

Environmental Analysis & Decision Making Pacific Southwest Region Partner Roundtable March 27, 2018



Environmental Analysis & Decision Making Pacific Southwest Region Partner Roundtable Objective

Collect diverse partner feedback to inform EADM processes on local, regional and national scales.

Purposes

- Share why changes are important for achieving the USDA Forest Service mission
- Identify, discuss, and capture partner perceptions on barriers and solutions
- Explore what roles partners can play moving forward
- Support dialogue to strengthen relationships between partners and the USDA Forest Service
- Explain how partner inputs will be incorporated



Environmental Analysis & Decision Making Roundtables



Roundtable Agenda

8:00 a.m.	Registration Opens
8:30 a.m.	Welcome and Meeting Overview
8:45 a.m.	Meeting Orientation and Logistics
9:00 a.m.	National Overview and Introduction of EADM Effort
10:00 a.m.	Icebreaker
10:15 a.m.	Break
10:30 a.m.	Regional Panel Overview and Perspectives on EADM Effort
11:15 a.m.	Small-Group Discussion
12:00 p.m.	Lunch Provided On Site
1:00 p.m.	Breakout Session #1
2:00 p.m.	Break (Exact time subject to change)
2:30 p.m.	Breakout Session #2
3:30 p.m.	Report Out of Breakout Sessions
4:30 p.m.	Reflections and Close-out
5:30 p.m.	Adjourn



Environmental Analysis & Decision Making Roundtables



United States Department of Agriculture

Improving Environmental Analysis and Decision Making



Forest
Service

Forest Service Change Efforts

Ensuring a Safe and Rewarding Workplace

Reducing the Costs/Risk of Fire Suppression

Environmental Analysis and Decision Making

Forest Products Modernization

“we have seen firsthand how cumbersome, time-consuming, and expensive USFS processes can be compared with other agencies”

Forest Service’s Largest
Stewardship Partner

“We believe the primary problems with – and solutions to – the Forest Service’s NEPA process lie not with the agency’s regulations and procedures but with operational and organizational culture issues that can be addressed within the scope of the agency’s existing authority. “

Coalition of Environmental Groups

We encourage you to return to the Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ) guidelines (40 CFR 1500-1508) as a starting point rather than the Forest Service Manuals.

...the USFS has added onerous detail to its environmental analyses. This has added years to planning processes and resulted in lengthy analyses that are difficult for the public to understand.

Governor Bullock - Montana

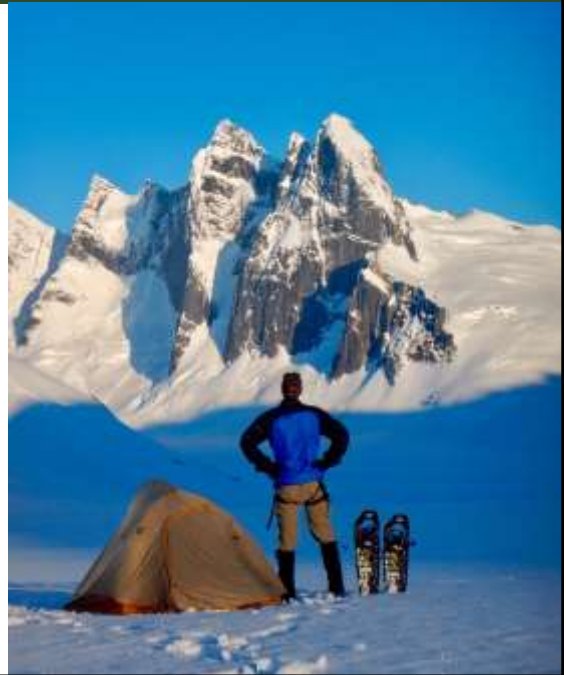
Our Goal

The goal of the Environmental Analysis and Decision Making effort is to increase the diversity, health, resilience, and productivity of our national forests and grasslands.

