



Intermountain Regional EADM Partner Roundtable

March 29, 2018

Salt Lake City, Utah

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.

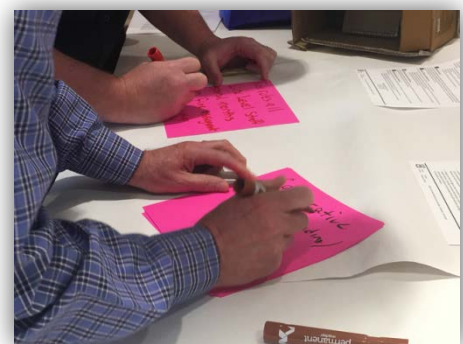
The Roundtables are a major piece of USFS strategy to integrate the public and partners into its EADM effort. The Agency invited representatives of highly-engaged partner organizations, Tribes, governmental entities and the business community to participate in the Roundtables. USFS also requested formal 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. 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 **Intermountain EADM Regional Partner Roundtable**, held in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Thursday, March 29, 2018.

ROUNDTABLE MEETING DESIGN

The USFS and the NFF hosted the Intermountain Regional EADM Partner Roundtable at the Hilton Garden Inn. The Intermountain 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 Intermountain Region sent out 128 invitations, and 34 Partners participated. Please refer to Appendix B for a full list of participants.

In an introductory activity, participants were invited to share their individual and organizational reasons for caring about National Forest System lands, and to recognize the values of others in the room. Values ranged from grazing, timber and private inholdings to recreation, spirituality, wildlife and clean water.



Overall roundtable design included context-setting presentations ([click here for presentation](#)), question and answer sessions, wall activities in which participants generated ideas, and small group discussion opportunities. The NFF and the Region provided neutral facilitation, with support from USFS staff who helped with table-based, small group discussion. USFS note-takers recorded examples of 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.

To provide participants with the national and regional context of EADM challenges from the agency perspective, presentations were delivered by: Mary Farnsworth, Deputy Regional Forester; Chris French, Associate Deputy Chief; and Mark Bethke, Intermountain Region Director of Planning and Financial Resources.

Following the presentations, the full group collectively identified challenges and opportunities and prioritized the most actionable by developing an enduring, SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely) solution for each.

The most actionable solutions became the topics of subsequent small group discussions that used a checklist to respond to prompts with others at their table:

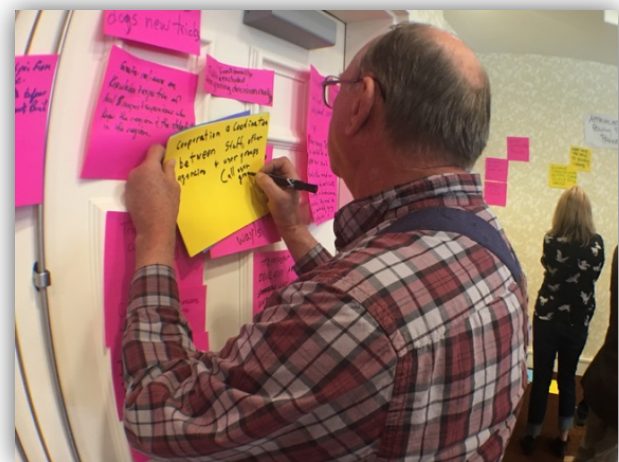
- *What are the barriers?*
- *What guarantees failure?*
- *What are the key issues to enabling change?*
- *What are the desired outcomes – what do we want this to look like?*
- *What are the strategies, tool, and resources needed?*
- *Transformational Leadership - Who will convene?*
- *Enable Advocates for Change – How will we enroll others to go where we want them to go?*
- *Process/Change Plan – How will we get there?*
- *Technology & Data – what do we have and what do we need to meet the vision and process?*

USFS employees (national and regional executives, regional directors, regional and local forest staff and/or EADM cadre members) joined each table’s discussion.

A second set of small group discussions narrowed the scope to address these prompts:

- *Two actions the Forest Service should take regarding EADM.*
- *Two actions partners should take regarding EADM.*
- *Hopes and fears about EADM.*

Over the course of discussion, USFS culture and the inadequacy of coordination with tribes, states, and counties arose as key challenges.



