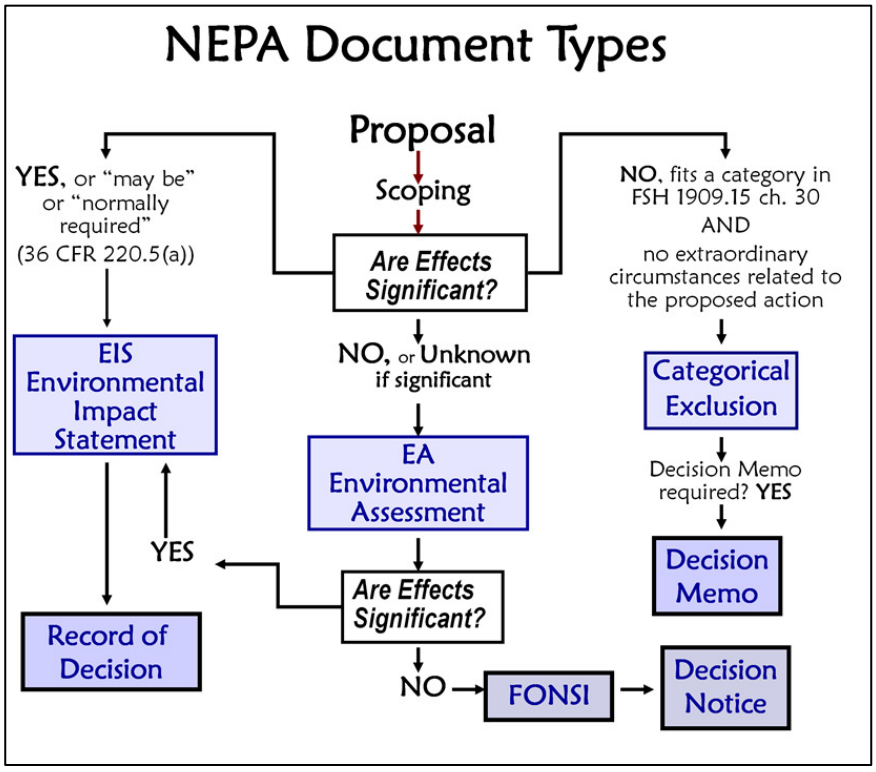
Definitions and Acronyms

Definitions are organized by the following categories in alphabetic order:

- Analysis and Decision Document Types
- Collaboration Terms
- Hydrology Terms
- Monitoring Terms
- Project Development & Design
- Restoration Terms
- Wildlife Terms
- Wildfire Terms

Analysis and Decision Document Terms

Decision Memo (DM) – A DM is a concise written record of the responsible official's decision to implement an action categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or environmental assessment (EA).



Decision Notice (DN) – A DN is a concise written record of the responsible official's decision when an Environmental Assessment (EA) and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) have been prepared.

Environmental Assessment (EA) - The purpose of an EA is to determine if a proposed action or its alternatives have potentially significant environmental effects. Applicable Federal, State, and local agencies, applicants, and, to the extent practicable, the public all participate in EA preparation. However, since agencies themselves determine the extent of public involvement, interested individuals should consult the agency to determine how the agency will engage the public. An EA: (1) provides evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an EIS; (2) aids agency compliance with NEPA when no EIS is necessary; and (3) facilitates preparation of an EIS when one is necessary. Often, the EA will also identify ways the agency can modify their proposed action to minimize environmental effects. The EA process concludes with either a Finding of No Significant Impact or a determination to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - The most rigorous level of NEPA compliance, an EIS has more regulatory requirements than an EA. First, the agency files a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register, informing the public of the upcoming environmental analysis and describing how they can become involved in EIS preparation. The Notice of Intent begins the scoping process, a period when the agency and the public collaborate to define the range of issues to be addressed in an EIS. The agency identifies and encourages participation from interested parties, defines the role of involved agencies, and determines the environmental issues relevant to the EIS. The agency also identifies any existing and required studies or analyses that can be used during EIS preparation. While drafting the EIS, the agency prepares a Purpose and Need statement to describe the rationale for the proposed action. This statement is the basis for creating

