



## **Alaska Regional EADM Partner Roundtable**

**March 22, 2018**

**Juneau, AK**

### **OVERVIEW**

#### **WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND DECISION MAKING CHANGE EFFORT?**

The USDA Forest Service (USFS) has launched an Agency-wide effort to improve processes related to Environmental Analysis and Decision Making (EADM). The goal of the EADM change effort is to increase the health, diversity, resilience, and productivity of National Forests and Grasslands by getting more work done on-the-ground through increases in efficiency and reductions in the cost of EADM processes. The USFS is working internally at all levels of the Agency and with its Partners to thoroughly identify and consider areas of opportunity.

Internally, the Agency has identified a number of impediments to efficient and effective implementation of work on the ground, including lengthy environmental analysis processes, staff training and skill gaps, and workforce issues related to budget constraints and the increasing costs of fire response. As the USFS works to improve EADM, it will continue to follow laws, regulations, and policies and deliver high quality, science-based environmental analysis.

USFS has explored opportunities to improve EADM for over thirty years, and there are compelling reasons to act now:

- An estimated 6,000-plus special use permits await completion nation-wide, a backlog that impacts more than 7,000 businesses and 120,000 jobs.
- Over 80 million acres of National Forest System lands need cost-effective fire and disease risk mitigation.
- The non-fire workforce is at its lowest capacity in years.
- A steady increase in timelines for conducting environmental analysis, with an average of two years for an environmental assessment (EA) and four years for an environmental impact statement (EIS).



USFS prioritizes multiple mission areas and develops national targets to be met at all USFS levels with the aim to keep up better with increased demands for access and higher fire and disease risk.

The USFS aims to decrease cost and increase the efficiency of EADM processes by 20% by 2019. In working toward this goal, actions may include:

- Training Agency subject-matter experts on contemporary approaches to implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental laws.
- Reforming compliance policies under NEPA and other laws by expanding use of categorical exclusions (CEs), capitalizing on process efficiencies, and enhancing coordination with other agencies.
- Standardizing approaches and electronic templates for CEs, EAs, and administrative records.

Leaders at all levels of the USFS – and across the National Forest System, State & Private Forestry, and Research & Development -- are fully engaged in this effort and challenging USFS employees to be creative, design new ways to advance the USFS mission and embrace change while maintaining science-based, high-quality analysis that reflects USFS land management responsibilities. To this end, employees were recruited from all USFS levels to form EADM Cadres that are tasked with developing and implementing change efforts in each local USFS unit; within USFS regions, stations, and areas; and at USFS headquarters. The USFS is creating multiple collective learning opportunities to tap into the Cadres' knowledge, expertise, innovative ideas, and networks in support of these changes.



## REGIONAL PARTNER ROUNDTABLES

Within the EADM change effort, USFS leadership recognized that partners and the public can offer perspectives and lessons that complement the Agency's internal experiences—leading to greater creativity, cost-savings and capture of talent/capacity. To support this recognition, the USFS asked the National Forest Foundation (NFF) to assist in hosting ten EADM Regional Partner Roundtables across the country in February and March 2018 (see Appendix A for the schedule) with the objective of collecting diverse partner feedback to inform EADM processes on local, regional and national scales.<sup>1</sup> The NFF and USFS worked closely together to plan, coordinate, and facilitate the Roundtables. The NFF was charged with preparing a summary report for each Roundtable as well as one national report that synthesizes themes emerging from partner input at all of the Roundtables. These reports summarize partner-identified

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<sup>1</sup> The National Forest Foundation (NFF) is a Congressionally chartered nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving and restoring National Forests & Grasslands, and supporting Americans in their enjoyment and stewardship of those lands. NFF is non-advocacy and non-partisan, and serves as a neutral convener and facilitator of collaborative groups engaging with Forest Service and also works with local nonprofits and contractors to implement conservation and restoration projects. To learn more, go to [www.nationalforests.org](http://www.nationalforests.org).



challenges and barriers, desired outcomes, and strategies and solutions for effective and efficient EADM processes.

The specific purposes of the Regional Partner Roundtables were to:

- Share why changes are important for achieving the USDA Forest Service's 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 from the Roundtables and from participation in the formal rulemaking process.

The Roundtables are a major piece of USFS strategy to integrate the public and partners into its EADM effort. The Agency invited representatives of highly-engaged partner organizations, Tribes, governmental entities and the business community to participate in the Roundtables. USFS also requested formal comments from all members of the public in response to an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) in January 2018 regarding the National Environmental Policy Act, and is working toward issuing a proposed rule in the summer of 2018 for additional comment. The USFS may choose to issue additional ANPRs or draft rules on other aspects of EADM as a result of the EADM change effort.



