



Rocky Mountain Regional EADM Partner Roundtable

March 19, 2018

Lakewood, CO; Cody, WY; Pagosa Springs, CO; and Rapid City, SD

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 **Rocky Mountain Regional EADM Partner Roundtable**, held in Lakewood, Colorado on March 19, 2018.

ROUNDTABLE MEETING DESIGN

The Rocky Mountain (RM) 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 RM Region sent out approximately 90 invitations, and 51 partners participated. Please refer to Appendix B for a full list of participants.

The USFS and the NFF hosted the Rocky Mountain EADM Regional Partner Roundtable in Lakewood, Colorado at the USFS Rocky Mountain Regional Headquarters. The NFF provided neutral facilitation. Given some partners were unable to travel to Lakewood, the USFS and NFF provided a video teleconference (VTC) link at USFS offices in Rapid City, South Dakota (Mystic Ranger District); Pagosa Springs, Colorado (Pagosa Ranger District); and Cody, Wyoming (Shoshone National Forest). In addition, the USFS and NFF hosted a “listen in” telephone line that allowed stakeholders located anywhere in the region to hear the discussions.²

² Meeting design required that the VTC link and “listen in” telephone line both be disconnected at 11:30am.



- (2) *What innovations and systemic changes would help to reduce the amount of time and money spent on EADM while maintaining or improving the Forest Service ability to steward the land?*
- (3) *What role can/should partners (collaborative groups, citizen groups, recreational users, industry and user groups, county, state, and tribal governments, etc.) play in supporting the identified innovations in EADM change?*

Small group facilitators asked participants to consider challenges, desired outcomes as a result of change, and the strategies, tools, and resources needed to make the change needed in EADM processes. To collect the participants' ideas for further engagement and identify stakeholders missing from the day's discussions, the facilitator asked participants to fill in flip charts to help USFS pinpoint events, networks, and types of partners that could enrich the regional EADM dialogue with USFS.

WHAT PARTNERS SHARED: THEMATIC TABLES OF EADM CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Ideas captured in Lakewood and from partners participating via the VTC link are presented in the below tables. Ideas are organized by top themes³: (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; and (7) Scaling Environmental Assessment and Decision Making.⁴ See Appendix D for a list of acronyms used in the thematic tables.



³ 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.

⁴ 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-averse. The lower the level of USFS authority, the more restrictive policies become. LOs are “hands off” or unwilling to make decisions (fear of litigation and repercussion).	Rocky Mountain Lynx Management Amendment – a policy set by USFS, but once at district level, became significantly more restrictive. Goshawk protection: Not on threatened list but district-level interpretation required a ½ mile buffer zone for protections.	Policies are strong across the USFS levels. LOs bear more responsibility and are empowered to make judgment calls. Wildlife biologists and forest management work together and are not in silos. Side boards clearly established.	LOs know when they have enough information to make decisions. Leaders let them know they are supported when decisions feel risky. USFS holds internal discussions of the consequences of not taking an action. Put similar types of projects under master agreements so that future projects can be expedited.	<u>Tools:</u> Concise list of only those species pertinent to a Forest. Federal Land Transportation model policy of all projects under \$5M deemed “no impact.”
Top agency leadership has not defined its role in watershed management.		Local decision makers value their decision space, but if it gets politically or socially sensitive, then a stronger leadership role at higher levels is needed.	Establish top-level leadership intent regarding water supply and quality.	



CONTINUED USFS CULTURE				
CULTURE CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CULTURE SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
LOs fear using CEs (for ski areas).	Established uses in ski areas such as restoration, replacement, rebuilding, and lift repair, are not granted CEs.	Projects in a ski area's approved construction plan use CEs and do not require other NEPA process, eliminating redundancy and reducing need for USFS subject-matter experts.	Use existing CEs to support new CEs.	<u>Tools:</u> Electronically-shared CEs. Training in how to use CEs that help create consistent NEPA side boards. <u>Resource:</u> Ski area timber CE.
Inconsistent policy interpretation, with EADM results different for same question.	Snow ruts caused by snowmobiles handled completely differently from one district to the next.	All involved parties know expectations upfront.	Allow partners to provide solutions and assist with monitoring. Better coordination of resource specialists across USFS regions and units.	
Ability of staff to accept change in the Region.	Regional Forester has changed the culture in Region 2 for the better.	Staff accept and appreciate the need for and advantages of changes in USFS culture.		
Regional meetings not inclusive of issues throughout the region.	Meetings in Denver tend to be focused on Colorado issues; Black Hills left out.		Include satellite meeting locations when conducting regional meetings.	

