



Improving Environmental Analysis and Decision Making Processes SUMMARY REPORT

Northern Regional EADM Partner Roundtable

March 14, 2018

Missoula, MT

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).



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 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.¹ 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 challenges and barriers, desired outcomes, and strategies and solutions for effective and efficient EADM processes.

¹ 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.

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. 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 **Northern Regional EADM Partner Roundtable**, held in Missoula, Montana on March 14, 2018.

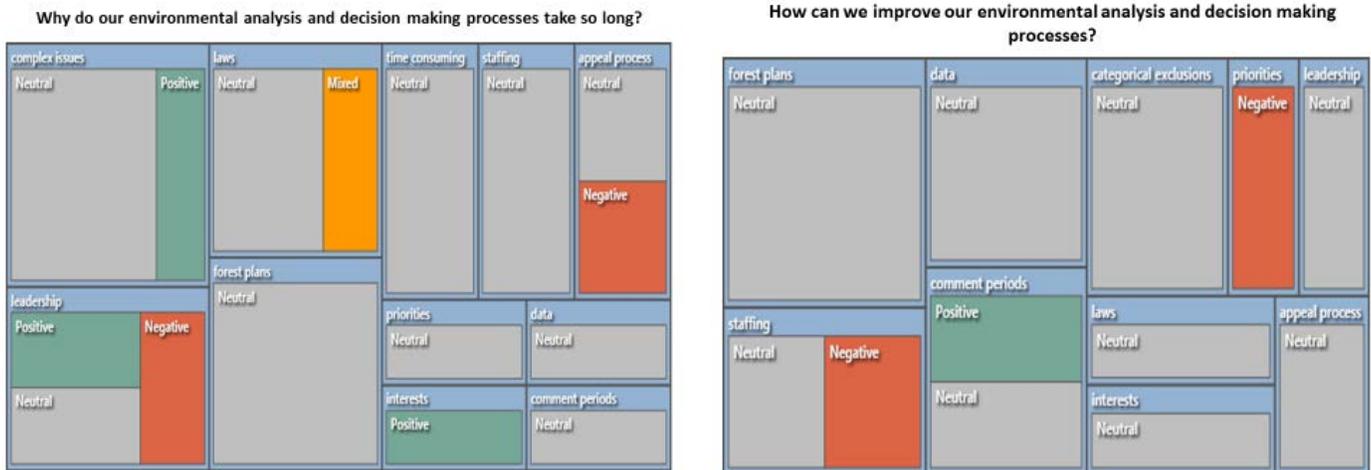
ROUNDTABLE MEETING DESIGN

The USDA Forest Service (USFS) and National Forest Foundation (NFF) hosted the Northern Regional EADM Partner Roundtable at the University of Montana. The Northern 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 Northern Region sent out 141 invitations, and 50 Partners participated. Please refer to Appendix B for a full list of participants.



Roundtable design included context-setting presentations ([click here for presentation](#)), question and answer sessions, and multiple small group discussion opportunities. Presenters included: Jeanne Higgins, National Policy Reform Lead; Leanne Marten, Northern Regional Forester; and Timory Peel, Regional Planner. Several Northern Regional EADM Cadre members and Regional Directors also participated in the meeting. The presentations provided participants with context to support small group discussions that revolved around challenges with EADM, brainstorming solutions, and providing diverse perspectives for successful solutions.

Thirty-four partners responded to two questions included in the Roundtable registration link. Rebecca Rasch, Regional Social Scientist and Cadre member, analyzed the responses using NVivo qualitative data analysis software to identify key themes and the associated sentiment expressed in relation to a given theme. She shared the results of the analysis with the group, explaining that the bulk of themes were described with a neutral sentiment, suggesting the respondent did not attach a strong feeling to the theme, either strongly positive or negative. Some themes were, however, associated with strong positive, negative or mixed (where respondents expressed both strongly positive and strongly negative sentiments about the same theme) sentiments, highlighting the complex nature of the themes related to environment analysis and decision-making. The questions, key themes and associated sentiments are listed in



the charts below. The charts were presented to participants and used as a tool to highlight the diverse perspectives and passions in the room, and remind participants to be sensitive to each other's issues as they entered into the breakout sessions focused on challenges.

