizes?
- What areas are important for big-game winter range? How should they be managed? How is winter range changing? What areas are used as wildlife migration routes? How should these areas be managed? What are the implications of increased development of private lands on big-game winter range and migration corridors?
- How should neotropical bird habitat be managed and monitored? Do National Forest activities affect neotropical birds?
- How should conflicts between different species be handled (for example, rainbow versus Colorado River cutthroat trout)?
- How should roads be managed to maintain or improve wildlife and fish habitat? How does burning logging slash affect wildlife habitat?
- Should portions of the forest be closed to hunting, either to maintain a sanctuary for wildlife or to reduce conflicts with other recreationists?
- Should non-native species (for example, ruffed grouse and rainbow trout) be stocked on the forest?

- Should predator species be protected?
- Do wildlife-harassing dogs pose a significant problem? If so, what should be done about it?
- Are any changes needed in water rights to protect or enhance fisheries?
- Should fish stocking take place in wilderness, especially pristine areas? If so, how?
- What is the connection between tourism and wildlife and fish? What are the economic impacts related to wildlife and fish?
- What is the role of education in solving human-wildlife conflicts?

## **Fire**

How should the Forest Service react to natural wildfires and what types of prescribed (controlled) fires should be initiated? The role of fire in the ecosystem has changed over the past century. The Forest Service's attitudes about fire have been changing over the last decade. Whereas in the past, fire was considered an undesirable occurrence to be controlled, it is now increasingly seen as having a natural role in the ecosystem which management can seek to emulate or guide.

### ***Questions to Address***

- What was the historic role of fire in the forest's ecosystems? How has that changed? What effect has changes in fire occurrence had on the composition, structure, and function of the San Juan National Forest's ecosystems? Should anything be done to adjust for these changes?
- Can a mix of logging and fire be used to maintain and restore ecosystem conditions? Can fire be used as a tool to establish a desired structure and composition of vegetation? How much fire is appropriate? What conditions are needed for successful prescribed burning?
- What are the relationships between:
  - fire, insects, and disease?
  - grazing and fire?
  - thinning trees, slash burning, and wildfire potential?
- How does fire affect air quality, soil stability and productivity, water quality, threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant and animal species, heritage resources, and other forest resources?
- Should anything be done to reduce the potential for large wildfires? What kinds of wildfire suppression or control strategies should be used? How aggressively should fires be fought? What level of expense is appropriate for fire suppression? Is fire suppression economically efficient?

- How should National Forest lands near private land development be managed in regard to fire risks? What kind of cooperation is needed between the Forest Service, other agencies, private landowners, and the public? What kind of access is needed for fire protection?
- What areas and timeframes are most appropriate for using prescribed fire? What specific techniques are most appropriate for prescribed fire? What should be done to prepare an area before prescribed fire?
- How does smoke from prescribed fires affect tourism?
- How can the San Juan National Forest best work with the public to implement an effective fire management program?

### **Heritage Resources**

How can heritage resources best be protected? Heritage resources provide a major source of public education, recreation, and cultural identity in this country. Nine concentrations of very unique and significant archaeological regions exist among thousands of cultural resources located Forestwide. Five of the nine concentration areas are already designated as archaeological districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The remaining four areas are proposed additions to the already existing National Register districts. Only two of the nine areas are managed to emphasize the preservation or conservation of the individual cultural properties and the surrounding landscape, whereas the other seven areas are managed to emphasize other resources.

### ***Questions to Address***

- Should the landscape containing cultural resource properties defining an archaeological district that is eligible for, or already listed on, the National Register of Historic Places be designated as a heritage area with a land management prescription that emphasizes the properties' unique and nonrenewable character?
- What is the appropriate balance between providing for site preservation or conservation and recreational enjoyment, and allowing other activities that can affect the use of the cultural site and its setting, such as logging, fire, mining, oil and gas extraction, grazing, and dispersed recreation? What are the appropriate specifications and constraints (standards and guidelines) for activities affecting cultural properties and their setting?
- Should each of the nine heritage areas share one common land management prescription, or should there be greater flexibility in these prescriptions to facilitate management of other resource types and use types?
- Does heritage-area designation increase the risk of loss of cultural materials from these nine cultural landscapes?

