

The Environmental Analysis and Decision Making (EADM) Frequently Asked Questions

October 4, 2017

1. What was the purpose of the Environmental Analysis and Decision Making (EADM) Workshop?

The purpose of the workshop was to gain a common understanding of the issues preventing us from being effective in environmental analysis and decision-making. The goal was to develop a path forward for implementing change that capitalizes on opportunities and innovations. This meeting was part of an overarching goal to have in place a comprehensive, national approach to reforming our agency culture, policies, and procedures for implementing laws and regulations with the realities of current and future on-the-ground resource objectives and public benefits.

The Forest Service, through the National Leadership Council (NLC), convened 150 leaders from all levels of the agency and from every region and staff area in Phoenix, AZ, Sept. 26-28 for this workshop. The NLC is made up of the highest level Forest Service leaders, including Regional Foresters, Research Station Directors and Washington Office leadership, and they support this change effort.

2. Why are we undertaking this national effort now?

For many years, there has been agency-wide recognition that reform is needed in our environmental analysis and decision making processes. We have made multiple incremental gains over the years, and the time is right to go big and step up our efforts exponentially.

3. How is this different than the past?

This effort focuses on the skills, experience, expertise, and lessons learned from the field, and begins the process of networking across regions and staff areas to institutionalize efficiencies and learning. Employees will be central to this effort. Specific efforts already being implemented to support employees in this change effort include:

- Launching new training opportunities for line officers, specialists and others about laws, regulations and policies that guide our work. The development of this training is ongoing.
- Prioritizing 100 positions across deputy areas and throughout the agency to focus on these changes and create a broader collective effort.
- Reviewing policies and practice to look for efficiencies, while holding steadfast to the tenets of our mission and stewarding our natural/cultural resources adequately and safely. This review looks at the differences between the Forest Service and other agencies in our policy and practices.
- Thinking together – engaging internally and with the public this fall.
- Managing national and regional contracts to promote increased capacity across multiple units.
- Addressing accountability through the development of performance measures for leadership, which will include benchmarks for meeting these goals.

- Embracing technology and capturing efficiencies through automated tools and procedures. Specifically:
 - Developing a standard, national template for EAs and a standard approach for CEs that will improve our conservation outcomes.
 - Establishing two national task forces, one to address ESA policies and regulations and one to address National Historic Preservation Act and how we work with SHPOs.

4. What are the Regional and Deputy Area EADM Cadres and how will they support change?

Each Region and Deputy Area stood up a cadre of 12 employees from multiple levels of the agency to participate in the EADM workshop. They were asked to develop action steps for carrying this message of change back to their home units. Each EADM Cadre is responsible for bringing the necessary people together within their region or deputy area to develop an action plan to undertake this change effort. Cadres will also play a key role in implementing the plan collectively across their home units. Throughout this effort, EADM Cadres will network with each other to help identify successful innovations that could be adopted nationally.

5. How will the NLC leadership support change?

NLC leadership will provide alignment, commitment, investment and continuity. Chief Tooke will hold leadership accountable through performance and regular check-ins with leadership.

6. How will the WO Directors support change?

WO Directors will provide coordination and establish timelines for policy and regulations changes, as well as provide individuals from their staffs to support the specific change efforts outlined above. They will provide some of the 100 positions Chief Tooke mentioned in his opening remarks to the EADM Workshop. These individuals will be available to assist Forests and Regions who want to use innovation and creativity to shorten processes and who need help to make those efforts successful.

7. What is going to look different in a year?

Chief Tooke expects to see an agency-wide paradigm shift in leadership mindset – leaders who demonstrate a different sort of intentionality when looking at what is possible. Within a year, all line officers will have attended their first set of the new training.

8. How can partners engage?

Partners can continue to engage with their local forests and local communities. Partners are encouraged to become involved in this change effort and shared stewardship of the NFS lands. Communication with partners and additional specifics about how they can help shape this future will be available by November 2017 Forest Service Regional and Deputy Area Cadres are encouraged to engage with partners and share what they experienced during the EADM Workshop.