



How the Public Land Use Decision Process Works:

In life, it often seems that we are given opportunities that at first glance we really don't appreciate. Unfortunately, this is often the case with making comments on Public Lands. Often these opportunities come when we are "too busy" or we just have too many things on our plate and we figure that someone else can get the job done. The truth is, our involvement is directly proportional to the outcome. In other words, if we want to keep it, we need to be involved!

The comment process can also be somewhat confusing. The following information is meant as a quick overview to help understand how the comment process generally works. Please understand that when comments are asked for, this is truly an opportunity and the fact is that your comment can make the difference between keeping something open and losing it forever.

The National Environmental Policy Act was passed in 1970. For major Federal actions, such as changing a Travel Plan in a certain area, NEPA requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). After the EIS process has started, there are several steps that you can be involved in.

Notice of Intent is the first step. After its made public by the BLM or Forest Service, we need to be working to find out what areas are affected. If you know the area, it's vital that you prepare to share your knowledge. Why is that area important to you? How does it affect your life? How does it impact your family?

Scoping Process is the next step. This is an important part for you to be involved in. This is where you can first submit comments on an area. Form letters, while helpful, don't carry the impact of well thought out comments that show knowledge of the area and have information that can be applied to it.

Next comes the Draft EIS. Comments are reviewed along with potential environmental issues and alternatives are come up with. Typically we then get to choose from Alternative A, B, C or D. One alternative is usually no action, one will be lots of action, (read that as lots of closures) and two will be a mix of give and take.

Now we get to the Public Comment period on the Draft EIS. Here is another opportunity! You can comment on which alternative you prefer. Don't just say "I



like Alternative C " . Say why you like it . Say why you don't . Remember , all comments are helpful but specific comments carry a lot of weight .

Now the Final EIS . We find out what was lost and maybe what was gained . Hopefully we got involved and shared what we know . Remember , like all things in life , it's up to us !