alternative solutions. Federal agencies must present reasonable alternatives in sufficient detail for readers to compare their environmental effects. If an agency has a preferred alternative, it should be clearly identified in the EIS. Agencies must also consider a no action alternative. No action alternatives describe what would happen if the agency chooses not to pursue the action. Once the agency has prepared a draft EIS, the document is published for public review and comment for a minimum of 45 days. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will publish a Notice of Availability, announcing the availability of the document, to the public. Upon expiration of the draft public comment period, the agency considers all substantive comments, conducts further analysis if necessary, and prepares a final EIS. The EPA then publishes a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register for the final EIS. This Notice begins a minimum 30-day review period. This review period must be completed before the agency makes a decision on the proposed action. The EIS process ends with the completion of a Record of Decision.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) – A FONSI is prepared when effects analyzed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) are determined not to be significant. If effects are determined to be significant, a FONSI would not be prepared and instead an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be prepared to further analyze and disclose the significant effects.

Proposed Action (PA) – The proposed action results from the purpose and need (the **Why**) for the project. The proposed action is the activity(ies)/treatment(s) being proposed. The PA should answer 5 questions: 1) **Who** is proposing the action?; 2) **What** action is being proposed?; 3) **How** will the action be done?; 4) **Where** is the action being proposed?; and 5) **When** is the action being proposed?

Purpose and Need (P&N) – The purpose and need are the reasons a project is being proposed — in other words "**Why"** something needs to be done. The purpose and need is generated by comparing the existing conditions with the desired conditions.

Record of Decision (ROD) – A Record of Decision (ROD) is the decision document for an EIS. The ROD explains the agency's decision, describes the alternatives the agency considered (including the environmentally preferred alternative), and discusses plans for mitigating potential environmental effects and monitoring those commitments. By continuing to monitor mitigation commitments, agencies implement NEPA requirements well after the environmental impact analysis is completed.

Collaboration terms

Collaboration - A process where two or more people or organizations work together towards common goals by sharing knowledge, learning and building consensus.

Collaborative Learning - Collaborative learning involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product. Collaborative learning requires positive interdependence (a sense of sink or swim together), individual accountability (each of us has to contribute and learn), interpersonal skills (communication, trust, leadership, decision making, and conflict resolution), face-to-face interaction, and processing (reflecting on how well the team is functioning and how to function even better).

In a collaborative learning setting, learners have the opportunity to converse with peers, present ideas, exchange diverse beliefs, question other conceptual frameworks, and be actively engaged.

Consensus - A feeling within a group that its conclusion represents a fair summary of the conclusions reached by the individual members of the group. Each individual accepts the group's conclusion on the basis of logic and feasibility.

Socioeconomic - Signifying the combination or interaction of social and economic factors.

Technical Advisor - An individual who knows a great deal about a particular field or subject, who is asked to provide information about that field or subject to help address specific issues or achieve specific goals.

Vision - A vision will define the desired or intended future state of the project area in terms of the community's fundamental objectives; it will describe where committee members would like the community to be in key economic, environmental and quality of life areas at some point (e.g., 20 years) in the future. The vision must reflect the commonly held values of the community and guide committee participants as they work toward the goals of the project.

Zone of Agreement (ZOA) - A collaboratively developed statement of shared goals and desired approaches for planned activities. ZOAs can be developed at multiple scales, such as for a project, planning area or for an issue that relates to multiple projects.

Watershed - A watershed is a basin-like landform defined by highpoints and ridgelines where all of the rainwater that falls on it, drains eventually to a body of water. Drop by drop, rainwater is channeled into soils, groundwater, creeks, and streams, making its way to larger rivers and eventually the sea. Watersheds come in all shapes and sizes. They cross county, state, and national boundaries. Watersheds (also called 'basins' or 'catchments') come in many sizes. Each sub-basin in turn contains numerous tributaries, many without names, but none without its own, unique, watershed.

Monitoring Terms

Adaptive Management - A structured, iterative process of robust decision making in the face of uncertainty, with an aim to reducing uncertainty over time via system monitoring.

Biophysical Monitoring - To measure physical changes that take place over a period of time related to a specific indicator and using an accepted measurement procedure. This provides statistically reliable data that can form the basis for measuring impact and change.

Multi-party Monitoring – Multiparty monitoring involves both the people that are implementing the projects and other interested parties. In multiparty monitoring, a diversity of people come together to develop questions and methods to answer those questions. For example, community residents and the Forest Service might develop a multiparty-monitoring process to determine effects of a project.

