

Appendix D: Forest Plan Functions

The following table summarizes the functions and limitations of National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) related to a variety of topics.

What a Forest Plan Does and Does Not Do

Topic	The Forest Plan does...	The Forest Plan does not...
Laws, regulations and policies	Use guidance provided by the Forest Service Handbook, Forest Service Manual, and other federal regulations and policies to create an over-arching management plan for the National Forest.	Make law, regulations, or policy. The Revised Forest Plan is not a policy-making document; it reflects agency policy and goals.
Budget for local Forest Service operations	Consider the financial feasibility of implementing Plan goals and objectives.	Determine funding levels for the National Forest (budget allocations are determined in other ways).
Travel management	Identify what kinds of travel are suitable to particular parcels of land, based on desired future conditions (DFCs) and other designations. This can vary by season.	Make the decision to open, close, or otherwise restrict use of a specific road or trail to certain modes of travel (such as ATVs or mountain bikes). If the management objective for certain parcels changes, site-specific plans for road and trail management will have to be made separately from the Forest Plan to bring travel into compliance. Decisions about specific roads and trails are made through project-level NEPA analysis and decision documents.
Timber harvests	Identify sustainable annual yields. Identify which lands are suitable for timber harvests for various objectives, including timber production.	Identify individual areas that will be offered for sale.
Timber sales	Provide direction and standards to determine where and how sales can take place, based on goals and objectives.	Approve any site-specific timber sale.
Grazing allotments	Analyze and disclose which lands are suitable for grazing. Describe the parameters or standards grazing practice shall attain.	Make decisions about what to do with vacant allotments or allotment management plans and permit renewals.
Land exchanges	Identify values and considerations to be evaluated in potential exchange of land parcels. Identify landscapes where opportunities to consolidate landownership patterns should or should not be pursued to meet DFCs and objectives.	Identify or prioritize specific parcels for exchanges. Guidance for required analyses for land exchanges is in Forest Service manuals and handbooks.

Topic	The Forest Plan does...	The Forest Plan does not...
Ski areas	Identify which lands have DFCs, objectives, standards, and suitability that emphasize ski-based resorts.	Approve creation of any additional infrastructure such as lifts, runs, or snowmaking facilities.
Endangered species	Provide DFCs, objectives, and standards to ensure sustainable habitat conditions for species that have been listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act.	Decide which species will be protected under the Endangered Species Act. These decisions are made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).
Hunting and wildlife management	Describe desired conditions, objectives, and standards for managing the habitat for many game and non-game species.	Set hunting seasons, designate areas as open or closed to hunting, or set harvest levels or hunting fees. Seasons and limits are set by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (except for migratory birds, which are set by USFWS.)
Wilderness	Recommend to Congress those areas capable and suitable for designation as wilderness. Allocate land to area designations that are managed for wilderness values.	Create or designate lands as Wilderness.
Wild, scenic and recreational rivers	Identify river segments eligible for further study as wild, scenic, or recreational under the nation's Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Allocate land to river corridors that must be managed to maintain the values that provide eligibility for wild, scenic, and/or recreational rivers.	Designate those rivers as wild, scenic, or recreational. A finding of eligibility does not automatically launch further study.
Law enforcement	Emphasize cooperative partnerships and collaborative activities with stakeholder groups, local communities, and governments.	Include directives about law enforcement, specify enforcement staffing, or budget for those operations.

Source: http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/gmug/policy/plan_rev/lwg/mtg_notes/unc_notes/10102002_plans_do_dont.sht