This report is a summary of activities and themes emerging from the **Alaska EADM Regional Partner Roundtable**, held in Juneau, Alaska on March 22, 2018.

## **ROUNDTABLE MEETING DESIGN**

The USFS and the NFF hosted the EADM Alaska Regional Partner Roundtable at Centennial Hall in Juneau, Alaska. The Alaska Region developed an invitation list of partners that regularly engage with the USFS in project design; comment formally and informally on policy, process, and projects; and/or bring a depth of understanding about the laws, rules, and regulations under which the USFS operates. The Alaska Region sent out 194 invitations, and 26 Partners participated. Please refer to Appendix B for a full list of participants. A listen-only teleconference option for partners not located in Juneau was provided during the morning presentations.

Roundtable design included context-setting presentations ([click here for presentation](#)), question and answer sessions, and multiple small group discussion opportunities. Presentations were delivered by: Beth Pendleton, Regional Forester; Chris French, Associate Deputy Chief for the National Forest System; and Sharon LaBrecque, Deputy Supervisor, Chugach National Forester. The presentations provided participants with context to support small group discussions that were organized by EADM topics. The NFF provided neutral facilitation. Note-takers recorded examples of currently ineffective or inefficient EADM shared by partners and the solutions



offered during these discussions, which provided the basis for the EADM Thematic Tables in this report.

The first facilitated small-group discussion provided participants with an opportunity to share their perceptions of the EADM reform effort. USFS employees (national and regional executives, Regional Directors, and/or EADM Cadre members) joined each table's discussion.

Participants answered the following questions with others at their table.

- *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?*

Participants were then asked to select one of the following topics for deeper small group discussion:

- 1) **Training:** *How can we prepare or equip USFS staff to conduct EADM in ways that enable them to care for the land and serve people more effectively?*
- 2) **Policy:** *How can the USFS reform its policies to improve implementation of NEPA and other environmental laws?*
- 3) **Performance:** *What performance measures can USFS use to strengthen accountability and assess EADM efficacy?*
- 4) **Consultation:** *How can the USFS improve its consultation processes under the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, or other laws to improve interagency communication and enhance transparency?*

Break-out group facilitators asked participants to consider challenges, desired outcomes as a result of change, and the strategies, tools, and resources needed to make desired change in EADM processes. They were also asked to identify hopes, fears, and actions regarding possible reform.

Finally, in a full-group discussion, participants shared ideas for creating additional opportunities for engagement with partners and the public on EADM, including forums in which EADM Cadre members could participate.



## **WHAT PARTNERS SHARED: THEMATIC TABLES OF EADM CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS**

Ideas captured in main-session and small-group discussions during the Alaska Regional EADM Partner Roundtable are organized below by top themes.<sup>2</sup> These are presented in the tables below: (1) USFS Culture; (2) USFS Personnel Policies and Staffing Decisions; (3) USFS Capacity and Resources; (4) Forest and Community Collaboration and Partnerships; (5) Analysis Documents and Specialist Reports; (6) Tribal and Interagency Consultations; (7) Scaling Environmental Assessment and Decision Making; and (8) Science and Research.<sup>3</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> The NFF organized information that emerged from all ten of the regional roundtables into major themes and the reports use a similar structure for easy comparison. The themes included in each report respond to the partner discussion at that particular roundtable.

<sup>3</sup> Please note that blanks or incomplete information in the table mean that no ideas were mentioned for that heading during the Roundtable.

## A. USFS CULTURE

The USFS was established in 1905 and since that time has developed cultural norms that guide how the Agency operates and how it relates with its public. The history of remote District Ranger outposts has led to persistent autonomy at the district and forest levels despite changes in technology and current national directives. Both USFS leadership and partners spoke to an inconsistency in practice across the country. Partners described frustration with a lack of communication from the Agency regarding decisions, and a desire to see innovation, risk-taking and effective risk management rewarded and encouraged.

USFS CULTURE CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	USFS CULTURE SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Risk aversion.	Litigation-proofing documents. Perception that all NEPA documents are challenged – when only small percent are challenged. Decisions overuse worst-case scenarios.	LOs shift to being more willing to take on risk, making decisions with best but less information. Litigation outcomes serve to educate staff in preparation for new decisions.	Understand and be able to accept true risk of litigation. Identify implications of losing if a decision is challenged. Conduct effective after-action reviews, and make changes based on lessons learned. Recognize that failure can result in greater innovation.	<u>Tools:</u> Debrief and after action reviews following litigation.
Inability to innovate.	USFS does not respond to new ideas. Complaints that USFS is inflexible, or has tunnel vision. Resistant to new technologies, e.g. unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), aka drones.		Develop a culture of experimentation. Define uses of UAVs for gathering data (e.g. in stream surveys). Rely on existing (e.g. state) regulatory restrictions on UAVs, rather than blanket disapproval.	
Reliance on old methods of doing business.	Financing of projects lacks innovation.		Increase innovation in financing projects (e.g. public-private venture for infrastructure and recreational improvements on Forests).	



