



**Santa Fe National Forest**

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# News Release

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## **Santa Fe National Forest Invites Public Participation in Forest Plan Revision, Wilderness Inventory**

**Santa Fe, NM – April 19, 2016 – For Immediate Release.** Nearing the midway point in the multi-year process of writing a new management plan for its 1.6 million acres, the Santa Fe National Forest (SFNF) announced a series of upcoming public meetings to help determine if there are lands that are or are not suitable for Wilderness.

In 2012, the Forest Service updated the directives that guide the planning and management of 154 national forests and 20 grasslands. The new planning rule is intended to reflect 21<sup>st</sup>-century issues, like sustainable recreation and climate change, while encouraging public participation and input. The SFNF launched the revision of its own forest plan in 2014 under the new planning rule.

As part of the 2012 planning rule, forests are required to identify lands that may or may not be suitable to recommend to Congress for Wilderness designation as part of the revision of their management plan. The upcoming round of public meetings is designed to seek public input on the criteria for each of these steps:

- the inventory of lands to be evaluated for Wilderness characteristics
- the evaluation of the areas based on characteristics outlined in the Wilderness Act of 1964, including naturalness, size, opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation, and special features
- analysis of areas to be considered in the plan alternatives, including their social and economic contributions to communities
- recommendations for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

“The Wilderness inventory, evaluation and analysis is a mandatory part of the planning process,” SFNF Forest Supervisor Maria Garcia said. “The important thing to remember is that only Congress can designate Wilderness. The planning process may or may not result in recommendations for additional Wilderness on the Santa Fe. This is an important part of the process where your voice and participation can make a huge difference.”

The public meetings will be held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the following dates and at the following locations:



- Monday, April 25, 2016: UNM West, Room 1225, 2600 College Avenue NE, Rio Rancho, NM
- Tuesday, April 26, 2016: El Rancho Community Center, 394 County Road 84, El Rancho, NM
- Monday, May 2, 2016: Highlands University, Sanchez Teacher Education Center (STEC), Rooms 203 and 204, 1031 11th Street, Las Vegas, NM
- Tuesday, May 3, 2016: Santa Fe Community College, Jemez Rooms, 6401 Richards Avenue, Santa Fe, NM

In addition, a technical meeting will be held on Thursday, April 28, 2016, at the Santa Fe Community College from 9 a.m. to 12 noon in the Jemez Rooms.

The meeting schedule, agendas and handouts are available on the [Forest Plan Revision webpage](#).

In addition to the Wilderness requirement under the 2012 Planning Rule, the Forest Plan Revision team continues to work on other aspects of the process. The team is finalizing the “need for change” statements that address specific areas in the current Forest Plan that need to be updated to reflect public input collected in fall 2015 and current science on multiple-use land and resource management.

The Forest will also publish a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register to revise the forest management plan and prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will guide the drafting of a new forest plan.

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