

5 Tips for Writing Effective Comments

1. Identify yourself

Begin with an introduction of yourself. Use a simple statement, such as "I am a third-grade teacher at _____ elementary school" or "I am an avid member of the Sunday Hikers Club...."

2. Make it personal

Making connections between parts of the draft plan and how they would affect you personally can be powerful. For example, "I have hunted in the Upper North Fork, and future hunting would be compromised by this proposal." Or "I want to see recommended Wilderness in the Big Pryor Mountain area because I went on an incredible hike there and I would like my children to be able to have that experience someday." Avoid copying and pasting information. Rather, take the information provided by MWA and frame it around your own knowledge and experience to inform the Forest Service.

3. Be as clear as possible

The Forest Service will receive hundreds of comments. That's why it's so important to make your comments as clear as easy to read as possible, ensuring they are accurately read. Using subheadings to make your key points visible and break up big blocks of text will make your comment more effective. Adding in a reference to which part of the document you are referring to will also make it easier for agency reviewers to categorize your comment. For example "In Alternative C..."

4. Be specific

Specific information is much more helpful than general statements of support or opposition. The comment process is not a vote. The most effective comments are those that adequately explain the reasoning behind your position. Why do you oppose it? What do you see as a solution to that problem?

5. Include the facts

Citing news articles, scientific papers, expert opinions, or statements you've heard made by agency staff can be a powerful way to backup your comments.