

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.

Phoenix Environmental Analysis and Decision Making (EADM) Workshop

External Talking Points

150 leaders from all levels of the Forest Service and from every region and staff area convened in Phoenix, AZ, Sept. 26-28 for a workshop on environmental analysis and decision making processes.

- This change effort was initiated by the National Leadership Council (NLC). NLC is made up of the highest level Forest Service leaders.

At the meeting, Chief Tony Tooke announced an agency-wide focus on how we engage in project design, regulatory compliance and public engagement to get more work done on the ground.

- He stated the Forest Service will continue to deliver scientific based, high quality analysis with meaningful results that honor our stewardship responsibilities. He said we will engage with our partners to help achieve these goals.

The Workshop focused on efficiency of planning, policy and implementation—leveraging capital and human resources appropriately, strategically focusing and organizing our work and continuing to work closely with our partners to identify solutions.

- The goal is to make decisions that authorize projects in a timelier manner, to eliminate unnecessary processes and steps, to increase the scale of analysis and the amount of on-the-ground work covered by analysis and decisions.

The issues around environmental analysis and decision making have been discussed for over 30 years. The meeting in Phoenix is part of Forest Service recognition of rapidly changing social and environmental conditions.

- The 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.

The National Leadership Council sponsored the workshop and engaged directly with participants to hear issues and concerns and to encourage innovation.

- Meeting participants spent the first half of the first day hearing leadership intent and context for the Workshop.
- The second half of the first day and the second day, they condensed the topics into focus points.
- The third day, they drafted actions that will help bring all Deputy Areas (NFS, R&D, S&PF) to increase the pace at which we can analyze and implement needed projects.
- Emphasis items included partner involvement in creating solutions and using science to inform decision-making.

Other actions being taken include reforming our NEPA policies and implementing directives to reduce unnecessary process and analysis, align to standard government practice, expand agency authorities, and expedite decision making.

- We are reforming internal Agency-wide training based on reformed policy.
- We have prioritized existing capacity to better deliver outcomes from the regional and national levels in 2018—we are modernizing and streamlining our CE and EA documentation process.
- Chief Tooke stated we will actively engage with partners beginning fall 2018 to help with changes.

Phoenix Environmental Analysis and Decision Making (EADM) Workshop

External Talking Points

The Forest Service is interested in and recommends that the Secretary of Agriculture convene an interagency task force with DOI and DOC to effect even more procedural efficiencies for ESA compliance for Forest Service projects. The proposed task force would:

- Develop Counterpart Regulations/Alternative Procedures or a Programmatic Consultation Agreement for projects with a primary purpose of ecosystem restoration.
- Develop procedural guidance for Proactive Conservation/Section 7(a)(1) consultation approaches.
- Use the implementing regulations of the ESA to develop “alternative” procedures for consultation for Agency projects that are designed to be congruent with FSM 2020 (Ecosystem Restoration Policy); or, programmatically address a suite of management activities/projects that are consistent with FSM 2020.

As a result of these actions, the Forest Service will reduce timeframes and costs associated with our environmental analysis and decision making and increase the acres or projects authorized by these decisions.

- The performance and training reforms that are within current agency authorities will result in a 10% efficiency gain in time and expenditures in FY18.
- Policy reforms conducted by the agency will take 6-12 months to fully complete and result in an additional 10-20% efficiency gain in time and expenditures by FY19-20

Phoenix Environmental Analysis and Decision Making (EADM) Workshop

Internal Talking Points – (10/4/2017)

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- Meeting participants included:
 - Agency representative across all levels and staff areas within the USFS
 - Regional and Deputy Area Cadres 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.
- Participants spent the first half of the first day hearing leadership intent and context for the Workshop
- The second half of the first day and the second day, they condensed the topics into focus points.
- The third day, they drafted actions that will help bring all Deputy Areas (NFS, R&D, S&PF) to increase the pace at which we can analyze and implement needed projects.
- Action and learning items included: Commonality in issues across regions, engaging all employees, innovation, taking the message home, leadership and accountability are key, and partner engagement.

Next steps following the Workshop involve the Cadres facilitating similar conversations at their home units to generate additional input and ideas, while highlighting existing innovations.

Phoenix Environmental Analysis and Decision Making (EADM) Workshop

Internal Talking Points – (10/4/2017)

- Cadres 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, and networking across regions and deputy areas to share their lessons learned, insights, struggles, and opportunities.
- There will be regular check-ins with Cadres into the future, with the first check-in scheduled for 30 days after the meeting.
- 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.

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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.

Environmental Analysis and Decision-Making - Cadre Report-Outs

September 2017 Phoenix, AZ

Meeting Summary

150 leaders from all levels of the Forest Service and from every region and staff area convened in Phoenix, AZ, Sept. 26-28 for a workshop on environmental analysis and decision making processes (EADM). 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.

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- Cadres (12 individuals from each Regional and staff area) and were charged with:
 - Carrying context and outcomes of this meeting to their home units;
 - Identify successful innovations that could be made; and
 - Identify specific actions the Cadre will take to help this effort (report to NLC in 30 days);

Cadre Learning and Action Items

- After 3 days of discussions and learning, the Cadres provided a brief report to the plenary outlining key learning and action items to carry forward in their units and Regions.
- Common themes of learning across the Cadres surfaced in the report-out session, including:
 - **We can do this and we're in this together:** Cadres consistently pointed to the commonalities of issues nation-wide. They noted we have existing options, tools, and expertise to improve efficiency.
 - **Engage employees:** Cadres pointed to the importance of people as the agency's greatest asset. All employees need to be part of the solution.
 - **Innovate:** The need to support employees to be innovative was front and center in Cadre report-outs. Several Cadres mentioned plans to pilot NEPA efficiencies and to take a critical look at how we are organized for success around NEPA.
 - **Take the message home:** Communication featured prominently as an important part of telling the story about the need for change and why now.
 - **Leadership and accountability are key:** Cadres voiced that leadership commitment and accountability (including from NLC, Directors, and line officers) is key to success.
- Cadre action items were designed to act on these learning themes by initiating employee and partner engagement, identifying innovators, and developing messaging and communication strategies tiered to a national-level communication plan currently in development.

Next Steps

- The Cadres are expected to implement action upon return to their respective Regions and staff areas.
- A 30-day Cadre check-in will be held with the National Team during the first week of November.
- Cadres will meet quarterly to continue to check-in on progress on action items, share learning and innovation, and help lead this change effort.
- A Washington Office Task Force is in place to support the work of the Cadres.
 - An [EADM SharePoint site](#) was developed to capture meeting content and other information related to this effort.