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
Lack of LO engagement and management.	Decisions made by specialists in the absence of LO management.	LO involvement in decisions is a core business practice. LOs hold their staff accountable to keeping EADM process moving, producing reports on time.	Raise expectation of LO position. Involve LOs in programmatic analysis.	<u>Tools:</u> Training in NEPA processes. Training for rangers to know when decisions are theirs to be made.
Leadership change and staff transitions. Acting positions.	Halts process of decision-making and sets back progress. Acting LOs will not make decisions until regular ranger returns.	Leadership shifts to focus on increased productivity and success in EADM.	Transitions include informing constituents, partners, cooperating agencies of leadership, staff change, and next steps.	
Planning teams lack the staff to tackle challenges presented by the complex Forest landscape.	Challenges vary by topography, timber type, and density.	Planning teams are formed strategically to match needs of forest.	Include hydrologists and timber managers in large-scale planning processes. Set contractors up for success by having them spend time upfront with specialists.	



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
Time and funding absorbed by excessive analysis instead of implementation.		The time and resources of USFS and partners are focused on implementation and monitoring.	Transfer more funds into budgets for implementation. Via MOUs, use partners to help complete EAs and EISs. Explore NGO resources to fund limited aspects of planning.	
Resources and capacity diverted to fight forest fires.	EADM budgets and staff teams stripped with fire prioritized.	Fire funding fix is independent of EADM. Fire personnel are used on other natural resource management projects when fires are not present.	Consider project deadlines when sending staff to fires. Put fire crew on trail projects, with readiness to respond to fire.	
Lack of capacity to address excess biomass in forests.	Excess biomass increasing fire risk and causing trees to fall on trails.		Explore/encourage alternative industry resources deployed to help eliminate excess biomass. Approve timber sales, thinning, or biomass removal more quickly to prevent trail blockage and fire risk.	



CONTINUED USFS CAPACITY AND RESOURCES				
CAPACITY AND RESOURCE CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CAPACITY AND RESOURCE SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Lack of prioritization.	Level of analysis does not match project impact.	Clarity of purpose guiding actions and environmental analyses.	Prioritize EADM that will have the biggest impact.	
Lack of disclosure.	Not disclosing environmental impacts leads to decisions vulnerable to litigation.		Use the full spectrum of management actions (mitigation, monitoring, and adaptive management).	
Lack of BAER teams for post-fire restoration.	BAER held up process of post-fire recovering in the South Platte area.	Post-fire recovery and restoration moves forward strategically and quickly.	Add capacity for post-fire recovery by integrating county and state specialists into BAER teams. Integrate BAER into NEPA process.	<u>Tools:</u> Training in pre-fire preparedness.
Forest plan (FP) is continually amended.	The Forest is forced to work with a plan held together by "band-aids."	Forest has the capacity to identify and address needed FP changes.	Create a trigger, like a change in a condition, for environmental analysis of forest plan components.	<u>Resources:</u> National Forest Advisory Board. Collaborative group designed to address issues on the forest. Public petition for an amendment process.
Resource specialists unavailable for small projects.	Staff teams lack archeologists for recreation analysis, trails projects, and resource surveys needed for EAs.	Trail and other recreational site work is accomplished faster by involving partners and volunteer groups.	Use contracted and volunteer partner support for surveys needed for recreation trail projects.	