- What kinds of cooperation are needed between the Forest Service, the tribes, other agencies, and private individuals to protect these areas?
- Since each of the proposed heritage areas is defined by resources that are prehistoric Native American, what kinds of social values need to be emphasized at each of the nine heritage areas? If there are conflicting values to be managed at specific sites or areas, how do conflicts in multiple cultural values get resolved?
- If the heritage areas are identified as appropriate for meeting heritage tourism goals, what types of recreational and interpretive opportunities or experiences should be developed at the heritage areas? Should fees be charged for the recreational use of heritage areas?

### **Recreation**

What levels of various types of recreation can be maintained while sustaining a healthy and diverse ecosystem? How can wildness be provided to sustain the human need for solitude, retreat, and renewal? Although uses of the San Juan National Forest have historically emphasized commodity activities, recent social, economic, and demographic transformations have significantly increased the demand for recreational uses.

### ***Questions to Address***

- What mix and emphasis of recreation opportunities on the National Forest accommodates a wide variety of users while ensuring resource protection? What areas are appropriate for various recreation uses?
- What is the carrying capacity of the forest? How much recreation use can be sustained from both an ecological standpoint and a visitor enjoyment perspective? Do any limits need to be placed on certain areas or types or use? Should fees be charged for recreation use?
- How do various recreation uses affect each other, ecosystems, and other forest uses?
- What are appropriate levels of use for different kinds of recreation activities? How much of available capacity for each type of recreation should be allocated to commercial (outfitter-guides), and institutional users versus individual users?
- What should the Forest Service do to interpret recreation, as well as other resources and opportunities?
- How can National Forest and private sector recreation opportunities best fit with each other?
- How should major recreation corridors like the Dolores River, West Dolores River, Lone Dome, Highway 550, and the designated All-American Road, the San Juan Skyway, be managed? What kinds of opportunities do we want to provide there?
- What are appropriate development levels for campgrounds, picnic areas, trailheads, etc.? How many facilities (campgrounds, roads, etc.) can be maintained under reasonable budget expectations?

- How can quality and quantity of recreation experiences be balanced?
- What are the impacts of demographic changes and new and future technologies on recreation?
- How accessible is the forest and how accessible should it be? How should facilities be upgraded to accommodate all users (including disabled)?
- Should potentially conflicting recreation uses, such as mountain biking and horse riding, occur in the same areas or be segregated?
- Should hunting be allowed everywhere or should it be restricted?
- What are recreation's economic impacts on local economies?
- How much opportunity for backcountry recreation should be provided outside wilderness?
- What are the effects of motorized use in the backcountry and how much is appropriate?
- What are the effects of dogs in the backcountry and wilderness? Should they be restricted?
- What is the role of education in resolving recreation and wilderness problems?
- How can recreation opportunities be provided in a way that limits conflicts with heritage resources?

### **Travel Management**

What degree and types of access should be developed through the trail and road system of the San Juan National Forest, and how can travel conflicts can be minimized? Under what conditions should motorized travel be allowed off of existing road and trails? What are the effects of various means of travel on wildlife and erosion? Increasing recreational use has resulted in more travel by diverse user groups. Education needed by users is also part of this issue.

While no single solution will fit the entire National Forest, some travel areas may be shared by mixed uses, while other uses because of their unique impacts, may need to be separated. Human activities can impact wildlife corridors and habitats.

### ***Questions to Address***

- What are the appropriate methods of travel for each part of the forest? Should some methods of travel be segregated?
- Should any areas (as opposed to roads and trails) have travel restrictions? Should weather affect travel restrictions?
- What are the implications of rapidly changing technology for travel management?

- Can a travel management policy be developed that is understandable and enforceable? Can better travel maps be produced? How should the Forest Service designate allowable travel methods and inform the public?
- How do various methods of travel affect the forest's ecosystems? How do various methods of travel affect other forest visitors?
- How do methods of travel affect the spread of noxious weeds?
- Are there any pack animals (horses, mules, pack goats, llamas) that aren't appropriate uses on the forest?
- To what levels or standards should roads and trails be maintained? How can roads and trails be maintained to an adequate level with declining budgets and fewer timber sales that include road maintenance by the purchaser?
- What can be done about road damage during hunting seasons?
- Are ATVs causing conflicts, especially during hunting seasons?
- How much access to the forest is needed, and what types? How should the Forest Service deal with increased pressure to access private inholdings? How can the increasing demands for access to remote sites for electronic sites be best addressed?
- Can some balance be found between people wanting to plow snow from roads to their property (within the National Forest) and people wanting to ski and snowmobile on those roads?
- How can the Forest Service provide a wide range of recreational opportunities to people that are physically restricted from traveling far other than by motorized means?
- How many roads does the forest need? What is the appropriate road density? What are the appropriate road standards? How many areas should have unroaded versus roaded characteristics?
- Should any existing roads or trails be closed (permanently or seasonally)? Should any existing roads or trails be obliterated? What rationale should be used in making these determinations?
- How should roads and trails be managed? What are the effects of roads and trails on fish and wildlife, soil and water, heritage resources, recreation, and other forest resources?
- How do the Forest Service's travel management policies affect private property within the forest boundary?
- How much signing should be provided and what types?

