

# NEWS RELEASE

## USDA Forest Service

### Pacific Southwest Region

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### **FOREST SERVICE TO RE-ISSUE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FOREST PLANS DECISION**

VALLEJO, Calif., Dec. 21, 2005 – Due to a technical error in the documents, the USDA Forest Service (FS) plans to re-issue its Sept. 20 decision on land management plans for the four national forests in southern California.

Public comments on wildlife issues and the agency's responses were inadvertently omitted from the printed and electronic documents. FS officials discovered the error and made the information available at [www.fs.fed.us/r5/scfpr/projects/lmp/errata.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/scfpr/projects/lmp/errata.htm) on Oct. 24. The omitted material was fully considered in the decision-making process, so the decision itself will remain the same.

“While this is basically a technical error, we realize that it may have affected appeals of the decision by people who have concerns over wildlife issues,” said Pacific Southwest Regional Forester Bernie Weingardt. “We want to make sure that everybody has a fair opportunity to review the plan. Therefore, a new 90-day appeal period will begin when we re-issue the decision, which is planned for January 2006. The end of the appeal period will be determined at that time.”

In addition to announcing this in the Federal Register and newspapers of record, FS will notify those on the project's mailing list by postcard. Anyone who had already filed an appeal by the current Dec. 29 deadline will not need to resubmit it, but they can do so, or modify their original appeal.

“I remain fully confident that my decision will protect the natural character of these 3.5 million acres of public land, and provide a wide range of recreation opportunities over the next 10-15 years,” Weingardt said. He called the plans a “balanced, strategic blueprint for responding to the increasing demand for recreation and other uses of the national forests while protecting forest ecosystems and resources, especially threatened and endangered species.”

The Forest Plans will guide management of the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests (NFs) surrounding southern California's major urban populations. The new plans give top priority to protecting nearby urban and rural communities from the threat of catastrophic wildfires and set the stage for the Forest Service to work closely with local communities to reduce hazardous fuels in the "wildland urban interface." Motorized administrative access to certain backcountry areas will be allowed for reducing hazardous fuels and fighting wildfires in valuable watersheds and wildlife habitat. The plans incorporate numerous measures to protect watersheds, plants, wildlife, and their habitats during all management activities.

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