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
Management conflicts with partners/stakeholders are self-imposed.		Recognition that conflict values within collaborative groups will mean more USFS time allotted to EADM.	Engage current users, permit-holders, and lessees in the planning process.	
Agency blind to situations when USFS cannot act alone to fix a problem that involves landscapes shared with private landowners.	USFS and BLM did not own the land with the most important sage grouse habitat; landowners and permittees felt “burned” by interactions with USFS during planning.	Negative unintended consequences are avoided by involving and considering private landowners. Positive interactions mean landowners more likely to engage and cooperate with the Agency in the future.		
Unclear public guidance on permitted recreation in a forest.	Unclear direction of where mountain biking is permitted.		Share what activities are permitted so partners know where to access outfitters and guides.	
Inadequate communications with partners.	No NEPA hotline or place to communicate to USFS that documents are out of line.		Provide clear and ready avenue for public questions and opinions.	



CONTINUED COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS				
COLLABORATION CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Project benefits to the watershed community are not highlighted in EAs and other NEPA documents. Project objectives and benefits are narrowly defined.	Forsythe project in Colorado. Often times the “no action” alternative is the most harmful course of action.	USFS establishes and communicates integrated project objectives to help build community support, which enables the project to move through the NEPA process more quickly.	Highlight the “no action” alternative to reveal threats, particularly in high-population watersheds. Use this analysis to build and argument for why the proposed decision is critical. Reuse site analysis for analyzing future projects in the same watershed.	
Public cannot discern the timeline for or what staff is working on a project.	Partners waste time trying to figure out what stage projects are in. Uncertainty of who to contact for a proposed project on NF land (e.g. a powerline extension).	Public has easy access to project timelines and the involved staff are identified/	Provide public access to a database of existing CEs and other considerations in DM processes.	
Over-engaged public. Asking for more analysis now habitual, as public has become increasingly afraid to allow decisions to be made.	Public is engaged on already-determined actions.	Public comment process is channeled to focus on key parts of the analysis, keeping the process moving forward. Public is educated on what USFS needs to streamline (e.g. using more CEs), and what adaptive management means and requires.	Let public know what changes are coming, extent of the changes, and gathering abundant information is not always the best route to good decisions. Make stronger interpretations of whether existing NEPA analysis is adequate or not. Isolate problem areas (e.g. air quality), but keep useable conclusions in place. Publicly emphasize the changed data.	



CONTINUED COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS				
COLLABORATION CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Rather than elevate issues within USFS, partners appeal to Congress.		Partners know where decisions lie within the Agency and how to contact these decision-makers. Partners check in with USFS more regularly, and receive explanations for decisions from USFS.	Educate partners on who has the ultimate responsibility for making decisions.	
Risk and burden of decisions transferred to partners.	The agreement with Denver Water (CSFS, NRCS, and FS) put work increase on the local unit. The utility has to monitor and enforce the provisions without "license" to do so.	Risk and burden of USFS decisions shared appropriately with partners.		
Scoping timeframes are too short.	Scoping timeframes do not allow adequate time for partner groups to convene and develop viable ideas. The Black Hills Resilient Landscapes (BHRL) project not scoped adequately at the local level.		Extend the scoping period to ninety days. Create a more structured scoping process that includes education on how NEPA processes are structured, encouraging local partners (including government) to engage.	



CONTINUED COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS				
COLLABORATION CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	COLLABORATION SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Well-organized local collaborative input not understood, valued, or appreciated by USFS enough to avoid sending projects out for broader public scoping which derails collaborative proposal process.	Local collaborative groups are frustrated and lack enthusiasm to reignite efforts to develop future proposals.	Trust between USFS and collaborators is maintained. Public understands what is required of USFS under NEPA.	Encourage collaborative efforts and/or community outreach outside of the NEPA process. Scope problems instead of solutions.	

