Summary of the 2016 National Planners Workshop: Lessons Learned, Innovations, and Best Practices among Early Revision Efforts in National Forest Planning[[1]](#footnote-1)

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# Introduction

In May 2016, the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture held a meeting in Fort Collins, Colorado to bring together forest planning team members to share experiences and lessons learned during plan revisions under the 2012 planning rule. The meeting participants included planning team members from early adopter and other forests beginning the plan revision process, regional and national planning staff, and members of the National Advisory Committee on Implementation of the Planning Rule (FACA committee). This provided a forum to share lessons learned, innovations, and emergent challenges that planning team members are experiencing across the National Forest System, and establish network connections among planning staff. This meeting also was designed to identify opportunities to support learning throughout the organization in order to make planning processes across the agency more effective and efficient. In summary, the specific objectives of this meeting were to:

* Provide a forum for forest planners to come together in person to dialogue, share lessons learned, problem solve, and improve their knowledge networks within the organization;
* Identify challenges and successes thus far in the process of revising forest plans;
* Identify topic areas amenable to synthesis of best practices and begin this synthesis; and
* Capture knowledge gained so far in forms that can be easily shared.

The Forest Service Ecosystem Management Coordination (EMC) staff partnered with Colorado State University (CSU) to help plan and facilitate this meeting. CSU students took detailed notes and developed summaries of meeting content throughout each session in order to capture emergent themes, challenges, innovations, lessons learned, and best practices regarding plan revision. We have compiled this report based on these meeting notes. We also recorded short videos interviewing staff about important topics, lessons learned, and innovations; these have been provided to EMC. In addition, we will be conducting a series of interviews with planners in Summer 2016 to investigate these topics in greater depth, and we will compile a second report based on these interviews.

The meeting included a mix of presentations, panel discussions, small group breakout sessions, and large group dialogue. This report is organized to roughly follow the meeting agenda (see Appendix A), provides a brief introduction to key topics, and captures key themes and details from presentations and discussions. Relatively more time is spent on topics that were covered in greater depth at the meeting, such as public engagement and assessment, which is attributable to where most forests were in the revision process.

Further information discussed at this meeting can be found on the Lessons Learned Event Library within the Early Adopters SharePoint site: [https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/fs-emc-plngrule2012/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx#InplviewHash35bb0e58-7903-4ba3-9181-c36e7dd5307b](https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/fs-emc-plngrule2012/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx" \l "InplviewHash35bb0e58-7903-4ba3-9181-c36e7dd5307b" \t "_blank)=.

# General Themes

Several overarching themes arose over the course of the three-day workshop as important for facilitating effective planning processes and supporting communication across the organization.

## Project Management and Capacity

Developing an adaptable project management plan (discussed more in section 4.1), complete with information about key steps in the process, including pre-assessment work, completion dates for essential tasks, and timelines for public engagement, is essential to success and can increase efficiency. The workshop also identified a series of challenges related to project management, including:

* Capacity issues. The complexity of the process, high expectations, and personnel turnover make it challenging to complete plans on original timelines.
* Personnel turnover. Losing staff in the forest planning process presents a particular challenge for maintaining momentum and relationships both internally and externally. In addition, many planners are new to their forests or to forest planning and need time to develop local knowledge, relationships, and knowledge of the forest planning process.
* Funding uncertainty. Attendees said that it was challenging to develop a work plan for planning in light of uncertainties about the availability of adequate funding in the future.
* Additional policy requirements. When developing forest plans, national forests must consider requirements dictated by policies other than the 2012 planning rule. For example, in addition to considering Species of Conservation Concern (SCCs) as required by the planning rule, forests also must consider threatened and endangered species in accordance with the Endangered Species Act. The existence of additional policy requirements can add to the time needed for forest planning.
* Tension between the pressure of an expedited timeframe and completing a high quality plan revision.

## Transparency and External Involvement

Workshop attendees identified several innovations that relate to openness and transparency in forest planning. These included:

* Open office hours to allow the public to “pick the brains” of the planning team in an informal context;
* Interdisciplinary team meetings open to the public, such as those being conducted on the Nantahala-Pisgah National Forest, to promote trust and ensure transparency of the process;
* General versus technical public meetings to strategically tailor meetings to different purposes; and,
* Online “living” assessments and development of plan components to invite public input and review in real time as forest planning products are developed.

## Learning, Innovation, and Diffusion

Important objectives of the 2016 planners meeting included investigation of current strategies for and barriers to organizational learning and exploration of ways to promote learning and diffusion of innovations across the agency. Details of these discussions are provided in section 5 of this report. Attendees said that maintaining and improving connections across networks of planning team members and across the hierarchical levels of the agency were integral to supporting learning, sharing innovative ideas, and promoting communication across the National Forest System. By increasing the ability of the agency to share lessons learned and innovations used to overcome challenges, the organization can create more efficient processes and more effective forest plans. The process where only a few forests begin the revision process every year is ripe for engaging in a strategic approach to organizational learning. This meeting provided a chance to encourage documentation and support to export important innovations and tools being used by forest planners. Innovative approaches are being used by forests to create more efficient and effective forest plans. Some examples of emergent tools, all of which are discussed in more detail in the sections that follow, include:

* Engaging the public early and often throughout plan revision including using local events such as farmer’s markets and county fairs to educate the public and building mailing lists;
* Including a pre-assessment phase to develop a public participation strategy, project management plan, and Species of Conservation Concern list;
* Creating executive summaries for assessment topics to make these documents more accessible and readable for the public;
* Utilizing interactive mapping tools for wilderness;
* Addressing ecosystem services through value-based questions such as use and benefits of the forest to the public;
* Developing a science synthesis to provide the scientific base that will be utilized throughout the planning process; and,
* Considering monitoring components early and throughout the process.

# Workshop Topics Covered In-Depth

## Public Engagement

On Day 1, attendees discussed public participation requirements under the 2012 planning rule. The final planning rule requires that land management plans provide for ecological, social, and economic sustainability while using public input and the best available scientific information to inform decisions. The rule requires the agency to engage the public early and throughout the revision process. According to the Directives, each forest is required to create a Public Participation Strategy prior to initiating the assessment. This document serves as a roadmap for how planning teams will inform and engage the public during each phase of plan revision. See 36 CFR §219.4 and Ch. 40 of the planning directives for specific requirements and guidance.

Topic leads discussed the spectrum of public engagement and explained how the spectrum may distinguish the different public involvement activities that the Forest Service can utilize. This discussion identified the following options:

* Inform: Tell the public about the plan revision process and keep them updated;
* Consult: Obtain feedback from the public and, in turn, provide them with explanation on how their input informed decision-making processes;
* Involve: Understand and incorporate public aspirations;
* Collaborate: Ask people to talk and work with each other (the Forest Service is not the center of attention).

Small groups then convened for world café-style discussions in order to share lessons learned, innovations, challenges, and best practices in the following topic areas within public engagement: early engagement; underserved/underrepresented communities; developing strategic relations with federal, state, local, and tribal governments; wilderness; assessments and BASI; timber suitability; species of conservation concern; and monitoring.

### Public Engagement Breakout Group on Early Engagement

#### Lessons learned and best practices

Lessons learned and emergent best practices included the importance of meeting the public in their own communities as early as possible to begin to establish working relationships, build trust, educate the public about forest planning, and learn about public preferences for engagement before the process begins. Participants noted that establishing relationships with community leaders helped create trust and increase public ownership of the plan. The group also agreed on the necessity of using a variety of media platforms, such as webinars and websites, to ensure that interested individuals can participate remotely. The group agreed that it is important to help the public understand what planning does and does not involve upfront and establish sideboards. This can include explaining to the public that travel management and project-specific issues will be excluded from the land management plan. Participants also noted that regular conference calls with regional offices to discuss lessons learned and share innovations are particularly helpful in order to help diffuse information across the agency and create more efficient planning processes.

