



Forest Plan Revision

Tongass National Forest

Engagement Strategy

Introduction

Each National Forest and Grassland in the United States is governed by a Land Management Plan (Forest Plan) in accordance with the National Forest Management Act. The Tongass Forest Plan serves as a roadmap to guide future management, protection, and use of the lands, waters, and resources.

The Tongass National Forest is preparing to begin revision of the Forest Plan to meet the requirements in the Forest Service's planning rule. This is an opportunity for the Forest Service to work collaboratively with Tribes, communities, partners, and the public on adapting to changes in social and ecological conditions over the past 25 years. The process will create a Plan that protects cultural and natural resources, supports sustainable economies and communities, and maintains healthy ecosystems.

This engagement strategy is a living document that provides a draft framework for communication and collaboration and is intended to evolve based on your input and feedback throughout the process.

Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to provide guiding principles and practices for engagement with people during the planning process that:

- 1.) Facilitate shared learning between people that gets at the issues and challenges
- 2.) Create potential solutions to those issues and challenges together
- 3.) Repair and build trust and create lasting relationships that will be necessary to implement solutions

Engagement Principles

- Strive first to listen, then to be heard and communicate for common understanding, adapting based on feedback.
- Seek to repair and build trust and relationships with communities and tribes.
- Offer a wide array of opportunities to engage. Tailor engagement to people's needs and schedules.
- Make communication materials that are understandable and relevant for each audience.
- Conduct proactive, timely notifications and involvement.
- Explain why input was incorporated, or why not.
- Solicit lessons learned and make changes to provide better public engagement throughout the process.



Engagement Practices

- Design and chart out timely rollout and updates on engagement opportunities throughout the planning process using a variety of methods and techniques to reach the broadest audience possible
- Meet with governments, organizations, people early in the process to create shared expectations for engagement during the planning process
- Outline what is within the scope of Forest Plans, what is not within the scope, and why.
- Try to understand and gather knowledge of the lands, waters, and resources and the people who depend on them, from the people who depend on them
- Use formal engagement methods (e.g., facilitation, exercises, workshops, etc.) that clarify issues and shared challenges and promote solutions
- Use existing partnerships, relationships, initiatives, and associated gatherings as engagement opportunities (e.g. Seacoast Indigenous Guardians Network, Community Forest Partnerships, Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy (SASS), Southeast Conference, Sustainable Southeast Partnership (SSP) convenings)
- Co-host opportunities for engagement with partners whenever possible
- Ask for feedback on the engagement process and share what is being done to improve it

Engagement Roll-Out Plans

Roll-out plans will be created to describe engagement opportunities and draft schedules. Roll-out plans will be specifically tailored to different audiences based on their needs.

Importantly, individual roll-out Plans for Tribal Governments and Alaska Native Corporations will be created that tailor the type and frequency of engagement to their needs.

In addition, community roll-out plans describing tailored methods and logistics will be developed to reach broader communities.

The following sections provide a starting point for designing engagement roll out plans by identifying possible audiences and methods for engagement.

Audiences

- Alaska Native People
- Alaska Tribal Nations
- Alaska Native Corporations
- State of Alaska
- Governments/Agencies
 - Local, State, County, Municipal, Federal Land Management and Resource Agencies
- Business (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, economic development organizations)
- Civic organizations (Elks, Moose, Rotary)
- Clubs and Community Groups (e.g., local Filipino Assoc. etc.)
- Disability organizations (i.e., Alaska disability and advocacy organizations)
- Educators in schools and environmental education programs
- Ecology and Wildlife
- Energy (including Renewable Energy such as Hydro, Biomass Processing, Wind, and Transmission)
- Environmental Interests and Organizations
- Extractive Uses (including Mining and Timber)
- Commercial fishing (longlining, trolling, etc.)
- Forest Collaborative Groups



Audiences

- Gatherers/Foragers (e.g., Fuelwood, Mushrooms, Traditional Plants)
- Hatcheries
- Industry (e.g., timber or biomass purchasers, mining)
- Local community residents
- Low-income populations
- Media
- Minority and under-represented communities
- Private landowners
- Recreational permittees
 - Dispersed (e.g., outfitter/guides) and Developed (e.g., campgrounds, resorts)
- Recreational users (locally based, urban, national, and international)
 - Dispersed (e.g., anglers, artists, backcountry / cross-country skiers, birdwatchers, boaters, equestrians, hikers, hunters, motorized driving (e.g., ATV, OHV, 4x4), mountain bikers, rock hunters, snowshoers, subsistence users) and Developed (e.g., campers, cabin users)
- Scientists including University Researchers and Students
- Soil and Water and Natural Resource Conservation Districts/Tribal Conservation Districts
- Tourism (outfitter/guides, excursions, cruise ship, small boat operators, sightseeing flights, etc.)
- Students including school and university environmental and civic clubs
- Volunteer and stewardship groups
- Water Supply and Hydroelectric Interests (e.g., residents, local municipalities, local tribes)
- Youth and NGOs providing opportunities to youth (i.e., AYS, YCC, Scouts, 4-H programs, Discovery Southeast)

Potential Engagement Methods

METHOD	POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES
In-Person Forums	Partner-Led Gatherings and Activities Listening sessions Workshops Open Houses Individual meetings Presentations at meetings and conferences Media interviews
Digital Tools	Videos Social Media Interactive infographics Website Gov Delivery e-newsletters Interactive tools (e.g. Story Maps)
Virtual	Webinars Live Streams and Chats (“office hours”) Zoom/Teams meetings Radio spots and PSAs
Social Media	Facebook Twitter Partner Amplification



METHOD	POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES
E-Communications	News releases Newsletters Gov Delivery Surveys
Print publications	Brochures Flyers/posters Mailers/postcards

APPENDIX A: Community Engagement Roll-out Plan Through CY 2024

Fall 2023:

- Outreach to communities and organizations for people to be on a Scenarios Team (40-60 people)
- Develop ways to engage with Native Alaskans, Tribal Members, Tribal Governments, and Alaska Native Corporations on the following topics and describe them in Tribal Engagement Plans:
 - Native knowledge and Indigenous ecological knowledge
 - Land ethics and cultural issues
 - Sacred and culturally significant and historic sites and their protection
 - Management of areas of Tribal Importance

Winter 2023:

- Finalize Overall Engagement Strategy and create Draft Engagement Rollout Plans for other specific audiences
- Continue planning for Scenarios Team Process
- Begin engagement with Tribal Members

Winter 2024:

- First Scenarios Team Workshop (construction phase)
- Continue engagement with Tribal Members

Spring 2024:

- Provide Webinars on Forest Plan Revision topics
- Develop draft community survey tools, forms, and report templates for engaging on Forest Plan Revision
- Second Scenarios Team Workshop (implementation phase)
- Translate the results of the Workshops into training for community engagement
- Finalize community survey tools, forms, and report templates
- Provide community engagement training to FS Staff involved in engagement activities
- Scenarios Team Implications workshop at SSP Retreat
- Begin community engagement workshops