

The Environmental Analysis and Decision Making (EADM)

Workshop Overview

September 26-28, 2017 | Phoenix, AZ

Objectives

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 a workshop on environmental analysis and decision making processes. The objectives of the EADM Workshop were to gain a common understanding of the issues preventing us from being effective in environmental analysis and decision-making and to develop a path forward for implementing change. This meeting is 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 by winter 2018/spring 2019.

Participants

- Agency representative across all levels and staff areas within the USFS (e.g., R&D, S&PF, and NFS including range, special uses, forest products, botany, heritage, planning, recreation, acquisition and budget, fire, wildlife, soils, air water, environmental coordinators and more).
- Cadres (12 individuals from each Regional and staff area) and were charged with:
 - Carrying context and outcomes of this meeting to their home units;
 - Identifying specific actions home units will undertake to help this effort (report to NLC in 30 days); and
 - Identifying successful innovations that could be adopted nationally.

Framework

The EADM Workshop was three full-work days at the Bureau of Land Management Training Center in Phoenix, AZ. The National Leadership Council (NLC) engaged in this workshop at its opening and closing sessions, which were livestreamed to the entire agency.

Chief Tooke welcomed employees and provided expectations and sideboards. The Chief spoke to improving our capacity to get work done on the ground more quickly, in particular to address restoration, recreation, and range needs. He encouraged employees to tend to our relationships and develop new relationships that help us achieve our mission. He challenged employees to think boldly and be creative. He indicated this will be a collective shift that requires collective action. To do this, we need to hear all employees and be accountable to each other. He charged employees with stewarding the whole and making this effort sustainable for the future.

- Day 1: The focus was setting the context by convening small group conversations on why this change is important, concerns and fears, opportunities, and what needs our attention now. Chris French, Director of Ecosystems Management Coordination, gave a context-setting presentation to set the stage for developing and highlighting existing efficiencies around our environmental analysis and decision-making processes. The NLC joined the participants in discussion at small circles until lunch.
- Day 2: Participants were joined by agency storytellers who led discussions about innovative changes and how we can support change on the ground. Each EADM Cadre then got together as a group and began to decide which pieces they heard translated into opportunities their EADM Cadre and unit could address.

- Day 3: Cadres worked in their groups to outline action steps for moving forward. In the afternoon, the Cadres presented their initial action steps to the NLC, including Chief Tooke. Part of the afternoon, NLC members responded to questions that were identified during the workshop. The Chief closed out the workshop by emphasizing his commitment to this change effort and acknowledging the tensions and fears that can come when facing culture change. The Chief challenged employees to be curious, ask learning questions, listen to understand, value all input, and draw on the collective strengths of the agency to accomplish this cultural shift.

Next Steps

The next steps are for the Cadres to facilitate similar conversations at their home units to generate additional input and ideas, while highlighting existing innovations. They are tasked with developing a plan for moving forward with these efforts, capitalizing on the knowledge and innovations that are coming from the field level. They will network across regions and deputy areas to share their lessons learned, insights, struggles, and opportunities.

There will be regular check-ins with EADM Cadres into the future, with the first check-in scheduled for 30 days after the meeting.

Timeline

- A Washington Office Task Force is in place to support the work of Cadres.
 - An [EADM SharePoint site](#) was developed to capture meeting content and other information related to this effort.
- EADM Cadres will meet virtually the first week of November 2017 and quarterly thereafter to report out on actions planned and taken.
 - Cadres are grouped into networks to provide for shared learning and will be meeting in their network groups on a regular basis.
- The agency will move forward with public engagement as soon as possible.
 - External talking points are available on the SharePoint site.