#### Innovations

The Prescott National Forest encouraged early engagement by allowing communities to create vision statements that described their desired conditions of the forest and their vision for the forest for the next 15-20 years. This approach garnered strong interest from the public, and Forest Service staff felt this resulted in greater community commitment to following the process of plan revision. The Santa Fe National Forest also hired a collaboration specialist to help focus efforts on public engagement and used public events, such as farmer’s markets and county fairs, as outreach opportunities to educate the public about plan revision and expand mailing lists. Other innovations discussed by planning team members included using participatory geographic mapping to learn how communities relate to the landscape and weekly email updates to the public about the plan revision process and what is coming next.

#### Challenges

Attendees stated that there is a long-term need to track socio-geographic information in order to best understand community needs. Language translation was also identified as a challenge, and one planning team member cited the National Guard as being a helpful in this regard.

### Public Engagement Breakout Group on Underserved/Underrepresented Communities

#### Lessons learned and best practices

The 2012 planning rule encourages national forests to engage underserved and underrepresented communities including youth, minority, and low-income populations in the planning process. Lessons learned and emerging best practices in this area included finding community leaders within these groups and using co-hosted meetings to encourage further involvement by these populations. The group also agreed that using local schools is a particularly important strategy to engage youth and increase community awareness and involvement. Other best practices included taking the time to understand needs, establish relationships, and make knowledge available to these communities. Several attendees cited the benefits of using collaboration specialists to ensure underserved and underrepresented communities are included in planning processes. Other attendees acknowledged the need to recognize historic cultural communities associated with land grants and involve these groups in the planning process.

#### Innovations

The El Yunque National Forest conducted a socio-economic assessment that took into consideration the cultural heritage of the people surrounding the forest during the assessment phase and used local social scientists to identify community needs to be addressed in the plan. The Sierra National Forest developed a consortium to promote environmental literacy in underserved communities and hired youth to work on the forest during summer breaks. Region 5 worked with a GIS specialist to identify potential underserved and underrepresented communities around the forests including youth, minority, low-income in order to cultivate relationships with these populations early on to begin foundational conversations.

#### Challenges

Challenges discussed by the group included the difficulty of getting low income populations, as well as subsistence hunters and tribes, interested and educated about the planning process so they can meaningfully contribute.

### Public Engagement Breakout Group on Developing Strategic Relations with Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Governments

#### Lessons learned and best practices

Establishing relationships with federal, state, local, and tribal governments can allow the Forest Service to increase its capacity and resources during forest plan revision. In Region 1, there were several forests at different phases in the planning process; staff working with these forests said it was valuable to establish agreement among all the forests in the region regarding the scale and timing of involvement of cooperating agencies. Emerging best practices included the following: providing a regional communication strategy to explain what was being done on individual forests and publicize how cooperating agencies could be involved at each stage; clearly identifying roles for planning team members in external communication; and working with county and local government to support communication between the forests and the public. Staff said that upfront coordination with the state is important, but so is recognizing the limitation of local government to coordinate with every forest in the state. Also, creating Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with local governments gets them involved and provides a way to establish roles and responsibilities of involved parties. Collaborative coordinators at regional and forest levels also have been helpful. Some said it is valuable to invest in the state forest action plans that each state needs to conduct.

#### Innovation

The Inyo National Forest used an innovative approach by entering into a cooperative agreement with Inyo County, formalized through an MOU, to focus on the economic aspects of plan revision. The agreement included an emphasis on economic issues and a clear agreement with the associated counties to provide comments on the wilderness inventory and the species of conservation concern list. Staff members said this helped improve the relationship between the Forest Service and the county. Another innovative strategy on the El Yunque National Forest involved engaging with state and county land management planners to develop an “all lands” approach to planning. This approach considered how the forest is part of the landscape and how it affects ecological, economic, and social dimensions of other jurisdictions.

#### Challenges

One challenge discussed is the difficulty for the Forest Service to act as the liaison between the forest and the public to transfer information back to the planning process. This challenge is further complicated due to the differing levels of understanding about land management planning and the 2012 rule among the public.

### Public Engagement Breakout Group on Assessments and Best Available Scientific Information (BASI)

#### Lessons learned

The planning process includes an assessment phase prior to the plan revision and monitoring phases. Some lessons learned and emerging best practices related to assessment and BASI included the use of non-technical language in small, bite-sized portions when soliciting feedback from the public. Engaging the public early, while being aware not to fatigue the public, was another lesson learned. One suggestion from the group was to ask the public very general and unspecialized questions to get at the important aspects of assessments instead of using the language in the directives. Other best practice included providing a preliminary need-for-change in the draft assessment so the public could see how the forest was going to use the assessment. Establishing a plan for public engagement early in the process is also important. Staff noted the importance of increasing transparency by explaining the significance of BASI and how BASI informs decision-making.

#### Innovations

Innovations used by forests in Region 5 included a bioregional assessment to focus resources and consolidate information. The bioregional assessment was based on a science synthesis, conducted by the Pacific Southwest Research Station. This supported the region-wide assessment that then served as the basis for forest-level assessments. Region 5 also used a Wiki to create on online “Living Assessment.” These innovations are discussed more below in section 3.2. Another important innovation used by the El Yunque National Forest included developing a consistent glossary of terms.

### Public Engagement Breakout Group on Wilderness

#### Lessons learned and best practices

The group discussed the need to manage community expectations. Several attendees agreed that showing maps in the first meeting is confusing to the public, and it is better to wait until later in the process to share wilderness area maps. Emerging best practices included clearly explaining the process for designating and assessing wilderness areas to the public.

#### Innovations

The Santa Fe National Forest used a question-based approach to engage the public through strategic questions designed to target the public’s conceptualization of wilderness. By soliciting opinions through open-ended questions, the forest was able to garner public opinion and incorporate public sentiments in their planning process. The Helena-Lewis and Clark successfully worked with an outside contractor to use an interactive mapping tool designed to collect place-based spatial information from the public about the forest, including wilderness.

### Public Engagement Breakout Group on Species of Conservation Concern (SCCs)

#### Lessons learned and best practices

Identifying SCCs is a new requirement under the 2012 planning rule. A lesson learned according to planners was the difficulty in developing plan components prior to developing the SCC list. Region 5 shared that it would be helpful to start developing the list earlier in the process of plan revision. Planners also stated that an emerging best practice included providing the public with the methodology used to determine the list, particularly the reason why species were not included, soliciting feedback on this process, and ensuring that there was adequate capacity to respond to and address public comment. Some said a final list may be necessary before developing a draft plan. These practices would allow forests to solicit public input in a timely manner. Some work on developing SCC lists should be part of pre-assessment work to support efficient planning processes, according to participants.

#### Innovations

Forests are using several innovative approaches to address this requirement. For instance, the Chugach National Forest developed a SCC list in association with the assessment and then took comments during public meetings. They then took it to partners and scientists to get their perspective on the list. Early adopters in both Region 3 and 5 put out draft lists that helped the public understand what SCCs were and why they should care about this topic. In Region 6, working groups were being organized to prepare the region to start off plan revision on the right foot. This included discussion about topics such as SCCs.

