
FOR RECREATION RESIDENCE CABIN OWNERS

GETTING INVOLVED IN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANNING



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Overview – What Is This About?



For most cabin owners, a nagging question in the back of their minds is
“Will my cabin be here for my children, and for theirs?”

The answer to this important question is to be found in your Forest Management Plan, which sets the strategic direction for each forest as to land use and management policy.

What’s Going On Now?

To find out what the present plans are for cabins on your forest, go to the Forest Management Plan, which can be accessed through the “Lands and Resources Management” tab on your forest’s webpage.

How To Think About the Future -

To find out – and influence – what the future plans are for cabins on your forest, you’ll need to get involved in the revision or updating of your forest plan. Read on to learn more about how to get involved in the forest planning process and how to influence future policies on recreation residences.

So When Should You Get Involved?

To find out when your forest’s management plan is scheduled for revision, go to the Forest Service webpage “Schedule for Forest Service Land Management Plan Revisions & New Plans” at <https://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/includes/LMPscheduleOct2016.pdf>

Your forest may not be listed. This means that your plan is current and not on the current schedule. Check back periodically.

Why Do Plans Matter?

Simply put, Forest Management Plans establish and document the emphasis and intent of how National Forest lands will be managed in the future. Among other information, your Forest Plan can provide information on:

- Management emphasis to be applied to lands surrounding recreation residences, organized camps and other special use areas. For example, prescriptions may address the protection or restoration of riparian areas or propose wilderness areas;



- Actions that will be occurring in recreation residence areas such as reducing tree densities in overstocked stands or removing non-native plants;
- Issues that may directly affect recreation residences including permit limitations to promote endangered species, riparian issues, or fuel clearance programs to reduce wildfire risks;
- **How recreation residences will be managed in the future and whether specific recreation residence tracts will be continued.**

Forest Plan Content

According to the *National Forest System Land Management Planning* regulations defined in CFR 36, Volume 2, Part 219, every plan must include the following components:

- Desired Conditions
- Objectives
- Standards
- Guidelines
- Suitability of Lands
- Other Content:
 - Identify watershed(s) that are a priority for maintenance or restoration;
 - Describe the plan area's distinctive roles/contributions within the broader landscape;
 - Include the monitoring program; and
 - Contain information reflecting proposed and possible actions that could occur on the plan area during the life of the plan.

A Plan may include additional content:

- Potential management approaches or strategies; and
- Partnership opportunities or coordination activities.

Individual Forest Management Plans do not necessarily adhere to this outline in their organization, but will be found to contain the required content, perhaps in a different order. The *Draft Revised Land Management Plan for the Inyo National Forest*, for example, has the following basic organization¹:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Vision
 - Desired Conditions
- Chapter 3: Management Strategy
 - Plan Objectives
 - Watershed Conditions
 - Goals
 - Potential Management Approaches
- Chapter 4: Design Criteria
 - Standards
 - Guidelines
- Chapter 5: Forest Plan Monitoring
- Appendix B: Proposed and Possible Actions
- Appendix C: A Renewed Partnership Focus for the Inyo National Forest

¹ Draft Revised Land Management Plan for the Inyo National Forest, United States Department of Agriculture, May 2016.

How and Where to Include Cabins in Your Forest Plan

The goals to be accomplished by participating in the Forest Plan process are:

1. To **ensure inclusion** in the Plan of language and statements **recognizing the legitimacy, continuation, and contributions of recreation residences** on the subject forest; and
2. To **prevent inclusion** in the Plan of any language or statements which envision or enable to **termination and removal of recreation residences** from the subject forest.

INCLUDING REFERENCES TO CABINS:

The objective here is to include references to “recreation residences” within the Plan wherever this makes sense, thus making these residences a stated use within the Plan.

As a general rule, advocate for the addition of the wording “recreation residences” in listings of recreation activities for areas where cabins present are located.

Additionally, specific statements related to recreation residences should be proposed in Plan sections where they will reinforce their importance to recreation on the forest and set forth useful policies for the management of cabins and cabin communities. Following are specific Plan sections in which recreation residences should be mentioned and sample language that might be proposed.

Desired Conditions – “Recreation residence communities provide family-based, overnight, sustainable recreation opportunities.”

Potential Management Approaches – “Sustainable Recreation – Coordinate the management of recreation residences and recreation residence tracts with holder organizations to enhance and promote their heritage, cultural and recreation contributions on National Forest Systems lands.”

