

Action Plan

for the

Recreation Site-Facility Master Planning (RS-FMP) Public Participation Review Report dated April 2, 2007

This Action Plan responds to the key recommendations of the Recreation Site-Facility Master Planning (RS-FMP) Public Participation Review Report. The Review Report and this Action Plan focus on public participation in the RS-FMP process and on improved communication. The *Key Recommendations* from the report are listed first, followed by **Actions**.

As an initial matter, the review team recommended that, wherever possible, jargon and acronyms be eliminated. The term “master planning” implies to some that this is a decision-making process, as opposed to an analytic one. Therefore, the analysis of recreation facilities formerly referred to as Recreation Site Facility Master Planning, or RS-FMP, shall be referred to more accurately and simply as **Recreation Facility Analysis**.

In general, the public is involved throughout the Recreation Facility Analysis process. Initially, the public is involved through survey results and demographic information. Forests also engage local communities and stakeholders in a dialogue about a forest’s settings and opportunities, and visitor needs and expectations. After ensuring data is adequate for initial analysis and including any public input received at this point, Forest staffs prepare, share, review, and discuss analysis results with citizens, forest visitors, and local communities. Public involvement and feedback is imperative to ensure that we meet visitor and community needs, and provide the best recreation opportunities in the best places.

Key Recommendations and Actions

Recommendation

“1. Institute greater oversight at the national and regional levels on the effectiveness of public involvement in [Recreation Facility Analysis]. Develop a management strategy document that emphasizes this.”

Actions

- Forests will submit a Public Participation Assessment Report at each step of Recreation Facility Analysis. Regions (at a minimum, the recreation staff, in coordination with the public affairs staff) will review these reports and consult with forest line officers wherever questions arise concerning the adequacy of public participation, taking corrective action as appropriate.
(On-going, at each step of Recreation Facility Analysis)

- The Washington Office Recreation staff will consult on the effectiveness of public participation with the Regional Recreation staff and the Recreation Facility Analysis Implementation Team (Implementation Team), identify forests requiring attention, and review corrective actions proposed by the respective Regions. (Quarterly through 2008, annually thereafter)
- The Washington Office Recreation staff will develop the management strategy document by August 25, 2007.

“2. Continue the direction of active public participation throughout the [Recreation Facility Analysis] process on National Forests undertaking the process.”

Action

- The attached letter of direction, dated July 25, 2007, reiterates the direction on this subject stated in the letter from Deputy Chief Joel Holtrop dated October 12, 2006. An opportunity for active public participation is a requirement throughout Recreation Facility Analysis.

“3. Improve the capacity at the forest level to conduct public involvement and citizen engagement.”

Actions

- Forests will coordinate with their Public Affairs Officer, or ensure equivalent public affairs/communication expertise is included, in carrying out each step of the process. (Letter of Direction dated July 25, 2007)
- The Washington Office Recreation staff, Regional Recreation staff, and the Recreation Facility Analysis Implementation Team will continue to highlight good examples and models of public participation in Recreation Facility Analysis, as well as training opportunities. In response to Region or Forest requests, the Washington Office Recreation staff and Regional Recreation staff will work with the Recreation Facility Analysis Implementation Team to continue to provide facilitation and/or training for Forests and Regions in the conduct of recreation values workshops. (On-going)
- Forests will identify opportunities to coordinate public participation across multiple programs (e.g., forest planning, travel management, Recreation Facility Analysis, etc.). (On-going)

“4. Require those National Forests who have completed [Recreation Facility Analysis] 5-year proposed programs of work to share those plans with the public and to invite participation by the public in proposed actions. Develop national guidance to support this.”

Action

- At a minimum, National Forests & Grasslands that have completed Recreation Facility Analysis 5-year proposed programs of work will notify the public of the availability of this document. Where a 5-Year Proposed Program of Work has not yet been prepared, NFS units will notify the public when initial analysis has been developed and invite them to discuss analysis results and alternatives being considered based on Recreation Facility Analysis. This may include posting analysis results or the 5-Year Proposed Program of Work on unit websites or posting a notice of availability in local media. Units that have previously completed this notice of availability are not required to repeat this notification. Actions taken before January 26, 2007, are not required to be a part of this notification.

“5. Extend the September, 2007 deadline for completion of [Recreation Facility Analysis] agency-wide to provide sufficient time to ensure adequate public participation.”

Action

- The enclosed letter of direction dated July 25, 2007, extends the deadline for completion of initial Recreation Facility Analysis agency-wide to December 31, 2008. This extension provides all national forests the opportunity to ensure each step of Recreation Facility Analysis is conducted with active public participation.

The following three recommendations, numbers 6, 7, & 8, all concern improved communication. Some adjustments and enhancements to existing communication materials were identified as important to both improve public awareness and understanding of the value of the analysis and enhance opportunities for understanding public interests and concerns. These three recommendations are grouped together followed by Actions in response.

“6. Establish communication plans about [Recreation Facility Analysis] at the appropriate Agency levels to proactively reach key audiences and to facilitate public involvement at all levels.”

“7. Develop key messages about [Recreation Facility Analysis] that are free from jargon and acronyms. Explain [Recreation Facility Analysis], its objectives and

outcomes, in plain language. Convey how [Recreation Facility Analysis] relates to other Forest Service programs that are also of interest to the public. Explain how public involvement has been used to date and how the public will be involved in [Recreation Facility Analysis] in the future.”

“8. Clarify that [Recreation Facility Analysis] does not result in site-specific decisions to raise fees or remove sites. This clarification should describe how [Recreation Facility Analysis] provides information for future decisions about implementing the 5-Year Proposed Program of Work (PPOW) which may propose such actions as recreation fee changes, modifications in how recreation sites are managed, facility and site expansions, and new construction or facility removals. This clarification should also emphasize the important role that the public will have in informing the implementation of the 5-Year PPOW.”

Actions

- Existing National, Regional, and Forests communication plans will be updated to incorporate revised key messages and Q&As by August 25, 2007.
- The review and this action plan focus on public participation in the analysis of recreation facilities. After the public has participated in a review of the initial results of Recreation Facility Analysis, National Forests & Grasslands prepare a 5-Year Proposed Program of Work that lists work that incorporates public input, from basic operations and maintenance (e.g., painting) to major tasks that require additional formal public participation. This 5-Year Proposed Program of Work also will be made available to the public. Some actions proposed based on Recreation Facility Analysis, such as site decommissioning or changes in fees, will be subject to additional formal public involvement opportunities (e.g., NEPA, Recreation Resource Advisory Committees).

“9. Illustrate Forest Service leadership of and commitment to [Recreation Facility Analysis] through public statements by Chief Kimbell.”

Action

- Revised key messages have been shared with the Chief for her use. The Washington Office staff will continue to identify opportunities for public statements by the Chief.