#### Challenges

Workshop participants noted the difficulty associated with educating the average user of the forest about the concept of SCCs. The participants saw a need to make this information more accessible to the public and to pursue a shared understanding with the public. This included internal education as well, as one planner stated that some planning team members know very little about most species, such as small mammals and plants. To overcome this challenge, the forest reached out to researchers and partners during the development of assessments.

### Public Engagement Breakout Group on Timber Suitability

#### Lessons learned and best practices

The conversation about timber sustainability was only peripherally associated with timber. Despite this, details of the discussion were recorded and are reported in this report. The group noted that large open forums enabled grandstanding and did not work for some forests. Instead, small working groups were more effective. Attendees stated that transparency of decision-making was important to the public. One suggestion was to develop plan components before creating and displaying timber suitability maps. Framing plan development and plan components in the context of the “greatest good for the greatest number” was cited as a concept that made sense to the public. Planners identified several other emerging best practices, including providing information gathered during public participation meetings on the web as a best practice to disseminate knowledge. The group also suggested revising and updating information and components from previous planning efforts, especially if these were relatively recent, to save time and resources. Planners also emphasized the importance of recognizing the specific and unique characteristics of the forest undergoing plan revision when developing engagement processes.

#### Innovations

One planner noted that using field trips is an affordable strategy to help educate the public and increase understanding of the planning process; these trips also foster conversations about a range of concerns such as recommended wilderness, timber, access, wildlife habitat, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and trails. In addition, field trips improved community relationships and capacity to engage in planning. The group stated that it is important, however, to follow-up at an evening workshop to recap the field trip to ensure the public has ample opportunities to participate. Other innovations included the Cibola National Forest using landscape teams, which involved cooperating agencies such as soil and water conservation districts, tribes, state agencies, and counties, and establishing one landscape team for each mountain range. This resulted in better relationships between the Cibola and the involved agencies.

#### Challenges

Planners stated that it is hard to do everything in sequence and meet the expected timeframe of plan revision. A roadmap and strategy for public participation can help to identify important time bottlenecks. Another challenge cited by some attendees was that the public generally did not follow through with pre-reading before public meetings and was therefore unable to meaningfully contribute to the conversation.

### Public Engagement Breakout Group on Monitoring

#### Lessons learned and best practices

Region 10 noted that an emerging best practice included developing an effective public engagement strategy in order to educate both staff and stakeholders about monitoring in the rule and explain public engagement in this phase. The group agreed that forests shouldstart thinking about monitoring during the assessment phase and throughout the plan revision process. Forests said that they needed considerable time up front to create the structure for how to collect and analyze information. Another key lesson learned was that, when there is a lack of BASI,validationmonitoring may be necessary to help the Forest Service explain the decision-making process to the public.

#### Innovations

One innovation utilized by Region 5 included holding a series of dialogs sessions to discuss a range of critical issues that affect the people who live, work, and recreate in the Sierra Nevada and the Cascades. During the Sierra Cascades Dialog Sessions, the Forest Service hosted specific tables on different monitoring topics to collect public feedback. Region 5 also developed consistent desired conditions, questions, and indicators relating to monitoring across all three early adopter forests. Region 10 noted that they used public engagement to help home in on critical monitoring items.

#### Challenges

Workshop participants said that maintaining engagement with the public throughout the monitoring process is a challenge. The public generally displayed concern about a few key areas of interest, such as specific species, fires, and wilderness. The primary groups involved represented environmental interests rather than a diverse set of stakeholders.

### Tools that Emerged During the Public Engagement Sessions

The group identified several tools that are available and may be useful to forests across the system. For instance, based on the experiences and lessons learned in public engagement of the three early adopters in the region, Region 5 developed guidance for public affairs officers and interdisciplinary team leaders to identify best practices for engaging the public. This Public Involvement Guide includes outlining the phases of planning and helps forests plan out the steps that they will take to meet the requirements. This guidance includes three tools, including the Public Involvement Guide, a two-page checklist to help forests see the big picture of public engagement, and a SharePoint site that provides resources such as lessons learned, templates, and training. This guidance can be found at: [https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/fs-r05-pifpr/SitePages/Welcome!.aspx](https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/fs-r05-pifpr/SitePages/Welcome%21.aspx" \t "_blank)

Another tool, developed by the National Inventory Monitoring and Assessment Strategy Implementation Team in the Washington Office, includes a chart that illustrates the planning milestones and when planners might involve various partners and groups identified in the rule. Further information about this tool can be found at:

[https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/fs-nrm-imac/SitePages/Home.aspx](https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/fs-nrm-imac/SitePages/Home.aspx" \t "_blank)

### Summary

Under the 2012 planning rule, plan revisions must involve public participation and collaboration throughout all stages. Themes and best practices discussed by workshop attendees included the following:

* Remaining transparent and encouraging early and often open communication with the public;
* Establishing a public engagement strategy and roadmap early, in tandem with developing a project management plan to establish timelines, identify bottlenecks, and clarify expectations;
* Conducting a pre-assessment phase to prepare for revision, including developing a project management plan, rapid stakeholder assessment, and developing a preliminary SCC list;
* Establishing strong relationships with the public early and maintaining them throughout revision;
* Utilizing a variety of outreach methods; and,
* Including a social scientist or collaboration specialist.

## Assessments

The plan revision process consists of three phases: assessment, plan revision, and monitoring. Assessment is required and discussed at 36 CFR §219.6 of the rule and Chapter 10 of the directives. In the assessment phase, the responsible official must rapidly identify and evaluate relevant and existing information to provide a solid base of information and context for plan decision-making. A half-day at the planners meeting focused on the assessment process—the planning phase for which revision forests had the most experience at that point in time.

A panel discussion focused on the FACA committee’s findings from their review of assessments. Committee members outlined the importance of an obvious link between the assessment and need-for-change document. The purpose of the need-for-change document is to identify the preliminary need to change topics for developing the new forest plan. By assessing the current plan, current conditions, and forecasting future conditions, planners may clearly justify what needs to change in plan revisions. A well-defined connection can support clarity in the plan revision process, particularly during public engagement. The FACA committee members noted that assessments need to include more robust social, economic, and cultural information. In terms of cultural information, they suggested increasing the use of ethnographic, demographic, and anthropological data, instead of relying strictly on archaeological information. The committee members stressed the importance of making documents user-friendly, including clear messages and appendices with key information and public comments. They felt that the public wants to see their values reflected in documents, so making this clear for the public is important. Committee members described successful assessments as those that situate the national forests in their broader landscapes while identifying the forests’ distinctive roles and contributions to these landscapes. The successful assessments were outward-looking and analyzed a range of transboundary issues, challenges, and opportunities. They set the stage for an increasingly “all-lands” approach to planning. More information on FACA committee recommendations can be found at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/planningrule/committee>.

EMCstaff also presented their review of assessments. The WO committee found that assessments covered all 15 required topics but needed better integration throughout assessment chapters to increase cohesiveness of the document as a whole. They said that documents lacked clear focus and generally failed to set the stage for adaptive management strategies. The panel stated that, while the documents cited BASI, the documents included little evidence of how this science was used to support decision-making. They suggested that there needs to be a clearer explanation of how BASI is informing the planning and assessment process. They also noted that there has been significant time spent on the assessment phase. Of the four years allotted for plans, one year of time is allotted for assessment; however, forests are spending close to half of their time in assessment. The presenter stated that assessments should identify and evaluate current conditions and trends on the forest and synthesize this information into an easily readable document. In summary, the presenter identified the following key question to consider when creating assessments to inform the planning phase: Does the plan need to be changed to address this topic?

Small groups then convened to further discuss experiences, lessons learned, innovations, and challenges regarding the assessment phase of plan revision. Notes from these sessions are summarized below.

