

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service

Chugach National Forest

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Chugach National Forest Launches First Phase of Forest Plan Revision

Public invited to February forums to learn more and provide feedback on forest use and issues

ANCHORAGE, January 31 -- Chugach National Forest officials announced today the beginning of the first phase of a three year planning process to revise the 2002 forest plan under a new National Forest System Planning Rule. The forest plan provides direction for managing resources and activities such as recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, historic and sacred sites, vegetation, mineral exploration and development, and timber.

“The Chugach National Forest is the backyard for nearly half of Alaska’s population and provides opportunities for residents and visitors to live, work, and play across its 5.4 million acres. It’s an important place, and forest plan revision is the process in guiding management over the next fifteen years,” said Forest Supervisor Terri Marceron.

During phase one, also known as the “assessment,” the Forest Service will identify and evaluate existing information about ecological, economic and social conditions and trends related to the Forest and Southcentral Alaska. The resulting assessment report will provide a solid base of current information for phases two, drafting the revised plan and developing an environmental impact statement (EIS), and three, developing a monitoring strategy.

“Many trends and emerging issues like demographic shifts and climate change will require looking beyond our forest boundaries,” Marceron noted. “In the coming weeks and months we’ll be reaching out to other agencies, state and local governments, Alaska Native Tribes and Corporations and the public to make sure our plan takes into consideration the larger landscape around us.”

The public is invited to learn more about the process and provide feedback at nine Forest Planning Forums across the region. During the forums, the Forest Service will ask:

- How the public uses the forest now, how might use and users change over the next fifteen years
- What the public sees as emerging issues and trends
- How the public can best be involved in the revision process

Last February the Chugach announced that it was selected as one of eight national forests across the country to revise its forest plan under the new planning rule. The Forest was selected because of its robust engagement with the public during development and implementation of the 2002 forest plan.

“Over the past decade, we’ve seen projects like the Spencer Whistle Stop and Chugach Children’s Forest emerge out of our previous collaborative planning efforts, and I’m looking forward to building on that tradition. These planning forums are just the beginning, and over the next three years we’ll be meeting with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, and working to get new voices, like youth, involved in the process,” Marceron explained.

Meeting Dates:

Thursday, February 7

Alaska Forum on the Environment, Dena’ina Center (Anchorage), 9-10:30am

Wednesday, February 20

Girdwood Community Center, 6:30-9pm

Thursday, February 21

Seward Public Library, 6:30-9pm

Soldotna Sports Center, 6:30-9pm

Saturday, February 23

Chugach National Forest Supervisor’s Office (Anchorage), 10am-12:30pm

Monday, February 25

Cooper Landing Community Center, 6:30-9pm

Moose Pass Community Hall, 6:30-9pm

Wednesday, February 27

Cordova Masonic Hall, 6:30-9pm

Thursday, February 28

Prince William Sound Community College (Valdez), 6:30-9pm

For more information, please visit:

- Chugach Forest Plan Revision “Spotlight” at www.fs.usda.gov/chugach
- New Planning Rule background at www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule

To request information or sign up for the mailing list, email chugachplanrevision@fs.fed.us