

## CHAPTER 4. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

### Public Involvement

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The Forest Service has provided notification in the *Federal Register* and opportunity for public comment for promulgation of the Roadless Rule. In addition to Administrative Procedures Act (APA) requirements, the Agency chose to evaluate and disclose the environmental effects of the proposed rulemaking through an EIS prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The implementing regulations for NEPA also provide opportunity for public comment after publication of a Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* and again after publication and distribution of a DEIS. The Agency combined the rulemaking of APA and NEPA processes by publishing the proposed rule at the same time the DEIS was published and distributed.

Public involvement for the Roadless Rule began on October 19, 1999, when the Forest Service published in the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent to prepare a proposed rule and an environmental impact statement that would provide direction for the future management of inventoried roadless and other unroaded areas. Publication of the Notice of Intent initiated a 60-day scoping period to identify relevant public issues and concerns. The scoping period included more than 180 listening sessions throughout the nation that drew more than 16,000 participants. More than 360,000 public responses were collected through these meetings, and by letter, electronic mail, and telefax. These comments were analyzed to help develop the Roadless Rule and DEIS. (*Roadless Area Conservation Proposed Rule and DEIS, Forest Service, May 2000*).

A website, ([roadless.fs.fed.us](http://roadless.fs.fed.us)), was launched in November 1999 to share information about the proposal. The website included a copy of the Notice of Intent, a set of preliminary questions and answers about the proposal, copies of news releases, public meeting schedules, and contact numbers for information from specific regional offices and national forests. Later, the website information was expanded to display profiles of representative inventoried roadless areas from around the country, a full set of State and national forest maps of inventoried roadless areas, a summary of the public comments received during scoping, specialist reports, other supporting information used in developing the DEIS, and direct links to news articles, other pertinent Forest Service and USDA sites, and other sites discussing the Roadless Rule.

To further broaden involvement, members of the National Roadless Team and regional coordinators provided information to a wide array of interest groups including: wildlife, hunting, fishing, travel and tourism, recreation, State and local governments, transportation, professional societies and academic interests, conservation education, racial and cultural minorities, natural resource interests (for example: fire, forestry, mining, ecology, and water), and disability access groups (groups that focus on recreational accessibility of public lands for people with disabilities).

Consultation with American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes began during scoping and continued throughout development of the Roadless Rule. Forest Service line officers made contact with leadership from potentially impacted American Indian or Alaska Native Tribes having proximity to, or interest in, their administrative unit. Most of these contacts were initiated through scoping letters distributed to the tribes, followed by face-to-face meetings between Tribal leadership, members, resource professionals, and other interested parties and Forest Supervisors, District Rangers, and Tribal liaisons. Additional meetings were held during the release of the DEIS to further explain the alternatives analyzed, answer questions, and receive comments from the Tribes.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout development of the roadless environmental analysis, the Agency has responded to continued interest and scrutiny from members of Congress, State governors, and other elected officials. In addition, the Forest Service testified at seven oversight committee hearings, State-level field hearings, and other hearings that dealt indirectly with roadless issues. The Roadless Team conducted regular briefings and updates for key members of Congressional committees and others with interest and oversight for natural resource issues. At the regional and forest level, Forest Service officials met with governors, State agency officials, County officials, and a variety of interest groups to hear their concerns about the proposal and to share information. The Agency estimates that it received more than 11,000 letters addressed to the Chief and his staff asking specific questions about the proposal, including more than 500 letters from members of Congress, other government entities, or letters from citizens relayed through a Congressional office. The Roadless Team has also processed more than 60 requests from citizens for documents and information under the Freedom of Information Act and information requests from congressional oversight committees.

The Roadless Team fielded hundreds of telephone inquiries from national and regional newspaper, radio, and television reporters; concerned Forest Service employees; and a wide variety of public interests. During development of the DEIS, the team briefed Forest Service leaders and employees and developed a network of roadless coordinators at the regional- and national-forest level to provide feedback to the Roadless Team, help improve internal understanding of the proposal, and provide informed contact points for the public.

Some questions and concerns raised by the public and employees during and after scoping focused on a perceived lack of information about what the proposal might affect. Some citizens also expressed a strong need to “speak their mind” about the proposal. Accordingly, public information and involvement for release of the DEIS was designed to provide the maximum information and access in a variety of formats, along with meetings designed to take verbal comments from those who wished to speak.