### Lessons Learned and Best Practices

One national forest planning staff member noted that it is important to clearly communicate expectations and timeframes when doing public engagement during the assessment. The forest struggled with publically posting their draft assessment and dealing with an overwhelming amount of comments and updates needed. One national forest suggested releasing pieces of the assessment at different times for public input instead of the entire document. This strategy engages the public throughout the process, while reducing the amount of reading material and comments received for each section.

Several forests noted that the pre-assessment time period was critical to getting teams ready for the assessment. They said that the pre-assessment phase allows teams to take stock of information available, which increases the efficiency and strategic nature of the process. This could include developing a SCC list prior to beginning assessments. One national forest leveraged public engagement to develop their SCC list. The forest solicited comments on best available science and data gaps related to a preliminary SCC list, the criteria for developing it, and species that the public felt were important species of conservation concern. Pre-assessment work could also include conducting a rapid stakeholder assessment to set the stage for public involvement and inform the assessment phase; the Grand Mesa Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests did this.

Region 3 said that it is important to develop some level of a standardized process for the assessment phase with strong support from the regional office. A standardized process with common data sets, terminology, products, and processes across all the forests in the region helps individual forests learn from what others have already done.

### Innovations

One forest proposed convening a Delphi panel during the pre-assessment phase. A Delphi panel is a systematic forecasting technique composed of a panel of specialists and used to build consensus. The forest’s panel would consist of experts and representatives from local, state, and tribal government. The panel would discuss the 15 assessment topics reviewing known information and data gaps, helping to frame the assessment phase. The person from this forest thought the Delphi panel could help craft a more efficient, focused assessment phase.

A planner from the Rio Grande National Forest stated that they created executive summaries for each piece of the assessment; they said these summaries were effective tools for engaging the public. Each executive summary reviewed and delineated the need for assessment and change according to assessment topic. Another strategy mentioned was to develop a main assessment document and offer more detailed information used for decision-making in appendices.

Region 5 shared several innovative approaches to the assessment phase. A science synthesis was completed to establish a solid base of scientific information for the assessment phase. Region 5 partnered with the Pacific Southwest Research Station to increase resources and capacity. The science synthesis included a conversation with the public in order to determine what the most important science-based questions were that needed to be answered in order to develop assessments. This synthesis became the underpinning of both the bioregional assessment that Region 5 conducted, and for the individual forest assessments.

Early adopter forests in Region 5 used a Wiki to engage their public in the process of drafting a “living assessment” that the public could access and edit. This allowed the public to help improve and develop the draft and also showed the public how their comments were considered and addressed in subsequent drafts. Editing was conducted with strict rules enforced by a content manager. A planner noted that the public was still not very familiar with Wiki documents and that there was disproportionate commenting from various stakeholders, such as the recreation community. While there were difficulties associated with the “living document,” several planners believed it helped with information gathering during the pre-assessment phase and engaged the public; they said they would use a similar approach again in the future.

## Best Available Scientific Information

On the second day, the workshop included an hour-long session addressing BASI and working with research stations. This session included a panel discussion as well as group discussion.

The planning rule specifically dictates that plans should “use the best scientific information available.” Furthermore, plans must document their use of BASI (§219.3). Based on the panel discussion and comments from workshop participants, several different approaches existed to meet BASI requirements. Region 5 worked with the Pacific Southwest Research Station to develop a science synthesis document concurrent with the assessment process that addressed BASI at the bioregional scale. The Region noted that it may have made more sense to finalize the document prior to undertaking assessment. Participants from the region noted the following questions as important to consider:

* Is relevant scientific information being considered?
* Is the information reasonably interpreted?
* Are there uncertainties documented?
* Are management consequences identified and documented?
* What do you do when there is conflicting science or different interpretations of science?

Region 8 provided perspective on how it approached BASI for the El Yunque National Forest. The forest put together documentation of the best available science, which was reviewed by the region using several different tools. The region identified its Ecological Sustainability Evaluation tool (ESE) as something used to support plan decision-making. To address climate change, the region pointed to the Template for Assessing Climate Change Impacts and Management Options (TACCIMO), which offers a searchable database of the latest scientific information related to climate change. On the Francis Marion National Forest, participants noted that for gaps in knowledge, the forest intended to monitor and apply adaptive management. The region said that addressing BASI in the Record of Decision is a challenge.

The panel also discussed BASI in assessments based on a review of completed assessments. The panelists noted that assessments often provided criteria for assessing BASI but did not directly apply these criteria on specific items. The panel identified several suggestions, including the development of an appendix with citations and relevancy to plan, criteria, trends, and indicators for each individual item.

Participants identified several challenges related to BASI. The panelists noted an unresolved question with regard to whether assessments should serve as a forum for debate about conflicting science. Furthermore, the participants acknowledged the difficulty of using BASI when it conflicts with public preferences or local knowledge. Another highlighted the appeal of using BASI because it has already been scrutinized and identified as reliable.

In addition to the panel and group discussion, workshop attendees were asked to record in writing answers to one of the following questions:

1. How did you find BASI?
2. Do you have suggestions as to how to support BASI needs of the forest planning process?

We received a total of 40 responses, with roughly half answering each question.

The most common responses concerning how participants found BASI referred to research stations (e.g., science synthesis documents), online clearinghouses for scientific information (e.g., JSTOR, Web of Science, TreeSearch, Google Scholar), individuals (e.g., resource specialists, experts at universities, agencies, etc.), and public input. Other unique responses included the Forest Service Library, local and tribal governments, climate vulnerability assessments, and, more generally, scientific literature.

When asked how to support BASI needs of the forest planning process, participants responded most frequently by emphasizing the need to better share BASI among those engaged in forest planning, through methods such as citation software programs (e.g., EndNote) and science synthesis documents. Also common among responses was the suggestion to provide opportunities to build relationships with those that may have knowledge of BASI, such as research station and state agency experts. Other suggestions included gaining WO support for staff positions focused on collecting BASI, facilitating ways for units to share their BASI with the public to increase transparency, and hiring more social scientists and economists to support BASI-related needs.

There was some noteworthy overlap in question responses. Some commonalities included:

* The use of science syntheses to find BASI and the suggestion to complete science syntheses, likely before the assessment phase, to support BASI needs of forest planning.
* The importance of relationships and specific individuals (resource specialists and individual experts) to both find BASI and to support BASI needs.

## Plan Components

Plan components guide future management decisions and include desired conditions, objectives, standards and guidelines, and suitable uses. See §219.7 for more information on plan components. The group had a discussion on how to build integrated plan components, which can be defined as components addressing multiple resource concerns or areas. This began with small group discussion around four planning topics: fire, sustainable recreation, social and economic sustainability, and wildlife. The goal was to then look at how components might overlap or conflict when the entire group returned for discussion.

The sustainable recreation break-out session discussion focused on how to integrate desired conditions with other topics such as wildlife. In the wildlife meeting, an individual introduced a matrix that could be used as a tool for building plan components; it outlined necessary ecological conditions for SCCs and plan components to address these conditions. The fire group discussed a unique approach adopted by Region 5 to develop fire management zones. Using a risk assessment modeling approach with the help of an outside contractor, the Region sought to objectively quantify fire risk recognizing the probability of ignition, flame lengths, and intensity. The goal was to quantitatively identify where fire may be used, or managed less intensely, for ecological benefit with less risk to humans and important infrastructure. The region assessed value in terms of human values, critical habitat for at-risk species, and infrastructure.

