



USDA FOREST SERVICE NEW 2012 PLANNING RULE

Photographer: Bill Lea

Rethinking Forest Regulations

Missoula, Montana USA, July 2013

Outline



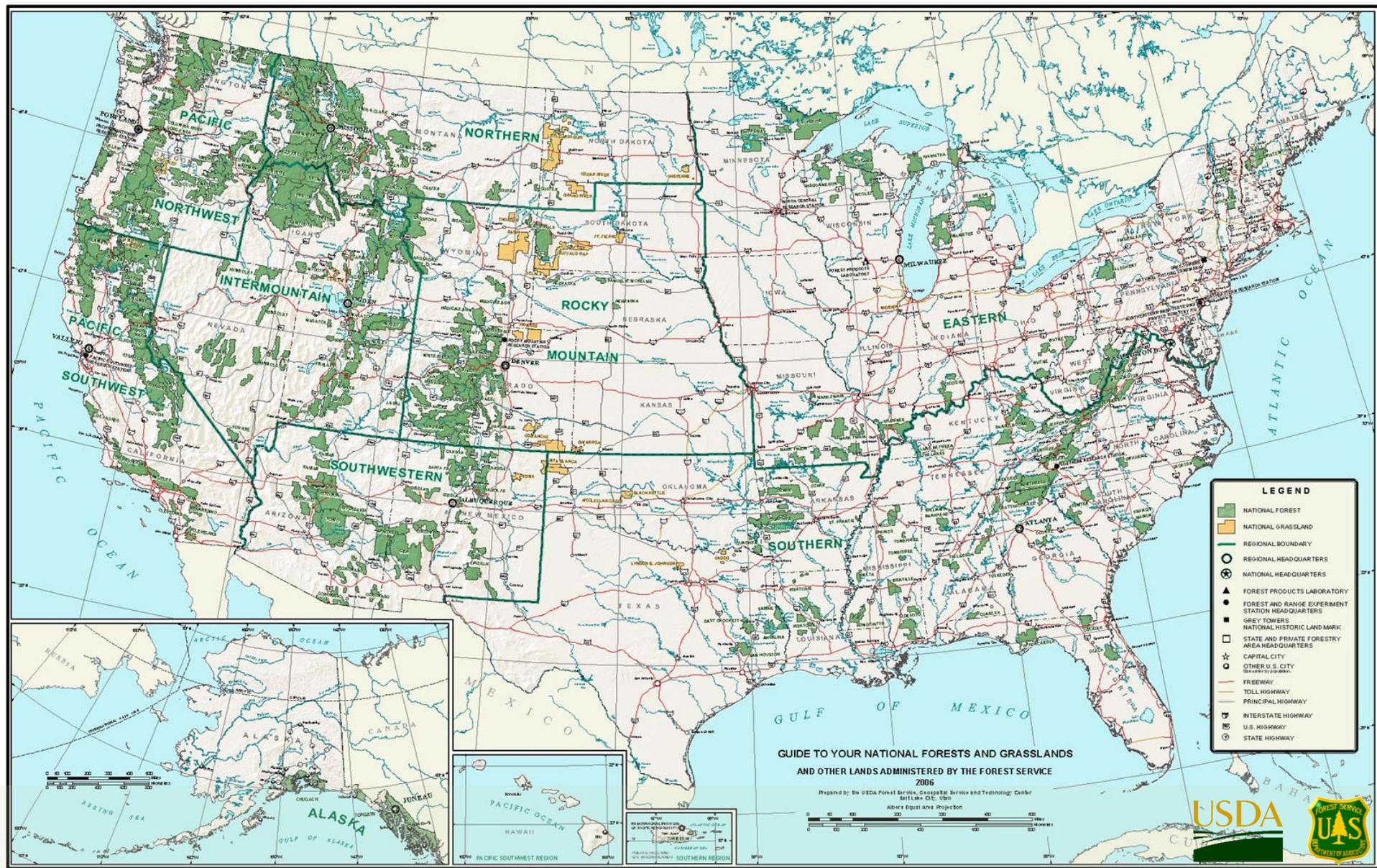
- Context for Planning for America's National Forest System
- History of the Forest Service Planning Rule
- Development of the 2012 National Forest System Planning Rule
- 2012 Rule Adaptive Management Framework
- Rule Implementation
 - Federal Advisory Committee
 - Eleven National forests