WHAT PARTNERS SHARED: THEMATIC TABLES OF EADM CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Ideas captured in main-session and small-group discussions during the Intermountain Regional EADM Partner Roundtable are organized below by top themes.² 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) Scaling Environmental Assessment and Decision Making; (7) Science and Research; and (8) Resource Conflict.³

The NFF has set the context for each theme at the beginning of each table. The contents of the tables represent input from the partners at the Roundtable. Please note that in some cases, partner input about how processes should work are not currently allowed under law or regulation. A list of acronyms is provided in Appendix D.



² 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.

³ 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 offices 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
USFS cannot admit or accept failure.		USFS is open and honest about what is not working well.		<u>Tools:</u> After action reviews. Lessons learned assessments and documents.
USFS has not set a national timeline for needed EADM changes.		USFS has assessed and reported on the EADM change it deems necessary. Leadership vision and intent is clear and consistent. Vision is applied across the regions, forests, and districts.	Complete EADM Partner Roundtable series across nine USFS Regions and the Washington Office (WO).	<u>Tools:</u> Regional EADM Partner Roundtables. Roundtable and national rollup reports. <u>Resources:</u> Leadership intent.
Uncertainty in policy from each administration.	Agency changing mindset every four to eight years.		Consider forest health and timely decision making (DM) the top priorities regardless of executive presence in the White House.	
Closed culture.	Close-minded, opinionated, non-neutral staff who have a hard time letting partners help meet the USFS mission.	Open culture. Transparent communications.	Recognize what partners can bring to the table. Meet regularly with partners. Build relationships with partners and communities.	<u>Tools:</u> Collaborative groups. Trainings. Meet and greet events hosted by both partners and USFS.



CONTINUED USFS CULTURE				
CAPACITY AND RESOURCES CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CAPACITY AND RESOURCES SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Resistance to change and lack of accountability.			Establish decision accountability by setting expected timelines and requiring explanations of failures. Develop NEPA strike teams or "Centers of Excellence." Establish an intra-agency network for each specific discipline and meetings regularly.	<u>Tool</u> : Story maps. NEPA Strike Teams. Interagency network by discipline.
Ineffective internal communications.		USFS staff communicating effectively to complete analyses more efficiently, and to conduct landscape-scale projects.		
USFS staff are risk-averse when they continually do not have all the information that could inform a decision.	"Sue and settle" reality creates poor policy (and in effect, encourages more lawsuits). Grazing permit renewal process cumbersome.		Encourage staff to make decisions based on the information that is available.	<u>Resource</u> : Advice of litigators.



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
Staff turnover. Hiring freezes. Lengthy hiring process. Having to rely on a temporary workforce. Staff lacks local institutional knowledge.	“Detail” staffing culture. “Revolving door” undermines community relationships. Seasonal hires not possible midseason. Rapid change in forest supervisors over a short time period.	Hiring policies are flexible and focused on retention.	Incentivize employees to stay on one forest as they pursue their career paths. Create an “in-process” database for tracking NEPA projects.	<u>Tools:</u> Human Resource (HR) policies. Project tracking database.
WO intervening at the “11th hour.”		Decisions are made on a local level, closest to the situation as possible.	Delegate more authority to the unit and to District Rangers (DRs).	
Staff lack accountability for results of EADM.		Accountability is refined to allow for unexpected outcomes (accountable to the process versus strictly outcomes) and success is rewarded. Line Officers (LO) are engaged in proposal review, directing, and holding staff accountable for meeting deadlines.	Ensure LO receives regular project updates from staff. Staff are held accountable to timeframes.	<u>Tools:</u> Accountability measures.



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
Focus on analysis instead of implementation and monitoring of projects.		Tasks are prioritized and projects are completed because they are a priority. A commonly accepted process brings decisions closer to implementing projects on-the-ground and landscape health is improved.	Encourage citizen stewardship of lands.	<u>Tools:</u> Joint EADM trainings for USFS personnel and partners.
Not enough staff on-the-ground.		Partners share the workload and help finance, fundraise, monitor, and advocate for project implementation.	Create a national NEPA strike team of core experts. Outsource NEPA analyses to third-party contractors.	<u>Tools:</u> National NEPA strike team. Contractors. <u>Resource:</u> Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services (ACES) program.
Demands for EADM surpass USFS capacity to process requests.		USFS has sufficient resources to handle the demand for EADM.	Take seasonality of work into account when developing specific goals and timelines.	<u>Resources:</u> Funding for comparable analyses.
Limited capacity to process Special Use Permits (SUP) backlog.		The “good actors” are incentivized to continue operating by rewarding them with expedited SUPs.	Develop and implement a regional training course to reduce SUP backlog.	<u>Tools:</u> Trainings in SUP processes.



