

# CHAPTER 1 PURPOSE AND NEED

Forest Plan

## A. INTRODUCTION

Described in Chapter 1 of this Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) are (B) the purpose and nature of the planning action, (C) the planning process, (D) the vicinity of the Tahoe National Forest (TNF), and (E) the scope of the issues addressed. Described in Chapter 2 are the alternative development process, alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed study, and alternatives considered in detail. Described in Chapter 3 is the environment in which the proposed action and alternatives will take place. Displayed in Chapter 4 are the environmental consequences of implementing the proposed action (preferred alternative) and other alternatives. Listed in Chapter 5 are the names, together with their qualifications, of the persons who are primarily responsible for preparing the FEIS and significant background papers. Listed in Chapter 6 are the agencies, organizations, and persons to whom copies of the FEIS are sent.

## B. PURPOSE AND NATURE OF THE ACTION

Historical and Legislative Framework.

In 1974 Congress acted upon the need for coordinated and long-range planning of the uses and resources provided by the National Forests. Two pieces of legislation were passed: the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (RPA) and the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA), amending RPA. These require that comprehensive, long-range Forest Plans replace the separate and often uncoordinated resource management plans.

Additional legislation required Forests, before developing a complete Forest Plan, to investigate and make public:

1. Alternative approaches which could be used in developing the Plan.
2. The environment to be affected by the Plan.
3. Anticipated environmental consequences of the alternatives.

This Environmental Impact Statement addresses these major subjects as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations.

The TNF Plan is the preferred alternative chosen from the alternatives described in this FEIS. Published separately from this FEIS as a companion document, the Forest Plan accomplishes the following:

- o Guides management of the Forest for the next 10 to 15 years.
- o Allocates land to the combination of management activities for which it is most suited.
- o Includes 50-year long-range objectives.
- o Provides for multiple use and sustained yield of goods and services to maximize long-term net public benefits in a cost-efficient and environmentally sound manner (see Appendix D).
- o Responds to major issues, management concerns, and resource opportunities.

The Forest Plan will be revised at least every 15 years or whenever conditions or demands significantly change. It will be reviewed every 5 years to determine the need for more frequent revision.

All existing resource plans were examined by the Forest's interdisciplinary planning team during this planning process. The plans identified in Appendix A of the Plan will be incorporated, superseded, or will be developed as indicated.

### **C. PLANNING PROCESS**

Forest Plans form only one part of the Forest Service planning framework. Based on information from the Regions, the National RPA Recommended Program establishes direction and assigns targets to the Regions for producing goods and services. Each Region in turn provides direction and allocates its share of the National production levels to its Forests; each Forest Plan validates the levels or provides a basis for changing the production levels assigned by the Region.

At the local level, activities and projects carry out the direction developed in the Forest Plan. These local projects can use all the data, evaluations, and other information in the Plan and the EIS as a basis for local project environmental analyses. This process of "tiering to" the broader documents and incorporating the Plan and EIS by reference permits concentration on issues specific to subsequent smaller projects. Similarly, the Forest Plan is tiered to the Pacific Southwest Regional Guide (previously called the Regional Plan), which is tiered to the National RPA Program. (Figure 1.1 shows the planning process.)

The Forest planning process, as specified in the NFMA regulations (36 CFR 219), is an interdisciplinary approach, which, with public participation, fully considers economic, environmental, and social impacts. The process includes the following steps:

1. Identification of issues, concerns, and opportunities (ICO's).
2. Development of planning criteria.
3. Data inventory and information collection.
4. Analysis of the management situation (AMS).
5. Formulation of alternatives.
6. Estimating effects of alternatives.
7. Evaluation of alternatives (and identification of a preferred alternative).
8. Selection of the preferred alternative (or "proposed action").
9. Plan implementation.
10. Monitoring and evaluation.

This FEIS presents the results of planning actions 1 through 7 and identifies the preferred alternative (proposed action) that forms the basis for the proposed Forest Plan. Public comments on the draft Plan and the DEIS were used to develop the Final Environmental Impact Statement and selected Forest Plan. The final Forest Plan will be selected by the Regional Forester and documented in a Record of Decision that will be provided to the public.

All of the documents and planning records that chronicle the Forest planning process are available for inspection at the Forest Supervisor's Office, Tahoe National Forest, Highway 49 and Coyote Street, Nevada City, CA 95959, during regular business hours. These planning records contain the detailed information and processes in developing the Forest Plan as required in 36 CFR 219.12. They are incorporated by reference at appropriate points in the text of this FEIS and the Forest Plan.