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<sup>1</sup> A separate document entitled “Roadless Area Conservation Rulemaking: Forest Service Consultation With American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes” describes the consultation process in detail and is available upon request.

In early spring, the Agency provided information about how to order copies of the Proposed Rule and DEIS through national and local news media outlets; the project's web site; letters to major libraries, Federal and State resource agencies; congressional, State, and local officials; tribal leaders; and Forest Service employees.

The Roadless Team also conducted several weeks of discussions with a representative internal group of Forest Service field line and staff employees to answer their questions on the proposal and to seek advice on effective information sharing and explanation of the proposal to the broad array of interests across the country. Responding to employee concerns about the proposal, the team also included representatives of the employee union, the National Federation of Forest Employees, on the advisory group. These advisors helped design materials and meeting formats for explaining and commenting on the proposed rule. They also briefed their peers around the country so that Forest Service employees at the local level could answer questions from local citizens about the impacts of the proposal on their interests. The aim was to produce informed and effective public comment on the DEIS.

Release of the DEIS and proposed rule was announced May 9, 2000, initiating a public comment period that ended July 17, 2000. The DEIS and proposed rule, the accompanying maps and database, and the Summary of Public Comment were posted on the web site ([roadless.fs.fed.us](http://roadless.fs.fed.us)), where it could be downloaded in whole or in part. The documents were sent to every Forest Service office, key State and local natural resources offices, and public library systems. Citizens who requested copies were provided, at their option, the Summary or the full two-volume set in compact disk or hard copy format. More than 50,000 copies of the Summary and 43,000 copies of the two-volume DEIS were distributed; including 10,500 two-volume sets sent to municipal libraries across the country.

The Roadless Team also staffed an internal hotline and external toll-free telephone line with meeting schedule information, document-ordering information, and voicemail to record public questions, which were answered by a member of the Roadless Team. Over 130 messages were fielded and responded to between May 11 and June 12, the first month after the release of the DEIS; the number of calls dropped off to about six telephone inquiries per week throughout the early part of July.

The Forest Service addressed public requests for information and desires to be heard through a two-step public meeting process. In late May and June, about 230 public information meetings and briefings were held at every regional office and national forest or grassland with roadless acreage. Documents and explanatory materials, questions and answers, a user guide summarizing the proposal and instructions for submitting comments, a PowerPoint summary, posters, and maps, were available at every meeting. Forest Service officials were available to discuss expected effects of the various alternatives on local areas. The material and a full schedule of national meetings were also posted on the ([roadless.fs.fed.us](http://roadless.fs.fed.us)) web site.

In late June and early July, Forest Service units hosted another set of meetings to hear, and record for the official record, verbal comments from interested citizens. More than 200 meetings were held. Some units held daylong and double sessions to ensure that all who wanted to speak were heard. Additional sessions were scheduled at public request. For example, a meeting was held in Hawaii where there are no National Forest System lands, but where citizens expressed interest in roadless area issues in the continental United States. Court reporters transcribed comments for the official record. Comments were also collected through letters, telefaxes, electronic mail, and reports and videotapes. Opportunity to comment was also available through a link on the (**roadless.fs.fed.us**) web site.

All comments, no matter their origin or format, were sent to the Content Analysis Enterprise Team (CAET) for compilation, coding, and archive purposes. Responses began to arrive as early as May 10, 2000. The final day of comment, July 17, brought the largest number of responses, including several hundred thousand postcards and telefaxes. These comments are summarized in the final CAET report (Content Analysis Enterprise Team 2000b).

More than 23,000 people attended public meetings, and more than 1.2 million chose to respond by postcards, form letters, original letters and notes, testimony at meetings, electronic mail messages, and telefaxes. In terms of volume, the roadless proposal is the largest public involvement project in the history of the Department of Agriculture or the Forest Service.

## Preparers and Contributors

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Under the overall leadership of the project directors, four primary teams prepared this document. The Public Involvement Team coordinated the scoping effort, other public involvement activities, content analysis of the comments, and responses to correspondence. The Data Team collected and managed the extensive and varied information required for this effort. Using information assembled from the other teams, the EIS and Rule Team developed the proposed rule text and alternatives for the DEIS, conducted necessary analyses, and documented the findings in the FEIS. The Interagency Team served as a steering committee, providing review, edits, advice, and oversight to the project. Their close involvement early and often in the process facilitated and expedited the formal review and clearance process.