Reduce the time and cost of project analysis and decision making.

Increase the scale of analysis and accomplish more work on-the-ground.

Boldly, and creatively design new ways to care for the land and the people we serve.



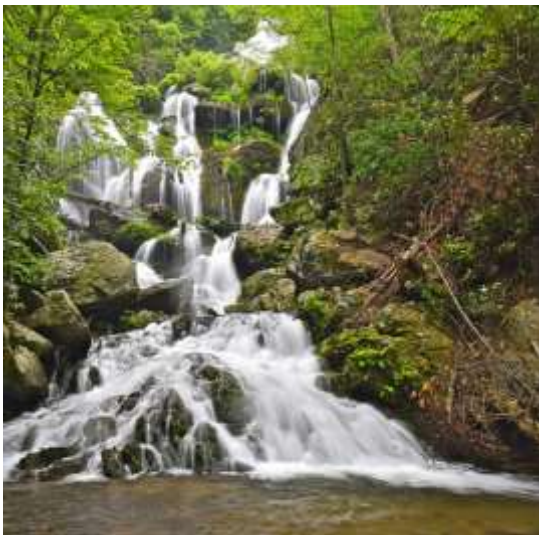


Our Commitment

The Forest Service will follow all laws, regulations, and policies to deliver scientific-based, high-quality environmental analysis that leads to sound land management decisions and honors our stewardship responsibilities.

The agency is committed to working with employees at all levels of the Forest Service, along with engaging the public, our partners, and tribes.

Why Change Now ?



Special Use Permit Backlog

More than 6,000 special use permits impacting more than 7000 businesses

Fire and Disease Risk

More than 80 million acres at risk from fire and disease.