Groups highlighted the importance of noting the relevant scale when describing desired conditions in plan revision. Several groups discussed how desired conditions are mid- to long-term goals, not requirements, and it is important to communicate this to the public. Lastly, there was agreement that plan components, specifically desired conditions, can be complex and interconnected; thus, there are challenges associated with drafting and implementing them.

The workshop attendees established two broad goals that could frame the integration of plan components: ecological sustainability and socio-economic contributions.

## Ecological Integrity

The workshop included a breakout session to discuss how different forests and regions were defining ecological integrity. Ecological integrity is an important component of ecological sustainability and of maintaining the diversity of plant and animal communities (§219.8 and §219.9). The rule defines ecological integrity as follows: “The quality or condition of an ecosystem when its dominant ecological characteristics (for example, composition, structure, function, connectivity, and species composition and diversity) occur within the natural range of variation [NRV] and can withstand and recover from most perturbations imposed by natural environmental dynamics or human influence” (§219.19).

Different national forests at the workshop employed different approaches to considering ecological integrity. Individual national forests could assess ecological integrity at the scale of an individual management unit; however, several regions assessed ecological integrity at the regional scale. Region 1 established a standard set of broad potential vegetation types and invested in regional monitoring efforts. Similarly, Region 5 developed natural range of variation reports based on major vegetation types. The regional ecologist also used state-and-transition models to assess ecological integrity. In Region 3, the regional office provided significant support by identifying natural range of variation for ecosystems and created regionally consistent desired conditions that forests may adopt or modify as needed. The units of analysis for this approach were Ecological Response Units. The region noted that this approach took a long time and was labor intensive. Ultimately, workshop participants agreed that approaches to assessing ecological integrity involve identifying key ecological characteristics to assess. Data availability shaped abilities to assess ecological integrity. Workshop attendees noted that Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) may present an opportunity to assess ecological integrity.

## Ecosystem Services

The workshop also included a session to gather approaches from the group with regards to ecosystem services in assessment. According to the 2012 planning rule, ecosystem services are one component of social and economic sustainability (§219.8).

Planners suggested an emerging best practice is to consider the mix of ecosystem services to inform analysis of EIS alternatives. The group believed that in the context of assessment, forests could address ecosystem services in a separate section or throughout other assessment sections. Planners stated that assessments should seek to list or identify services, as well as indicators for these services. According to the group, listing these services in a tabular format, including evaluation of the scientific information available for each ecosystem service, may enable the prioritization of particular services. Planners also stated that plans should use lay language to communicate what ecosystem services are, using terms that are relevant to communities (e.g. watershed protection).

Several participants identified the challenge of discussing ecosystem services with the public, who are unsure what this terminology means or how it is measured. Several innovative approaches to communicating about ecosystem services emerged. Participants found it helpful to use alternate approaches to discussing the concept with the public, including focusing on:

* What benefits does the forest provide?
* How do you use the forest?

Another innovative approach employed by forests was to map ecosystem services, where they occur, and potential threats to these services.

## Day 3 World Café Topics based on Participant Priorities

There were four suggested breakout sessions on Day 3 including: management areas and geographic areas, tribal consultation, programmatic NEPA, and public engagement.

### Management Areas and Geographic Areas

Management areas are areas to which the same set of plan components apply; they do not have to be spatially contiguous. Geographic areas are spatially contiguous areas and reference broader landscapes, linking the forest plan to easily identifiable places such as watersheds and mountains. Geographic areas and management areas may overlap. See §219.7 of the planning rule and §22.2 of the directives for more information regarding management and geographic areas. Several forests noted that they are working to reduce the number of management areas within their forest and prefer to focus on geographic areas instead. By reducing the number of management areas and focusing on broader geographic areas, forest planners hoped to reduce plan complexity and increase ecological integrity across larger landscapes.

### Tribal Consultation

Planners noted there are multiple methods of tribal consultation, including quarterly meetings. Participants mentioned it is important to be inclusive of both recognized and non-recognized tribes, stressing the importance of cultivating and maintaining these relationships. Participants noted that communication with tribes is critical at each step of the process in order to ensure tribes are familiar and comfortable with the final plan. Many noted that there are capacity issues not only with the Forest Service, but also with the tribes, including high turnover in points of contact among tribal positions. See §219.4 for more information regarding tribal consultation.

### Programmatic NEPA

Several planners noted the importance of shifting from project-level NEPA to programmatic NEPA in the context of forest planning. A Region 3 planner stated that many people were not accustomed to doing programmatic NEPA, so they held workshops throughout the region that outlined expectations for programmatic NEPA. Planners cited confusion because the kind of analysis that occurs at the project-level NEPA is not always relevant to programmatic NEPA. One major challenge planners experienced was knowing what level of detail to use in varying circumstances. Overall, the group emphasized the importance of focusing on qualitative data versus quantitative data in programmatic NEPA documents. The site-specific details and quantitative data appear in the project-level NEPA documents and should be avoided in programmatic NEPA if it is not necessary. Instead, the programmatic NEPA document should utilize qualitative data such as ranges of numbers and description of general context and trends.

### Public Engagement

The group discussed the difficulty with the time period between releasing the draft and final plan because forests want to maintain communication with their stakeholders throughout revision. Individuals mentioned that there is a challenge around balancing the resources needed to develop a final plan while also wanting to continue engagement and not appear unresponsive to the public while processing comments. Workshop participants suggested using a forest’s collaborative group as a sensing tool to identify needs and reengage on key, controversial issues. Many participants discussed approaches to responding to numerous comments, including the Collaborative Comment and Analysis Response Application (CARA) and coding. Planners recognized the importance of developing a coding structure and continuous team engagement throughout the content analysis process. Participants suggested weekly check-ins to make sure everything is being addressed appropriately. See §219.4 and §219.16 for more information regarding public engagement and comments.

# Presentation Topics

## Project management

The workshop included an hour of panel discussions on project management plans, staffing, and regional support. Project management plans lay out plans for completing the plan revision process, including timelines for relevant tasks, staffing plans, and resource considerations. They should be consistent with public involvement plans.

### Lessons Learned and Best Practices

Based on their experience revising forest plans, forest planning staff noted the importance of appropriate project management. Workshop attendees said that developing project management plans while concurrently undertaking planning does not work. Based on this lesson learned, forests should seek to develop comprehensive project management plans before getting too far into forest planning. Participants reflected that an initial investment in project management yields better accountability to partners and management, fewer missed deadlines, and anticipation of problems before they occur.

There was agreement that project management plans should include time to read, process, and consider input from the public and should consider holidays and staff leave time. Workshop attendees noted that project managers should expect some turnover of agency personnel and have a plan to address the departure and arrival of planning staff.

An additional presentation on editing resources noted that project management also must include time for the production and delivery of planning documents that achieve Section 508 Accessibility compliance. Forests should decide whether they intend to seek help from agency editing staff. Regional staff at the workshop noted that their offices could support project management by offering resources in the form of both personnel and information. Regional offices should track the progress of individual national forests periodically; regular status calls with forests help accomplish this.

### Innovations

Tools that can be beneficial to project management are the electronic management National Environmental Policy Act (eMNEPA) suite of tools, which includes:

* Planning, Appeals, Litigation System (PALS). This tool tracks all Forest Service NEPA project progress and documentation and is the main way to make projects available on public web pages.
* Mailing List Management System (MLMS). This tool allows staff to automate mailing lists. The public can self-subscribe to a project and this tool will send updates on projects or upcoming public engagement meetings.
* Content Analysis and Response Application (CARA). This is an automated database that collects public comments and finds key words and themes.
* Project Record Management Tool (PRM). This automates collection for litigation, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, and administrative recordkeeping. It automates conversion of Microsoft Word and Excel files to PDF and automatically numbers documents for litigation or FOIA requests.