### Project Directors

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### Interdisciplinary EIS and Rule Team

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## Involvement Team

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## Distribution of the Final Environmental Impact Statement

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This FEIS has been distributed to individuals who submitted substantive comments on the DEIS and to those who specifically requested a copy of the entire set of documents. Two versions of these documents are available:

- A 43-page summary;
- A 1,766-page, four volume set that also includes a summary, appendices, a set of maps, Agency responses to public comments on the DEIS, and copies of letters from Federal agencies, federally-recognized Tribes, State and local governments, and elected officials.

The above are available in hardcopy, compact disk, and at the Roadless Area Conservation Project Web Site ([roadless.fs.fed.us](http://roadless.fs.fed.us)). The final rule and Record of Decision will be published in the *Federal Register* no sooner than 30 days after the Notice of Availability for the FEIS is published in the Federal Register.

In addition, copies of the FEIS have been sent to the following Federal agencies, federally recognized tribes, State and local governments, and organizations representing a wide range of views regarding roadless area management.

### Advisory Council On Historic Preservation

#### Agriculture, U.S. Department of

Animal And Plant Health Inspection Service  
Policy And Planning Division, Office of Civil Rights  
Rural Utilities Service  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
National Agricultural Library

#### Commerce, U.S. Department of (DOC)

National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Habitat Conservationists Division  
Northeast Region  
Southeast Region  
Northwest Region  
Protected Species Division, Southwest Region  
Protected Resources Management Division, Alaska Region

#### Council on Environmental Quality

**Defense, U.S. Department of**

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
 U.S. Air Force Environment, Safety, and Occupational Health  
 Army Corps of Engineers  
 Mississippi Valley Division      Pacific Ocean Division  
 North Atlantic Division      South Atlantic Division  
 Northwestern Division      South Pacific Division  
 Great Lakes And Ohio Division      Southwestern Division  
 Office of Chief Of Navy Operations, Environmental Protection Division  
 Naval Oceanography Division, U.S. Naval Observatory

**Energy, U.S. Department of**

Office of Environmental Compliance

**Environmental Protection Agency**

Office of Federal Activities, EIS Filing Section

EIS Review Coordinators:

Region I	Region VI
Region II	Region VII
Region III	Region VIII
Region IV	Region IX
Region V	Region X

**Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**

**Housing & Urban Development, U.S. Department of**

Environmental Officers:

Boston, MA	Fort Worth, TX
New York, NY	Kansas City, MO
Philadelphia, PA	Denver, CO
Chicago, IL	Seattle, WA

**Interior, U.S. Department of the**

Office Of Environmental Policy And Compliance

Bureau Of Land Management

National BLM Office	Montana/Dakota State Office
Alaska State Office	Nevada State Office
Arizona State Office	New Mexico State Office
California State Office	Oregon State Office
Colorado State Office	Utah State Office
Eastern States Office	Wyoming State Office
Idaho State Office	

National Park Service

Alaska Area Region	Northeast Region
Midwest Region	National Capital Region
Intermountain Region	Southeast Region
Pacific West Region	

**Interstate Commerce Commission**

**Northwest Power Planning Council**

**Ohio River Basins Commission**

**Susquehanna River Basins Commission**

**Tennessee Valley Authority**

**Transportation, U.S. Department of**

Assistant Secretary for Policy, Environmental Division

Federal Aviation Administration

Eastern Region

Great Lakes Region

New England Region

Northwest Mountain Region

Southern Region

Southwest Region

Western-Pacific Region

Alaska Region

Central Region

Federal Highway Administration

Regional Administrator

Midwestern Region

Southern Region

Eastern Region

Western Region

Federal Railroad Administration

Office of Transportation and Regulatory Affairs

Research and Special Program Administration

U.S. Coast Guard, Environmental Impact Branch

Congressional delegations

State governors

State agencies:

Lands

Forestry

Transportation

Wildlife management

Federally recognized tribes

County and municipal libraries (approximately 10,500 copies)

Forest Service offices

Individuals that provided substantive comments on the DEIS or specifically requested a copy of the FEIS

A complete list of all recipients of the FEIS is maintained in the project record and is available upon request.