Socio-economic monitoring - Monitoring combined social and economic outcomes of a project. Relevant indicators can change based on the social and economic monitoring focus. Metrics may include jobs, wages, community benefit, capacity building, etc.

Scientific Model - A scientific model can be designed to predict future conditions based on current data and a set of assumptions. Models are used when it is either impossible or impractical to create experimental conditions in which scientists can directly measure outcomes.

Benchmark - A standard by which something is evaluated or measured.

Trend - The change in a series of data over a period of years that remains after the data have been adjusted to remove seasonal and cyclical fluctuations.

Project Development and Design

Best Management Practices – A practice or set of practices that enable a planned activity to occur while still protecting the managed resource, normally implemented and applied during the activity rather than after the activity.

Connected Actions - Actions that are integral parts of the proposed action that cannot be segmented and should always be in the same proposal. For example, if there is a proposed action to do treatments in a stand affected by insect and disease but the road accessing the stand is in disrepair, any road maintenance required to access the stand would be a connected action. On the other hand, if there is a nearby recreation trail that needs maintenance but access to or use of the trail is not integral to the proposed stand treatment, the trail maintenance is not a connected action and therefore could be addressed through a separate project/proposed action.

Desired conditions – A descriptions of forest landscape condition goals. These conditions may currently exist or may be achieved sometime in the future. Desired conditions may be based on ecological or social objectives, or both. Desired ecological conditions are typically based upon the concepts of ecosystem structural and functional sustainability, resilience and adaptive capability. Landscape restoration strategies must be developed upon a sound ecological framework. Desired conditions for local landscapes are described by stakeholders informed by best available science. They are normally expressed in broad, general terms and have no specific date by which they are to be achieved. Current conditions and desired condition goals are the focus of the restoration strategy and provide the basis for

developing treatment objectives and priorities. Desired conditions constitute a framework for ecological sustainability and should clearly focus management activities.

Design Features – (also referred to as mitigation measures) criteria used to reduce adverse effects/ impacts to resources during project implementation.

Management Framework – The laws, regulations or policies that guide/constrain the Responsible Official's decision space. All proposed actions must be in compliance with law/regulation/policy.

Mitigation Measures – *See Design Features above.*

Restoration terms

Assessment - A watershed assessment describes conditions in a watershed, such as the kinds and extents of aquatic habitats, drainage and erosion patterns, or fish-passage barriers such as poorly-designed culverts. The assessment may also note the presence of exotic, invasive plants and animals, cultural artifacts, or other significant features, and human activities that affect water, land and climate conditions within the watershed.

Action Plan - A watershed action plan is a set of activities or actions proposed to improve undesirable conditions identified in the assessment, such as brush-thinning in forests to reduce risk of wildfire or planting stream banks to reduce erosion.

Ecology - The study of living things, their environment, and the relation between the two.

Ecosystem function - The major process of ecosystems that regulate or influence the structure, composition, and pattern. These include nutrient cycles, energy flows, trophic levels (food chains), diversity patterns in time/space development and evolution, cybernetics (control), hydrologic cycles and weathering processes.

Ecosystem services - Humankind benefits from a multitude of resources and processes that are supplied by natural ecosystems. Collectively, these benefits are the major process of ecosystems that regulate or influence the structure, composition, and pattern. These include nutrient cycles, energy flows, trophic levels (food chains), diversity patterns in time/space development and evolution, cybernetics (control), hydrologic cycles and weathering processes.

Ecological processes - The flow and cycling of energy, materials, and organisms in an ecosystem. Examples of ecosystem processes include the carbon and hydrologic cycles, terrestrial and aquatic food webs, and plant succession, among others.

Management Actions - This term broadly refers to projects designed to repair or replace degraded habitat, reduce the risk of future impairment, and strive to improve or allow natural watershed processes to function so that all users benefit from ecosystem services.

Resilience - The positive ability of an ecosystem or community to adapt itself to change.

Restoration - The process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.

Ecological restoration - Focuses on establishing the composition, structure, pattern, and ecological processes necessary to facilitate terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem sustainability, resilience, and health under current and future conditions.

Sustainability - Social and environmental practices that protect and enhance the human and natural resources needed by future generations to enjoy a quality of life equal to or greater than our own.

