

**Rio Grande National Forest (RGNF) Forest Plan Revision
Awareness Meetings October 1-15, 2014
Group Discussion Summary**

Roles and Contributions the RGNF Makes to the Community	Antonito	South Fork	Alamosa	Saguache
Economic Benefits	X	X	X	X
Ranching, agriculture, logging, tourism, and recreation industries; employment opportunities; school and community funding				
Ecosystem Services	X	X	X	X
Clean water, fresh air, wildlife habitat, biomass, biodiversity				
Life Sustenance	X	X	X	X
Food (hunting, fishing, and gathering), heating (firewood)				
Recreation	X	X		X
Motorized and non-motorized opportunities for residents and visitors				
Social and Cultural Benefits	X	X	X	X
E.g., solitude, education, wildlife and landscape viewing, historical appreciation, open spaces, quietude, relaxation, inspiration, perspective, spiritual fulfillment, positive mental health, group gathering locations, escape from civilization, basis of local communities and their identities				

Where People Use the Forest	Antonito	South Fork	Alamosa	Saguache
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conejos Canyon • Wilderness areas • Spruce Hole • From Chama to E. area around Horca • Upper Rio Grande from Creede to South Fork to New Mexico • Cumbres Pass • Areas adjacent to private property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River corridors • San Juans • La Garita • Spanish Trail • Natural Arch area • Pinos Creek • Areas around South Fork, Del Norte, and Creede • Divide and Conejos Districts • Facilities • Areas adjacent to private property • Entire forest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rock Creek • South San Juans • Wilderness areas • South Fork • Conejos • Areas around Crestone and Montrose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rock Creek • Rio Grande headwaters • La Garita • Sangre de Cristos • Areas around Saguache, Creede, and Crestone • Gunnison County • Poncha Pass • Cochetopa • Penitente • Above the sand dunes • Entire forest

Desired Changes, Concerns, and General Feedback

Issue Topic	Antonito October 1	South Fork October 3	Alamosa October 14	Saguache October 15
Travel Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open roads to allow firewood retrieval by vehicle - not to hunters. • Increase Forest Road 250 maintenance. • Designate more areas for non-motorized winter recreation. • Turn some roads into biking/ATV trails, or close them entirely. • Improve road signage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widen ATV trails to 60”. • Create specific designation of ATV trails. • Integrate South Fork and USFS roads. • Address the issue of RS2477. • Increase number of safe motorized trails in appropriate areas. • Minimize off-trail game retrieval. • Close some roads and upgrade others for fire risk management. • Don’t close any roads or trails – open them all. • Keep roadless areas roadless. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce prohibition of ATV usage on roads and open areas. • Develop several new motorized and non-motorized trails for community connectivity (South Fork – Del Norte – Creede – Lake City). • Encourage successful big game harvest by keeping trails and roads open • Review and change roadless area boundaries. • Open road closures. • Keep roadless areas roadless. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase handicapped access to trails and roads. • Maintain important access for hunters and anglers. • Consider demographics: the San Luis Valley is 10 years older than the rest of Colorado. Ensure access for people 60-80 years old.
Trail Maintenance and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address erosion and damage due to ATV trail use. • Improve trail quality. • Improve trail signage and marking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address ATV use, trail use, and erosion. • Have stock users maintain trails they use. • Use funding to maintain existing trails rather than building new ones. • Improve Continental Divide Trail and Colorado Trail. • Address unmarked and dangerous trails. • Create more loop trails. • Enhance trail integrity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address ATV trail erosion and expansion (i.e., single-track to double-track). • Strongly increase trail maintenance efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain trails for recreation and grazing.
Wilderness and Backcountry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get rid of backcountry designation. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide exemptions for structure maintenance and equipment in wilderness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain, preserve, and expand backcountry and wilderness designations. • Have more wilderness designation with no motorized use.

Desired Changes, Concerns, and General Feedback (continued)

