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My Turn

Community input needed on Carson National Forest

James Duran

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Through our collaborative effort in revising the Carson National Forest plan, public involvement has been valuable in aligning future management concepts with the needs and values of nearby communities. The National Forest is very committed to continued collaboration with many partners not only through plan development but also through plan implementation. The recent planning effort has provided various opportunities for community members to review and comment on the draft forest plan, as well as the wilderness recommendation and eligible wild and scenic river processes, both of which are part of the Carson's plan revision effort.

The new Carson forest plan will reflect the ecological conditions and social and economic opportunities that our communities value and desire in the lands that make up the Carson National Forest and the greater regional landscape. It will also provide for management that values a healthy, diverse forest ecosystem that is not at risk for wildfire, provides habitat for wildlife, and clean water for drinking and agricultural use. The new plan will focus on opportunities that support and value the unique culture of many communities located around the forest and contribute to the local economy into the future. Management direction will emphasize restoration and preservation of our valuable watersheds, streams and wetlands. The new forest plan will also include management direction that improves vegetative conditions for wildlife habitat, including at-risk species.

We will focus on enhancing the experiences that people enjoy in the forest.

The Carson National Forest is important for livestock grazing, fuel wood gathering, hiking, skiing, hunting, fishing and so many other uses valued by our communities. Forest management under the new plan will seek to preserve and protect our very special forest and its bountiful natural resources, while providing opportunities for future generations to enjoy and use the forest in a sustainable way.

Planning efforts are ongoing with an official draft plan expected in summer of 2018 and a Record of Decision targeted for late 2019. We appreciate the comments you've given us so far and have been making adjustments to the plan based on your feedback.

We encourage everyone to review an updated version of the Preliminary Draft Proposed Plan that is posted on the Carson National Forest webpage and tell us what works or does not work for you.

We have and will continue to provide opportunities for the public to submit feedback via email at carsonplan@fs.fed.us, through the webpage and by visiting with us during our open houses. Our next open house will be in January and the exact date will be shared through our mailing list, in *The Taos News* and on our webpage.

In order for your feedback on the latest version of the Preliminary Draft Proposed Plan to be most useful, please give us your feedback by February 1. For questions, feel free to contact Kevin Naranjo on our forest plan revision team at kjnaranjo@fs.fed.us.

As we continue through the revision of the Carson National Forest's 1986 plan, it is our goal to inform and involve the public through many different mediums.

It is my hope that through our commitment to service, as well our commitment to quality collaboration and community engagement, we develop a new forest plan that protects values in Northern New Mexico for years to come.

Duran is Forest Supervisor of the Carson National Forest.

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