The first facilitated small-group discussion provided participants with an opportunity to identify their challenges surrounding EADM. Break-out session facilitators prompted discussion by asking partners: *What do you see as challenges to efficient and effective environmental analysis and decision-making by the Forest Service?* Each group was tasked to discuss challenges partners face surrounding EADM, and to report on one or two key challenges. The key challenges identified were synthesized into break-out session topics for solution generation in the afternoon, using the following questions:

- 1) *Exploring Staff Management: What are solutions for managing turnover, improving training, and building capacity?*
- 2) *How do we focus analysis to reduce paralysis and prevent overwriting analysis documents to litigation?*
- 3) *How can we effectively and fairly incorporate public (and agency) input into decision making?*
- 4) *How can the Agency improve systems for employee and leadership accountability and authority?*
- 5) *Exploring Categorical Exclusions (CEs): When are they the right tool? How can they be improved? What are people's hopes and fears about CEs?*

- 6) *How can we tier project-level decision making to forest plans, landscape analysis and monitoring?*

Break-out group facilitators asked participants to respond to the questions with solutions, including desired outcomes, needed strategies, tools, and resources needed for success.

Finally, in a World Café-style session, participants rotated through six sessions that focused discussion on collecting diverse perspectives to vet or “ground truth” the solutions identified in the prior breakout discussions. Partners voiced their perceived strengths, weaknesses, and possibility of scale for peer-proposed solutions. A USFS small-group facilitator stationed at each table asked partners to respond to the following questions:



- 1) *What are the strengths of this proposed solution?*
- 2) *What are the weaknesses of this proposed solution?*
- 3) *Do you see potential to apply this solution to any of the other challenges identified in the morning break out groups, or more broadly (scale up)?*
- 4) *What is the most appropriate scale to apply this solution?*
- 5) *How would this solution help you in your work on national forests and grasslands?*

This last breakout session allowed partners to scrutinize and provide feedback on all of the proposed solutions to make them as actionable as possible.

WHAT PARTNERS SHARED: THEMATIC TABLES OF EADM CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Ideas captured in small-group and main-session discussions during the Northern Regional EADM Partner Roundtable are organized below by six top themes. These are presented in the tables below²: (1) Culture; (2) Staffing Decisions; (3) Capacity and Resources; (4) Agency and Community Partnerships and Collaboration; (5) Analysis Documents and Specialist Reports; and (6) Interagency Consultation. See Appendix D for a list of Acronyms used in the following tables.

² 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.

CULTURAL CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CULTURAL SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Risk-averse.	Fragmented understanding of roles leads to limited decision making space. Excessive documentation. Lack of knowledge.	Leadership approaches decisions from an educated risk-management perspective versus avoiding risk.	Empower line officers to act more independently. Reward successful risk-taking behavior. Hold line officers accountable.	
Lack of clear guidelines for how the public can engage with the USFS for public comment, collaboration, or EADM related questions.	Public mistrust of USFS, and public lack of confidence in the Agency that public interactions matter.	Guidelines that define the different levels of public engagement, externally and internally. USFS uses current technology for questions, collaboration resources, to notify the public of advanced notice of proposed rulemaking comment period, and submit/review EADM related public comments.	Create EADM portal on USFS website that is searchable via google. Connect mass public to opportunities for engagement via social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter).	<u>Tools:</u> Current technology and social media platforms.



CONTINUED USFS CULTURE				
CULTURAL CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CULTURAL SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Inconsistent communication from various levels within the agency.	Ask one question and receive five different responses from five different employees.	USFS demonstrates accountability for consistent communication. Benefits of a proposed action are well-explained, revealing motivations and priorities.	Increase opportunities for internal communication training.	<u>Tools:</u> Leadership training. Public training in NEPA process.



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
High turnover of permanent staff positions within all levels of Agency.	Lack of understanding of roles. Agency staff are not integrated into local communities. No incentives or career benefits to stay in one place. Over-programmed specialists. Flat funding with increased workloads.	USFS maintains consistent staffing and makes place based decisions within forests. If turnover occurs, use best practices toolbox to assist in a more seamless transition.	Require a “Handover Memo” when a person is transitioning out to assist their replacement in understanding existing contracts, partnerships, important relationships, and projects. Build expertise amongst contractors with Indefinite Delivery and Indefinite Quantity contracts. Provide incentives and promotion opportunities in place versus requiring relocation. Rehire retirees to consult during transition. Use GNA to help control project priorities and keep specialists from being overworked (leading to longer tenure within positions).	<u>Tools:</u> GNA. Handover Memo. <u>Resources:</u> Time for cultural shift that allows for promotion in place.



