



NEWS RELEASE

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Washington, D.C., 20024 • Voice (202) 205-1134 • Web: <http://www.fs.fed.us>

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Contact: Joe Walsh, Press Office
(202) 205-1134

FOREST SERVICE CONVENES TEAM TO BROADEN PUBLIC'S INVOLVEMENT IN RECREATION SITE FACILITY MASTER PLANNING

WASHINGTON, January 26, 2007—USDA Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth has tapped a National Review Team to gauge the effectiveness of citizen participation in the Recreation Site Facility Master Planning process.

"Our aim is to raise the standard for participation and strengthen our work with the public so we can collectively determine the needs for forest recreation facilities and meet future demands," Bosworth said this week in a letter to Regional Foresters. "The ultimate goal is to improve recreation opportunities and experiences on national forests."

Responding to increased public attention on the Recreation Sites Facility Master planning effort, Bosworth charged the national team to conduct a thorough review and make recommendations by April 2. The team's findings and recommendations will form the basis for broadening the current citizen involvement process.

"As one of my last acts as Chief, I want to again emphasize the importance of recreation to the American people and to our quality of life. Our goal is to provide sustainable, well-managed outdoor recreation for the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities," said Chief Bosworth. Chief Bosworth recently announced his plans to retire.

Recreation Site Facility Master Planning is not a decision process. Rather, it is an analysis tool, to encourage dialogue on the changing demands for recreation facilities on national forests and what options may exist to respond to those changes. Open dialogue with communities is an essential aspect in each step of the process.

Deputy Regional Forester Beth Pendleton, of the Pacific Southwest Region, will lead the national review team. The team will assess public participation activities, methods, products and results from a diverse cross section of the national forests. The team is expected to interview a selection of citizens who have expressed interest in the Recreation Facility Master Planning process.

During the Review Team's examination of public involvement, national forests will not make any decisions based on the Recreation Site Facility Master Planning analysis.

"The Forest Service has a long, proud tradition of offering recreation opportunities, honoring the attachments people have to the special places we manage. Executed properly, this process will help us live up to that tradition," said Chief Bosworth.

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