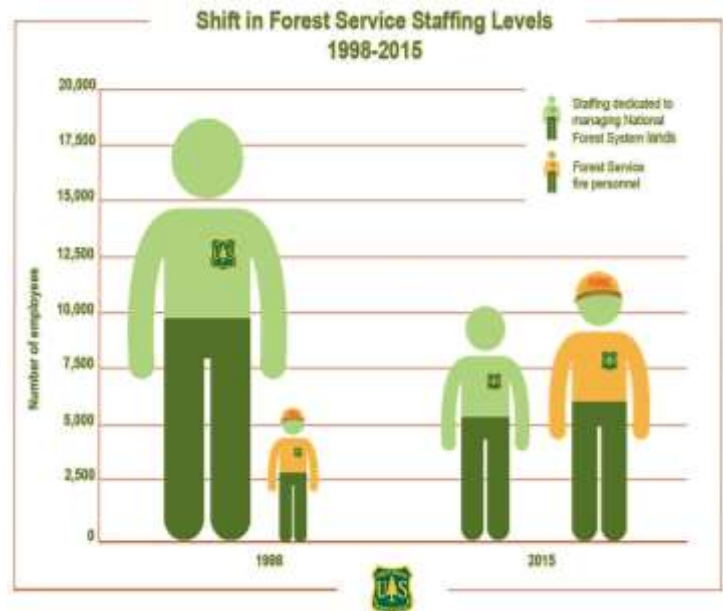
Restoration

Watersheds, Habitats, and Infrastructure are declining

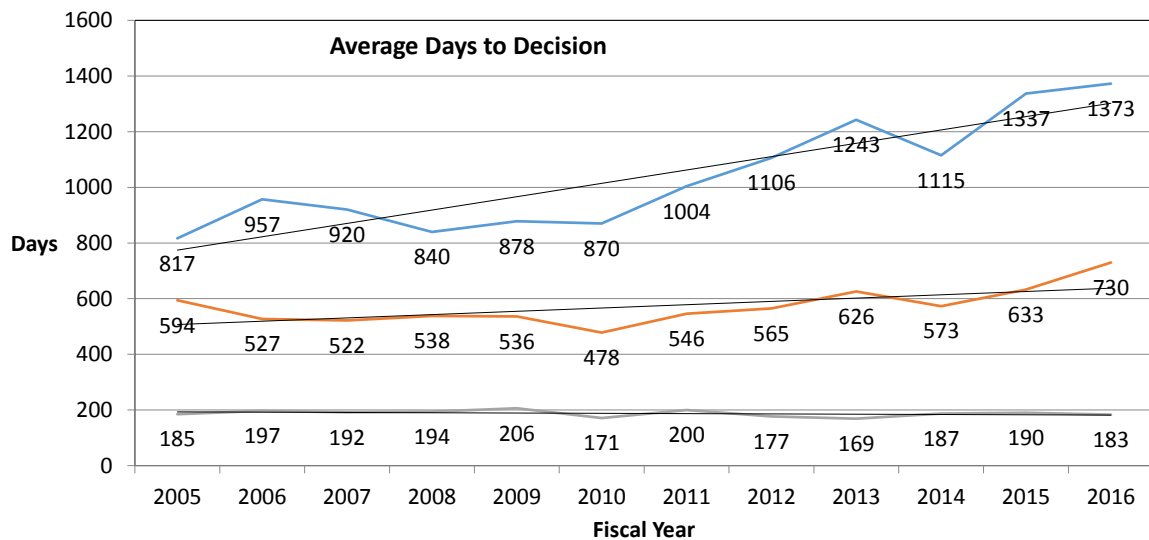
Why Change Now?

Workforce

Non-fire workforce at lowest capacity in years.



Why Change Now?



Achieving our Goal

**Examine and
Reform Forest
Service Policy**

**Train Our
Employees**

**Improve
Efficiency
through
Technology**

Achieving Our Goal

**Change the
Way
We Do
Business**

**Improve
Consultation
with
Other
Agencies**

**Develop New
Performance
Standards**



Outcome

Decrease in cost and an increase in efficiency by 20%.

Comprehensive, national environmental analysis and decision making improvements by 2019.

Experience and skill of experts in across all agency levels.

Challenging employees to innovate.

Collective learning opportunities with partners and tribes.



Next Steps

Complete Roundtables

- February 22 & 23, 2018, Portland, OR. (PNW)
- March 12, 2018 (NE Area)
- Mar 14, 2018, (Northern)
- March 14, 2018, District of Columbia (HQ)
- March 19, 2018, Denver, CO (Rocky Mountain)
- March 20, 2018, Chattanooga, TN. (Southern)
- March 21, 2018, Albuquerque, NM. (SW)
- March 22, 2018, Juneau, AK. (Alaska)
- March 29, 2018, Salt Lake City, UT. (Intermountain)
- March 27, 2018, Rancho Cordova, CA. (PSW)

Reports

- Regional Summary Reports
- National Summary

Presentation to Leadership

- Chief of the Forest Service
- National Leadership Council
- Staff teams working on change efforts

Next Steps - Continued

Proposed New Rule

- **New Proposed Rule will be based on:**
- Comments submitted on ANPR
- Internal expert review
- Related ideas from Roundtables & partner conversations
- External Technical Workshop results
- **Final Proposed Rule will be based on:**
- Comments and feedback results from formal public participation

Forest Service Change Efforts Continue...

- **Ensuring a Safe and Rewarding Workplace**
- **Reducing the Costs/Risk of Fire Suppression**
- Environmental Analysis and Decision Making
- Forest Products Modernization

EADM change efforts continue..