**B. USFS PERSONNEL POLICIES AND STAFFING DECISIONS**

The USFS has a long history of encouraging employees to change positions and move frequently to gain breadth and depth of experience, and to move up in responsibility. Aims of this policy include adequately preparing USFS employees to advance professionally; ensuring employees are able to make unbiased and professional decisions in managing public lands; and enhanced consistency and shared culture across the agency. While moving employees to different units can support a transfer of good practices and new ideas, it also means that employees are in a frequent learning curve to understand the relevant forest conditions, ecological systems, and community interests and dynamics. Often local relationships become fractured and have to be rebuilt, taking time and efficiency from EADM processes and frustrating local partners.

PERSONNEL POLICIES & STAFFING CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	PERSONNEL POLICIES & STAFFING SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Rapid loss of NEPA team leadership as well as other NEPA expertise in Alaska (AK).	Federal jobs in Alaska are hard to fill, and require multiple job announcements.		Identify staff that desire to stay in AK and contract with partners to increase AK-based capacity. Recruit younger staff that can bring innovation and encourage them to rise through the ranks.	<u>Tool</u> : GNA that allows State of Alaska to develop partner contracts quickly.
Staff lack essential expertise.	Central Tongass LLA Project.		Train IDT leaders in project management. Improve staff skills in convening and facilitating user groups.	<u>Tools</u> : Trainings in project management and group facilitation.
Performance measures do not place adequate value on project completion, teamwork, and partnerships.	Performance measures for staff heavily weighted towards NEPA planning rather than getting projects implemented.	Employee merit system reflects value of project implementation through teamwork and partnership.	When evaluating employees, change Teamwork and Partnership to a Critical Element of employee performance. Address/reward project completion in performance appraisals.	<u>Tools</u> : Performance measures. <u>Resources</u> : Federal employee union buy-in.

CONTINUED   USFS PERSONNEL POLICIES AND STAFFING DECISIONS				
PERSONNEL POLICIES AND STAFFING CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	PERSONNEL POLICIES AND STAFFING SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
High degree of staff turnover.	Partner relationships undermined. SUP applicants have to deal with multiple staff.	Leadership is longer-term and more consistent.	Use succession planning to ensure a seamless transfer of LO power and/or specialist knowledge. Have departing staff mentor incoming staff (possible overlap of 6 months to ensure full orientation).	<u>Tools:</u> Personnel policy and resources. Orientation.
Inconsistent staffing and decisions across forests.	USFS efficiency is undermined.	Forest-wide NEPA team fosters consistency across districts.	Create a “NEPA Ninja Team” of employees highly skilled in NEPA analyses and deploy it across multiple projects. Consider including the state and other organizations or individuals with NEPA skills, using the GNA. Set up staff teams to mentor incoming staff and utilize “corporate knowledge.”	<u>Tools:</u> Regional NEPA Ninja Team. GNA.  <u>Resources:</u> Forest-based staff specialist mentors.
Employee non-performance is un-addressed. No consequence for failing to implement NEPA.	Projects in SOPA appear as thrown together at the last minute and are inaccurate.	Staff held accountable for conducting NEPA process. NEPA documents do not slow project implementation.	Establish consequences for failing to implement NEPA (analogous to retraining for safety infractions). Add incentives for getting NEPA done and implemented. Set achievable goals and timeframes. Gather feedback from partners to inform LO of employee performance. Use results of after-action reviews to structure accountability into projects.	<u>Tools:</u> After-action project reviews. Performance incentives. Accountability measures  <u>Resource:</u> Partner feedback on USFS staff performance.





CONTINUED   USFS PERSONNEL POLICIES AND STAFFING DECISIONS				
PERSONNEL POLICIES AND STAFFING CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	PERSONNEL POLICIES AND STAFFING SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Inadequate training in EADM.	No retraining of employees that fail to meet goals of a timber sale NEPA process.		Retrain and hold staff accountable. Encourage partners to notify supervisors of unsatisfactory staff performance.	<u>Tools</u> : Training. Accountability systems.
Failure to learn from successful projects.	Wrangell Island started at 90 MMBF and ended up at 10 MMBF.		Compare successful projects that worked with projects that did not succeed to identify problems, including process bottle necks.	



### C. USFS CAPACITY AND RESOURCES

Training in management, resource specializations, and EADM itself remains an unaddressed need throughout the USFS. Budget shortfalls and statutory mandates on funding for fire response combine with a shortage of trained employees in areas other than fire and/or a frequent diversion of staff to fire duty. This situation hampers the ability for the Agency to make progress on stewardship of important forest and grassland resources. Moreover, the complexity of landscape-scale approaches to ecological management of public lands demands a high level of expertise and a deep knowledge of forest conditions at the unit level.

