

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service -- Northern Region



May 12, 2005

**News Contact: Paula Nelson (406) 329-3472
Tom Rhode (406) 329-3196**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Regional Forester Announces Forest Planning Decision

Seven of the eight management plans for national forests in the Northern Region currently under updating will be revised under new national direction, Forest Service Regional Forester Gail Kimbell announced today. The new national rules were finalized Jan. 5, 2005.

“I took extra time to examine the value of using both the old and new planning rules and consulted with Forest Supervisors, our specialists, the Chief’s office and others before arriving at this conclusion,” said Kimbell. “Protections remain in place for following the Endangered Species Act, the National Forest Management Act, Clean Air and Water Acts, and the National Environmental Policy Act,” added Kimbell.

“The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest is ready to print their draft Revised Plan and so they will continue to proceed using the 1982 process,” said Pam Gardiner, Director of Ecosystem Assessment and Planning for the Northern Region. “The Bitterroot, Clearwater, Flathead, Idaho-Panhandle, Kootenai, Lolo and Nez Perce Forests were in earlier stages of Plan revision and will use the new rules,” she added.

“The valuable information already gathered from the public will definitely be used as we move ahead with this process,” said Kimbell. “We will build on that information as well as on the extensive specialists’ field data and additional public input to craft the new plans.”

The Northern Region includes 13 national forests and grasslands in northern Idaho, Montana and North Dakota. Eight of the thirteen are currently engaged in Plan revision which begins 15 years after a Plan is

finalized. The Dakota Prairie Grasslands has already completed their Revision. The remaining four forests will utilize the 2005 planning rules when they initiate revision.

~end~

Links and other related material:

National Planning Rule and directives: www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma

Northern Region Plan revision information:

- Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF: www.fs.fed.us/r1/bdnf
- Bitterroot, Flathead & Lolo NFs: www.fs.fed.us/r1/wmpz
- Idaho-Panhandle & Kootenai NFs: www.fs.fed.us/kipz
- Clearwater & Nez Perce NFs: www.fs.fed.us/cnpz