- Agency Culture
- Agency Structure
- Decision Making
- Training
- Project Management
- Public Engagement
- NEPA Rule Making
- Consultation

Get Involved Partner Roundtables:

<https://nff.wildapricot.org/page-1693922>

FS EADM website:

<https://www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/eadm>



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March 2018

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Interactive Session: Icebreaker

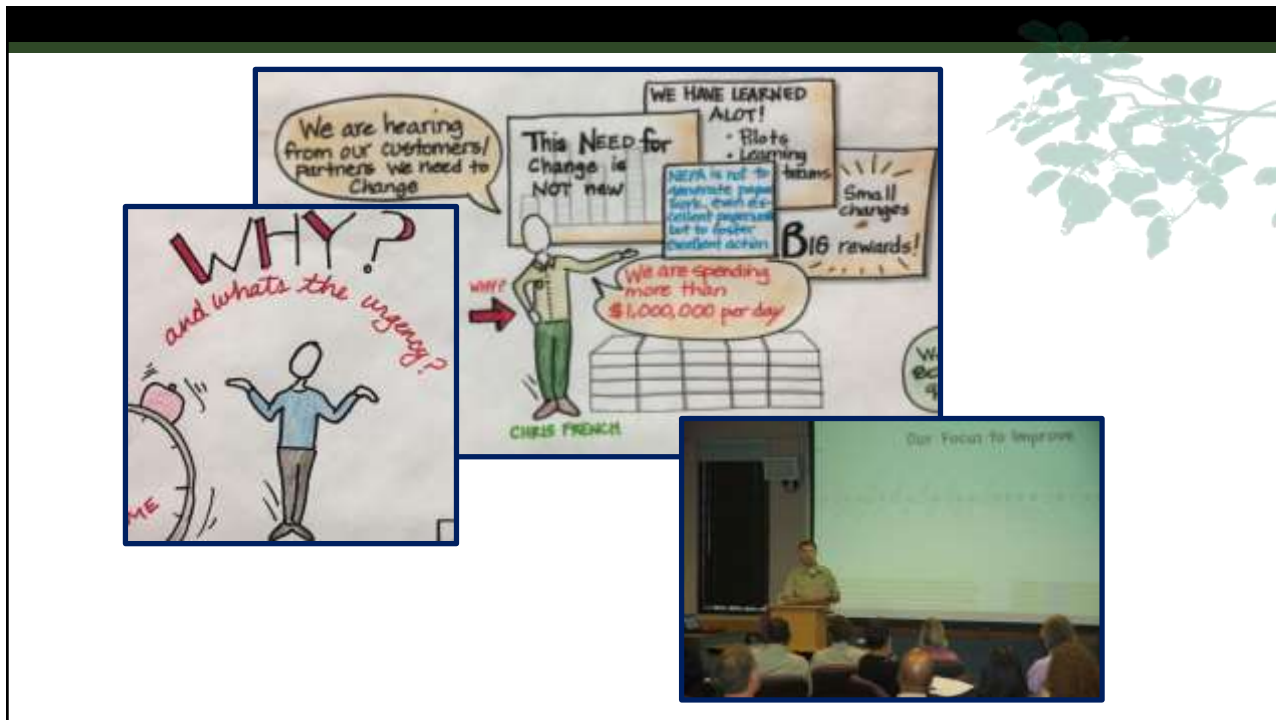


Environmental Analysis & Decision Making Roundtables



150 leaders from all levels of the Forest Service and from every region and staff area convened to discuss environmental analysis and decision making processes