CAPACITY AND RESOURCES CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CAPACITY AND RESOURCES SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Staff under pressure to crank out more work with less capacity and funding.	LO and Specialist staff tied up excessively in EADM processes.		Free up staff time to conduct essential weed treatments and trail work. Enhance capacity through State of AK support for IDT/analysis.	<u>Tool</u> : GNA.
Staff lack knowledge of basic economics and business principles.	Tongass LMP required staff to consider small mill economics; staff appeared to be untrained. Projected cost of alternatives to develop a mine rendered project infeasible.	Better education in basic economics and business principles, resulting in proposals that economically make sense.	Train IDT/others in basic economics and business principles. Visit sites of industry proposing a project. Identify and use local expertise.	<u>Tools</u> : Site visits. Economics training. Mentorships.  <u>Resources</u> : Local banks that loan money to implement business plans. Local companies giving “brown-bag lunch” talks.
Budget constraints on staffing.			If LLA projects succeed, “bigger bang” for “buck” spent on EADM analysis.	<u>Tool</u> : Model of the POW LLA.  <u>Resources</u> : Staff with project management skills.



#### D. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

In the last ten to fifteen years, the USFS has recognized the opportunities offered by the rise of collaborative groups in addressing resource management conflicts and building agreement in project design. Not all units, however, regularly welcome collaboration and partnerships, and stakeholders expressed frustration with an inconsistency in USFS transparency, skill, communications, and use of scientific and traditional knowledge contributed by the public.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Limited communications from the outset of a project.	Partner communication on POW LAT increasingly narrow.	Partner-USFS communications and engagement are handled on a “two-way street” from the start of a project.	Communicate regularly with timber industry. Reach remote communities with project information. Use commonly-used (lay) terms to describe projects and impacts to fish and wildlife.	<u>Tools:</u> Strong project management and communication.
EADM processes do not incorporate a reasonable representation of stakeholders or result in polarization of stakeholders.	POW LAT - lack of feeling heard, partners (e.g. Viking Lumber) dropped out of meetings.	Stakeholder integration supports rural economic development. Each community implicated in a project has a voice and some needs met.	Inquire about implicated community’s minimum needs. Engage with towns/ villages individually; enable independent participation. Recruit district staff with locally focused field knowledge and experience within local communities.	<u>Tools:</u> Conflict resolution training. Maps identifying large landowners (e.g. State of AK, SEAlaska Corp). <u>Resources:</u> Mayors; facilitators.
Inefficient collaboration.	Groups left out of collaboratives because of perceived contention.	USFS efficiently convenes just the partners with a stake in a project.	Merge collaborative efforts of groups operating in parallel (e.g. Kake and Central Tongass LLA Collaboratives). Integrate disenfranchised groups. Identify forums where USFS can share EADM processes/outcomes.	<u>Resources:</u> Trout Unlimited fish habitat partnerships; National Association of State Foresters; SEACC; Visitor Products Working Group.



CONTINUED | COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Collaboration is not inclusive (from the outset of EADM).	Needing to be on a mailing list to get a SOPA is a disadvantage for some partners.	USFS engages the audience it intends and needs to engage (focused marketing). USFS knows how to interact with its partners; recognizes what works for some might not work for others. Stakeholder meetings occur before, during, and after scoping.	Choose the right type of partner(s) for a project. Scope a large set of stakeholders. Involve district rangers in outreach. Implement an electronic SOPA process, and use social media to reach a younger audience. Recognize different communication styles and find a common language or ground for partner engagement.	<u>Tools:</u> Electronic mailing list (like the Tongass NF uses). Electronic SOPA
Public distrust of USFS.	Not all public believes that USFS is sharing all information or listening to their concerns or proposals.	USFS and public exchange good information and trust each other. USFS decisions (and factors considered) are transparent.	Develop personal relationships to build trust. Meet consistently, not waiting until problems arise. Follow through on promises in a timely manner. Provide explanations for why some things cannot get done.	<u>Tools:</u> Regular meetings between USFS and partners.  <u>Resource:</u> Strong LO involvement .
Partners lack understanding of project benefits.		Mutual benefits are described, and USFS and partners are on the same page.	LOs authoritatively describe benefits.	
Geographic constraints on collaboration.	POW LAT.	Isolated communities can get access to the latest information when they cannot participate in meetings.	Deploy USFS staff or “ambassadors” to meet with isolated communities.	<u>Tools:</u> VTC, Adobe Connect.