CONTINUED USFS PERSONNEL POLICIES AND STAFFING DECISIONS				
PERSONNEL POLICIES & STAFFING CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	PERSONNEL POLICIES & STAFFING SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
<p>“Move on, move up” concept. USFS staff relocates frequently on detail to advance their careers.</p>	<p>Lack of connection to local area, community, and resources. Frequent turnover in staff. Knowledge voids. Disintegration of USFS relationships with local community and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Staff remain in place long enough to understand local community, forest condition, and maintain trust based relationships within the community, with stakeholders, and other USFS unit staff.</p>	<p>Promote in place versus promotion through “detailing.” Restrict gaps between hires. Limit number of detailers in a position. Utilize a hiring panel consisting of USFS and local/collaborative representation. Maintain overlap during transitions prior to detailer leaving. Applicants with experience from the hiring region weighed heavier.</p>	<p>Human Resources team to evaluate incentives for place based hiring and tenure.</p>
<p>IDT and forest project do not share mutual goals.</p>	<p>Lack of clarity of purpose. People move up quickly and do not receive adequate training or mentorship for being an IDT member. Line officers do not have authority to hold IDTs accountable.</p>	<p>Clear and aligned goals for IDT and forest project.</p>	<p>Authority acknowledged by line officer to ensure goals and objectives are defined and attainable.</p>	

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
Forest planning timelines are outdated.	Forest plans are updated every 10-15 years. Not updated to reflect new resource issues or best available science.	Forest plans are updated more frequently, providing timely objectives and milestones to be reached. Forest plans reflect a current timeframe of forest project monitoring and management.	Make forest plan revision process easier. Update forest plans every five to seven years to make them more relevant as guidance tools for on-the-ground work.	<u>Resources:</u> USFS staff.
Monitoring is considered expendable.	Agency priorities have reduced monitoring efforts. Lack of monitoring inventory. Lack of common measurements associated with vegetation and timber.	Monitoring is the first aspect of planning, with a standardized method/cycle before direction of forest plan is decided. Accurate monitoring leads to more confidence in determining detrimental impacts/significance. More monitoring to mitigate instead of litigate.	Outsource monitoring to collaborative groups. Research stations conduct monitoring. Shift agency priorities to align with the importance of monitoring. Standardization of a monitoring cycle.	<u>Tools:</u> Agency wide standardized cycle of monitoring. <u>Resources:</u> USFS staff & collaborative groups. Time for culture shift within Agency.



CONTINUED USFS CAPACITY AND RESOURCES				
CAPACITY AND RESOURCES CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CAPACITY AND RESOURCES SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Lack of funding or flat budgets with increased workloads each year.	Under funding. De-prioritization of targets i.e. wildlife, wilderness. Constraints on ranger's decision space.	Ranger districts receive funding and appropriate decision space to do critical work.	USFS reports out accomplishments of what has been funded, and identifies where Congress can fund based on public support for projects.	<u>Tools:</u> New approach to communicate USFS accomplishments. <u>Resources:</u> Congressional funding.
Increasing size and magnitude of forest fires.	No plan or support for long term fire/fuel project maintenance. Diversion of staff and funding to fire assignments draws out NEPA processes.	Project continuity and public engagement is a priority (i.e. NEPA process not interrupted or delayed by fire).	Public engagement on fire. Field visits to see how different management might have affected an area. Congressional fire funding fix. Rebuild staffing capacity to accommodate for seasonal fires.	<u>Resources:</u> Congressional funding. Additional staffing capacity during fire season.
National Forests being combined.	More ground to cover with fewer projects on the ground. Too long of a time frame for NEPA to be completed with fewer specialist to do NEPA work. Collaborative groups drop out due to long time frame, and a lack of progress.	Longer-term/big picture NEPA. Project maintenance identified for the future disclosed and detailed in first NEPA document.	USFS addresses long-term maintenance in NEPA documents instead of individual NEPA processes for each report.	

