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Forest Planning Rule Release Statement of Tom Partin, American Forest Resource Council President

The National Forest Planning process has a significant impact on the members of [AFRC](#) and their employees who live and work in the remote communities of the West where timber jobs and forest health are important to everyday life.

The new Forest Planning Rule will guide how individual National Forests put together management plans, so we are very concerned about whether the agency took the comments we made on the draft rule to heart and made changes needed to avoid the mistakes of the past.

Forest plans need to be achievable, implementable and encourage management of our federal forests on a sustainable basis.

We will be reviewing the final Rule hoping that the agency has more closely followed Congress' statutory direction. For example, the National Forest Management Act requires that the agency manage for a diversity of plants and animals within the context of its multiple use mandate, not in a manner that overrides that mandate with single-use.

We hope the requirement for forests to cooperate with local government in planning has been restored to the rule.

We hope that ecological, social and economic objectives are given equal weight in planning so that all of the needs of our citizens will be met by our federal forests.

We hope to see direction in the rule that forest plans provide direction to harvest timber for the many benefits it provides, including wood products, forest health and habitat diversity and that timber management is not neglected in the planning process.

Once we have had a chance to review the Rule and discuss it with the Forest Service, our members will be providing direction on how we should proceed.

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