CONTINUED | COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
EADM processes, timelines, and the staff accountable for achieving milestones are unclear to partners. Partners do not comprehend NEPA process and cannot track decisions.	Partners cannot determine what staff positions are accountable for DM on a project or SUP. Lack of transparency on how priorities are set and met. Perceived breakdown in management of the timber program, blamed on the continual failure of NEPA processes.	A transparent schedule/plan is set for each project/permit DM process that identifies the accountable staff. Barriers and solutions are addressed in EADM documents, and staff are held accountable for NEPA success.	Establish an EADM liaison that communicates with applicants/proponents to keep them informed of progress. Set and adhere to a process timeline that identifies staff roles. Establish staff incentives for meeting timelines as well as consequences for missing deadlines. Conduct post- public comment period educational meetings/dialogues with partners. Develop a national project management database that enables partners to check on project status, timeline, and steps to completion. Integrate partner and USFS NEPA training.	<u>Tools:</u> Publicly-accessible database revealing progress on a proposed action. Personnel incentives. Meetings with partners. Joint trainings.  <u>Resource:</u> USFS EADM liaison position.
Informal and late collaboration.	Holding open houses at the end of the EADM process is too late. Partners join the process late because of just recently hearing about the project.	Collaboratively-made decisions are given a higher level of priority in EADM.	Encourage establishment of a collaborative/ advisory group that operates from the start of the EADM process (e.g. POW LAT). Create a notification system” to let partners know it’s time to engage.	<u>Resources:</u> Advisory and collaborative groups.



**E. ANALYSIS DOCUMENTS AND SPECIALIST REPORTS**

Federal environmental laws require analysis of the physical, biological, social and economic effects of an action on public lands or waters. Risk aversion and a history of legal challenges to USFS decisions have led to the “bullet-proofing” of environmental analysis documents and specialist reports. Rather than being understandable by the public, documents tend to be extremely long and hard to read. Partners offered suggestions to help streamline documentation and process without sacrificing quality of analysis.

<b>ANALYSIS DOCUMENTS AND SPECIALIST REPORTS CHALLENGES</b>		<b>DESIRED OUTCOMES</b>	<b>ANALYSIS DOCUMENTS AND SPECIAL REPORTS SOLUTIONS</b>	
<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Evidence</b>		<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Tools and Needed Resources</b>
Over-analysis.	Public expectation that NEPA documents should look the same regardless of project size and type. Use of EIS instead of EA or CE.	LO comfortable with some areas excluded from NEPA document (relying on analysis already done to make the judgment that analysis is not necessary).	Re-characterize NEPA as a disclosure tool, versus a DM tool. Note that a public engagement priority is different from decision-making responsibilities.	<u>Tools</u> : NEPA document templates.
Analysis creep.	Specialists provide information in NEPA documents where not necessary.	NEPA documents cover only the range of resources appropriate to the project.	Disclose only the range of resources implicated in projects when preparing NEPA documents.	
Length of time to complete NEPA documents.	In the AK Region, it takes 5-6 years on average to complete an EIS (longer than national average). Timber sale components get dropped and not replaced.	Time spent conducting EADM is similar across forests and districts nation-wide.		



CONTINUED   ANALYSIS DOCUMENTS AND SPECIALIST REPORTS				
ANALYSIS DOCUMENTS AND SPECIALIST REPORTS CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	ANALYSIS DOCUMENTS AND SPECIAL REPORTS SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Duplicative NEPA analysis.		LO flexibility in decision making enables quick implementation of project plans that meet USFS goals.	Equip LOs to determine the adequacy of NEPA documents or use of Supplemental Information Report. Create more realistic options for mitigation.	
Lack of adaptive management.	USFS lacked foresight to handle changing conditions when they threatened the visitor industry. Changed circumstances seem to hinder DMs (e.g. a tree with a non-ESA bird nest).	Ability to continue to implement decisions with flexibility even when encountering changing conditions on the ground.	Mentor LOs until they are comfortable with DM risk. Bring in outside perspectives. Identify and deploy “change analysis” tools in conducting field work.	<u>Tools:</u> Change analyses methods.
Cumbersome SUP approval process.			Use templates for SUP approval processes and simplify (electronic) day-use permit application process. Separate renewals from new proposals.	<u>Tool:</u> State-of-the-art, electronic Special Uses Database system with ease of access by SUP Administrator and Permittee (for updates).



**F. TRIBAL AND INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION**

Federal laws require multiple agencies to consult with each other about how the fish, wildlife and cultural resources on National Forests and Grasslands could be affected by an action. The USFS also consults and coordinates with Federally-recognized Tribes in a government-to-government relationship. The lack of adequate staffing, complexity of the issues, and inconsistent approaches and coordination has led to lengthy consultation processes.