CONTINUED USFS CAPACITY AND RESOURCES				
CAPACITY AND RESOURCES CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CAPACITY AND RESOURCES SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
USFS cannot make decisions when multiple users conflict.			Incentivize and prioritize initiatives that develop through collaboration.	<u>Tool:</u> Neutral third-party facilitation. <u>Resources:</u> Collaborative groups.
Staff skill sets insufficient for effective EADM.		Regional teams dedicated to NEPA are established (and have no other responsibility except NEPA).	Use NEPA teams for specific resources (i.e. timber, grazing, ski resorts). Bring in contractors to help USFS become tech-savvy.	<u>Tools:</u> Training and mentoring. Regional NEPA strike teams. <u>Resources:</u> Contractors.
USFS lack skills in the process and paperwork required for effective collaboration.		Collaboration is a performance measure. LOs and managers at all levels embrace and model change.	Evaluate and score the work of partners to build accountability and trust. Coordinate through inclusive and diverse collaborative groups with the funds and time to work effectively with USFS.	<u>Tools:</u> Performance measures.



D. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

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

COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Collaborative groups and processes do not represent a balance of interests.		Collaborative processes and groups are diverse and adaptive, using neutral third-party facilitators where needed to ensure balance and productivity.	Regularly meet with diverse stakeholders and informal partners. Encourage diversity in collaborative groups and processes.	<u>Tools:</u> Neutral facilitators. Regular meetings between the USFS and collaborative groups.
Insufficient communication tools.	Website is “unfriendly,” using USFS speak and jargon. Difficult to find needed information.		Use existing partner networks to communicate, explore, and implement projects.	<u>Tool:</u> Website with project details and status. <u>Resources:</u> Partner networks.
Partnership projects are proposed in a piecemeal fashion.	USFS priorities and partner/ collaborative group priorities are not in sync.	Partners join collaborative processes ready to be a productive partner and integrate work.	The USFS invites partners into development of landscape strategies and longer term plans.	<u>Tools:</u> Collaborative landscape strategies. Five-year action plans.
Partners are obstructive or resistant to USFS outreach efforts.	Local community resistance.	Partners play an equal role in helping to build trust, engaging in open dialogue with the intent to be helpful.		<u>Tools:</u> Communication strategies. <u>Resources:</u> Neutral facilitators.



CONTINUED COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS				
COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Inadequate Non-government organizations (NGO) engagement.	Partners discouraged.	Partners are encouraged to participate, commit to engage on a consistent basis, and see results.	Engage more meaningfully with grazing permit holders and NGOs who hold site specific knowledge that to inform management decisions.	
Partners lack understanding of the process and paperwork for engaging in USFS EADM.		Partners understand when and how to engage effectively in project development. Partners are mindful of timelines and USFS requests.	Educate partners on NEPA process i.e. a CE starts when project information is entered into Planning, Appeals, and Litigation System (PALS), and that EIS/EAs start with the public scoping (and EIS gets a Notice of Intent (NOI)).	<u>Tools:</u> Joint USFS/ partner NEPA training.
Results of collaborative groups are diffuse or lacking.	Partners do not know about projects other partners are proposing.	Collaborative groups are diverse in membership but have a common vision; each member is accountable for achieving that vision.	Identify early areas of consensus among collaborative members. Collaborative group members are transparent and share information.	<u>Tools:</u> Strong collaborative group protocols. Neutral facilitation.
Partners fear nothing will be accomplished through collaborative processes or groups.	Partners show up to meetings and only share complaints.	Partners share positive information, including social progress, and offer new ideas for solving reoccurring problems.	Use existing collaborative process and group successes as models for other collaborative groups.	



