



USDA Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Forest Plan Revision Topics—Need for Change

This revised report accompanies the Forest Service Need for Change discussion, and is intended to clarify the role of the Forum within the revision process to better aid members to provide input to the Forest Plan Revision process. Information provided now will inform the development of our Comprehensive Evaluation Report (CER), and ultimately, our revised Forest Plan.

Topics covered in this briefing concentrate on subject areas we have not addressed so far in Pathway. These subject areas have not been specifically discussed with the public to date. This document provides what is being evaluated in the current Forest Plan specifically related to these subject areas. Specific Vision and Desired Condition statements related to the topics discussed will be prepared at a future date.

The format that the planning team uses for evaluating the existing Forest Plan includes four steps.

Status and Desired Future Conditions and Objectives. What has been accomplished to reach the original desired future conditions and/or if the objectives in the current Plan are being met.

Current Conditions and Trends. This step is an evaluation of conditions and trends that relate to Forest Plan direction. Current conditions are described in more detail and point out important trends that 1) have influenced whether the desired conditions were achieved and/or 2) may influence the ability to continue working toward the same desired conditions. This provides context for what has happened to the resource during Forest Plan implementation and is based on available information, including monitoring information, surveys, assessments, analyses, and other studies.

Major Changes since 1988. Changes that have affected management or resource conditions, including changes in agency direction or policy, changes in resource conditions due to factors other than management activities, or other factors that were not anticipated in the current Forest Plan but had an important impact on the current conditions and how they are managed. These changes may explain why some expected conditions did not occur.

Need for Change in Forest Plan Direction. This is an evaluation of the current conditions and the current Forest Plan direction. The need for change provides an initial list of issues where revision of current Forest Plan direction may be considered. The need for change may be related to one or more of the following factors:

- Resource conditions are not favorable and do not appear to be moving in the right direction;
- Continuing trends would not lead to desirable conditions based on current science;
- Current management direction does not reflect recent science;
- Desired future conditions or other factors that may no longer be appropriate.

This report introduces the topics and subject areas that will be reviewed as part of the revision of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit's 1988 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) *and have not already been addressed in the Pathway 2007 process to date*. The direction, issues and opportunities, science, tools and uses of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) lands have been affected by new documents, plans, direction and public outreach (see Table 1); therefore, this is an appropriate time for the Forest Plan to be revised. The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires plan revision every 15 years.

The questions provided address the intricacies and detail of the planning issues being discussed in the process of revising the 1988 Forest Plan. Examples include questions about whether mining should be considered. While mining is not an uncommon activity on National Forest Lands, since the 1988 Forest Plan was written we are more focused on water quality, plus there have been changes in environmental regulations. It is unlikely that any new mining activities would be presented to us, but evaluation of what was proposed in the 1988 Forest Plan – within the context of current planning - is part of the process. Within this context, mining as a resource subject area is being considered within the four-step process to determine the need for change, public input will also be considered, and a recommendation will be proposed in our Comprehensive Evaluation Report as to how we will address this subject area in the revised Forest Plan. This example discussion can occur around questions presented in this document.

The questions presented in this report have not yet taken into consideration the changes listed in Table 1. Forest Service direction or policy has not been reviewed prior to bringing these subjects forward. These are discussion points that were brought forward from the 1988 plan. There may be no public issues associated with these topics. These questions are intended to stimulate discussions around these topic areas to determine if any concerns remain.

Table 1. New Items to Consider in Forest Plan Revision

<i>Changes in:</i>	<i>New Documents, Plans or Directions</i>
Direction	Lake Tahoe Restoration Act Environmental Improvement Plan South Nevada Public Lands Management Act Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment 2005 Forest Service Planning Regulations USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2003-2008 Forest Service Chief's Four Threats Healthy Forest Restoration Act Community Fire Plans
Issues & Opportunities	Public Outreach through Pathway 2007 and other venues
Science	Terrestrial Ecological Unit Inventory (TEUI) 2006 Soil Survey of Tahoe Basin Area LTBMU Monitoring Results
Uses	Types & Demographics
Tools	2006 Soils Survey of Tahoe Basin Lake Tahoe Watershed Assessment South Shore Landscape Assessment East Shore Landscape Assessment (in progress)

The need for change will be adjusted based upon public input received from the Pathway Forum and through further public involvement efforts. *The Forest Plan revision process is based on the need for change—we keep the policies and procedures in the current Forest Plan that are working and change the things that are not working.* This report builds upon the work accomplished (and recorded) in the Pathway 2007 Evaluation Report (ER), September 30, 2005, as well as the additional input being received through the Forum and the public on the twelve resource topics addressed.

