

NEWS RELEASE

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USDA FOREST SERVICE WILL HOST PUBLIC EVENTS ON DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW PLANNING RULE

Jackson, MARCH 29, 2010 – Carole ‘Kniffy’ Hamilton today announced a series of events to provide opportunities for public discussion on the development of a new Forest Service Land and Resource Management Planning Rule (planning rule). A roundtable discussion will be held on April 8, 2010 at the Hansen Hall at St. John’s Episcopal Church, at 170 North Glenwood in Jackson, WY from 1-4 p.m. and 6-9 p.m. Each session will be identical. In addition to the roundtable meeting at the Hansen Hall, the Forest Service will host a national science forum, three national roundtables, eight regional roundtables and 14 roundtable meetings throughout the Intermountain Region on April 8 at each Forest Supervisor’s Office. Meeting locations, agenda and pre-registration can be found at www.fs.fed.us/r4 by clicking on the “Planning Rule” link.

Providing multiple opportunities for public participation ties directly to President Obama’s call for open government that is transparent, participatory and collaborative, and illustrates Forest Service commitment to engage the public in the development of a new planning rule.

"We encourage broad public participation in our regional roundtables," said Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. "Through collaboration we will be able to better address the current and future needs of the National Forest System such as restoration, protecting watersheds, addressing climate change, sustaining local economies, improving collaboration, and working across landscapes."

Summaries from discussions in the science forum, national and regional roundtables, along with the individual comments received during the 60-day formal comment period on the Notice of Intent, will be used to develop the proposed rule and a draft environmental impact statement.

To encourage widespread participation the Forest Service is using new media tools in conjunction with the public meetings. Please visit <http://blogs.usda.gov/usdablogs/planningrule> to participate in the planning rule blog and sign up to follow the Forest Service on Twitter at www.twitter.com/forestsservice.

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency

manages the 193 million acres of National Forest System land, provides stewardship assistance to non-federal forest landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world.

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