### **Scenery**

How can scenic attributes guide the appropriate and sensitive management of the San Juan National Forest? Everyone experiences forest lands in a visual sense. For some people the San Juan National Forest is a scenic backdrop to daily, community life. It is part of most local residents' and visitors' quality of life. It is also the reason that many have sought residence in the area. For some, visual indications are evidence of either a dynamic, healthy ecosystem, or of an overworked, overused landscape.

### ***Questions to Address***

- What human activities and natural events affect scenic quality? Which are short-term versus long-term impacts? How much weight should be given to short-term versus long-term effects?
- How does scenic quality change naturally over time? What ecosystem dynamics affect it? Does this have any management implications?
- What is the relationship between air quality and scenic quality? What is the role of fire in this relationship? Should the Forest Service have a role in setting air-quality guidelines?
- How can scenic and cultural attractions, such as historic mines, cabins, and cultural sites, be preserved?
- Should scenic quality be maintained or enhanced, especially along major travel routes and the designated scenic byway? If so, where and how?
- What is the appropriate amount and type of signing? Should it vary depending on an area's management emphasis?
- Should some activities have buffer zones around them so that they are visually less evident?
- How can littering and trash be controlled on the forest?
- How does timber harvesting and slash treatment affect scenic quality? What types of timber harvesting and slash treatment are best from a visual standpoint?

### **Stewardship, Volunteerism, and Education**

What is the role of stewardship, volunteerism, and education in managing public lands? This issue is woven throughout most of the other issues and considerations. Increasingly, community members and groups are interested and involved in voluntary, forest-stewardship opportunities. Public education has also been suggested as a means of improving the management of ecosystem resources, through increased awareness of impacts and reduction in conflicting uses. Volunteerism reinforces the small-town community ethic, gives people ownership in the forest, and is becoming an essential way of achieving community resource- conservation objectives.

### ***Questions to Address***

- What is sustainable stewardship?

- What is the role of partnerships in forest management?
- How can people feel more ownership in the forest?
- What can people do to help the forest?
- Can local people be educational links between the forest and tourists?
- What is the role of volunteers in forest management?
- What role should the forest play in environmental education?
- Should the National Forest have environmental education centers or other facilities?
- What are the implications of the demographic shift from a rural to an increasingly urban society on environmental education?
- What kinds of interpretive signing are needed?
- Can signs be used to help protect fragile resources?
- What types of conflict management or resolution are needed to build long-term positive relationships?

### **Social Values**

What is the appropriate balance between various uses of the National Forest? People value the San Juan for a variety of reasons, including as a scenic backdrop, a place to recreate and to find spiritual renewal, and as a source of livelihood.

### ***Questions to Address***

- How can the local quality of life best be sustained?
- How can the cultural relationships people have with the forest best be sustained?
- How can traditional cultural places and sacred sites important to Native Americans best be identified and managed?
- What role should the Forest Service have in addressing social issues that are community and regional in scope (for example, affordable housing and the homeless)?
- How responsive should the Forest Service be to the social, political, and economic environment of this region? What is the appropriate balance between National and more local interests?
- How should the Forest Service work with state and local governments in addressing local social problems?

- Can the Forest Service provide a stable management program?
- What role does the San Juan NF play in the local economy?

### **Sense Of Place**

How should unique or special areas of the San Juan National Forest be designated and managed, and how should their outstanding values be preserved for future generations?

### ***Questions to Address***

- How should areas that are currently unroaded and undeveloped be managed in the future?
- What areas should be recommended for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System?
- What additional areas should be given a scenic byway designation?
- What areas are eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers?
- What kinds of designations should be applied to special and unique areas of the forest?
- What special management considerations apply to urban interface areas?
- Which, if any, additional areas should be considered for Research Natural Area (RNA) status?
- How should the newly designated Piedra Special Area be managed?
- Does the Purgatory Ski Area prescription need boundary adjustments?
- Should the Wolf Creek Ski Area boundary be adjusted to include lands within the San Juan National Forest?
- How should lands designated as potential ski areas in the current Forest Plan be managed with the Wolf Creek Valley and East Fork areas no longer proposed for ski area development?