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 CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Inconsistency in USFS interactions with collaborative groups.	Lack of definition and understanding what a collaborative group is across the USFS. Inconsistency leads to miscommunication, lack of connections, and unclear expectations of involvement and coordination between collaborative groups and regulatory agencies.	USFS leadership clearly defines and trains all staff on what collaborative groups are, and guidelines for their engagement.	Clarification and codification of the responsibility, accountability, and authority of collaborative groups. Combined internal and external training on collaboration. Establish best practices for collaboration.	<u>Tools:</u> National guidance defined through Council on Environmental Quality, USFS handbook for employees, and/or possible legislative action.
Lack of transparency of how public comment, collaborative group comment, and form letters are weighted, considered, and utilized.	Partners cannot always access letters from public comment periods to review. Partners ignored after submitting comments.	Public comments affect decision. <i>Some partners suggested that collaborative group comments be weighted more heavily than general public comment, but not all partners agreed.</i>	Online database to view public comments by project. USFS provides consistent communication to collaborative groups regarding how collaborative group input was utilized during agency decision making.	<u>Tools:</u> Technology. Follow-up meetings after decision making.



CONTINUED | FOREST AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

COLLABORATION CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Litigation slows down implementation of projects.	Collaborative groups that want to support USFS in litigation cannot pay for legal representation.	Projects are not only scientifically rigorous, but are developed collaboratively so stakeholders are familiar with them and supportive. Collaborative groups are enabled to support USFS projects to expedite time spent in litigation.	Intervenor called to provide support to USFS in litigation.	<u>Tools:</u> Knowledge of lawyers hired to represent stakeholders in lawsuit. <u>Resources:</u> Intervenor.
Lack of understanding about touchpoints between collaboration and NEPA public involvement process.	Some forest units afraid to collaborate on projects.	Collaborative groups and USFS employees understand the opportunities for collaboration before, during and after the formal NEPA process.	Hold joint trainings with USFS and partners in NEPA (not just how to write it but how to communicate), appropriate collaboration strategies.	<u>Tools:</u> A Roadmap to Collaboration Before, During and After the Collaborative Process (National Forest Foundation)



CONTINUED | FOREST AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

COLLABORATION CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Perception of legitimacy of agency decisions has plummeted.	“Collaborative Fatigue.” Short-lived relationships. Lack of stakeholder participation. Collaborative group input considered until overridden by national leadership. Negative news or missed opportunities are publicized.	USFS staff across the agency consistently and effectively builds relationships with partners, while partners also adapt to new EADM opportunities.	Share success stories with collaborative groups and public. Agency wide training on public engagement. Guidelines for partners on USFS engagement. Collaborative groups have access to all levels of USFS staff, not limited to decision makers and specialist. FACA 101 training.	<u>Tools:</u> Training includes conflict resolution, how to effectively engage with collaborative groups/ public, FACA 101, and levels of public engagement. <u>Tools:</u> USFS staff. Stakeholders.
Collaborative groups consist of different types of users than emerging generation of millennial National Forest users.	USFS is not a relevant agency to the millennial generation as users of National Forest lands. Users do not understand USFS language.	USFS uses current technology to cultivate millennial generation engagement as informed and active users of National Forest lands.	Rebrand the Agency. Focus on the Agency as a priority for national security: promoting clean water, long-term nutrients, food supply, carbon, protected from fire risk – all connected to healthy ecosystems on National Forests.	<u>Tools:</u> Technology. Media campaign. <u>Resources:</u> USFS.



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.

ANALYSIS DOCUMENTS AND SPECIALIST REPORTS CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	ANALYSIS DOCUMENTS AND SPECIAL REPORTS SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Levels of analysis not consistent across NEPA types (CE, EA, EIS)	EAs include EIS level analysis. Partners cannot differentiate nuances of NEPA documents.	USFS staff and external partners are clear and concise with NEPA analysis. Clear differences between NEPA documents are defined and practiced. Enhanced collaborative understanding about NEPA.	Reinitiate agency wide NEPA training to include partners, especially NEPA contractors. Maintain certifications. USFS focuses on why the behind NEPA during partner communications, versus just writing NEPA documents.	<u>Tools:</u> Refreshed NEPA training. Clear definitions of NEPA documents and levels of analysis. <u>Resources:</u> USFS and external partners.
Lengthy timelines for completion of NEPA documents (NEPA is not the problem. The challenge is in implementation and process).	Fewer specialists available to do work. “Bullet-proofing” of NEPA and over-concern about litigation slows the process.		Limited number of EISs. Clear organizational structure to give IDT leaders the authority to hold staff accountable. Staff are evaluated based on meeting timelines.	<u>Tools:</u> Training. Document and process templates. Incentives for completing quality analyses within timelines. Performance reviews. <u>Resources:</u> Clear leadership from line officers to IDT leaders.