Partnerships or Coordination Activities – “Develop and expand partnerships with recreation residence communities to enhance communications and leverage resources for forest stewardship.”

How to Get Involved in the Planning Process

First, contact your forest.

Request to be placed on the notification list for any proposed Land Management Plan amendments or actions. This will ensure that you receive notice of any proposed actions or meetings.

Second, go to your forest's website.

Find the page for the current Land Management Plan. On most Forest Service websites, "Planning" can be found under "Land & Resources Management" in the menu along the left side of the homepage. On the Planning page you should find information on any proposed amendments or revisions to the Plan as well as links to the current Land Management Plan.

Forest Plans are intended to provide strategic guidance to forest management for a period of 10-15 years, which suggests that Plans are supposed to be revised and updated at least every 15 years. Of the 127 Land Management Plans across the Forest Service, 68 were past due for revision as of December 2016, which means that the Plan revision will be forthcoming in many forests in the near future.

Others' Experiences in Forest Planning

Other cabin owners, individually and through their tract organizations, have participated in the forest management plan process with varied success. Their experiences and what they did may help guide your involvement in your forest's planning. The following documents contain comment letters that others have submitted on their forest management plans.

[Attachment A: Inyo National Forest, Region 5 \[Eastern California\]](#)

[Attachment B: Sierra National Forest, Region 5 \[Central California\]](#)

Sample Comment Letter

As a place to begin with a comment letter on your forest's management plan, Attachment C contains the format for a very basic sample comment letter.

For More Assistance

For questions not covered by this overview or to discuss your Forest's planning process, please contact the NFH Executive Director, Sharon Leach, at:

Email: sleach@nationalforesthomeowners.org

Phone: 800-669-9971



Attachment A: Comment Letter on Inyo National Forest Management Plan

September 25, 2014

Debra Schweizer, Public Affairs Officer
Inyo National Forest
US Forest Service

Re: Comments, Forest Plan Revision – Inyo National Forest

Dear Ms. Schweizer,

National Forest Homeowners (NFH) is an organization that represents recreation residence permit holders who have cabins on U.S. Forest Service lands. We work to support and enhance the Recreation Residence Special Use Program on national forests, as authorized by federal law, USFS regulations, and permits that are renewed in 20-year increments.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the forest plan revision for the Inyo National Forest. NFH feels strongly that the plan must specifically mention the Recreation Residence program, which celebrates its 100-year anniversary in 2015. These permits are authorized under the ***Term Permit Act of 1915***. It is our position that a specific mention of the program must be included in the forest plan revisions for all national forests that include recreation residences authorized under the Act stated above. Recreation residence cabin owners are and have been an important part of the historic, traditional, and intergenerational use of forests for a hundred years—or more—along with grazing permittees, traditional hunting and fishing activities, and other recreational pursuits.

It is important to note that cabin owners and family members who hold these recreation residence permits also contribute significantly to stewardship, maintenance, and enrichment programs on these public lands. Benefits include, but are not limited to, search and rescue activities, trail patrols, trail maintenance, trash removal, fires safety activities, volunteer fire departments, noxious weed removal, and educational programs that benefit the general public.

On behalf of National Forest Homeowners and all of the cabin owners in the Inyo National Forest, thank you for your consideration of the comments listed above. Please feel free to contact either myself or NFH Executive Director, Ernie Atencio (eatencio@nationalforesthowners.org) for further comments or discussion.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jay Tripathi, President

Attachment B: Comment Letter on Sierra National Forest Management Plan

18 September 2013

Supervisor Dean Gould
Sierra National Forest
1600 Tollhouse Road
Clovis, CA 93612

Subject: Comments to DRAFT Sierra National Forest Assessment

Dear Supervisor Gould:

My goal is to ensure the almost 100-year old Recreation Residence Program in the Sierra National Forest (SNF), its contributions to the USFS and public, and its continuance, is explicitly addressed in the new SNF management plan. The Recreation Residence Program is, for example, mentioned on the first page of the latest [2005] forest management plans for the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests.

Recreation and tourism comprise the single largest employment sector in the Sierra Nevada. Over half of all recreation occurring on public lands in the Sierra Nevada takes place on National Forest System lands. It is critical to consideration recreation [including the Recreation Residence Program] in monitoring the effects of Forest Service management on communities, as the 1976 National Forest Management Act requires.¹

Revised forest plans are grounded on the concepts described by the Committee of Scientists in their seminal report, *Sustaining the People's Lands: Recommendations for Stewardship of the National Forests and Grasslands into the Next Century* (March 1999). Paraphrasing the report, the term sustainability includes three major components: ecological, social, and economic. Sustainability, in short, means meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to also meet their needs.² The Recreation Residence Program of the Sierra National Forest certainly has done this since 1917.