CONSULTATION CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CONSULTATION SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Inadequate consultation and EADM resource-sharing with other government agencies.	Lack of collaboration with National Park Service.		National task force focused on ESA addressing how USFS works with USFWS and National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA;) similar national task force addresses heritage compliance with SHPOs.	<u>Tools</u> : National task forces.
Not appropriately involving the Alaska Native Community.		Government-to-government consultation with Native Alaskan communities is increased.	Hold and assess value of an "Intervention Summit." Permit small projects to identify what works.	<u>Resources</u> : Entities with representation of tribe nationally (e.g. Intertribal Timber Council, Native American Fish and Wildlife Society).





### G. SCALING ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND DECISION MAKING

Participants identified a number of issues related to the scale of project analysis, at what level decisions are made, and how local information is or is not reflected in decisions. Partners raised questions about how forest plans and the required large-scale analysis relates to project-level decisions. The discussion also highlighted the challenges of climate change and other cross-boundary issues, and the complexity of natural resource projects.

SCALING CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CONSULTATION SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Unwieldy scale of projects. CEs not used frequently enough.		USFS learns from small projects and builds up to larger projects, extrapolating publicly-endorsed CEs and other decisions upwards.	Scale down. Identify smaller targets, and implement smaller projects faster. Make iterative improvements. Use new CEs that are publicly-accepted to help authorize projects (versus new timber management authorities).	<u>Tools:</u> New CEs.
Projects lack achievable goals due to scale.	Incremental steps are not clear or possible.	NEPA process is conducted at a scale that can be achieved and implemented.	Set achievable project goals on a timeline; implement quality control to curtail costs.	<u>Toosl:</u> Project management tracking systems.
Inconsistent application of policy at different scales.	Policy is interpreted inconsistently across districts, Forests and regions.	Ensure projects of a similar type across districts within a Forest use a standard approach to NEPA.	Ensure DM information is shared at a district level (i.e. on the SOPA).	<u>Tools:</u> ANILCA training. Model - Conflict mitigation that generated compatible use and timing of bear guide and small cruise ships.



**CONTINUED | SCALING ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND DECISION MAKING**

SCALING CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CONSULTATION SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
EADM inappropriately small-scaled.		Scale of analysis matches degree of consequence for taking action. Project timelines associated with the complexity of the project.	Take a more holistic view on permitting, scaling up within geographic areas. Conduct more condition-based or programmatic NEPA. Let forest plan-level NEPA suffice for most projects.	
IDT leader and district ranger needs and expectations are split on EADM team because of their conflicting priorities.	Project priorities differ across districts.	Projects prioritized efficiently across the forest.	Create an organizational structure that integrates districts across the Forest, and Forests across the region. Share specialists with skills across the Forest and region. Use “enterprise” teams to offer select specialties.	<u>Resources:</u> Contracted partner specialists using GNA. Forest and regional five year action plans.



## H. RESEARCH AND SCIENCE

Participants discussed the important role of science and data in EADM processes, and the relationship between research, monitoring and open discussion of science with partners as critical to decision making.

RESEARCH AND SCIENCE CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	RESEARCH AND SCIENCE SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
USFS not current with trends documented by research.	Tourism has grown 50% in AK Region; industry lacks the capacity to accommodate due to challenges of accessing NF lands.	Tourism trends are considered in EADM.	Use tourism data in EADM.	<u>Resources:</u> Tourism data.
Lack of scientific data that is electronically available.		Key scientific research findings are easy to access and apply during analyses.	Balance information received from partners with science and research.	
Missing or inappropriate metrics by which to measure the success of decisions and projects. Lack of transparency regarding metrics used.	EADM and project metrics do not reflect what partners expect or can use to judge project success or “downstream” effects. A report on a project restoring fisheries production set metrics only in terms of miles of stream or acre-feet of lakes.	Project outcomes are linked to targets using measurable indicators. Economic and community impacts are measured.	Set up metrics to identify the need for restoration work and permits (e.g. of streams). Use project metrics to prioritize economic and community benefits (i.e. received via budget allocations). Define national-scale metrics such as number of jobs and economic value, then customize the metrics to match regional industries (e.g. fisheries and timber in AK; grazing and mining in the Southwest Region).	<u>Tools:</u> Existing USFS and partner economic studies that define metrics. Agreed-upon metrics.



## **THE EADM CHANGE EFFORT**

EADM Partner Roundtables were held in each USFS region and in Washington, D.C. Information in this regional report, as well as the national report, will be used by USFS leadership to refine business practices, information sharing, policy, and direction toward improved efficiencies. As they are developed, the NFF will post summary reports from all of the Roundtables and a national report that synthesizes the themes heard around the country regarding EADM challenges and solutions ([click here](#)).

The NFF will present information generated at the Roundtables to USFS leadership and the staff teams working nationally and regionally on the EADM change effort.

