

Government Agencies Propose Plans to Restore National Forests, Protect Wildlife

By *Anna Sanders*
Created 01/26/2012 - 1:57pm



California's Cleveland National Forest, at 460,000 acres, accounts for just 0.2 % of the National Forest System's 193-million acres that will be affected by new rules. (Photo: [Wikipedia Commons](#) ^[1])

Today, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack [announced](#) ^[2] the department's intent to issue new planning rules for the nation's 193-million-acre National Forest System through the release of a Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the [National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule](#) ^[3].

The new rules will amend 1982 guidelines several administrations have failed to revise and will protect watersheds and wildlife, promote forest restoration and conservation, and ensure forests could be used for "outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, wildlife and fish," stated a Department of Agriculture press release. In addition, the new rules would also provide opportunities to "connect people with nature." The department notes that the rules also require opportunities for public involvement and comment the forest planning process.

"Our preferred alternative will safeguard our natural resources and provide a roadmap for getting work done on the ground that will restore our forests while providing job opportunities for local communities," said Secretary. Vilsack in the release.

The USDA will publish the preferred alternative on Feb. 3 and the secretary will issue a final decision on the planning rule within 30 days.

In other news, the U.S. Interior Department [proposed a plan](#) ^[4] as well – this time to save the earth's creatures and ecosystems from the potentially devastating impacts of climate change. Last week, the department posted the first draft of their strategy, "[National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Plan.](#)" ^[5] for public review and comment until March 5.

"The impacts of climate change are already here and those who manage our landscapes are already dealing with them," said Deputy Secretary of the Interior David J. Hayes in a press release. "The reality is that rising sea levels, warmer temperatures, loss of sea ice and changing precipitation patterns – trends scientists have definitively connected to climate change – are already affecting the species we care about, the services we value, and the places we call home."

The draft strategy includes descriptions of current and projected [impacts of climate change](#) ^[6] on the country's eight major ecosystems, highlighting the plight of a different plant or animal species for each (like the lesser prairie chicken). In addition, the draft includes [proposals](#) ^[7] to reduce the vulnerability of communities that depend on these ecosystems in the

face of climate change.

Public comments on the draft can be [submitted online](#) [8] or mailed to the Office of the Science Advisor (Attn: National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive Suite 222, Arlington, VA 22203).

[Climate Change](#) [Nature](#) [Plants](#) [Wildlife](#)

```
//> //>
```

```
var gaJsHost = (("https:" == document.location.protocol) ? "https://ssl." : "http://www.");
document.write(unescape("%3Cscript src=" + gaJsHost + "google-analytics.com/ga.js"
type='text/javascript'%3E%3C/script%3E")); var pageTracker = _gat._getTracker("UA-6149536-1");
pageTracker._trackPageview();
```

[The Perch](#) | [About](#) | [Archive](#) | [Get the Magazine](#) | [Audubon.org](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Source URL: <http://magblog.audubon.org/government-agencies-propose-plans-restore-national-forests-protect-wildlife>

Links:

- [1] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mountlagunasmall.jpg>
- [2] http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2012/01/0028.xml&navid=NEWS_RELEASE&navtype=RT&parentnav=LATEST_RELEASES&edeployment_action=retrie
- [3] <http://www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule>
- [4] <http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/National-Strategy-Proposed-to-Respond-to-Climate-Changes-Impacts-on-Fish-Wildlife-Plants.cfm>
- [5] <http://www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov/public-review-draft.php>
- [6] http://www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov/pdf/Chapter2_Impacts.pdf
- [7] http://www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov/pdf/Chapter3_Strategies.pdf
- [8] <http://www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov/public-comments.php>