Issue Topic	Antonito October 1	South Fork October 3	Alamosa October 14	Saguache October 15
Forest Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address beetle kill issue. • Find funding to prevent future beetle kill. • More aggressively address fire abatement and timber management, particularly in relation to beetle kill. • Open more roads to harvest beetle kill, or at least allow access to pull out beetle kill. • Increase focus on forest health. • Address tent caterpillars. • Appropriately manage threatened and endangered species. • Identify areas each year to clean out downed and standing dead timber, or put dead timber in a bunker that people can access for firewood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address beetle kill issue (consider gasification). • Increase logging and fuel mitigation efforts. • Have more vision of biomass use. • Use a wood pellet production plant (semi-mobile) that can be moved to new areas as beetle kill wood is exhausted. • Increase focus on forest health. • Protect sensitive riparian areas and watersheds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop beetle kill plan to address safety and management issues. • Actively pursue/expand use of beetle kill trees. • Expedite salvage of dead timber. • Preserve wildlife corridors. • Protect riparian areas and streams. • Treat the forest as if you're going to stay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address social and personal choices that cause/exacerbate the beetle kill issue. • Expedite salvage of beetle kill. • Harvest less live timber, or adjust timber harvest to fit current conditions. • Begin sustainable timber harvesting. • Expedite fuel reduction. • Increase focus on forest health, integrity, and sustainability. • Control noxious weeds. • Reduce wildfire hazard to protect regeneration in apparently dead stands. • Use better silviculture to create more resilient forests (reduce density; insulate live stands). • Ensure clean air. • Address climate change. • Protect clean water and ensure sustainable water flows, starting with springs and headwaters. • Address risks to forest health from fracking, motorized uses, public destruction and misuse, and wildfires.
Technology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase areas for technology and create future vision for technology. • Get radar for weather/floods/irrigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate areas for cell/telecommunication towers to lessen their impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the internet and other technology to provide user friendly information.

Desired Changes, Concerns, and General Feedback (continued)

Issue Topic	Antonito October 1	South Fork October 3	Alamosa October 14	Saguache October 15
Cooperation and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public/private cooperation. • Create more AmeriCorps and/or Vista programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use more volunteers. • Bring consumptive (e.g., cattle and sheep grazers) and non-consumptive (e.g., hikers, campers, anglers, skiers) users together to hear each other’s concerns and find ways to reduce conflicts. • Attempt a trail users-only meeting to identify what all trail users have in common and what would enhance their experience – keep it all positive; avoid negativity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better inform public about when and why campground, road, and trail closures occur. • Provide consistent information about open trails and roads. • Coordinate partnerships to improve monitoring. • Ensure landowners are aware that they can’t expect fire protection. • Collaborate with counties to support fire zoning. • Increase educational outreach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give better notification of road closures. • Coordinate with other agencies and National Forests, especially those undergoing similar planning processes. • Help the public understand how logging helps forest health. • Increase community responsiveness and engagement. • Increase local districts’ decision-making abilities. • Offer public opportunities to work on forest sustainability. • Write newspaper articles calling for public input and directing people to the web site. • Create multiple response venues. • Create a more nurturing culture.
Grazing Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control grazing in areas that need to be refurbished. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise current grazing plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize riparian grazing. • Address overgrazing where it occurs. • Enforce annual grazing permittee requirements, particularly non-compliance and overgrazing violations. • Retire grazing permits on wilderness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more grazing rules. • Keep springs drinkable and free of cattle tramping and manure. • Compare hazards and benefits of grazed and ungrazed lands. • Maintain science-based sustainable grazing. • Stop grazing in the highest mountain areas.

Desired Changes, Concerns, and General Feedback (continued)

Issue Topic	Antonito October 1	South Fork October 3	Alamosa October 14	Saguache October 15
Forest Service Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor snowmobile impacts. • Improve consistency across the forests, but with appropriate regionalization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice more active management. • Address funding inadequacies. • Put more personnel in the field to allow and enforce responsible use. • Complete more scientific assessments of USFS actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address lack of resources. • Do not allow land swaps to diminish the forest. • Stop new bypass flows and groundwater management practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice more adaptive management. • Increase resources and staff for monitoring and assessing USFS actions. • Keep your hands off public water - if you want water rights, get in line. • Ensure all forest users keep it clean, respect fencing, and practice responsible use.
Forest Plan Revision Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease the timeframe. • Weigh local input more strongly than outside input. • Reduce the amounts of bureaucracy and “bovine fecal matter” • Address public concerns with the NEPA process. • Publicize more. • Have revision meetings in smaller towns (e.g., Chama, Creede). • Don’t allow special interests to drive the plan. • Ensure local USFS people are involved - don’t let facilitators overwhelm the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease the timeframe. • Weigh local input more strongly than outside input. • Actually incorporate public input. • Ensure options for public to make informed input. • Only include plan options that were discussed with the public. • Do not let minority issues get lost in the shuffle. • Ensure continued public involvement throughout the process. • Follow through with the promise of transparency. • Avoid polarization. Listen to all sides equally. Consider multiple opinions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease the timeframe. • Actually incorporate public input. • Maintain momentum. • Don’t weigh electronic survey questions too heavily. • Speed up the NEPA process. • Reach underrepresented groups and smaller communities (e.g., Capulin, San Luis, Center). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease the timeframe. • Weigh local input more strongly than outside input. • Follow through with what you say. • Make the plan understandable to the public. • Ensure plan implementation. • Don’t overextend funding. • Consider the big picture – ethics, sustainability, future generations, stewardship, culture... • Include more social and cultural input in the assessment. Use a demographer and an anthropologist. • Involve young people. • Involve the silent majority. Do not allow the loud minority to overshadow other voices. • Avoid undue influence of special interest groups.