The USFS will consider the input from the Roundtables as it develops its proposed rule regarding NEPA. The Agency will also review the input received at the Roundtables as it considers other priorities and actions to improve EADM processes, which may involve changes in practices, improved training, altered staffing structures, and/or steps toward improved rulemaking.

## **RESOURCES**

### **ALASKA REGIONAL EADM CADRE**

- Becky Nourse, Deputy Regional Forester, Regional Office
- Sharon LaBrecque, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Chugach National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Perry Edwards, District Ranger, Tongass National Forest
- Sue Howle, District Ranger, Tongass National Forest Ketchikan Supervisor's Office
- Kate Baldridge, Attorney, Office of General Council, Juneau Office
- Scott Langston, Director of Acquisition Management, Regional Office
- Dave Hays, Acting Director of Ecosystem Management, Planning & Budget, Regional Office
- Robin Dale, Administrative Review Group Leader, Regional Office
- Ken Post, Environmental Coordinator, Regional Office
- Deyna Kuntzsch, Resources & Planning Staff Officer, Chugach National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Kori Marchowsky, Forest Environmental Coordinator, Chugach National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Pat Heuer, NEPA Coordinator, Tongass National Forest
- Marina Whitacre, Forest Writer/Editor, Tongass National Forest
- Carey Case, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Tongass National Forest
- Greg Dunn, Wildlife Biologist, Tongass National Forest, Sitka Supervisor's Office



## WEB LINKS

- USDA Forest Service EADM webpage – [www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/eadm](http://www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/eadm)
- National Forest Foundation EADM Webpage – [www.nationalforests.org/EADM](http://www.nationalforests.org/EADM)
- USDA Forest Service Directives – [www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/](http://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/)
- Environmental Policy Act Compliance – [www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/01/03/2017-28298/national-environmental-policy-act-compliance](http://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/01/03/2017-28298/national-environmental-policy-act-compliance)



**APPENDIX A**

<b>Environmental Analysis and Decision Making Regional Partner Roundtable Dates</b>		
<b>Region</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>1 - Northern</b>	March 14, 2018	Missoula, MT
<b>2 - Rocky Mountain</b>	March 19, 2018	Lakewood, CO (and by video teleconference in Cody, WY; Pagosa Springs, CO; and Rapid City, SD)
<b>3 - Southwestern</b>	March 21, 2018	Albuquerque, NM
<b>4 - Intermountain</b>	March 29, 2018	Salt Lake City, UT
<b>5 - Pacific Southwest</b>	March 27, 2018	Rancho Cordova, CA
<b>6 - Pacific Northwest</b>	February 22-23, 2018	Portland, OR
<b>8 - Southern</b>	March 20, 2018	Chattanooga, TN
<b>9 - Eastern</b>	March 12, 2018	Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, IL (and 14 Forest Unit locations by Adobe Connect)
<b>10 - Alaska</b>	March 22, 2018	Juneau, AK
<b>Washington, D.C.</b>	March 14, 2018	Washington, DC



## APPENDIX B

### EADM ALASKA REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANT LIST

**SUMMARY:** Approximately 194 partner representatives were invited by the Regional Forester to participate in the Roundtable. Of these, 25 participated in the Roundtable in person. The participants represented a broad range of regional forest interests and revealed strong experience with USFS EADM processes.

#### PARTNER PARTICIPANTS

Chantel	Adelfio*	Copper River Watershed Project
David	Albert	The Nature Conservancy
Rob	Cadmus	Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition
Sierra	Gadaire	Gastineau Guiding
Owen	Graham	Alaska Forest Association
Pete	Griffin	US Forest Service Retiree
Holly	Harris	Earthjustice
Brian	Holst	Juneau Economic Development Council
Mckenzie	Johnson*	Alaska State Historic Preservation Office
Mark	Kaelke	Trout Unlimited
Darrin	Kelly	Travel Juneau
Daniel	Kirkwood	Pack Creek
Chris	Maisch	Alaska State Forester
Connie	McKenzie	Senator Murkowski/Senator Sullivan
Graham	Neale	
Crystal	Nelson	Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
Paul	Olson	The Boat Company
David	Phillips*	Chugach Alaska Corporation
Pete	Strow	Coeur Alaska
Andrew	Thoms	Sitka Conservation Society
Mike	Tibbles	Cruise Lines International Association Alaska
Meredith	Trainor	Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
Robert	Venables	Southeast Conference
Scott	Wagner	NSRAA
Austin	Williams*	Trout Unlimited

\*Participated by teleconference.