More information about these tools can be found at the NEPA Services Group (NSG) SharePoint site and forest service web page: http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/em/emnepa\_mp/.

## Species of Conservation Concern

The workshops included an hour of panel presentations and discussion on species of conservation concern (SCCs), defined as “a species, other than federally recognized threated, endangered, proposed, or candidate species, that is known to occur in the plan area and for which the regional forester has determined that the best available scientific information indicates substantial concern about the species’ capability to persist over the long-term in the plan area” (§219.9). At the time of the workshop, the Washington Office was assessing how forests identified SCCs and was developing additional guidance. Participants noted that the SCC approach sets a higher standard than the sensitive species approach used previously. Workshop participants noted challenges in addressing SCCs, including confusion on what “known to occur” means; participants said that evidence of the species on the forest is needed. An additional question that arose was the following: How do you determine “substantial concern”? Different individuals understand risk differently, and, as such, it may be difficult to establish SCCs consistently without further guidance. As a result, forests may define a small number or large number of species depending on the characteristics of that forest. Identifying these species requires consideration of scientific information that addresses the level of confidence in the data, the distribution of the species, its dispersion, habitat requirements and vulnerability, population trend, life history, and demographics. A lesson learned for early adopters was the extensive amount of work associated with identification of SCCs; accordingly, participants agreed that national forests should begin the endeavor early in the planning process. Finally, workshop attendees highlighted challenges related to transitioning from Regional Forester Sensitive Species to Species of Conservation Concern; the Washington Office EMC staff said that guidance on this was forthcoming.

## Wilderness

The workshops included a 45-minute presentation and discussion session addressing considerations of wilderness areas in forest planning. The planning rule requires that, as a part of plan development, national forests assess lands for wilderness designation (§219.7). This session focused on a presentation from Forest Service Washington Office staff involved with wilderness and Wild and Scenic River inventories on a recent lessons learned document developed based on wilderness inventory efforts completed by the Flathead, Cibola, Nantahala-Pisgah, Coronado, and Prescott National Forests which can be found on the Lessons Learned Event Library within the Early Adopters SharePoint site (link found in the introduction). This session emphasized the need to engage experts, both from the Forest Service and relevant NGOs, in undertaking wilderness inventorying. One participant suggested that forests should define terms, especially “substantially” and “noticeable.” Several forests cautioned against showing wilderness inventory maps too early in the process, because the public may not react well. Instead, they suggested that forests conduct public meetings before revealing wilderness inventory maps. One participant suggested that forests should include the caveat from the planning directives that the inventory does not denote future implications for particular areas.

## Objections

The workshop included a presentation and discussion related to the objection process. Subpart B of the planning rule establishes pre-decisional administrative review, also referred to as objection (§219.50-219.62). Much of the information that was covered can be found in Chapter 50 of the handbook, which provides additional guidance. The objection process provides the opportunity for an independent review and resolution of issues before the plan approval. Experiences shared by workshop attendees suggested that the objection process represents a continuation of the public engagement process, which starts with assessment. Accordingly, workshop attendees suggested that forests should have a plan for the objection process throughout plan development, particularly in terms of relationships with the public, groups, agencies, and stakeholders. Participants noted that project management plans should include guidelines that address timelines and staffing for the objection process. Workshop participants advocated for mindful and deliberate approaches to considering public input and responding to comments to set the stage successfully for objections. Resources available to forests include a national administrative review Sharepoint site, public brochures, a cooperating agency briefing paper, various training materials, Leaders-as-Conveners Workshops, and the Collaboration Cadre.

## Broad-scale monitoring

The rule requires “the development of a broader-scale monitoring strategy (BSMS) for plan monitoring questions that can best be answered at a geographic scale broader than one plan area” (§219.12). Members of the team conducting the Region 2/3 BSMS pilot project gave a brief presentation. The Southwestern Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) were in the process of conducting this project, set to be completed in late 2016, in partnership with the Forest Service Washington Office (National Forest System and State and Private Forestry), the Rocky Mountain Region of the Forest Service, the Southwestern Region, and the Rocky Mountain Research Station. In order to meet the requirements and goals of developing a BSMS under the 2012 planning rule, this project will collaboratively design a broader-scale monitoring framework for Regions 2 and 3, including BSMS monitoring questions, indicators, and associated parameters (scale, databases, and potential governance approaches). This framework will provide an initial outline of the BSMS for the two regions but will be adjusted over time as new priorities and information emerge. More information can be found at <http://sweri.eri.nau.edu/BroadscaleMonitoring.html>. The team noted that a BSMS may include: 1) aggregated data from multiple forests; 2) forest level data analyzed in unique ways at the regional or multi-forest level; or 3) regional or national level datasets that are relevant for forest planning but is not collected by the forests. Emergent questions from this project are around the ideal timing for developing a BSMS, whether the BSMS can include questions at the regional level that do not appear in forest plan monitoring plans, whether the BSMS should be primarily responsive to existing questions in forest plans or developed with greater leadership at the regional level with questions that are then included in forest plans as a result, and whether a BSMS needs to be shaped around regional management questions.

The discussion sparked several questions from the audience including how broader scale monitoring aligns with the national inventory, monitoring, and analysis (IMA) program. Many participants stated that they do not believe BSMS and IMA are highly linked, even though they could dovetail together. Region 1 stated that they developed regional management questions and associated monitoring questions for their BSMS with strong input from regional specialists and forests within the region; they were working to build capacity to conduct the BSMS analysis. Region 1 also is tiering their questions and indicators to the IMA framework. Region 8 approached broader scale monitoring as both a bottom-up and top-down process. They compiled questions from forest monitoring plans, including monitoring transitions and early adopters, and looked for regional efficiencies and consistencies. The regional office also was taking responsibility for analyzing existing data sources (e.g. FIA data and climate monitoring data from partner organizations) to develop questions and indicators for required plan monitoring questions. They developed a framework for creating their BSMS that includes criteria and categorizes questions by the eight requirements for plan monitoring in the rule (see §219.12). Region 8 was also prioritizing the implementation of coordinated climate monitoring.

# Final Thoughts

On the last day, the group spent an hour discussing organizational learning—specifically how it occurs and how to promote learning more effectively throughout the organization. The workshop finished with a session discussing lessons learned and ways forward led by the Director of EMC.

The workshop offered a venue for peer-to-peer learning; the conveners and participants also intend for learning to continue in other contexts. Attendees were impressed with the level of energy and enthusiasm for forest planning at the workshop, which they said may enable further learning. People suggested annual workshops of this nature would be useful for promoting ongoing learning. Workshop participants also identified several opportunities that would enable increased agency learning:

* Workshop participants highlighted the importance of networking within the agency in order to support learning. They suggested bringing teams together centered on particular resource concerns or planning challenges, convening monthly meetings to address particular issues, and creating a directory of forest planning staff across the country, including information of individual’s specialties. Developing communities of practice would support dissemination of innovations.
* Planners from forests who are undergoing later plan revisions could shadow earlier forest planning efforts in their regions in order to develop direct experience with the process and its associated challenges. Participants noted that there is no substitute for firsthand experience with forest planning. Workshop attendees also noted that a mentoring website could help connect more experienced planners and resource specialists with those beginning the process.
* Existing structures, such as early adopter phone calls and SharePoint sites, also present valuable opportunities to share ideas.
* People suggested the agency devote time to learning and make it a priority.
* Several workshop participants highlighted the value of having FACA committee members participate in the workshop and see this as an opportunity for future guidance.
* Several workshop participants said detailers have been helpful for forest planners. In addition, “quick-strike teams” or a “planning cadre” could be leveraged to provide targeted support to forests undergoing plan revision.
* Workshop participants suggested the need to aggregate valuable information in one place. Individuals noted that SharePoint sites could enable the dissemination of information. Other participants suggested the need for a library of valuable documents and information.