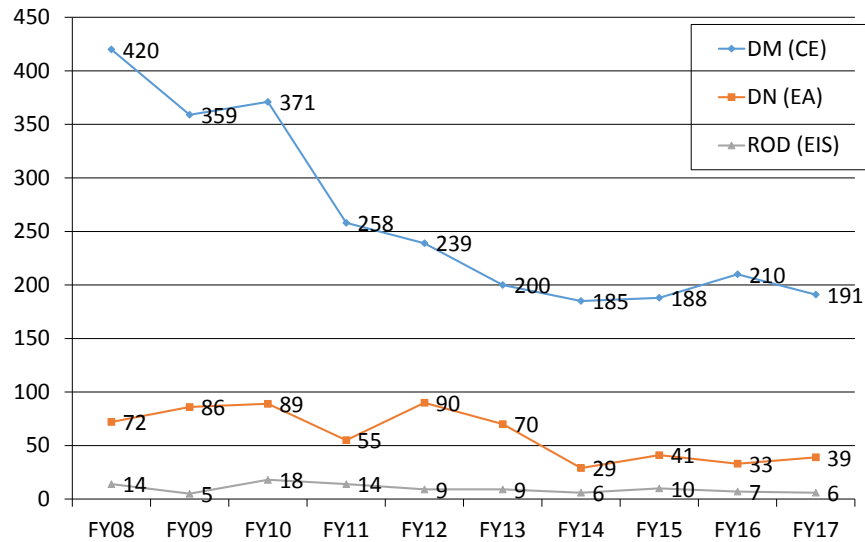




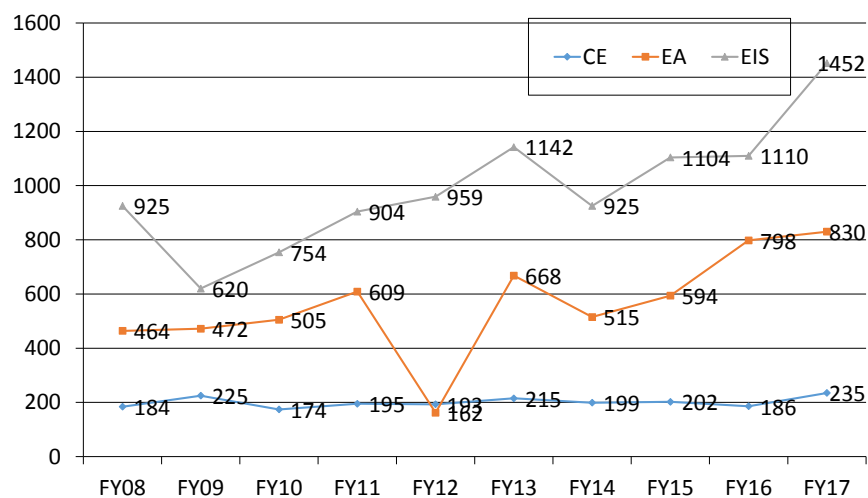
R5 Cadre

Name	Title	Location
Jeff Vail	Forest Supervisor	Angeles NF
Jim Junette	District Ranger	Stanislaus NF
Wendy Coats	Public Services staff officer	Klamath NF
Kayanna Warren	State and Private Forestry	RO
Sarah Sawyer	Ecosystem Management	RO
Keli McElroy	Forest Silviculturalist	Shasta Trinity NF
Jeanette Williams	Forest Resource Officer	Sierra NF
Debbie Gaynor	Public Services	RO
Jennifer Marsolais	Forest Environmental Cord.	Eldorado NF
Laura Hierholzer	Ecosystem Planning	RO
Steve Bachmann	Zone Hydrologist	Shasta Trinity NF
Denise Adamic	Public Affairs Specialist	RO
MaryBeth Hennessy	Deputy Director EP	RO
Alan Olson	Director Eco Planning	RO