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
Re-litigation of forest plan-level decisions that were already made or that are no longer relevant.	Cultural impact related to a power line that is 100 years old no longer exists.		Set higher bar for reopening a forest, landscape or programmatic decision, e.g. a major landscape change has occurred.	
Complexity of analysis is out of sync with the complexity of the project.	Volunteer project with ten Boy Scouts planting trees required NEPA analysis. Xcel Powerline maintenance halted by USFS administrative process.		Identify permit needs early. Apply an easy-to-follow “80/20 Rule” to work planning: less effort is dedicated to routine business (80%), and specialists are used to tackle more intricate or complex environmental concerns (20%). Set this rule at the regional level to provide “cover” to LOs making decisions in units.	<u>Tools:</u> NEPA decision matrices used by other agencies.



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
Review process lost in minutia with too much information causing “analysis paralysis.” Too much time and paper spent on EADM.		Field officers empowered to manage simple problems. Region-wide understanding of what is required to conduct EADM with proficiency.	Make EAs a framework for adaptive management instead of the EA being the source of all the information. When preparing a NEPA document, build in enough flexibility to issues that are likely to arise (e.g. bug kill salvage). Simplify quantitative analyses. Reduce the number of management units and prescribed actions to be in line with acreage.	<u>Tools:</u> Permits that outline the scope of work to be done.
	USFS uses narrower interpretations than other Federal agencies.		Engage with collaborative scientific teams to expedite projects.	
CE paperwork has become excessive.	Some CEs are 30+ pages.	Timeframes prescribed for CEs limits on paperwork.	Create templates for CEs that both partners and USFS staff can easily utilize.	
USFS hamstrung by specific interpretations of NEPA and length of time to take action.	Three years to complete an EA to address insect and disease problems, meanwhile the damage has already been done.			



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 analysis.	Ski Area Programmatic Biological Assessment opinions are rendered over and over in the same small area.	Surveys are used more than once.	Create an electronic library of studies and establish project consistency.	
Reducing timelines spend more time in project development; in groups/public/government.	Draft sent out appears to be final; can't change.		More pre-NEPA involvement on project development.	



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 CHALLENGE		DESIRED OUTCOMES	CONSULTATION SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Inadequate involvement of states and counties in USFS EADM.	USFS does not coordinate with state agencies when it would be appropriate to do so.	USFS able to use proposals developed by states and counties (i.e. by working with organizations such as the Western Governors Association). Define and build on “cooperating agency” status. Get public input on what constitutes a good cooperating agency relationship.	Turn over more proposal work to states and counties. Encourage state/county agencies to forge common proposals. Involve counties in forest plan revisions. USFS Rocky Mountain Region and Intermountain Region could enter into an MOU with the WY State Parks and Recreation and USFS Outdoor Recreation Office.	<u>Tools:</u> Model forest plan revisions that included county input. Proposals developed by WY and ID state agencies for USFS. Up to date and well known inter-agency programmatic agreements (e.g., ESA Section 7 consultation, SHPOs). <u>Resources:</u> WY State Parks grants to support NEPA contractors.
USFS does not accept the conclusions of state agencies and expert consultants .	New powerline corridors. USFS Regions 2 and 4 could enter into an MOU with the WY State Parks and Recreation Agency (CHECK)’s Outdoor Recreation Office.	Interagency NEPA process used for larger projects and landscape-scale projects. USFS accepts state conclusions and allows work across boundaries. Increased length of time permits can be issued.	Share resources and specialists across agencies. Create upfront programmatic operating agreements that focus on who does what and mitigate staff turnover. Increase the length of time that permits cover.	



