

*This developing plan content is under construction and is being shared as a snapshot of thinking. Additional changes based on Forest Service and public input are expected.*

-----

## **Forest-wide Community Connections Plan Components**

### **Background**

*The role of the Forest is as a contributor to local quality of life, including opportunities for sustainable economic development through recreation, tourism, and carefully designed timber harvests; as a producer of clean water; as a provider of habitat vitally important to many native species; and as a source of wildlife; wilderness; and abundant recreation opportunities. Additionally, the Forest is uniquely positioned to help young Americans reconnect with our natural and cultural heritage, employ young people to work in the great outdoors, and inspire the next generation of conservation leaders. By expanding access to the outdoors for all young people, the Forest Service will help build the personal experiences that are the foundation of stewardship.*

*Proactive efforts reach both traditional and nontraditional users and lead to a greater citizen understanding, appreciation, advocacy, and participation in forest stewardship and conservation.*

### **Desired Conditions**

- The forest contributes to economic vitality of the region by providing benefits, maintaining local cultures and traditions, connecting people to the land, and contributing to a higher quality of life.
- People connect to the land and to each other, aided by high-quality public information, interpretive services, and environmental education programs/activities..
- The forest managers work with state and local governments, Tribes, and partners across boundaries to achieve shared goals.
- Partnerships promote a connection to place, foster a sense of stewardship and help move the forest toward sustainable conditions.
- Sustainable forest settings and opportunities complement regional and local programs and tourism strategies.
- The Forest provides locations for research partners to identify, testing, and demonstrate sustainable ecosystem management techniques.
- Diversity of visitors, volunteers, and partners continues to grow through existing and new relationships. Barriers that reduce underserved populations from connecting with the forest are reduced.
- Accurate, high quality visitor information is available through multiple media sources with an emphasis on consistency, accessibility, convenience and quality.

**Management Approaches**

- Reconnect young people from all walks of life with nature and their cultural heritage while building pathways to careers in resource stewardship.
- Work with partners under the authorities of the Public Land Corps and Youth Conservation Corps Acts; hire young Americans to help protect natural and cultural resources, advance our scientific understanding, and restore the natural environment.
- Expand educational programs to reach more youth. For example, in classrooms and at sites throughout the country, ensure that programs provide youth of all ages and backgrounds meaningful educational experiences of the highest quality.

DRAFT