USDA Forest Service



- Manages 193 million acres of National forests and grasslands (National Forest System Lands).
- Provides assistance to state and private lands.
- Manages the largest forestry research organization in the world.
- Provides support to over 59 countries for some of the world's most threatened forests.

National Forest System



National Forest Management Act



- The National Forest Management Act of 1976 requires:
 - Development of a planning rule under the principles of the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960.
 - All National forests and grasslands must have land management plans.
 - All plans need to be revised every 10-15 years.

Structure of Forest Planning



National Forest Management Act



Forest Service Planning Rule



Land Management Plans
(Forests/Grasslands)



Project or Activity Decision

The Initial Planning Rule, 1982



- Emphasized maximization of net public benefits.
- Too much analysis and not enough meaningful public participation.
- The process was complex, costly, lengthy, and too cumbersome for the public to provide input.
- Procedures were not current with regard to science, knowledge of the environment, and adaptive management, or social values.

Previous Planning Rule Efforts



- **1982 Planning Rule** - All existing land management plans
- **2000 Planning Rule** - Litigated and internal review concluded it would be too difficult to implement
- **2005 Planning Rule** - Injunction by the courts
- **2008 Planning Rule** - Injunction by the courts

What's Changed?



- The focus will be on collaboration, science, and sustainability, rather than the extensive analysis that was done under the 1982 rule procedures.
- The strategy will reach far beyond mitigating harm to an adaptive framework that will help responsible officials to respond to changing conditions and new information.

2012 Planning Rule Development



26,000 comments, a Science Forum, Tribal consultation, 35 public meetings, and 300 blog comments – considered in development of proposed rule.

Released proposed rule in February 2011 - conducted 28 regional forums.

Responded to over **300,000** comments and modified the proposed rule - the Final planning rule issued on April 9, 2012.