Workshop attendees were mainly planning staff, and several participants noted the importance of line officers learning about the planning process. Participants noted that it is especially integral to educate forest supervisors and rangers who are new to the role or who have little experience with forest planning. Participants felt that it would be valuable for these individuals to better understand the decision-space, what resources they can provide, and how to overcome existing barriers. Some planners suggested it was their job to educate their line officers, but regional staff noted that this is also an area where they have a significant role and responsibility.

Ultimately, the workshops yielded a rich compendium of ideas that forests undergoing plan revision may apply. In concluding the workshop, participants shared new approaches and techniques that they intended to try out on their forests. These ideas suggest active efforts by workshop participants to learn from one another and innovate their approaches to forest planning. Several notable ideas included:

* Open ID team meetings to the public to increase transparency with stakeholders. A representative from the Nantahala-Pisgah National Forest originally shared this idea.
* Apply the factors of success triangle to focus planning team on the issues that really matter and avoid distractions. Washington Office staff presented this idea in an introductory presentation to the workshop.
* Start early, particularly on wilderness inventories, selecting SCCs, and project management.
* Avoid using jargon to improve communication with stakeholders.
* Develop relationships with cooperative agencies to set the stage for forest plan revision.
* Monitor collaborative efforts to identify opportunities to improve collaboration.

Meeting Agenda

**2012 Planning Rule Implementation**

**A Learning EVENT**

**May 17 – 19, 2016**

Natural Resource Research Center, Buildings A and B

2150 Center Ave.

Ft. Collins, CO

Overview

**Objectives**

* Provide a forum for forest planners to come together in person to dialogue, share lessons learned, problem solve, and improve their knowledge networks within the organization.
* Identify challenges and successes thus far in the process of revising forest plans.
* Identify topic areas amenable to synthesis of best practices and begin this synthesis.
* Capture knowledge gained so far in forms that can be easily shared.

**Outcomes**

* Identification of innovative approaches used to conduct plan revisions.
* Group deliberation on future innovations to address the most pressing challenges.
* Increased network connections among FS planners.

**Products**

* Detailed notes and summaries of meeting content, hosted on internal web pages.
* A synthesis and summary of findings – a compilation of key lessons learned and potential innovations for planning.
* A peer-reviewed paper, produced by CSU faculty and grad students, focusing on organizational learning and innovation.

Tuesday, May 17

**Welcome & Introductions**

Location:  **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Topic Lead: **Bruce**

**800 - 815:** Welcome and House-Keeping (Bruce)

**815 – 845:** Opening Remarks (Chris, Ann or Tracy)

**845 – 900:** Agenda Review, Introduction of facilitation team (Bruce)

**900 - 915**: Historical Perspective (Courtney Schultz)

**915 - 945:** Introductions and Ice-breaker (Peri, Debbie, Michelle)

**Break**

**Public Engagement**

**Objectives:** Efficiently collect ongoing public engagement effort information (data) around what we are required to do (key rule and directive requirements). What worked well? What were the challenges? What would we do differently in the future?

Location: **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Topic Lead: **Timory Peel, Deb Whitall, Ashley Goldhor-Wilcock**

Note-Takers: **CSU (5) + WO EMC**

**1000-1030: Part I Intro—Public Participation Spectrum Primer and Introduce Plan Revision Public Engagement Census Activity** (Deb, Ashley, Timory)

Facilitators: Peri leads, Debbie assists

**1030-1145: Part II—World Café – Public Engagement Efforts Download** (Deb, Ashley, Timory)

Small group discussions around approaches and experiences with the multiple public engagement points supporting plan revision.

Each table has a CSU or WO-EMC note-taker and a host to guide the table discussions based on the four questions:

*What did we do? What worked well? What challenges did we face? What would we do differently in the future?*

Three 20-minute sessions

* Early engagement (outreach/communication/plan revision education/managing expectations/assessing capacity) (Timory Peel)
* Engaging underserved communities/youth (Ashley Goldhor-Wilcock)
* Developing strategic relationships with federal, state, local and tribal governments (Elaine Kohrman)
* SCC public engagement (–Deb Whitall)
* Wilderness/WSR public engagement (inventory/criteria/evaluation) (Sonja Lin)
* Assessment and BASI (Don Yasuda)
* Timber suitability and plan component development and sufficiency of BASI (Joe Krueger)
* Monitoring program and sufficiency of BASI (Michelle Tamez)

**1145-1230:** Report out and Q&A from the World Café

Facilitators: Debbie leads, Peri assists

**Lunch (12:30 – 1:30)**

**Location: Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

**1330-1430: Part III—Panel Discussion with Q&A**

Facilitators: Bruce leads, Debbie assists

Three panelists speak for 10 min each, followed by 30 min Q&A

* Strategically Planning Public Engagement and Project Management for the Long Haul – Deb Whitall
* Collaboration and Power Dynamics: Forest Service as a Partner Model – Elaine Kohrman
* Monitoring the Progress of Collaborative Efforts: The Progress Triangle – Sharon Timko

**1430-1500: Part IV—Collaboration Tools (visit tables during the extended break)**

**Location**:  **Building A - meeting rooms off of main lobby**

* emNEPA Tool Suite
* Talking Points Collaborative Mapping tool (Ashley Goldhor-Wilcock, Scott Dawson)
* R5 Public Involvement Guide (Michelle Tamez)
* National Collaboration Cadre (Sharon Timko and Timory Peel)

**Break (visit tools tables as desired)**

**Organizing for Success: Project Management Plans, Staffing, and Regional Support**

Location: **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Topic Lead: **Timory Peel**

Facilitators: Peri leads, Bruce assists

Note-Taker: CSU

**1500-1545: Part I—** **Building the Roadmap for Revision**

*Successful Sequencing through Project Management Planning—Panel Discussion and Q&A*

Three panelists sharing examples for 10 minutes each

* Lessons learned in R5 and preparation for next revisions (Sonja Lin)
* Lessons learned in R3/R10 (Mary Rasmussen)
* Project management planning examples from large scale planning efforts (Deb McGlothlin)

**1545-1615: Part II** - Staffing for Both Revision (SO) and Oversight Responsibilities (RO)

*What do forests need most from the RO to assist with revision efforts? —Panel presentations followed by discussion*

* How to provide redundancy to planning teams, so resources can be brought in from elsewhere when Forest personnel leave or are over their heads (**Joe Krueger)**
* How do you coordinate sufficient regional oversight and review of the concurrent planning efforts without unduly affecting individual forest timeline and targets? (**Matt Turner**)
* What is the sufficient “hard look” for a programmatic analysis?

**Recap & Close-Out from Day 1**

Location: **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Facilitator: Courtney, with assistance from Ashley, Timory and Deb

Note-Taker: CSU

**1615 – 1700:** For each of the topics covered today, summarize the following with the group:

* What did we learn? (lessons learned1)
* What would we do again or what would we do differently? (best practices2)
* What are possible innovations and tools we could implement based on what we learned?

**Evening Social**

1 A lesson is an innovative approach or work practice that is captured and shared to promote repeat application and it could be an adverse work practice or experience that is captured or shared to avoid recurrence. A lesson is not a lesson learned until the organization and its personnel modify behavior to reflect their new knowledge and insights.