Region 5 – Decisions by Type



Region 5 – Elapsed Time Scoping to Decision



Region 5 Sensing Survey

Employees perspectives of challenges in Environmental Analysis/ Decision Making

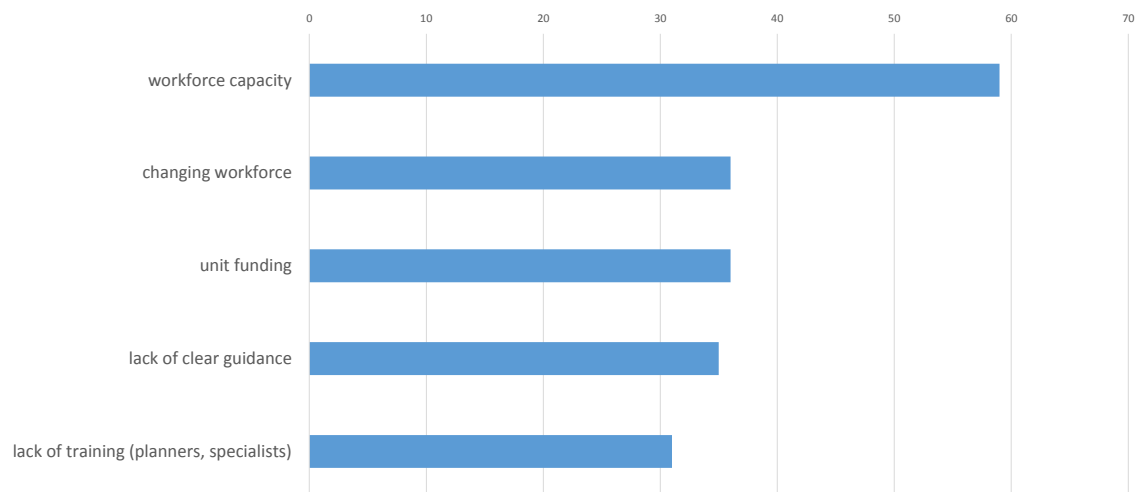


Environmental Analysis & Decision Making Roundtables



Select Your Top 5 Barriers to Streamlining environmental analysis or decision making.

Percent of Respondents Who Selected:



Barriers

- We are our own barrier; self-imposed “requirements”
- Resistance to minimalized resource reports
- Accustomed to/assume a need to have all specialists on every project
- Not bringing all specialists (and ultimate implementers) to the table during project initiation
- Perceptions of resource advocacy or personal opinion rather than professional opinion (i.e. presenting facts, likely outcomes, and tradeoffs)



Environmental Analysis & Decision Making Roundtables



Barriers cont.

- Multi-disciplinary vs. an interdisciplinary approach (“silo-ing” of specialties often inhibits teamwork and effective dialogue)
- Lack of understanding or dialogue around required v. optional/additional resource protection measures
- Too many perfectionists – it is never good enough
- Misunderstandings by specialists that they need to protect themselves from risk, rather than understanding that it is the line officer who takes the risk
- Lack of regional support for change



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Perception of Leadership

- Fears of litigation
- Fears lack of public support
- Fear length of time to consult with regulatory agencies
- Fear of decision risk-taking
- Feeling unsupported to take risks (by RO or WO leadership)
- Lack of understanding of significance thresholds



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Challenges

- Agency Culture
 - Internal resource and conflicts inherent with our multiple use mission and the complex biological, physical, and social environment within which we work
 - IDTs and managing differences
- Policy and Regulation
- Capacity
- Leadership
- Public Relations



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Challenges

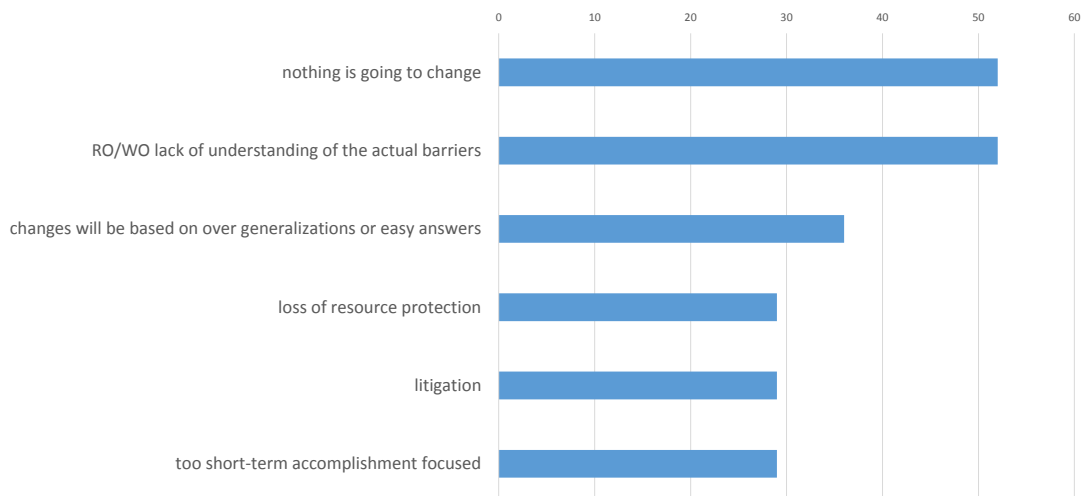
- Too many competing and shifting priorities
- Projects and tasks are not clearly prioritized at the unit level
- time to complete tasks is not understood or accepted by leadership
- intent of the streamlining effort is not clearly articulated or distributed
- there is an impression of being more interested in speed and avoiding litigation over resource protection or on-the-ground results
- lack of understanding from line how shifting priorities affects specialists and timelines