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
Forest plans are paralyzed by analysis.	Outdated documents that don't allow for tier analysis.	Forest planning is up to date allowing for tier analysis.		<u>Resources:</u> Forest plan revision.
CEs are underutilized as a planning tool, but not always trusted by public. CEs are difficult for collaborative groups to support.	Example: Wildlife habitat restoration CEs are not being used enough. Only remedy for a CE challenge is court. Need to have adequate time for comments and monitoring data that the public can trust.	New CE authorities developed and used with increased public comment period and adequate monitoring. Existing CE authorities evaluated to ensure they still meet intent and are being applied in accordance with that intent.	USFS conduct an audit to see use of CEs over last 40 years to determine how they've been applied, and where appropriate to expand authority. Do more monitoring and consider CE best management practices.	<u>Tools:</u> Audit that is publically shared. Monitoring protocols. Forest and project-level meetings to communicate how/why CEs being applied as a tool and how to build public/collaborative understanding of CEs. <u>Resources:</u> Funding. Commitment to monitoring.

F. INTERAGENCY AND TRIBAL 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.

INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION CHALLENGE		DESIRED OUTCOMES	INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
CEs different across agencies.	Cumbersome consultation for ESA.			
Consultation process takes too long.	Agencies are involved too late in planning process.	Engagement with consulting agencies occurs prior to scoping creating quality documents for planning, also leading to fewer surprises in decision making. Shared agency risk for litigation as possible outcome.	Conduct interagency meetings and communications consistently.	<u>Resources:</u> All implicated agencies.

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

NORTHERN REGIONAL EADM CADRE (*Present at Roundtable)

- Julie Schaefers , Ecosystem Assessment and Planning Director - EADM Point of Contact
- Christine Dawe, Renewable Resources Management Director
- Tammy Fletcher, Regional Wildlife Program Manager*
- John Gubel, Kootenai NF District Ranger - NEPA LOT
- Rob Gump, Bitterroot NF Planning Staff Officer
- Craig Kendall, Flathead NF Watershed & Fisheries Program Manager
- Clint Kolarich, MT/DK NEPA Strike Team Leader
- Chandra Neils, Idaho Panhandle NF Soil Scientist - Facilitator
- Bill O'Donnell, Dakota Prairie Grasslands Forest Supervisor - NEPA LOT
- Chris Partyka, Lolo NF Environmental Coordinator*
- Timory Peel, Regional Planner - EADM Content Manager*
- Rebecca Rasch, Regional Social Scientist*
- Katie Renwick, Regional Assistant Planner
- Dan Scaife, Idaho Panhandle NF District Ranger
- Matt Shaffer, IDT Leader Tally Lake, Flathead National Forest
- Karen Smith, NPCW Central Zone Fish Biologist*
- Kim Smolt, Acting Regional NEPA Coordinator*
- Brian Sweatland, Regional NEPA, Administrative Review and Litigation Specialist
- Katie Van Alstyne, Regional NEPA Specialist

WEB LINKS

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



APPENDIX A

Environmental Analysis and Decision Making Regional Partner Roundtable Dates		
Region	Date	Location
1 - Northern	March 14, 2018	Missoula, MT
2 - Rocky Mountain	March 19, 2018	Lakewood, CO (and by video teleconference in Cody, WY; Pagosa Springs, CO; and Rapid City, SD)
3 - Southwestern	March 21, 2018	Albuquerque, NM
4 - Intermountain	March 29, 2018	Salt Lake City, UT
5 - Pacific Southwest	March 27, 2018	Rancho Cordova, CA
6 - Pacific Northwest	February 22-23, 2018	Portland, OR
8 - Southern	March 20, 2018	Chattanooga, TN
9 - Eastern	March 12, 2018	Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, IL (and 15 Forest Unit locations by video teleconference)
10 - Alaska	March 22, 2018	Juneau, AK
Washington, D.C.	March 14, 2018	Washington, DC



APPENDIX B

EADM NORTHERN REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANT LIST

SUMMARY: Approximately 141 Partner representatives were invited by the Regional Forester to participate in the Roundtable. Of these, 49 participated in the Roundtable in person. The participants represented a broad range of regional forest interests and revealed strong experience with USDA Forest Service EADM processes.