CONTINUED COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS				
COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
USFS fails to include and consider key partner input and expertise.			Engage established collaborative groups and other interested stakeholders prior to scoping to help focus analysis. Generate cross-boundary Interdisciplinary Teams (IDT) (positions for tribes, other jurisdictions, partners). Enhance and define role of impacted parties, e.g. SUP holders.	<u>Tools:</u> Pre-scoping meetings. Collaborative groups. IDTs with non-USFS membership.
Partners entering EADM process late, causing USFS to readdress issues.		USFS engages partners, communities, and collaborative groups early in the project design stage (pre-NEPA).	Front-load project planning with collaborative process (including communities). Discuss alternatives with stakeholders before NEPA process begins. Conduct pre-NEPA project field tours to identify issues/alternatives.	<u>Tools:</u> Pre-scoping meetings. Collaborative groups.
Distrust between USFS and partners.	Partners fear that USFS EADM “streamlining” will eliminate alternatives and EADM quality.	Trust means USFS and partners see problems the same way and jointly recognize the trade-offs regarding how to solve them. Partners recognize that cultural shifts will not happen overnight.		<u>Tools:</u> Open IDT meetings. Communication.



CONTINUED COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS				
COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Lack of agreement on what the definition of coordination between partners, organizations, and USFS.		Counties and USFS have clear and common understanding of coordination.	Train staff in coordination. Have the Chief define coordination for a clear and concise Agency-wide understanding.	<u>Tools:</u> IDTs with non-USFS membership.
Permittees have to pay for third-party contractors and pay for processing delays.		Permittees work with USFS to help foster efficient SUP process.	Where possible, streamline SUP process.	<u>Tools:</u> Templates.



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 SPECIALIST REPORTS SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Excessive analysis. Documents are too long.	“Can’t see the forest for the 400 pages.” Too much narrative in documents.		Use past justifications for current decisions. Focus on a more narrow "Purpose and Need." Train staff to “right-size” analysis. Replace written segments with geospatial analyses. Use maps to demonstrate need or justify decisions.	<u>Tool</u> : ESRI Geo-Planner. <u>Resource</u> : Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC).
Long NEPA process timeline. Documents take too long to complete.	Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is capable of completing NEPA process in shorter timeframes.		Utilize previously completed EAs and EISs for areas in close proximity and with similar characteristics. Separate out the analysis really needed from the NEPA process. Use strict requirements before extending the public comment period.	
SUP issuance capacity is halting opportunities for use in forests.	SUP backlog stops application process.		Improve USFS SUP issuance process to work more quickly.	
Lack of proposed alternatives.	Inadequate NGO engagement.		Use adaptive management when changing conditions arise.	



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
Redundant analyses.		The appropriate level of analysis is conducted in the appropriate places for quality DM.	Develop NEPA tiers (guidance) based on use and type of area. Treat developed areas differently from undeveloped areas of the forest. Increase the use of Decision of NEPA Adequacy (DNA). Use templates with certain boilerplate language for EAs and EISs. Train staff to avoid reinventing the wheel. In approving uses in developed areas, be general enough to allow for appropriate changes/modifications overtime to avoid having to conduct NEPA process annually.	<u>Tools:</u> Forest-wide CEs. DNA. Training. Templates for NEPA instruments (EIS, EA, CE). <u>Resources:</u> Framework or guidance for choosing the appropriate NEPA instrument.
CEs are not utilized enough.			Broaden CE categories. Increase CEs for projects that are supported by a diverse group of stakeholders.	<u>Resources:</u> Analysis of CEs and where authority could expand.
Blaming NEPA for the length of time to make decisions and implement projects.	Problem lies in the process USFS undertakes and not the NEPA itself.	Decisions are based on the science that is provided for the project, not on special interest pressure.	Generate self-populating NEPA document template (automatically inserts language from past NEPA decisions).	<u>Tools:</u> Templates. Clear timelines. <u>Resource:</u> LO leadership.
Failure to admit significant impacts, setting decisions up for conflict and litigation.		LOs are not afraid to identify impacts of an activity on the land and environment.	Recognize that partners can provide scientific and monitoring data that is useful in EADM if it is collected with rigorous methods.	<u>Tool:</u> Partner data. <u>Resources:</u> LO leadership.



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
County government knowledge and expertise untapped.		USFS verifies there are no potential conflicts of interest when including county government representatives on IDTs (top priorities will be jobs, roads, and extraction).	Interact with county planners, aiming to forge consistency between forest, state, and county plans.	<u>Tool:</u> State and county socio-economic data and resource management plans.
Elected officials politicize NEPA process.		LOs know what elected officials are prioritizing, and they meet regularly to help resolve issues that could lead to litigation. LOs remain true to neutral environmental analysis requirements of NEPA.	Engage elected officials and share information.	<u>Tools:</u> LO and county meetings. <u>Resources:</u> LO leadership.
Potential for sharing inter-agency resources not realized.		Workforces are shared and integrated across agencies. USFS coordinates consistently with conservation districts, states, and other federal agencies.	Contract restoration NEPA documents through the State of Idaho. Work with BLM to adopt similar processes and standards (e.g. ESA Counterpart Regulations) to improve projects that stretch across multiple jurisdictions.	<u>Tools:</u> Good Neighbor Authority (GNA). Counterpart regulations.