The next document that the LTBMU will produce is the Comprehensive Evaluation Report. Subject areas outlined in the Forest Plan are listed in the two tables below. Those that were covered by the P7 ER and previously reviewed by the Forum are shown in Table 2; those additional topics we are now considering are shown in Table 3.

Table 2: Resource Areas Addressed in Pathway

Social and Economic
Air Quality
Noise
Vegetation
a. Fire and Fuels
b. Forest Pests/Integrated Pest Management
c. Sensitive Plants
d. Diversity (as it relates to the ecosystem)
Fish and Wildlife
a. Diversity (as it relates to species)
Recreation
a. Developed Recreation
b. Dispersed Recreation
Soils and Stream Environment Zones
Visual Resources (Scenic)
Water (Quality)
Transportation
a. Roads (limited)
b. Trails (limited)

Table 3: Forest Plan Revision Subject Areas Not Yet Addressed in Pathway

Adjacent Ownership (Private inholdings, urban lots, ski areas, etc.)
Recreation Special Uses
Facilities
Roads
Trails
Dams and Diversions
Administrative Facilities
Geology and Groundwater
Historical and Cultural Resources
Lands
Land Ownership Adjustment
Landline Surveys
Non-Recreational Special Uses and Utility Corridors
Withdrawals
Rights-of-Way Acquisition
Minerals (including energy minerals)
Prime Agricultural Lands, Wetlands and Floodplains
Range
Research Natural Areas, Special Interest Areas and Wilderness

Additional Forest Plan Revision Subject Areas

The revised Forest Plan will address desired conditions, objectives, guidelines, and designations for suitable uses, designation of special areas, or the monitoring program for these subject areas, as appropriate. The selection of these revision areas was based upon both the need for change in the existing Forest Plan and the strong public interest in the development of direction for these topics. The questions under each topic were derived from the current Forest Plan direction and will be the key aspects to address as we develop plan direction. The results of this review and review by our Forest Leadership will determine what will be brought forward in the final Comprehensive Evaluation Report.

A. Recreation Special Uses

This topic includes issues related to special use permits for recreation activities. These include such designations as ski areas, resorts, historic sites, outfitter guide operations, and campgrounds.

1. In areas where permitted recreation uses are allowed, what mix of recreation activities should be provided?
2. Have we managed these recreation sites to meet future needs?

B. Special Areas and Designations (Research Natural Areas, Special Interest Areas, and Wilderness)

This topic includes issues related to roadless area management and new designations for wilderness, research natural areas (RNA), and special interest areas (SIA).

The RNA system protects ecosystems for scientific study. The one LTBMU RNA, Grass Lake, covers approximately 250 acres.

The LTBMU includes portions of three wilderness areas, the Desolation Wilderness, Mount Rose Wilderness, and Granite Chief Wilderness.

The Tallac Historic Site is the only LTBMU designated Special Interest Area. Several areas have been identified for further study in this planning period to determine if they should be designated SIAs and to determine their boundaries. These are: Emerald Bay (geologic and scenic resources); Osgood Bog (paleobotanical resources); Free1 Peak Cushion Plant Community (botanical resources); and Taylor Creek Wetlands (botanical and zoological resources).

1. What areas, if any, should be recommended for research natural area designation?
2. What areas, if any, should be recommended for special interest area designation?
3. What types of activities should be acceptable in inventoried roadless areas?
4. What additional areas, if any, should be recommended for wilderness designation?

C. Facilities/Roads/Trails

The Forest Service constructs, maintains, and manages a variety of structural facilities to support resource management programs. On the LTBMU, these include roads, trails, dams and diversions, and administrative sites such as offices, repair shops and fire stations. These facilities both entail costs and have environmental consequences.