In looking at the future of the Recreation Residence Program in the Sierra National Forest, the broad economic impact and forest stewardship associated with these cabins is especially relevant for our new forest plan. Sustaining and enhancing recreation opportunities for the public is an oft-stated goal of the US Forest Service. And, since the national inception in 1915, the 'Cabin' Program has fulfilled this goal by providing family-oriented recreation opportunities while generating revenue for the US Treasury. Former Supervisor Ed Cole explicitly stated such in his Record of Decision (vis-à-vis renewal of all recreation residence special use permits in the Sierra National Forest) when he said recreation residences are a continuing legitimate use of National Forest System lands IAW FSM 2347.¹

Other Region 5 forests have also recently stated such in their new [2005] management plans. For example, "The existing uses on the national forests are expected to continue. Recreation

residences, for example, are a valid use that will continue, subject to compliance with the terms and conditions of the cabin owner's permit."³ Additionally, "The Forest land and resource management plan (forest plan) provides direction for continuance of the recreation residence use (FSM 1920). As forest plans are revised, availability for recreation residence use shall be explicitly addressed in the plan... ." "When recreation residence use is consistent with the forest plan, it shall continue."⁴

Following for your consideration are my personal comments and suggestions relating to Chapter 9 (Recreation Settings, Opportunities and Access, and Scenic Character) of the evolving Sierra National Forest Assessment and the continuance of the Recreation Residence Program in the new Sierra National Forest. As always, I -- and other Huntington Lake Association members -- remain available to meet with you and/or your staff to discuss and provide input (data) for the Recreation Residence Program in the Sierra National Forest.

Respectfully,

Dennis S. Driggers
Dennis S. Driggers, Ph.D.

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Clovis, CA 93611-0335
(559) 322-9259 home

[Editor Note: address and phone are no longer valid]

¹FEIS Volume 4, Appendix E-119 -- Adaptive Management Strategy, section 13.1

²Land Management Plan: Part 1 - Southern California National Forests Vision [Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests], September 2005, R5-MB-075 (p.1)

³Record of Decision, San Bernardino National Forest Land Management Plan, April 2006, R5-MB-114 (p. 1)

⁴FSM 2712, paragraph 23.e - Recreation Residence Continuance (p. 20), sub-paragraph 1. Use Is Consistent With Forest Plan (p. 21)

Comments to DRAFT Sierra NF Assessment

Chapter 9: Recreation Settings, Opportunities and Access, and Scenic Character

(1) General Comment: When possible, specifically mention the recreation residence program. See examples below.

(a) p. 147 (Sierra NF Niche Statement): "From lakeside camping and picnicking to wilderness solitude, the Sierra National Forest is destination recreation."

Change to: "From lakeside camping and picnicking, to recreational residences and resorts, to wilderness solitude, the Sierra National Forest is destination recreation."

(b) pp. 150-151 (Important Recreation Sites or Areas): The number of recreation residences at Bass Lake (21) and Dinkey Creek (43) are shown; but, the number of recreation residences at Huntington Lake is omitted.

p. 151 (Huntington Lake): "There are seven resorts offering combinations of overnight facilities, stores, restaurants, marinas, and RV camp spaces. There are six organized camps around the lake."

Change to: "There are seven resorts offering combinations of overnight facilities, stores, restaurants, marinas, and RV camp spaces. There are also 415 recreation residences and six organized camps around the lake."

(c) p. 152 (Special Uses): "Recreation special use permits allow for occupancy and use of the national forests."

Change to: "Recreation special use permits (for recreation residences, for example) allow for occupancy and use of the national forests."

(d) p. 152 (Special Uses): The special uses permit chart shows 491 recreation residences at Huntington Lake; I believe there are only 415 recreation residences.

Comment: Double-check this number and correct, if necessary.

(e) p. 153 (Conditions and Trends Affecting Recreation Opportunities): "Family traditions also influence recreation preferences."

Change to: "Family traditions, like fourth-generation recreation residences in the Sierra National Forest, also influence local recreation preferences."

(f) p. 157 (Opportunities to Foster Greater Connection Between People and Nature): "Increasing understanding about the natural environment and helping more people have positive outdoor experiences can create a citizenry that understands the importance of being good stewards of the land."