CONTINUED | TRIBAL AND INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION

CONSULTATION CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CONSULTATION SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
States are left out of designing NEPA process.	States treated like ordinary partners.	The USFS actively engages state resource managers. NEPA teams are expanded to include local (city, county, and state) planners.	Give cooperating agencies a greater role in designing projects and completing EISs and EAs versus a reactionary role. Improve cooperation with governors to foster “co-management” of lands. Make regulations more explicit to direct forests to use CAs in data gathering, EA and EIS in drafting and editing, and as IDT members. Include state legislatures, commissioners, and governor’s offices in outreach.	<u>Resources:</u> Cooperating agency regulations.
Lack of neutral facilitation of collaborative groups.	State and county facilitation is not neutral.	All stakeholders in a collaborative are able to participate knowing the rules are fair with all perspectives having an equal voice at the table.		<u>Tools:</u> Neutral facilitators.



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	SCALING SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Inconsistencies in decisions and actions within the same forest.		Tiered documents are mandatory.	Develop a consistent small NEPA process for the region, including report templates. Explain why a CE is not used; do not use a CE when there are significant impacts.	<u>Tool</u> : Guidelines for which NEPA instruments to use when and where.
Most projects are at too small in scale.		Landscape level analysis, planning, and implementation using “all lands” approach.	Conduct cross-boundary analyses and make use of state/county resource management plans. Improve cumulative impacts analysis.	<u>Tools</u> : State and county resource management plans. ESRI Geoplanner tool. Landscape scale collaborative groups. <u>Resources</u> : State data.



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
Excessive number of specialists on a project, producing surveys that must be considered.	Every “ologist” is invited to a small-project NEPA tour, which prompts all to feel they must contribute something to studies.		Rely more on the knowledge and expertise of local LOs and stakeholders who know the forest.	
Data is questioned.		When permits begin to appear “easy-to-get,” encourage independent science on outcomes.	Standardize data-gathering process across implicated agencies. Train state cooperating agencies to increase the amount of data accepted by USFS. Generate a WO policy that directs local forests to make greater use of the DNA tool.	<u>Tool:</u> DNA. Systems for collection and sharing of data across agencies.
The data upon which to make good decisions is lacking, including monitoring data.		Socio-economic impacts are measured. Collaboratives conduct citizen science to build baseline datasets while they learn together. Data is maintained in an organized way and shared regularly with partners.	Expand use of GNA for help with surveying and monitoring. Make the process easier to get science permits. Collect baseline data from partners, including economic data. Use existing data when appropriate. Use cooperative agreements to enable partners to support USFS with needed technology and data.	<u>Tools:</u> GNA. Multiparty data collection and monitoring efforts. Data-sharing systems. <u>Resources:</u> Elected officials, local government, universities, and conservation districts.



I. RESOURCE CONFLICT

Conflicts arise among stakeholders and resource user groups and EADM is complicated because the USFS has the most diverse mission of all land management agencies. The National Forest System is managed for multiple uses and benefits, meaning that USFS is charged with determining how to best achieve “the greatest good” while making trade-offs between different resources and uses.

RESOURCE CONFLICT CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	RESOURCE CONFLICT SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Failure to consider native non-game species and climate change impacts.		USFS does not attempt to permit human use of “every inch of the forest.”		
Processes are the focus of EADM, rather than managing resources well.		Desired outcomes are described ahead of project decision, then an assessment is conducted for whether the desired outcome actually resulted.		<u>Tools:</u> Project evaluations.
Fire “rules all” (is top priority at all times).	Staff and budgets directed predominantly toward fire. LOs spend more time on fire assignments; lack time for NEPA process.			
Legacy methods do not account for changing conditions on the landscape.	Grazing permit decisions do not consider that piping in more water may not ecologically make sense.	Current information and resource availability is used to inform EADM.		