PARTNER PARTICIPANTS

Reid	Ahlf	Idaho Forest Group
Julia	Altemus	Montana Wood Products Association
Mike	Bishop	Tenmile South Helena Forest Collaborative
Jonathan	Bowler	Swan Valley Connections
Skip	Brandt	Idaho County, Idaho
Carol	Brooker	Sanders County
Jim	Burchfield	Montana Forest Collaboration Network
Jeff	Burrows	Ravalli County
Scott	Carlton	U.S. Representative Raul Labrador
Greg	Chilcott	Ravalli County
Al	Christophersen	Elkhorn Restoration Committee
Bethany	Cotton	WildEarth Guardians
Kendall	Edmo	Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Hilary	Eisen	Winter Wildlands Alliance
Mike	Fiebig	American Rivers
Alison	Flint	The Wilderness Society
Marty	Gardner	Private Consultant
Mike	Hanna	U.S. Senator Jim Risch
Bob	Harrington	The Nature Conservancy, Idaho
Bill	Higgins	Idaho Forest Group, LLC
Jason	Howell	Montana Snowmobile Association
Tim	Love	Montana Forest Collaboration Network
Sarah	Lundstrum	National Parks Conservation Association
Paul	McKinzie	FJ Stoltz
Spenser	Merwyn	Senator Steve Daines
Kelsey	Milner	Ravalli County Collaborative
Sandra	Mitchell	Idaho Recreation Council; Idaho State Snowmobile Association
Edward	Monnig	Lolo Restoration Committee
Mark	Nechodam	Montana Department of Agriculture
Joshua	Osher	Western Watersheds Project
Peg	Polichio	Idaho Department of Lands
John	Prinkki	Custer Gallatin Working Group
Nicholas	Raines	Hecla Montana



Gordy	Sanders	Pyramid Mountain Lumber
David	Schulz	Beaverhead-DeerLodge Collaborative
Mitch	Silvers	U.S Senator Mike Crapo
Neil	Simpson	MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
Collin	Smith	National Wild Turkey Federation
Sid	Smith	U.S. Senator James Risch
Stan	Spencer	Backcountry Sled Patriots
Richard	Stem	Consultant
Todd	Tillinger	US Army Corps of Engineers
Tom	Toman	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Eric	Trum	Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Randy	Weimer	Sibanye-Stillwater
Fred	Weisbecker	RAC
Kerry	White	Citizens for Balanced Use
Mary	Williams	Nez Perce Tribe
Rick	Winkel	Clearwater County

USDA FOREST SERVICE STAFF

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Stephanie	Israel	NEPA Planner – Nez-Perce Clearwater National Forest
Jordan	Larson	Regional Economist – Regional Office
Meghan	Oswalt	Collaborative Coordinator – Regional Office
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Erin	Phelps	Nine Mile District Ranger – Lolo National Forest
Rebecca	Rasch	Regional Social Scientist
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Elizabeth	Wood	Forester – Lolo National Forest
Ruth	Wooding	Project Manager – Regional Office



ROUNDTABLE PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

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APPENDIX C

NORTHERN REGIONAL EADM PARTNER ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

- 8:00 a.m. Welcome and Meeting Overview
- 8:30 a.m. National Overview and Introduction of EADM Effort
- 9:15 a.m. Break
- 9:30 a.m. Regional Overview and Perspectives on EADM Effort
- 10:35 a.m. Break-out Session #1 – Identify Challenges Partners Face in EADM Efforts
- 11:45 a.m. Lunch on your own
- 1:00 p.m. Break-out Session #2 – Brainstorm Solutions to Address Challenges and How We Can Work Together to Implement Ideas
- 2:15 p.m. Break
- 2:35 p.m. Collecting Diverse Perspectives for Successful Solutions
- 3:30 p.m. Partner Reflections on the EADM Effort
- 4:00 p.m. Close Out and Next Steps
- 4:30 p.m. Adjourn



APPENDIX D

ACRONYM LIST

ANPR	Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
CE	Categorical Exclusion
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
EADM	Environmental Analysis and Decision Making
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FACA	Federal Advisory Committee Act
GNA	Good Neighbor Authority
IDT	Interdisciplinary Team
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFF	National Forest Foundation
USFS	USDA Forest Service