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
<p>USFS does not directly engage the water community in the same way it has engaged recreation, timber, and grazing. Water issues involve multiple director areas in the RO, undermining consistency as well as the ability to be strategic.</p>	<p>Annual Water Congress in CO held twice/year with excellent participation, yet USFS does not prioritize attendance (e.g. sends one staff for part of a day). Watershed Investment Partners' model relies solely on one RM regional employee (who is not a LO with decision-making authority) to manage the MOU relationship. USFS rarely represented at Colorado Basin Roundtable meetings.</p>	<p>USFS leans into statewide forums on water-related issues, with active USFS staff engagement. USFS participation results in water being prioritized during EADM. USFS gains credibility from attending Colorado Basin Roundtable and similar forums. USFS acknowledges to public and partners that it wants to partner on water delivery in Colorado (and other states), versus acting like a regulatory agency.</p>	<p>Take a watershed approach to EADM to help streamline other resource areas like vegetation management. Plan more holistic projects that are inclusive issues (like impact of roads on water quality), while keeping scope narrow enough to streamline decision-making. Integrate with state structure and decision-making processes whenever possible. Take a strategic approach to being a partner in water-related collaborative efforts, coordinating staff across the agency. Ensure enough and appropriate staff (e.g. local fishery biologists) are assigned/engaged. Identify key contacts who serve as a rallying point for other USFS staff on water.</p>	<p><u>Tools:</u> Model of Colorado Rural Water Association (involving Platte RD and PSICC NF).</p> <p><u>Resources:</u> Expertise and resources of the water community.</p>



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
Inadequate collaboration between USFS and state when analyzing the impacts of water providers within the Forest.	State needs to be involved as manager of fisheries. When a water provider wants to implement a project with fish barriers, it is challenging to form conclusions because of disagreement on research finding and lack of coordinated information between USFS and State of Colorado.	USFS co-develops water proposals with the states. Pre-loads large planning decisions with the authorities that allow USFS to work with state government from the outset of a project. Resources benefit from more efficient USFS EADM processes.	Involve state specialists (e.g. fisheries biologists) in NEPA proposal development from the beginning. Continue engagement with Western Governors Association that recognizes state sovereignty with goal of shared policies.	<u>Tools:</u> Guidance issued by USFS to LOs on appropriate state coordination.
County government officials do not understand USFS' NEPA process, undermining their confidence in USFS decisions.	Black Hills Resilient Landscapes project has done a poor job in bringing the counties into collaborative decision-making (better success in Phase 2). It is difficult to understand project impacts on local communities. Short notice creates mistrust. Local government left out of EADM processes because of use of NFAB as a substitute for county government involvement.	Pre-NEPA work is done with local governments, who are educated on the NEPA process. Local government partners know that, as elected officials, they play a vital role in ensuring projects reflect local culture and custom.	Bring county government officials into NEPA processes at an early stage of planning. Have USFS staff attend County Commissioner meetings and increase communication generally. Avoid considering NFAB a "cooperating agency" at the county level (not an elected group).	<u>Tool:</u> NEPA process map (understandable by the public and inclusive of the county government's role).



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
Inconsistent interpretation of USFS Manual and USFS Handbook across districts and Forests.	Restrictions placed on logging trucks working with White River NF led to an ineffectively short window of operation to achieve project purpose and need.		More landscape-scale and programmatic (e.g. ski areas) analysis.	<u>Tool</u> : Model of using GNA on Monument Creek.
Lack of an agreed definition of what a healthy watershed is due to differences in values and perspective.	Agriculture users consider a healthy watershed one that provides for crops; a salmon-oriented NGO views it as one that provides ample flows for salmon runs.	Users come together to develop a shared understanding of watershed health goals to achieve through watershed management and restoration. Efforts focused on investing where the greatest watershed impact is achieved per dollar spent.	Hold more frequent, collaborative, open meetings, fostering honest and transparent dialogue about what different parties want out of forest planning and management as relates to watershed health (e.g. invasive species removal, meadow restoration, road decommissioning). Develop the Desired Future Condition for the watershed, then work backward to identify how to achieve it through projects.	



CONTINUED SCALING ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND DECISION MAKING				
SCALING CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	SCALING SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
Unnecessary barriers make watershed work more complicated than it needs to be.	Seemingly ineffective and arbitrary limits on the geographic scope of certain CEs. Bureau of Reclamation, another big water player, does not get bogged down like USFS.			
Recreation decisions are too narrow in scope, ignoring the spectrum of change, and imposing undue future costs.	Trail and camping use has surged, without adequate planning for current trends. USFS is reactive instead of proactive.	More proactive, comprehensive recreation planning and DM considering larger landscape and potential ripple effects of recreation decisions.	Generate an adaptive plan that has trigger points where proactive measures can be taken.	
Conflict between forest plan/ existing forest management decisions and NEPA; the more restrictive approach is always applied.	USFS invested in infrastructure which was later undercut by a management decision elsewhere on the White River NF.	Forest Plan not approached as a “clean slate;” taking into account past decisions.	Use site-specific special use permits while envisioning wider impacts that NEPA DM envisions.	



