

The revised forest plan will include brief statements that describe the Shoshone's vision and niche. Using input from the October meetings, we developed draft vision and niche statements for your review. We'd like to know your thoughts about these. Please send niche and vision comments to shoshone_forestplan@fs.fed.us or to Forest Plan Revision, 808 Meadow Lane Avenue, Cody, WY 82414. Thank you.

The niche statement should explain the Shoshone's distinctive roles and contributions.

Draft niche—

Established in 1891 as part of the Yellowstone Timberland Reserve, the Shoshone is the nation's first national forest. Named for the Shoshoni Indians living in the area, the Shoshone National Forest has changed little since it was created.

It is a forest with a resounding history—indigenous Americans, such as the Arapaho, Blackfeet, Comanche, Crow, Nez Perce, Northern Cheyenne, Shoshoni, and Sioux, used the Shoshone for traditional cultural practices and subsistence living. Mountain men hunted, trapped, and traded on these lands, using Union Pass to travel through the mountains. Evidence of past uses remains today in tie hack flumes near Dubois and at Kirwin, a ghost town that was once a thriving mining community. Historical uses of the Forest resonate today in the rich western culture of the area, as professional outfitters and guides and historic lodges provide commercial fishing, hunting, and recreation services to the public.

It is a forest that contributes to local communities—through wood products, livestock grazing, minerals extraction, recreation- and tourism-related businesses that reflect Western culture, and agricultural, domestic, and recreational water uses, the Shoshone contributes to the economic, social, and cultural sustainability of the area.

It is a forest of mountain ranges—the rugged peaks and steep cliffs of the Absarokas, the scenic Wind Rivers, and the high alpine plateaus and glacial lakes of the Beartooths. From the Beartooth Scenic Byway and the Chief Joseph Scenic Highway in the north, the Buffalo Bill Scenic Byway near the center, and the Wyoming Centennial Byway in the south, visitors enjoy panoramas of pristine lakes, cloud-shrouded peaks, glacier-carved valleys, meadows blanketed with wildflowers, and an abundance and variety of wildlife.

It is a forest of distinctive physical features—Wyoming's highest point, Gannett Peak at 13,804 feet; the largest concentration of glaciers in the lower 48 states; the only Wild and Scenic River in Wyoming, the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone; Three Waters Mountain, which funnels water to the Colorado, Mississippi, and Columbia Rivers; paleontological specimens, including a petrified forest; and geology ranging from volcanics to limestone. Over 25 percent of the Shoshone is a landscape above timberline and nearly 25 percent of the Forest is mapped as rock, which projects as large expansive peaks and plateaus. The Shoshone's grasslands and forests, mainly lodgepole, spruce, and Douglas-fir, contribute to healthy watersheds—favorable conditions for water flow to the Missouri River.

It is a backcountry forest—large expanses of primitive wilderness and big mountain backcountry characterize the Shoshone. With five designated wilderness areas totaling about 1.4 million acres and an additional 749 thousand acres of inventoried roadless areas, approximately 84 percent of the Shoshone has seen little or no lasting human development.

It is a forest for recreation—high adventure and solitude in the backcountry, developed campgrounds along travel corridors, hunting, fishing, ice and rock climbing, mountaineering, whitewater rafting, dog sledding, hiking, horseback riding, internationally recognized trails, such as the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and 306 miles of snowmobile trails. The Shoshone is the eastern gateway to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, which draw nearly 3 million visitors annually.

It is a forest for wildlife—home to about 335 native wildlife species, the Shoshone is said to support the full complement of wildlife that was here at the time of the mountain men and fur trappers. The Shoshone provides habitat for grizzly and black bears, gray wolves, bighorn sheep, deer, elk, moose, pronghorn,

bison, and a host of smaller animals and birds ranging from picas, coyotes, and river otters to Clark's nutcrackers, blue grouse, and bald eagles. A year-round opportunity for wildlife watching is one of the reasons approximately 650,000 people visit the Shoshone every year.

The vision statement should illustrate what people want the Shoshone to achieve or become—the vision could be thought of as the goal for the management of the Shoshone.

Draft vision—

The Shoshone provides clean water to local communities for agriculture, household, and recreation use. Watersheds provide habitat for healthy populations of native aquatic species. Clean air and clear skies redouble the Shoshone's splendid scenery and heighten the experience of seeing millions of stars. From panoramic views of mountain ranges to clear alpine lakes and fields of wildflowers, the Shoshone's scenery is extraordinary.

The Forest provides critical contributions to local economies. A diverse and sustainable flow of goods and services, from wood products to tourism-related businesses, enhances community resiliency and supports livelihoods.

The Forest offers a wide range of recreation uses. Expansive wilderness areas provide a refuge from everyday life for people to experience solitude and adventure in a natural environment. Developed sites in highway corridors and in the front country complement the wilderness as part of the range of recreation opportunities. Additional recreation services are delivered by commercial outfitters, guides, and ranches. Wilderness areas are preserved and protected, and the undeveloped character and important values of backcountry areas are maintained.

An efficient system of safe roads and trails meets the needs of land managers and the public. Facilities and infrastructure—campgrounds, restrooms, offices, roads, and trails—meet the needs of people of all abilities.

Management promotes the sustainability of natural ecosystems for populations of native plants and animals. Natural disturbances, e.g., insects and fire, play a role in stimulating diversity in vegetation that is resilient to natural disturbances. Habitat is conserved to support healthy and diverse populations of native wildlife species. Threatened and endangered species are progressing toward recovery.

Life, property, and natural resources are protected from wildfire, though public and firefighter safety take precedence. Where appropriate, fire is allowed a natural role in ecological processes.

Tribal values and culture are recognized and supported. Cultural resources are protected and, where appropriate, interpreted for the public.

Forest employees provide high quality customer service in a management environment characterized by collaboration, communication, and cooperation. Visitor services, including interpretation and information, promote the natural history and culture of the area and enhance environmental and outdoor education. The Shoshone is a model for successful partnerships—people actively assist in caring for the land, and take seriously maintaining the long-term sustainability of the Forest's resources.