2012 Rule Framework



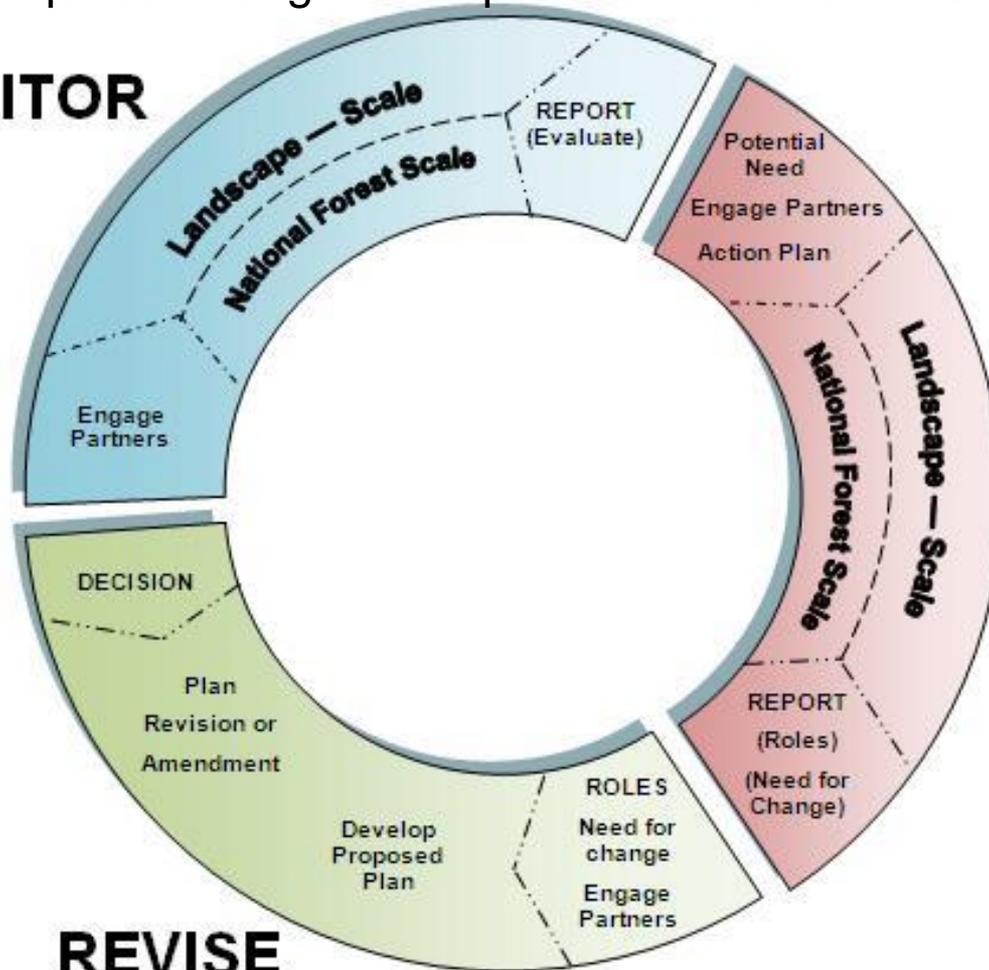
- The Rule introduces a planning framework that works in an adaptive management cycle.
- It is efficient, effective, and will reduce cost and time needed for revision, and amendment of individual plans.
- The Rule supports ecological, social, and economic sustainability as the primary goal for management of National Forest System lands.

Adaptive Management Framework



Collaboration required throughout all phases of the framework

MONITOR



ASSESS

REVISE
(or Amend)

Assessments



Identify and evaluate relevant existing information for items related to the land management plan.

Evaluate the condition and trend of these items related to ecological, social, and economic sustainability.

Involve the public in the identification and evaluation of this information.

Use best available scientific information.

Monitoring



- Two Levels: Plan area and broader scale.
- Monitor ecological and other conditions.
- Biennial reporting on the results with determinations for the future.
- The Rule allows monitoring programs to be changed in a timely way to respond to evolving science.

Plan Components



Within Forest Service authority, the inherent capability of the land and the fiscal capability of the Agency, the plan must provide for:

Ecological Sustainability

Species Diversity

Social and Economic Sustainability

Ecosystem Services and Multiple uses

Collaboration and Public Involvement



- Engage the public early and throughout the planning process.
- Consult with Tribes, State and Local governments, and other Federal agencies.
- Reach out to youth and minority populations.
- Use modern methods of communications in addition to traditional methods.

Science



- The responsible official determines information that is the most accurate, reliable, and relevant to the issues of the plan area based on best available science.
- The responsible official documents how the best available scientific information was used to inform the assessment, the plan decision, and the monitoring program.