## USDA FOREST SERVICE STAFF

Chris	French	Associate Deputy Chief, Washington Office
Beth	Pendleton	Alaska Regional Forester, Regional Office
Becky	Nourse	Alaska Deputy Regional Forester, Regional Office
Eric	Adam	Program Support Assistant, Regional Office
Lindsay	Buchanan	Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Coordinator
Cheryl	Corrothors	US Forest Service
Robin	Dale	Appeals and Litigation Coordinator, Regional Office
Sue	Detwiler	Director, Public Affairs, Regional Office
Gregg	Dunn	Wildlife Planner, Tongass National Forest
Perry	Edwards	District Ranger, Tongass National Forest
Maia	Enzer	Planning and Public Engagement Officer, Washington Office
Dru	Fenster	US Forest Service
Nicole	Grewe	Regional Economist, Regional Office
Dave	Hays	Acting Director, Ecosystem Planning and Budget, Regional Office
Melinda	Herndandez-Burke	US Forest Service
Keri	Hicks	Heritage Program Leader, Regional Office
Sue	Jennings	Forest Planner, Regional Office
Sharon	LaBreque	Deputy Forest Supervisor, Chugach National Forest
Charlette	Malacas	Program Support Assistant, Regional Office
Kerri	Mills	Program Specialist
Wayne	Owen	Director, Wildlife Fisheries Ecology Watersheds & Subsistence, Regional Office
Ken	Post	Regional Environmental Coordinator, Regional Office
Sharon	Seim	US Forest Service
Sarah	Shoemaker	Geologist MDM Locatables, Regional Office
Earl	Stewart*	Forest Supervisor, Tongass National Forest

\*Participated by teleconference.





## ROUNDTABLE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Kayla	Barr	National Forest Foundation Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program
Lindsay	Buchanan	Coordinator
Sue	Detwiler	Director, Public Affairs, Regional Office
Karen	DiBari	National Forest Foundation – Roundtable Facilitator
Gregg	Dunn	Wildlife Planner, Tongass National Forest
Perry	Edwards	District Ranger, Tongass National Forest Planning and Public Engagement Officer, Washington Office
Maia	Enzer	Acting Director, Ecosystem Planning and Budget, Regional Office
Dave	Hays	Heritage Program Leader, Regional Office
Keri	Hicks	Forest Planner, Regional Office
Sue	Jennings	Deputy Forest Supervisor, Chugach National Forest
Sharon	LaBreque	Program Support Assistant, Regional Office
Charlette	Malacas	Program Specialist
Kerri	Mills	Alaska Deputy Regional Forester
Becky	Nourse	US Forest Service
Sharon	Seim	Geologist MDM Locatables, Regional Office
Sarah	Shoemaker	



## APPENDIX C

### ALASKA EADM REGIONAL PARTNER ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

Thursday, March 22, 2018

**Location:** Centennial Hall, 101 Egan Drive, Juneau, Alaska

- 8:00 a.m. Check In and Networking**  
Coffee and tea will be provided.
- 8:30 a.m. Welcome and Meeting Overview** – *Beth Pendleton, Regional Forester*
- 8:45 a.m. Meeting Orientation and Logistics** – *Karen DiBari, National Forest Foundation*
- 9:00 a.m. National Overview and Introduction of Environmental Analysis and Decision Making Effort** – *Chris French, Associate Deputy Chief of the National Forest System*
- 9:45 a.m. Break**
- 10:00 a.m. Regional Overview and Perspectives on Environmental Analysis and Decision-Making Effort** – *Regional Forester Beth Pendleton and Sharon LaBrecque, Deputy Supervisor, Chugach National Forester*
- 11:00 a.m. Interactive session: Gathering Participant Ideas**
- 11:45 a.m. Lunch on your own**
- 1:00 p.m. Break-out Sessions Explained**
- 1:05 p.m. Break-out Session #1 and Quick Reports**
- 2:15 p.m. Break** (exact time of break is subject to change)
- 2:30 p.m. Break-out Session #2 and Quick Reports** (*same topics as Break-out Session #1*)
- 3:45 p.m. World Café Session: Ideas for further engagement**
- 4:30 p.m. Reflections and Close-Out** - *Beth Pendleton, Regional Forester and Chris French, Associate Deputy Chief for the National Forest System*
- 5:00 p.m. Adjourn**



## APPENDIX D

### ACRONYM LIST

ANILCA	Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
CE	Categorical Exclusion
DM	Decision Making
DNR	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
EADM	Environmental Analysis and Decision Making
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
LAT	Landscape Assessment Team
LMP	Land Management Plan
LLA	Landscape Level Analysis
LO	Line Officer
MMBF	Million Board Feet
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NF	National Forest
NFF	National Forest Foundation
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
POW	Prince of Wales
RO	Regional Office
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SIR	Supplemental Information Review
SOPA	Schedule of Proposed Action
SUP	Special Use Permit
USFS	United States Forest Service
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WO	Washington Office