CONTINUED SCALING ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND DECISION MAKING				
SCALING CHALLENGES		DESIRED OUTCOMES	SCALING SOLUTIONS	
Barriers	Evidence		Strategies	Tools and Needed Resources
CEs are not used enough.	CEs not used for utilities infrastructure. Lack of a CE for fire mitigation that covers the first 100 feet from the fence line.	Landscape-scale NEPA documents are used to make review of multiple projects on the landscape more efficient. Landscape NEPA is used for fence line projects at multiple locations. Human health and safety concerns reduced through streamlined processes enabled by CEs.	Make greater use of CEs, taking advantage of current authorities.	<u>Tool:</u> Ecosystem analysis at the landscape scale.
Small-scale NEPA projects decisions are inefficient. Projects of vastly different scales and impact go through the same NEPA analysis.	Within ten years, another project is necessary to address conditions that could have been treated on a larger scale the first time. Necessity of redoing cultural resource surveys. A sign permit and ten thousand acre vegetative management project go through similar NEPA processes.	Scale of required NEPA is commensurate with level of impacts anticipated. NEPA is not used as an excuse to limit progress on a project. Forest Plan considered sufficient analysis for certain projects on the Forest.	Scale projects appropriately. Conduct cultural surveys scaled to the project.	



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
The “best available science” isn’t necessarily the “best science.”	Early lynx science was theoretical, yet still being used with a “death grip” on decision-making.	Agency research continues to evolve and responds to current needs, standards, and expectations.		
Existing science does not have broad applicability.			If existing science generally applies, use it instead of invoking need for new studies.	
Lack of discussion on unintended economic consequences.	Haman & Buffalo Creek mitigation costs created an undue amount of money spent when damage could have been avoided in the first place.	Economic values consistently considered prior to action.	Develop area-specific socio-economic reports.	<p><u>Tools:</u> Social cost of carbon. WY state-county-university partnership to develop studies including local socioeconomic views. Socioeconomic handbook emulating BLM’s.</p> <p><u>Resources:</u> Funds and staff to generate area-specific socio-economic reports.</p>



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

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL EADM CADRE

- Jacqueline Buchanan, Deputy Regional Forester
- Scott Armentrout, Forest Supervisor
- Sara Brinton, NEPA Coordinator
- Scott Fitzwilliams, Forest Supervisor
- Mark Lambert, Planning & Recreation Staff Officer
- Steve Lohr, Director of Renewable Resources
- Frank Romero, District Ranger
- Jennifer Ruyle, Acting Director of Planning
- Trey Schillie, Regional Coordinator
- Dan Svingen, District Ranger
- Chris Tipton, Fire Management Officer
- Martha Williamson, District Ranger

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 14 Forest Unit locations by Adobe Connect)
10 - Alaska	March 22, 2018	Juneau, AK
Washington, D.C.	March 14, 2018	Washington, DC



APPENDIX B

EADM ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANT LIST

SUMMARY: Approximately 90 partner representatives were invited by the Regional Forester to participate in the Roundtable. A total of 51 participated in the Roundtable in person in Lakewood or at one of the VTC locations. The participants represented a broad range of regional forest interests and revealed strong experience with USFS EADM processes.