Rule Implementation



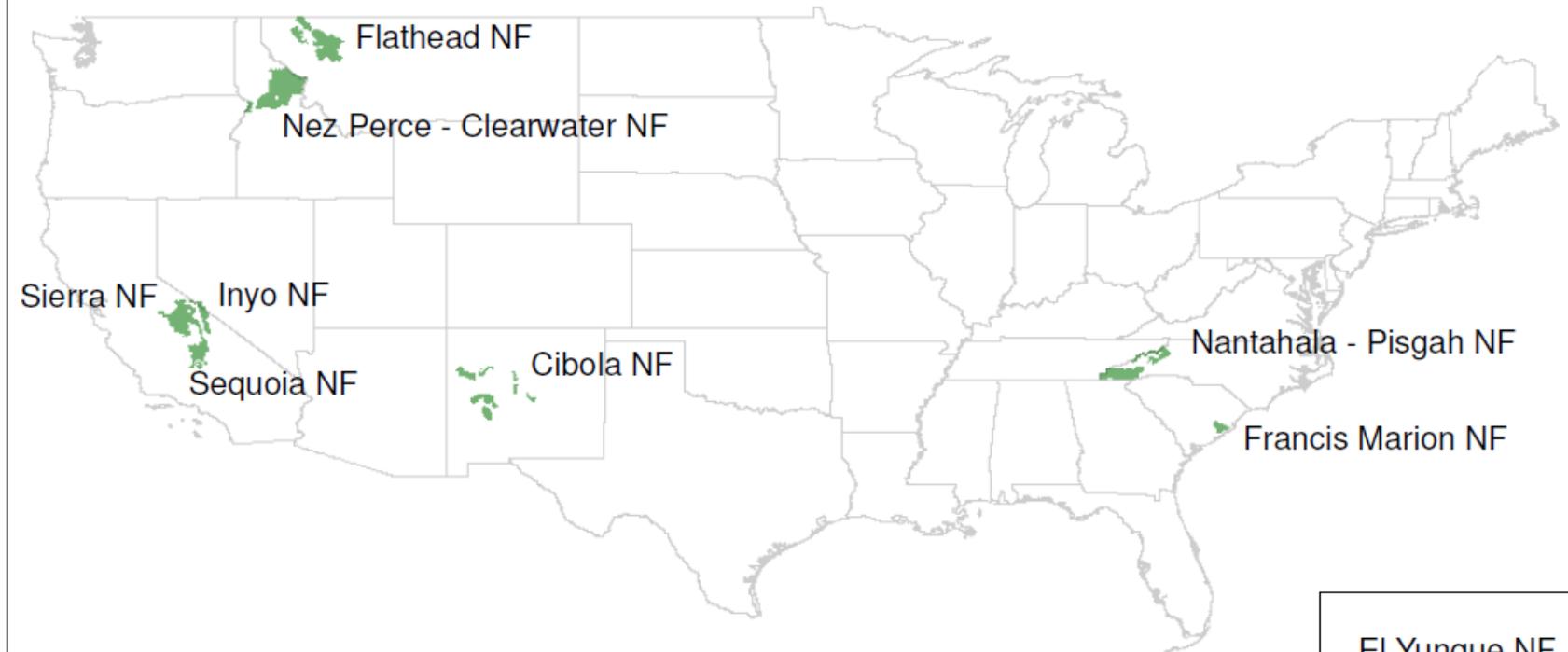
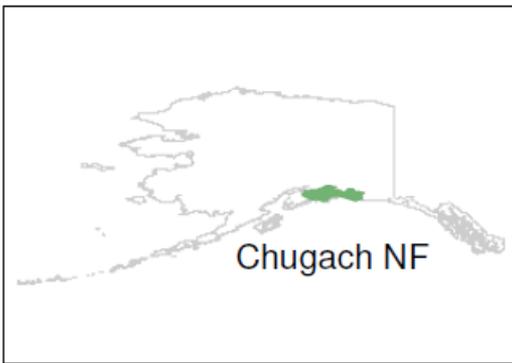
- Federal Advisory Committee: A collaborative approach to rule implementation.
- Early Adopters: Eleven forests are working with the public at varying stages preparing to conduct assessments and undergo plan revisions much faster than previous efforts.

Federal Advisory Committee



- ❑ Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), 1972.
- ❑ The Committee consists of 21 members from diverse backgrounds, geographic locations - representing the full range of public interests.
- ❑ Meetings are open to the public.
- ❑ The Committee is dedicated to reaching a consensus for final recommendations by October.

Early Adopters of the 2012 Planning Rule



Agency Outlook



- The cornerstone of the 2012 Planning Rule is early and continuous collaboration.
- This ensures a fluid planning process that can be responsive to the desires and needs of present and future generations.



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