CONTINUED RESOURCE CONFLICT				
RESOURCE CONFLICT CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	RESOURCE CONFLICT SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Long-term permit holders not differentiated from new SUP applicants.	Time wasted on re-analysis and demonstrates USFS lack of trust in partners.	USFS recognizes a good history with a partner and renews SUPs with ease.		
Lack of effective public input process on grazing permits.	Process of true review often shut down early. Public functionally excluded from grazing DM.		Conduct region-wide consensus-building effort to generate and/or contract a Range NEPA EA to serve as a grazing EADM template. Consider CEs for grazing conditions. Use forest plan revisions as an opportunity to rebalance grazing acreage and permits.	



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

INTERMOUNTAIN REGIONAL EADM CADRE

- Mark Bethke, Director Planning and Financial Resources, Regional Office
- Bruce Anderson, Acting Regional NEPA Coordinator, Regional Office
- Kris Boatner, Wildlife Biologist, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Ken Capps, Attorney, Office of General Council, Denver Office
- William Carronero Marcano, National Botanist, Washington Office
- Theresa Davidson, Forest Wildlife and Fisheries Biologist, Region 9
- Eric Davis, Assistant Director, Integrated Vegetation Management, Washington Office
- Sue Dixon, NEPA Coordinator, Payette National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Terry Hardy, Watershed Program Manager, Boise National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Chad Hudson, Deputy Forest Supervisor, UWC
- Jeff Huntzman, NEPA Planner, Salmon-Challis National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Carrie Gilbert, Regional Environmental Coordinator, Region 9
- Mike Golden, Fisheries Biologist, Dixie National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Kristy Groves, District Ranger, Ashley National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Stephaney Kerley, District Ranger, Boise-Mountain Home National Forest
- Jenneka Knight, Environmental Coordinator, Fishlake National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Daniel Lay, Forest Botanist, Manti-Lasal National Forest
- Kris Lee, Director Natural Resources, Regional Office
- Tera Little, NEPA Coordinator, Boise National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Rob Mickelsen, Acting Forest Supervisor, Caribou-Targhee National Forest
- Wade Muehlhof, Media and Legislative, Regional Office



- Kit Mullen, Forest Supervisor, Sawtooth National Forest
- Tricia O'Connor, Forest Supervisor, Bridger-Teton National Forest
- Dave Rosenkrance, Deputy Regional Forester, Regional Office
- Jeff Rust, Archeologist, Ashley National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Steve Scheid, Recreation Special Uses Program Manager, Regional Office
- Cecilia Seesholtz, Forest Supervisor, Boise National Forest
- Lyn Snoddy, NEPA Coordinator, Sawtooth National Forest Supervisor's Office
- Richa Wilson, Regional Architectural Historian, Regional Office

RESOURCES

- 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

Regional Environmental Analysis and Decision Making 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 14 Forest Unit locations by Adobe Connect)
10 - Alaska	March 22, 2018	Juneau, AK and teleconference
Washington, D.C.	March 14, 2018	Washington, DC



APPENDIX B

INTERMOUNTAIN REGIONAL EADM PARTNER ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANT LIST

SUMMARY: Approximately 128 partner representatives were invited by the Regional Forester to participate in the Roundtable. Of these, 34 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

Barrett	Anderson	Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
Serena	Anderson	Cottonwood Canyons Foundation
Carmen	Bailey	Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office
Travis	Beck	SE Group
Bob	Bonar	Snowbird Ski Resort
Joel	Bousman	Sublette County, Wyoming
Wayne	Butts	Custer County
Travis	Campbell	U.S. Representative Rob Bishop
Jim	Caswell	National Association of Forest Service Retirees
Kent	Connelly	Lincoln County Commission
Brian	Cottam	Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands
Dave	Fields	Snowbird Resort LLC
Carl	Fisher	Save Our Canyons
Lorie	Fowlke	Office of Congressman Curtis
Gregg	Galecki	Canyon Fuel Company, LLC - Skyline Mine
Redt	Johnston	State of Utah
Wayne	Ludington	Back Country Horsemen of Utah
Michael	Maughan	Alta Ski Area
Kim	Mayhew	Solitude Mountain Resort
Barry	McClaerien	U.S. Representative Mia Love
Patrick	Nelson	SLC Department Public Utilities
Jamie	Nogle	National Wild Turkey Federation
Mary	O'Brien	Grand Canyon Trust
Scott	Pugrud	Idaho Governor's Office of Energy and Mineral Resources
Laurel	Sayer	Midas Gold Idaho Inc.
Bailey	Schreiber	Wyoming County Commissioners Association
Jonathan	Shuffield	National Association of Counties
Agee	Smith	NV. Assoc. of Conservation Districts
Bryce	Somsen	Caribou County Idaho
Tyler	Thompson	UT Dept. of Natural Resources
Ryan	Wilcox	U.S. Senator Mike Lee
Tony	Willardson	Western States Water Council



