

Strategic plan to establish and implement nitrogen critical loads and target loads for national forests and national parks in the Pacific Northwest, USA

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The Clean Air Act and agency policies provide the basis for the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service to work with regulatory agencies and others to protect the air quality and air pollution-sensitive resources of national parks and national forests. A workgroup comprised of National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Geological Survey scientists has developed a five-year strategic plan to establish and implement nitrogen critical loads and target loads for areas managed by the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service in the states of Idaho, Oregon and Washington. The plan includes publication of a “state of knowledge” report that describes known and potential ecological effects of nitrogen in the Pacific Northwest and prioritizes data needs, development of nitrogen critical and target loads specific to Pacific Northwest ecosystems, preparation of GIS maps showing areas that exceed the nitrogen critical and target loads, and implementation of critical and target loads through National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service planning and policy mechanisms. Ultimately, the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service intend to collaborate with local, state and federal regulatory agencies to obtain emission reductions from sources that contribute to critical and target load exceedances in national parks and national forests.

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