



Mark Twain National Forest

Planning Journal

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Draft Revised Forest Plan Coming Soon

The Revised Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) presents strategic direction for managing the National Forest for the next 10 to 15 years. It focuses on describing desired conditions of the land and on outcomes (what is left on the land) rather than outputs (what is taken from the land). The Revised Plan will balance the ecological capacity of the forest's resources with shared needs and demands.

Specialists working on the revision of the Forest Plan (Forest Plan) are in the last stages of completing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The Draft Revised Forest Plan, DEIS and Executive Summary of the documents should be available for public review in January 2005.

How to Obtain Draft Documents

The draft documents will be made available to the public in several formats. Documents will be posted on the Forest's website (www.fs.fed.us/r9/marktwain). Printed copies will be available for viewing at Mark Twain National Forest offices and many public libraries. Copies will be available as compact disks (CD) and printed copies. To receive a CD or printed copy of the documents you must contact the Supervisor's office of Mark Twain National Forest, 401 Fairgrounds Road, Rolla, MO 65401 no later than November 10, 2004. Please be specific when indicating what format you want and whether you wish to receive the DEIS (450 pages), Draft Plan (200 pages) or Executive Summary (25-30 pages).

Public Involvement

When the draft of the Revised Forest Plan is published, the public will have 90 days to review the draft and make substantive comments. Substantive comments are comments that are specific to the proposed action or alternatives and include supporting reasons for the responsible officer to consider.

During the review and comment period, Mark Twain National Forest will host five open houses to provide

an opportunity to talk with members of the planning team and discuss the proposed alternatives.

Following the comment period, all comments will be examined and analyzed. The analysis of comments helps in the refinement of the alternatives and the selection of the preferred alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Revised Forest Plan. The FEIS, Forest Plan and Record of Decision are expected in September 2005.

Come and Meet With Us

There will be five open houses in February and March to give you a chance to meet with the Forest Planning staff and other resource specialists. You are invited to drop in between 6:00 and 8:00 to discuss the information presented in the Draft Forest Plan. Meetings are planned for:

St. Louis, Missouri - February 8 - 6:00 – 8:00
Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center
11715 Cragwood Road
Kirkwood, MO

Salem, Missouri - February 15 - 6:00 – 8:00
Old City Hall Building
202 N. Washington
Salem, MO

West Plains, Missouri - February 22 - 6:00 – 8:00
West Plains Civic Center
110 St. Louis
West Plains, MO.

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - March 15 – 6:00 – 8:00
Black River Coliseum
301 South 5th Street, Poplar Bluff, MO.

Springfield, Missouri – March 22 - 6:00 – 8:00
The Library Center
4653 South Campbell
Springfield, MO

If you plan on attending one of our open houses and have a special need such as signing or amplified hearing device contact: Charles Gill (573) 341-7406 TTY (573) 341-7453.

Tips on effective commenting

Involving the public in the process of revising the Forest Plan is very important to the Forest Service. When the Draft Revised Forest Plan is issued, you have a chance to have your say again and let the Forest Service know if we "hit the mark" on the issues and alternatives defined in the Draft EIS and the management direction presented in the Draft Revised Forest Plan. Here are a few important points you need to know about how the Forest Service responds to comments and how we can both get the most out of your review of these documents.

Commenting is not a voting process.

Comments are considered on basis of content not quantity. Substantive comments are specific, comparative, or solution-oriented and provide factual information, professional opinion, or informed judgment that is relevant to the action being proposed.

While all comments on the DEIS and Draft Revised Plan will be considered only substantive comments are addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Here are some examples to help you understand the types of comments that will be addressed in the FEIS.

The Forest Service **cannot** respond in the Final EIS to these kinds of comments:

"The Draft Revised Plan looks good." (Example of non-specific comment)

"I think the Regional Forester should select Alternative X to implement." (Example of opinion statement without supporting reasons)

This is the kind of comment we **can** respond to:

"The management direction for recreation in the General Forest Management Area should allow for additional OHV access." (Example of substantive comment.)

Commenting is your opportunity to affect alternatives and analysis that form the basis for a final decision. All comments on the Draft EIS and Draft Revised Plan will be considered. As a result:

- Alternatives may be modified
- New alternatives may be identified and analyzed
- Analysis may be expanded, modified or adjusted.
- Factual corrections will be made

Substantive comments and Forest Service responses will be documented in the Final EIS.

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