

**\*\*For more information on coordination and cooperating agencies see under Quicklinks [Coordination Vs Cooperating Agency Status](#)**

**<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry/forestry-assistance/forest-in-focus/collaboration-and-partnerships>**

**Session Topic: Coordination/Cooperation**

Date:

Session Leader: Hagengruber

What were the main strategies or solutions that you discussed?

1. Forest Service is required to coordinate land management planning for the National Forest System (such as the amendment and revision of forest plans) with land management planning conducted by State and local governments. Agency direction is to coordinate, as in work closely with each other.
2. There is no such thing as coordination status.
3. The Forest Service deciding official may designate a State or county as a “cooperating agency” to assist the Forest Service in preparing an EIS for a project or Forest Plan Revisions on National Forest System lands, however, a county may not need cooperating agency status to achieve the sort of relationship the county desires.
4. Differences between “coordination” and “cooperating agency status”. Counties don’t need to be designated as cooperating agency status in order to be involved closely in the process - - requesting involvement and providing feedback early on as well as

keeping the lines of communication open with the District Ranger or Forest Supervisor are key to making the most of the opportunity to participate in the process.

5. Because cooperating agency status can result in significant (and potentially long-term) demand for staff time, it is most typical for agencies (particularly state or federal) to participate as cooperating agencies, although counties have served as cooperating agencies in the past. The county should be prepared to consider hiring an experienced contractor to be effective as a cooperating agency.
6. Cooperating agency status can identify very specific obligations for both parties and specific points of engagement, as spelled out in a formal agreement.
7. Montana counties present during the discussion expressed unanimous/near-unanimous interest in travel management.