Karen Williams Idaho Cattle Association

USDA FOREST SERVICE STAFF

Chris	French	Associate Deputy Chief
Jeanne	Higgins	National Policy Reform Lead, Washington Office
Nora	Rasure	Regional Forester, Regional Office
Mary	Farnsworth	Deputy Regional Forester, Regional Office
Mark	Bethke	Director, Planning and Financial Resources, Regional Office
Lindsay	Buchanan	Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Coordinator, Forest Management
Maia	Enzer	Planning and Public Engagement Advisor, Ecosystem Management Coordination
Tom	Ford	Ecosystems Staff Officer, Salmon-Challis National Forest
Chad	Hudson	Deputy Forest Supervisor, Uinta National Forest
Jeff	Huntteman	NEPA Planner, Salmon-Challis National Forest
Joe	Krueger	Regional Planner
Crystal	Loesch	Zone Assistant Fire Management Officer, Salmon-Challis National Forest
Pam	Manders	Fish and Wildlife Program Manager, Manti-Lasal National Forest
Tamara	Minnock	Budget Analyst & Conference Manager, Regional Office
Wade	Muelhof	Media & Legislative Affairs Coordinator, Regional Office
Colleen (Chaz)	O'Brien	Regional Collaborative Planning Specialist, Regional Office
Justin	Robinson	Fisheries Biologist, Uinta National Forest
Maryfaith	Snyder	Field Supervisor, Rocky Mountain Research Station
Susanne	Tracy	Utah State Liaison

ROUNDTABLE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Kayla	Barr	National Forest Foundation
Mark	Bethke	Director, Planning and Financial Resources, Regional Office
Pavel	Bermudez	International Programs, USFS
Lindsay	Buchanan	Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Coordinator, Forest Management
Karen	DiBari	National Forest Foundation
Maia	Enzer	Planning and Public Engagement Advisor, Ecosystem Management Coordination
Danny	McBride	Regional Partnership Coordinator
Tamara	Minnock	Budget Analyst & Conference Manager, Regional Office
Wade	Muelhof	Media & Legislative Affairs Coordinator, Regional Office
Colleen	O'Brien	Regional Collaboration Specialist, Regional Office
Kathleen	Rutherford	KCG: Collective Action Consulting



APPENDIX C

INTERMOUNTAIN REGIONAL EADM PARTNER ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

Thursday, March 29, 2018

Agenda

- 8:30 am** **Registration Opens**
- 8:45 am** **Check In Activity**
- 9:00 am** **Welcome and Meeting Overview**
Mary Farnsworth, Intermountain Region, Deputy Regional Forester
- 9:15 am** **Meeting Orientation and Introductions**
Karen DiBari, National Forest Foundation Facilitator
- 9:30 am** **National Environmental Analysis and Decision Making Overview and Dialogue** – *Chris French, Associate Deputy Chief of the National Forest System*
- 10:30 am** **Break**
- 10:45 am** **Regional Overview and Perspectives on Environmental Analysis and Decision Making Effort** – *Mark Bethke, USFS Intermountain Region, Director of Planning and Financial Resources*
- 11:15 am** **Activity: Identify Opportunities and Challenges** – *Chaz O'Brien, Regional Collaboration Specialist*
- 12:00 pm** **Lunch**
- 1:00 pm** **Activity: Analyze Opportunities and Challenges, and Develop Solutions**
- 2:00 pm** **Small Group Discussions about Ideas on the Wall**
- 2:30 pm** **Small Group Discussions and Report Backs**
- 3:15 pm** **Closing Dialogue**
- 4:00 pm** **Reflections and Close-out**
Mary Farnsworth, Deputy Regional Forester, USFS Intermountain Region
Chris French, Associate Deputy Chief of National Forest System
- 4:30 pm** **Adjourn**



APPENDIX D

List of Acronyms

ACES	Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services
ANPR	Advance Notice of Proposed Rule-making
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CE	Categorical Exclusion
DM	Decision Making
DNA	Decision of NEPA Adequacy
EADM	Environmental Analysis and Decision Making
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ESA	Endangered Species Act
GNA	Good Neighbor Authority
HR	Human Resources
IDT	Interdisciplinary Team
LO	Line Officer
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NF	National Forest
NFF	National Forest Foundation
NOI	Notice of Intent
PALS	Planning, Appeals, and Litigation System
PILT	Payment in Lieu of Taxes
RO	Regional Office
SUP	Special Use Permit
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
WO	Washington Office



APPENDIX E

RESPONSES TO “WHY DO YOU CARE ABOUT NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS?”