Wildlife Terms

Management Indicator Species (MIS) - As defined by the National Forest Management Act, MIS may include species listed as (1) threatened, endangered, or rare, (2) having habitat requirements sensitive to management activities, (3) having social or economic value, and (4) serving as monitors for environmental factors, population trends of other species, or habitat condition.

Sensitive Species - Species that need special management to maintain and improve their status on National Forests and Grasslands to prevent a need to list them under the Endangered Species Act.

Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species - The Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act) describes two categories of declining species of plants and animals that need the Act's protections – endangered species and threatened species – and provides these definitions: *ENDANGERED* - any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range; *THREATENED* - any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range. In simple terms, endangered species are at the brink of extinction now; threatened species are likely to be at the brink in the near future.

Wildfire Terms

Fire Regime - A fire regime describes the basic character of fire for a given vegetation type. Although fire frequency and severity are the most commonly used descriptors, many other aspects have been studied, such as fire spread patterns, fire seasonality, and post-fire patch dynamics.

Fire regime classification

Fire Regime	Definition
I	0-35 year frequency and low (surface) fire most common to mixed severity (less than 75% of the dominant overstory vegetation replaced.
II	0-35 year frequency and high (stand replacement) severity (greater that 75% of the dominant overstory vegetation replaced.
III	35-100+ year frequency and mixed severity (less than 75% of the dominant overstory vegetation replaced)
IV	35-100+ year frequency and high (stand replacement) severity (greater than 75% of the dominant overstory vegetation replaced)
V	200+ year frequency and high (stand replacement) severity

Fire Regime, Natural - A natural fire regime is a general classification of the role fire would play across a landscape in the absence of modern human mechanical intervention, but including the influence of aboriginal burning.

Fire Return Interval - The time between fires in a defined area, usually at the scale of a point, stand or relatively small landscape area.

Hazardous Fuels - Dry brush and trees that have accumulated and increase the likelihood of unusually large wildland fires. ***Surface or ground fuels*** consist of duff, leaf and needle litter, dead branch material, downed logs, bark, tree cones, and low stature living plants that contact the surface of the ground. ***Ladder fuels*** consist of live or dead vegetation that allows a fire to climb up from the landscape or forest floor into the tree canopy, such as tall grasses, shrubs, trees and tree branches.

Mechanical treatments - The manual or mechanical removal or modification of fuels. Examples include chipping, seeding, biomass removal, mowing, crushing, and piling.

Prescribed Fire - The deliberate burning of wildland fuels in either a natural or modified state and under specified environmental conditions, which allows the fire to be confined to a predetermined area. Examples include broadcast burns (burns within well-defined boundaries), jackpot burns (burns of natural or modified concentrations of fuels), and pile burns (burns of hand- or machine-piled fuels, confined to the perimeter of the pile).

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) – WUI is defined as areas where homes are built near or among lands prone to wildland fire. Depending on the area of the country, fire departments might refer to wildland fires as brush fires, forest fires, rangeland fires, or something else; however, they are all part of the WUI and all pose the same threat to local assets. The increase in the WUI threat has been steep because of continued development and exposure. The WUI is not a place, per se, but a set of conditions that can exist in nearly every community. It can be a major subdivision or it can be four homes on an open range. According to the National Fire Protection Association, conditions include (but are not limited

to): the amount, type, and distribution of vegetation; the flammability of the structures (homes, businesses, outbuildings, decks, fences) in the area, and their proximity to fire-prone vegetation and to other combustible structures; weather patterns and general climate conditions; topography; hydrology; average lot size; and road construction. WUI exists in every state in the country.

Woody biomass - the by-product of management, restoration, and hazardous fuel reduction treatments, including trees and woody plants (i.e., limbs, tops, needles, leaves, and other woody parts) grown in a forest, woodland, or rangeland environment.

Acronyms (Alphabetized)

BMPs	Best Management Practices
CWA	Clean Water Act
DM	Decision Memo
DN	Decision Notice
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FRCC	Fire Regime Condition Class
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
HFRA	Healthy Forest Restoration Act
MA	Management Area
MIS	Management Indicator Species
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFMA	National Forest Management Act
P&N	Purpose and Need
PA	Proposed Action
ROD	Record of Decision
T&E	Threatened and Endangered
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFS	U.S. Forest Service (also FS)
VQO	Visual Quality Objectives
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface