

Draft Recreation Approach for the Proposed Forest Service Planning Rule
as posted on the Planning Rule Blog on 7/23/10 - <http://planningrule.blogs.usda.gov>

The high value placed on recreation has been a common theme throughout the collaborative process to develop the 2011 planning rule: many people told us that they felt we were ignoring recreation as a stand-alone issue area, and they wanted to see it treated separately.

We view the experiential, educational, spiritual, health and economic (among many others) contributions of recreation, and the value of recreation for connecting people to our lands, as extremely important. There are few other activities that provide people a sense of place like recreating in the outdoors. It is critical for the Forest Service to understand and plan for (ecologically and fiscally) sustainable recreation.

With this new rule, we expect to build an understanding of recreation uses and infrastructure needs that will guide planning for sustainable use. Our proposed intent is that the rule address: assessing recreation values, opportunities, settings, landscape character, and needs within the broader landscape context, planning to provide suitable and sustainable recreation opportunities and infrastructure, and monitoring visitor use and changing conditions to provide feedback to managers and the public.

We have taken an approach that integrates recreation concerns throughout the rule, including in each of the issue areas addressed by the other blog posts. In particular, we ask you to look to the “people and the environment” post for a discussion of how the planning framework might build in consideration of sustainable recreation, along with other values and contributions of NFS lands to people and communities.

Again, we want to affirm that we value recreation highly, and appreciate and have incorporated the feedback from previous meetings. We look forward to continuing to receive your feedback.

Please comment on this draft approach on the Planning Rule Blog at <http://planningrule.blogs.usda.gov>.