1. Have we managed facilities (administrative sites) to meet our future needs?
2. Have roads and trails been adequately addressed in the Pathway process?
3. Do we have any dams and diversions we need to address?

D. Historical/Cultural Resources

Cultural resources on the LTBMU are managed as a nonrenewable resource. The LTBMU is charged with the inventory, evaluation, enhancement, and protection of those cultural resources located on national forest lands or affected by federally approved or funded undertakings. Inventory and evaluation continues to be the greatest need within the cultural resource management program. Lack of a comprehensive cultural overview and a sufficient database hinders the management of known resources.

1. How can we improve the public's awareness of and appreciation for Tahoe's cultural heritage?
2. How can we assist the Washoe Tribal Council with their effort to reestablish their traditional cultural ties within the Lake Tahoe Basin?

E. Lands

The lands program on the Forest includes landline surveys, non-recreational special uses (such as utility corridors), withdrawals, rights-of-way management (including acquisition) and urban lots.

1. Are there any areas that should be considered for withdrawal from proposed activities or management?
2. Do additional utility corridors and electronic sites need to be identified and if so, where would they best fit into the landscape?
3. Within what specific areas would the future acquisition of land be desirable for use by the public?
4. What are the opportunities to manage urban lots to meet Forest Service objectives, while considering the needs of adjacent property owners?

F. Minerals/Geology and Groundwater/Prime Agricultural Lands, Wetlands and Floodplains

This topic includes issues related to geological hazards, geological resources, minerals and potential energy sources. Geologic hazards that occur on the Forest include landslides and

earthquakes. Volcanic hazards have been considered but are not expected to be a significant possibility.

As in the 1988 Forest Plan, the agricultural issues related to a short growing season and poor soils are being addressed; it was determined previously that no areas in the Basin are considered prime agricultural lands. Wetlands and floodplains are discussed in detail in the Evaluation Report.

1. Is there a demand for the development of groundwater and rock and soil materials?
2. Should mining opportunities be explored and if so, where would these activities occur?
3. The east and north shores have potential for development of low-temperature geothermal energy, suitable for direct heating. Should these resources be explored and developed if found to be usable?

G. Commercial Livestock Grazing

There are three cattle allotments, two horse pastures, two pastures for Forest Service horses, and part of two sheep allotments. All allotments have operated, and will continue to operate, with the goal of achieving proper use and compatibility with resource values. Individuals have expressed a need for backyard or neighborhood horse pasture and corrals on national forestland.

Two aspects of commercial livestock grazing will be addressed in the revised Forest Plan: what areas of the Forest should be available for commercial livestock grazing? And should closure occur on the allotments that are currently in non-use?

1. On what areas of the Forest should commercial livestock grazing, for the primary purpose of livestock production, be an acceptable use?
2. On what areas of the Forest should individual/personal livestock grazing be an acceptable use?
3. On what areas of the Forest should livestock grazing be used for the primary purpose of vegetation and/or habitat management?
4. Should closure occur on the allotments that are currently not being used?

Role of county and local land use plans

In cooperation with county and local governments, "place-based" planning is currently ongoing to address county and local planning. Three community based planning groups (Washoe Co., Placer Co. and South Shore Partnership including El Dorado and Douglas Counties) are currently working, as well as a Public Lands Group, consisting of the Forest Service, California and Nevada State Parks, and California Tahoe Conservancy. The Forest Service is the lead agency for the public lands place-based planning effort.

The place-based effort will result in specific discussion of Forest Service management areas and the suitable uses for these areas. Using planning transects, the appropriate and suitable uses will be identified. This will include restoration, recreation, permit recreation

uses and important management activities such as hazard fuel reduction and watershed restoration.

Many Forum members have joined the public in the initial workshops. Forest Service planning team personnel participate in all community place-based planning workshops, as well as the public lands workshops. In this way, issues relating to community and forest boundaries and interfaces can be brought forward into Forest Plan Revision. It is expected that information related to the issues, resource topics and desired conditions, will be discussed through place-based planning, and when appropriate, will be incorporated.