Desired Changes, Concerns, and General Feedback (continued)

Issue Topic	Antonito October 1	South Fork October 3	Alamosa October 14	Saguache October 15
Recreation Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give opportunities for no-host camping. • Leave campgrounds open until at least October 1. • Provide more quiet recreation opportunities. • Address different winter recreation regulations in the Divide and Conejos Districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more rafting/fishing user days. • Increase law enforcement for motorized recreation. • Designate specific areas to protect hiking trails from ATV and horse use. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure dependable quiet use. • Create requirements for quiet engines and gunfire. • Manage recreation more heavily to reduce spread of noxious weeds. • Bring people here in ways that respect the forest and benefit local businesses, artists, and residents. • Ensure safe, quiet use for non-hunters during hunting. Set aside an amount of land equal to the percentage of non-hunters in the US (95%).
Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider your economic impact. • Remember real estate investments (particularly taxable assessed values) are affected by the forest. • Understand that unsustainable forest management will have a negative long-term economic impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help make local industries sustainable. • Help local communities generate economic viability. • Increase commercial recreation service opportunities (e.g., guided mountain biking, hiking, and rock climbing). 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help support sustainable long-term local economies using hunting, fishing, and/or recreation. • Balance interests; don't focus only on extraction. • Use private industry as the most economic tool. • Don't exploit the forest for economic gain (using minerals, timber, etc.). • Do not use public lands as leverage or collateral for our national debt. • Realize that solitude and quiet use are our scarcest and most valuable resources. • Realize that federal lands can contribute to the economic base of this community, but focusing on solitude does not.

Desired Changes, Concerns, and General Feedback (continued)

Issue Topic	Antonito October 1	South Fork October 3	Alamosa October 14	Saguache October 15
Multiple Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control competing uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain multiple use and encourage cross-use collaboration. Have more criteria for multiple use activities. Consider impacts of multiple use on tourism (e.g., cattle in popular tourist locations and riparian areas). Balance motorized and non-motorized use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain multiple use Make multiple use your overarching principle. Keep ecological integrity foremost; this should take precedence over multiple use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance nonconsumptive and consumptive use.
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put more signage at historic sites (mining sites, pre-historic sites, pioneer settlements). Give access to more sites for snowpack data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base access during fires on whether homeowners have defensible space. Consider energy production options (e.g., biomass pellets). Keep oil and gas out. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suppress fires, smoke damage, and smoke impacts.

How People Use the Forest	Antonito	South Fork	Alamosa	Saguache
Appreciating history			X	X
Archaeology			X	
ATV riding	X	X	X	
Backpacking		X	X	X
Boating			X	
Camping	X	X	X	X
Christmas tree cutting			X	
Climbing				X
Creating art/photography/painting	X	X	X	X
Defining local culture				X
Driving	X	X	X	X
Enjoying solitude				X
Enjoying viewscapes				X

How People Use the Forest	Antonito	South Fork	Alamosa	Saguache
Entertaining company	X			
Experiencing quietude			X	X
Experiencing spirituality				X
Fishing	X	X	X	X
Flower gazing				X
Four-wheeling		X	X	
Gaining perspective				X
Gathering firewood	X	X	X	X
Gathering food (e.g., mushrooms, berries)	X		X	
Gathering personal landscaping materials		X		
Guiding/outfitting	X			X
Hiking	X	X	X	X
Horseback riding	X	X	X	X
Horse packing	X			
Hunting	X	X	X	X
Livestock grazing	X		X	X
Logging/timber use			X	X
Looking after the beavers				X
Maintaining trails		X		
Meditating			X	
Observing nature and wildlife	X	X	X	X
Picnicking				X
Rafting/kayaking	X	X	X	
Ranching				X
Renting yurts	X			
Residing	X	X		
Rock hounding				X
Running		X		
Seed harvesting			X	
Skiing	X	X	X	X
Snowmobiling		X	X	
Utilizing water supplies	X		X	X