PARTNER PARTICIPANTS

Lakewood

Travis	Beck	SE Group
Britta	Beckstead	Western Governors' Association
Sylvia	Bierman	US Forest Service
Brent	Bolzenius	Xcel Energy
Dominic	Bravo	State of Wyoming, Office of the Governor
Christina	Burri	Denver Water
Rick	Cables	Vail Resorts
Tony	Cheng	Colorado Forest Restoration Institute - Colorado State University
Tony	Cheng	Colorado Forest Restoration Institute
Aaron	Clark	International Mountain Bike Association
Nahtem	Clark	Rocky Mountain Research Station
David	Corbin	Aspen Skiing Company
Jessica	Crowder	State of Wyoming, Office of the Governor
Paula	Daukas	Denver Water
Jarod	Dunn	Colorado State University
Terry	Fankhauser	Colorado Cattlemen's Association
Sharon	Friedman	A New Century of Forest Planning Blog/National Association of Forest Service Retirees
Megan	Gilbert	Colorado Bureau of Land Management
Brian	Hall	Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
Alicia	Hamilton	Sierra Club
Eric	Howell	Colorado Springs Utilities
Diane	Hutchins	US Forest Service
Susan	Innis	Xcel Energy
Scott	Jones	Off-Road Business Association, Colorado Snowmobile Association, Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition
Anna	Kramer	American Alpine Club
Jason	Lawhon	The Nature Conservancy
Michael	McHugh	Aurora Water
Scott	Miller	The Wilderness Society
Melanie	Mills	Colorado Ski Country USA



Brad	Piehl	JW Associates
Paul	Pierson	Neiman Timber Company
Molly	Pitts	Intermountain Forest Association
Kimberley	Pope	Sierra Club
Mike	Smith	Central Federal Lands (Highway Division)
Tom	Spezze	National Wild Turkey Federation, Forest Health Advisory Council
Philip	Swing	Colorado Mountain Club
Jim	Thinnes	Society of American Foresters
Tom	Thompson	National Association of Forest Service Retirees
Troy	Timmons	Western Governors' Association
Kelly	Wade	Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands
Zeke	Williams	Lewis, Bess, Williams & Weese PC

Rapid City/Mystic

Mark	Carda	Black Hills Energy
Bill	Coburn	Black Hills Forest Resources Association
Terri	Holts	Black Hills Corporation
Greg	Josten	South Dakota Department of Agriculture
Chad	Kinsley	Black Hills Corporation
Tim	Madsen	Black Hills Energy
Lance	Russell	State Senator

Pagosa Springs

Bill	Canterbury	Colorado Outfitters Association
Heather	Dutton	San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District
Aaron	Kimple	Mountain Studies Institute
Janelle	Kukuk	Mineral County
Dick	Ray	Colorado Outfitters Association

Cody

Lee	Livingston	Park County Commissioner, Outfitter
Dave	Glenn	Wyoming State Parks and Outdoor Recreation



USDA FOREST SERVICE STAFF

Lakewood

Glenn	Casamassa	Associate Deputy Chief
Brian	Ferebee	Regional Forester, Regional Office
Susan	Alden Weingardt	Partnership Liaison
Scott	Armentrout	Forest Supervisor, Grand Mesa Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests
Sylvia	Bierman	District Ranger, Boulder Ranger District
Jacque	Buchanan	Deputy Regional Forester, Regional Office
Bob	Carnes	Program Assistant
Nahtem	Clark	Rocky Mountain Research Station
Don	Dressler	Mountain Resort Program Manager, Regional Office
Debbie	Gardunio	Budget Analyst, Regional Office
Jessica	Godinez	US Forest Service
Diane	Hutchins	US Forest Service
Cathy	Kahlow	National Recreation Sites Program Manager, Regional Office
Marissa	Karchut	Strategic Planner, Regional Office
Vinh	Le	IT Specialist, Regional Office
Steve	Lohr	Director of Renewable Resources
Bunni	Maceo	Regional Budget Director, Regional Office
Debra	Milner	IT Support Supervisor
Jace	Ratzlaff	Legislative Affairs & SRS Coordinator
Jason	Robertson	Deputy Director Recreation, Lands, Minerals, & Volunteers, Regional Office
Deb	Ryon	Non-Recreation Special Use Program Manager, Regional Office
Trey	Schillie	Policy Analyst, Regional Office
Kristin	Schmitt	Rocky Mountain Region Volunteer & Service Program Manager, Regional Office
Joe	Smith	National Partnership Coordinator
Bill	Yemma	Regional Timber Sales Administration Specialist, Regional Office