Change to: "Increasing understanding about the natural environment and helping more people have positive outdoor experiences can create a citizenry that understands the importance of being good stewards of the land (like the recreation residence permittees and other forest volunteers)."

(g) p. 161 (Contribution the Plan Area Makes to Ecological, Social, or Economic Sustainability): "The places that people visit often have emotional meaning that can help define sense of self, as well as social identity."

Change to: "The places that people visit (for example, recreation residences) often have emotional meaning that can help define sense of self, as well as social identity."

(h) p. 161 (Contribution the Plan Area Makes to Ecological, Social, or Economic Sustainability): "Being with friends and family is an important reason why people recreate on national forests, and plays an especially large role for certain groups like the growing Latino population."

Change to: "Being with friends and family is an important reason why people recreate on national forests, and plays an especially large role for certain groups like the recreation residence permittees and the growing Latino population."

(2) Ensure "List of References" includes USFS and other documents related to recreation residences. For example (not all inclusive):

- Cabin User Fee Fairness Act of 2000 (CUFFA)
- FSH 2709.11 [USFS Management of Recreation Residences]
- FSM 2340 [Privately Provided Recreation Opportunities], subsection 2347 [Recreation Residences]
- FSM 2700: Special Uses Management, subsection 2720 [Special Uses Administration]
- Managing Sierra National Forests (PSW-GTR-237, March 2012)
- National Forest Management Act (1976)
- Organic Administrative Act of 1897 [Creation of the Forest Reserves]
- Region 5 Supplement 2709.11-2011-2 [USFS Management of Recreation Residences], Chapter 40 [Special Uses Administration], subsection 41 [Recreation Special Uses]
- Occupancy Permits Act of 1915 [authorized USFS to issue special use permits for cabins for up to 30 years]

(3) Ensure the plan's "Glossary" includes terms related to recreation residences. For example (not all inclusive):

- Letter-of-Intent
- Noncompliance
- O & M Plan
- Recreation Residence [aka cabin, summer home]
- Term Special Use Permit

(4) Add a 1-2 page appendix (a) describing the recreation residence program, (b) its contribution to the USFS and public, and (c) a short history of the successful century-long program -- especially at Huntington Lake, for example. Such a short appendix could be provided by the Huntington Lake Association, California Cabins, the National Forest Homeowners, and/or the USFS (Region 5, for example).

(5) Include somewhere mention of, and a link to, the Huntington Lake Association, California Cabins, and the National Forest Homeowners

<http://www.huntingtonlakeassociation.org>
<http://www.nationalforesthomeowners.org>
Attachment C: Sample Comment Letter

July 31, 2017 *[insert correct date]*

Forest Planning Team *[Recipient for comments will be indicated in Draft Plan]*
(address)
(address)

Reference: Draft Revised Land Management Plan for the XXXX National Forest,
Dated May 2016 *[Insert correct data for your plan]*

Dear Forest Planning Team: *[Use appropriate title for your letter]*

These comments on the Draft Revised Land Management Plan for the XXXX National Forest are being submitted on behalf of the XXXX Cabin Owners Association, which represents the [insert number] permittees within the XXXX Recreation Residence Tract which is located with the XXXX National Forest.

[This opening paragraph establishes your standing to submit comments]

We appreciate this opportunity to comment on the land plan revision for the XXXX National Forest. Our association and individual permittees feel strongly that the plan must specifically mention the Recreation Residence program and recognize the contributions and importance of this program not only to sustainable recreation on National Forest Lands, but also to stewardship, heritage, partnerships and outreach activities on this Forest and across the entire National Forest System.

[This paragraph is intended as a general comment on the importance of specifically addressing the recreation residence in the Plan.]

We wish to make the following specific comments on the Draft Revised Plan as referenced above:

p. 151 (Huntington Lake): "There are seven resorts offering combinations of overnight facilities, stores, restaurants, marinas, and RV camp spaces. There are six organized camps around the lake." *[cite specific location in Plan where changes are desired]*

Change to: "There are seven resorts offering combinations of overnight facilities, stores, restaurants, marinas, and RV camp spaces. There are also 415 recreation residences and six organized camps around the lake."

[Be very clear as to the change that is requested. Explain why if necessary]

[Continue with additional comments]

Thank you for your consideration of the comments listed above. Please feel free to contact me at the phone or email shown below if you have questions or desire clarification.

Very Sincerely.