- ❖ I want to protect and preserve our forest
- ❖ Hunting, fishing, camping, cabin, hiking
- ❖ For citizens of the future to have land, air, water resources to use/enjoy
- ❖ It's our National Legacy
- ❖ I care because of the preservation efforts.
- ❖ We graze cattle on the forest. Want to see the resources maintained and improved our livelihood depends on it.
- ❖ Have a recreation business that uses forest land. Want to keep the beauty of the land and its health intact - so people can enjoy nature.
- ❖ Continued long term use of public lands including trail use by horse.
- ❖ Because that is where I recreate.
- ❖ Access for all + my grandchildren + there 90 year old grandpa. Remember you are here for a reason. Manage the resource... not the money.
- ❖ Family owns and operates large private land parcel w/in the forest.
- ❖ I have worked in organizations proposing management alternatives on FS lands in Region 6 (1981-2002) and region 4 (2003 - present) for 35 years - issues of herbicides, roads, grazing, veg management, aspen, etc.
- ❖ To remember our connection to nature is to preserve the spirituality.
- ❖ It's where I get away from the stress of our modern world because it's everyone's National Forest.
- ❖ I love the mountains and being in them. Let's allow access in environmentally sensitive ways.
- ❖ Because our public lands and natural parks are awesome. We recreate in these areas frequently.
- ❖ I love to feel the peace and beauty of the lands as I roam them, and I want my children to do the same.
- ❖ Manage for sustainability resiliency. Concerned about fire. Grazing permittee access.
- ❖ Coordination, open conversation at the beginning. Timber harvest. Recreation. Grazing. Multiple uses.
- ❖ Drinking water.
- ❖ We supply a mill with private timber. This mill is struggling because 90% of the wood they say is for public land. Caribou Targhee isn't offering close to enough timber to keep then open.
- ❖ Growing up the forest provided grazing lands for our families live stock and countless recreational opportunities.



RESPONSES TO “WHY DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION OR BUSINESS CARE ABOUT NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS?”

- ❖ USFS Mission provide for Americans today and tomorrow.
- ❖ My organization is involved in federal legislation on public lands.
- ❖ Our forest provides up to 60% of our drinking water. The health of our forest is directly related to the health of our population.
- ❖ My organization cares b/c working together closely with FS is very important.
- ❖ Drinking water
- ❖ Would like improvements in the permitting NEPA process.
- ❖ Multiple use for "all" tax payers. Give the Rangers authority back to manage at a local forest level.
- ❖ Conservation districts are interested and involved in resource (conservation) improving the resource. Bringing different entities to the table to work on solutions to the challenges we face.
- ❖ Caribou County is 42% federal land. USFS could be a big part of our economy but is currently not.
- ❖ Livestock grazing provides countless benefits for Utah's agriculture industry, conserving fire risk, recreation and overall vegetative health.
- ❖ Back Country Horsemen of America is a mayor volunteer group dedicated to keeping trails open for public use, including horse use.
- ❖ Overly cumbersome and time consuming NEPA. Lack of integration with BLM language state of Utah.
- ❖ Overlap between state and federal responsibilities that meets the State's expectation with permitting and timelines.
- ❖ Multiple USE. Resilient forest is a benefit to all multiple users. Fire suppression absorbs operation budget. Jobs infrastructure.
- ❖ So that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the beauty and peace of forest and wildlife now and forever into the future.
- ❖ We want to continue to provide our children and others access to beautiful scenery and mountains environments to recreate and enjoy.
- ❖ Provide wildlife habitat and public access.
- ❖ Our organization works for Colorado Plateau conservation and restoration - science - based, collaborative and on ground with volunteers and staff.
- ❖ Water, watersheds, grazing, invasives, aquatics, partnerships.
- ❖ We partner with FS providing year round recreation to the public.
- ❖ County - Custer Co. Id. 3.15 mil acres w/ 2.95 mil state and federally owned PILT. 97% state and federally owned.