**WHAT TO DO WITH THIS INFORMATION:** This revision effort is being undertaken to develop management direction to:

- provide goods and services to people, and
- sustain ecosystem functions.

The Forest Plan revision for the San Juan National Forest will be done using a concept that has locally been labeled “community-ecosystem stewardship” and is more broadly known as “collaborative stewardship.” Community-ecosystem stewardship is a style of land management characterized by:

- Sharing power and accepting mutual responsibility.
- Sustaining long-term interdependencies of communities, economies, public lands, and cultures.
- Facilitating an appropriate integration of desired community and ecological futures.
- Integrating scientific information with community knowledge.
- Adapting to the future based on past experiences.

**FRAMEWORK FOR ALTERNATIVES TO BE CONSIDERED:** A range of alternatives will be considered when revising the Forest Plan. The alternatives will address different options to resolve concerns raised as the revision topics listed above. A reasonable range of alternatives will be evaluated and reasons given for eliminating some alternatives from detailed study. A "no-action alternative" is required, meaning that management would continue under the existing Plan. Alternatives will provide different ways to address and respond to public issues, management concerns, and resource opportunities identified during the scoping process. In describing alternatives, desired vegetation and resource conditions will be defined. Resource outputs will be estimated in the Forest Plan based on achieving desired conditions. Preliminary information is available to develop alternatives; however, there will be additional public, agency, and tribal government involvement and collaboration for alternative development.

**CONSULTING AND COLLABORATING WITH TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS:** The Forest Service will establish regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal nations on a government-to-government basis. The Forest Service will work with tribal governments to address issues concerning Indian tribal self-government and sovereignty, natural and cultural resources held in trust, Indian tribal treaty and Executive order rights, and any issues that significantly or uniquely affect their communities. Correspondence, meetings, and field trips will be used in this effort. The Forest Service hopes to assemble a group composed of tribal representatives to also work in a collaborative manner.

**INVOLVING THE PUBLIC:** An atmosphere of openness is one of the objectives of the public-involvement process, in which all members of the public feel free to share information with the Forest Service regularly. All parts of this process will be structured to maintain this openness.

The Forest Service is seeking information, comments, and assistance from individuals, organizations, tribal governments, and federal, state, and local agencies who are interested in or may be affected by the proposed action (36 CFR 219.6). The Forest Service is also looking for collaborative approaches with members of the public who are interested in forest management. Federal and state agencies and some private organizations have been cooperating in the development of assessments of current biological, physical, and economic conditions. This information will be used to prepare the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The range of alternatives to be considered in the DEIS will be based on public issues, management concerns, resource management opportunities, and specific decisions to be made.

Public participation will be solicited by notifying in person and/or by mail known interested and affected publics. News releases will be used to give the public general notice, and public-

scoping opportunities will be offered in numerous locations. Public-participation activities will include (but will not be limited to) requests for written comments, open houses, focus groups, field trips, and collaborative forums.

Public participation will be sought throughout the revision process and will be especially important at several points along the way. The first formal opportunity to comment is during the scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7). Scoping includes (1) identifying potential issues, (2) from these, identifying significant issues or those that have been covered by prior environmental review, (3) exploring alternatives in addition to No Action, and (4) identifying the potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives.

**RELEASE AND REVIEW OF THE EIS:** We expect the DEIS to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public, agency, and tribal government comment in the spring of 2001. At that time, the EPA will publish a notice of availability for the DEIS in the Federal Register. The comment period on the DEIS will be 90 days from the date the EPA publishes the notice of availability in the Federal Register.

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of the DEIS must participate in the environmental review of the proposal in such a way that their participation is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions; Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the DEIS stage but are not raised until after completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) may be waived or dismissed by the courts; City of Angoon v. Hodel, 803 F. 2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and Wisconsin Heritages, Inc., v. Harris, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the three-month comment period, so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the FEIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns relating to the proposed actions, comments on the DEIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the DEIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statements. In addressing these points, reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3.

After the comment period on the DEIS ends, comments will be analyzed, considered, and responded to by the Forest Service in preparing the Final EIS. The FEIS is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2002. The responsible official will consider the comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the FEIS, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making decisions regarding these revisions. The responsible official will document the decisions and reasons for the decisions in a Record of Decision for the revised Plan. The decision will be subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR 217.

/s/Lyle Laverty

9/15/99

LYLE LAVERTY  
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