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Top 5 Concerns Related to EADM Changes. *Percent of Respondents Who Selected:*



Line Officer Check List

- A checklist intended to provide line officers with a framework for their involvement in the NEPA process as outlined in Forest Service Manual 1950.41
- List of considerations intended to encourage effective and efficient environmental analysis and interactions with ID teams, publics and cooperating agencies.



Province Case Studies



Case Studies will be used to identify:

- Excessive documentation
- Inefficiencies in the environmental analysis
- Common myths

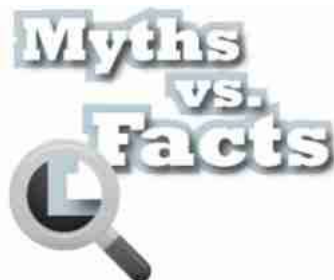
CE Optimization

Optimizing use of Categorical Exclusions (“CEs”) whenever appropriate.

- Part 1: Does NEPA apply or is this an Emergency?
- Part 2: Guidance on use of CE
- Part 3: List of categories for consideration based on various management activities



Myth Busting



- Focus on presenting the facts and dispelling the myths associated with environmental analysis related to NEPA and other laws, regulations, and policies.

Questions?



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Small-Group Partner Discussion

- What do you see as barriers to efficient and effective environmental analysis and decision-making by the Forest Service?
- What innovations or solutions could help improve the efficiency or effectiveness of the Forest Service's environmental analysis and decision-making?



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Pacific Southwest Region Environmental Analysis & Decision Making Cadre Members

- **Denise Adamic**, Public Affairs Specialist
- **Steve Bachmann**, Hydrologist – Watershed Program Manager
- **Wendy Coats**, Public Services Staff Officer
- **Debbie Gaynor**, Public Services
- **Mary Beth Hennessy**, Deputy Director, Ecosystem Planning
- **Laura Hierholzer**, Regional Environmental Coordinator
- **Jim Junette**, Groveland District Ranger
- **Jennifer Marsolais**, Forest Environmental Coordinator
- **Alan Olson**, Director, Ecosystem Planning
- **Sarah Sawyer**, Assistant Regional Ecologist, Ecology Management Endangered Species
- **Jeffrey Vail**, *Forest Supervisor*
- **Kayanna Warren**, *Ecologist, State and Private Forestry, Regional Office*



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Topic Areas

- **Recreation / Special Uses**
(existing process and needed innovations)
- **Partnerships and Collaboration**
(how can we be more effective in our collaborative efforts and build public support for projects)
- **Vegetation management and wildlife conservation balance**
(process, tension, pace/scale, timelines, ESA)
- **Organizational Challenges and Project Management**
(performance, innovation, capacity, utilizing technology)
- **Policy**
(NEPA, other Regulations and environmental analysis and decision making challenges)



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Breakout Session

FRAMING QUESTIONS

- What is working well?
- What challenges or barriers do you see?
- What do you see as the solutions?



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THANK YOU!



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