Rapid City/Mystic

Steve	Kozel	District Ranger, Northern Hills
Jessica	Eggers	Assistant NEPA Planner, Black Hills National Forest
Scott	Jacobson	Public Affairs Specialist, Black Hills National Forest
Twila	Morris	Executive Assistant, Black Hills National Forest
Dan	Svingen	District Ranger, Fort Pierre

Pagosa Springs

Sara	Brinton	NEPA Coordinator
Kara	Chadwick	Forest Supervisor, San Juan National Forest
Ellen	Shaw	Acting District Ranger, Pagosa Ranger District



Martha	Williamson	District Ranger, Divide Ranger District
Cody		
Sherle	Dickerson	Administrative Support Assistant
Lynn		
Helen	Sagner	Administrative Program Specialist
Lisa	Timchak	Forest Supervisor, Shoshone National Forest

ROUNDTABLE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Susan	Alden Weingardt	Partnership Liaison
Julie	Anton Randall	National Forest Foundation, Facilitator
Kayla	Barr	National Forest Foundation
Ben	Irey	National Forest Foundation
Emily	Olsen	National Forest Foundation
Joe	Smith	National Partnership Coordinator
Bob	Carnes	Program Assistant
Debra	Milner	IT Support Supervisor
Vinh	Le	IT Specialist, Regional Office
Deb	Gardunio	Budget Analyst, Regional Office
Marissa	Karchut	Strategic Planner, Regional Office
Kristin	Schmitt	Rocky Mountain Region Volunteer & Service Program Manager, Regional Office
Bill	Yemma	Regional Timber Sales Administration Specialist, Regional Office
Jessica	Godinez	US Forest Service
Don	Dressler	Mountain Resort Program Manager, Regional Office
Deb	Ryon	Non-Recreation Special Use Program Manager, Regional Office
Kristin	Schmitt	Rocky Mountain Region Volunteer & Service Program Manager, Regional Office
Jace	Ratzlaff	Legislative Affairs & SRS Coordinator



APPENDIX C

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL EADM PARTNER ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

Monday, March 19, 2018

Rocky Mountain Regional Headquarters – 1617 Cole Boulevard, Lakewood, CO 80401

Roundtable Objective:

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

Purposes of EADM Partner Roundtable:

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

- 8:30 a.m. Check-in and Networking
- 9:00 a.m. Welcome and Meeting Overview – *Brian Ferebee, Regional Forester*
- 9:15 a.m. Meeting Orientation and Logistics – *Julie Anton Randall, National Forest Foundation Facilitator*
- 9:30 a.m. National Overview and Introduction of EADM Effort – *Glenn Casamassa, Associate Deputy Chief of the National Forest System*
- 10:20 a.m. BREAK
- 10:30 a.m. Regional Overview and Perspectives on EADM Effort – *Regional Leadership*
- 11:30 a.m. Interactive Small-Group Discussion and Reflections
- 12:00 p.m. Full-Group Interactive Resource Values Topic Selection Session
- 12:15 p.m. LUNCH
- 1:00 p.m. Break-out Small Group Dialogue 1
- 2:00 p.m. Breakout Group Share Out on Key Themes
- 2:30 p.m. BREAK
- 2:45 p.m. Break-Out Small Group Dialogue 2
- 3:45 p.m. Breakout Group Share Out on Key Themes
- 4:15pm Leadership Closeout Remarks



APPENDIX D

ACRONYM LIST

ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
BAER	Burned Area Emergency Response
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CE	Categorical Exclusion
DNR	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
LO	Line Officer
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NF	National Forest
NFAB	National Forest Advisory Board
NFF	National Forest Foundation
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
PSICC	Pike and San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands
RD	Ranger District
RM	Rocky Mountain
RO	Regional Office
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SIR	Supplemental Information Review
SUP	Special Use Permit
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
WO	Washington Office