2 An effective practice is a process, technique, or innovative use of resources, technology, or equipment that has a proven record of success in providing significant improvement to an organization. An effective practice does not become a best practice until it is compared against all available effective practices with the same object

Wednesday, May 18

**Welcome Back & Overview of Day**

Location: **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Facilitator: Bruce Meneghin

Note-Taker: CSU

**8:00 – 8:20:** Quick review of Day 1, adjustments needed, and line out Day 2

**Assessments**

**Objectives:** Efficiently collect ongoing assessment effort information (data) around what we are required to do (key rule and directive requirements). What worked well? What were the challenges? What would we do differently in the future?

Location: **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Topic Lead: **Linda Joyce / John Rupe**

Facilitators: Debbie leads, Peri assists

Note-Taker: CSU

**8:20 – 9:00:** Findings from FACA and WO review of Assessments: report and discussion

**9:00 – 10:00:** Innovations for Assessments: panel discussion followed by Q&A

**Erin Minks** – success of executive summary and transition to need-for-change

**Peter Rich** – explaining different scales and spatial niche in assessment

**Michelle Aldridge** – incorporation of public information into assessment

**Break**

**10:15 – 11:30 Small group, in depth discussions on Assessments**

**Lunch (11:30 – 12:30)**

**Best Available Scientific Information and working with Research Stations**

**Objectives:** Efficiently collect ongoing use of BASI information (data) around what we are required to do (key rule and directive requirements). What worked well? What were the challenges? What would we do differently in the future?

Location:  **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Topic Lead: **Linda Joyce, Mo Essen, Bill Connelly**

Facilitators: Peri leads, Bruce assists

Note-Taker: CSU

**12:30 – 1:30:**

**The Gnarly Topics**

**Objectives:** Efficiently collect ongoing efforts around what we are required to do (key rule and directive requirements). What worked well? What were the challenges? What would we do differently in the future?

Location: **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Topic Lead: **Jessica Rubado**

Note-Taker: CSU

**1:30 – 2:30: Species of Conservation Concern**

Facilitators: Debbie leads, Peri assists

Three panelists speak for 10 minutes each, followed by 30 minutes Q&A

**Regis Terney –** the intent of Rule and Directives; **Mike Goldstein, R10 –** the short list; **Don Yasuda, R5 –** the longer list

* Report on SCC policy deliberations + other related topics around SCCs

**Break**

**2:45 – 3:30: Wilderness**

Facilitators: Bruce leads, Debbie assists

* Additions to “Advice on conducting wilderness evaluations”
* How to move from evaluation -> analysis and developed alternatives from the high quality results + feedback received after sharing evaluation results + preparation of wilderness appendix and guidelines for it

**3:45- 4:30:** Small group discussions around the following two topics - each group will have a facilitator and note-taker.

Location: **Building A – both rooms**

* Group 1: How are forests identifying "key ecosystem characteristics" and "ecosystem integrity" **Regis Terney, Courtney Schultz** facilitate
* Group 2: Approaches to identifying and assessing contributions to “key ecosystem services” and "social and economic sustainability"? **Bill Connelly, Debbie McGlothlin** facilitate

**Recap & Close-Out from Day 2**

Location:  **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Facilitator: Courtney Schultz, with assistance from Linda, Mo, Bill and Jessica

Note-Taker: CSU

**4:30 – 5:00:** *With a focus on the assessment phase*, summarize the following with the group:

* What did we learn? (lessons learned1)
* What would we do again or what would we do differently? (best practices2)
* What are possible innovations and tools we could implement based on what we learned?

Thursday, May 19

**Welcome Back & Overview of Day**

Location:  **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Facilitator: Bruce Meneghin

Note-Taker: CSU

**8:00 – 8:20:** Quick review of Day 2, adjustments needed, and line out Day 3

**Building Integrated Plan Components**

**Objectives:** Efficiently collect ongoing efforts around what we are required to do (key rule and directive requirements). What worked well? What were the challenges? What would we do differently in the future?

Location:  **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Topic Lead: Bruce Meneghin

Facilitator: Bruce leads, Peri assists

Note-Taker: CSU

**8:20 – 10:00: Small group discussions**

**Group 1 :** Integrating fire delineations into plan (**Don Yasuda**)

**Group 2:** Plan components for sustainable recreation (**Lis Novak**)

**Group 3**: Plan components that contribute to social and economic sustainability (Susan Winter )

**Group 4:** Standards and guidelines vs. Desired conditions for wildlife (Mary Morrison )

**Break**

**Objection Process**

**Objectives:** Efficiently collect ongoing efforts around what we are required to do (key rule and directive requirements). What worked well? What were the challenges? What would we do differently in the future?

Location:  **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Topic Leads: **Peri and Debbie** Facilitator: **Bruce**

Note-Taker: **CSU**

**10:15 – 11:00** Plan-level objection process: key messages and lessons learned

**Broad Scale Monitoring**

**Objectives:** Efficiently collect ongoing efforts around what we are required to do (key rule and directive requirements). What worked well? What were the challenges? What would we do differently in the future?

Location:  **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Topic Lead: Courtney Schultz

Facilitator: Peri leads, Debbie assists Note-Taker: CSU

**11:00 – 11:30** R2/R3 coordinated effort on broad scale monitoring – Courtney Schultz

Lunch (11:30 – 12:30)

Demonstration of Map Projection system for public meetings by Place Matters – Building A

**12:30 – 2:30 World Cafe**

Facilitators: Bruce, Peri and Debbie as needed

Topic leads: Assigned as needed, based on subject matter

NEPA & Agency/Tribal Consultations

How is tribal input integrated into the plan development especially those aspects that are in conflict with other public input?

Addressing public comment on the DEIS = methods of organizing, depth of response, when is it critical (threshold) to address comments through changes in the analysis? How long does this stage take?

Planning Rule and Programmatic NEPA-Considerations - Discussion to assist in awareness of what is to be expected to meet the hard look requirements

* Management areas and geographic areas and how they are used across different plans. What is the best utility of these tools or areas?

**Organizational Learning and Adaptive Management**

**2:30 – 3:30** Small group discussions on how we will monitor our planning performance, and how we will learn from each other. (Courtney Schultz, Mo Essen, Bruce Meneghin, Tracy Tophooven)

* What types of training have you received or given?
* How do we disseminate the results of this EVENT?
* What are the biggest gaps in ID Team knowledge? How do we fill those gaps?

**Recap & Close-Out of Day 3**

Location: **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Facilitator: Courtney, with assistance from Bruce, Peri, Debbie, and other topics leads from Day 3

Note-Taker: CSU

**3:30– 4:00:** For each of the topics covered today, summarize the following with the group:

* What did we learn? (lessons learned1)
* What would we do again or what would we do differently? (best practices2)
* What are possible innovations and tools we could implement based on what we learned?

Discuss next steps

**Workshop Review**

Location: **Building B - Sweetgrass Room**

Facilitator: Courtney

Note-Taker: CSU

**4:00 – 4:45:** Discuss overall impressions of the workshop, +/▲ list, etc.

Discuss next steps

1. A report by: Gwendolyn Ricco (MS Student) and Courtney Schultz (Professor and Project Lead), Colorado State University, with assistance from Kathleen McIntyre and Thomas Timberlake (PhD Students, Colorado State University) and Maureen Essen (Rocky Mountain Research Station); please contact Dr. Schultz with any questions or concerns at: ([courtney.schultz@colostate.edu](mailto:courtney.schultz@colostate.edu); 970-491-6556). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)