

Inyo, Sequoia, Sierra, and Stanislaus National Forests Travel Management Planning

January 2009 – July 2009

Location: California

Background: Four California national forests – the Sierra, Sequoia, Inyo, and Stanislaus – simultaneously initiated their travel management planning efforts in early 2009. Staff at these forests worked together with the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution staff to coordinate and facilitate the process of developing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for public comment. The Institute worked with the Center for Collaborative Policy to design and plan collaborative efforts for each of the forests, which allowed the forests to work more effectively together and with the public. The goal was to develop an integrated approach to travel management planning that maximized public participation and resulted in the drafting of widely supported proposed actions for each of the forests.

Results and Accomplishments

- Each forest held numerous public meetings, encouraging broad public participation. The facilitator provided support for significant public outreach, facilitating 30 public meetings to present each DEIS to the public.
- The public meetings provided information and understanding about the DEIS documents that helped participants better understand how to share comments about the plans; these comments have been useful to the Forest Service as they have revised the document.
- Through advance coaching and training sessions, the facilitator helped Forest Service staff become more comfortable in engaging the public during the meetings.
- The Inyo National Forest has published a final EIS and Record of Decision, is moving forward with implementation, and has gained broad community support for its decision. The other forests are currently at various stages in the process.



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Highlights/Innovations

- The chosen format for the meetings – convened more as a workshop than a formal hearing – was viewed as innovative. Participants were able to interact directly with Forest Service technical staff on specific relevant issues, allowing participants to focus on their particular area of interest.
- The meetings also offered Q & A discussions sessions; questions raised by participants were answered by a panel of Forest Service staff. This format kept the meetings focused and provided time for more in-depth discussion.
- The meetings concluded with a break-out period that allowed people to speak directly with staff if they had remaining questions or comments.

Credits

Partner from National Roster of ECR Practitioners

Austin McNerny, Center for Collaborative Policy, California State University, Sacramento

U.S. Institute Project Manager

Larry Fisher, Ph.D., Coordinator

Public Lands and Natural Resources Program
Phone: (520) 901-8544; FAX: (520) 670-5530
Email: fisher@ecr.gov; Website: www.ecr.gov