

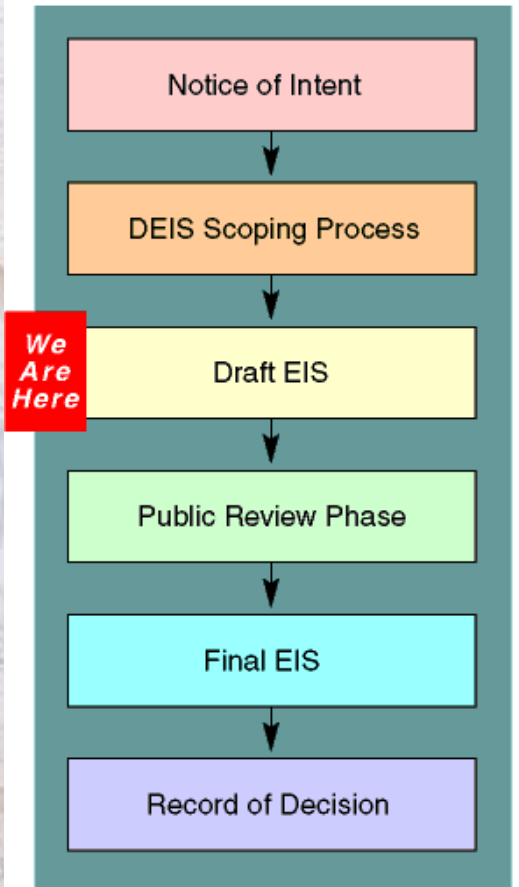


Protect America's Climbing

UNDERSTANDING NEPA: WHAT CLIMBERS NEED TO KNOW

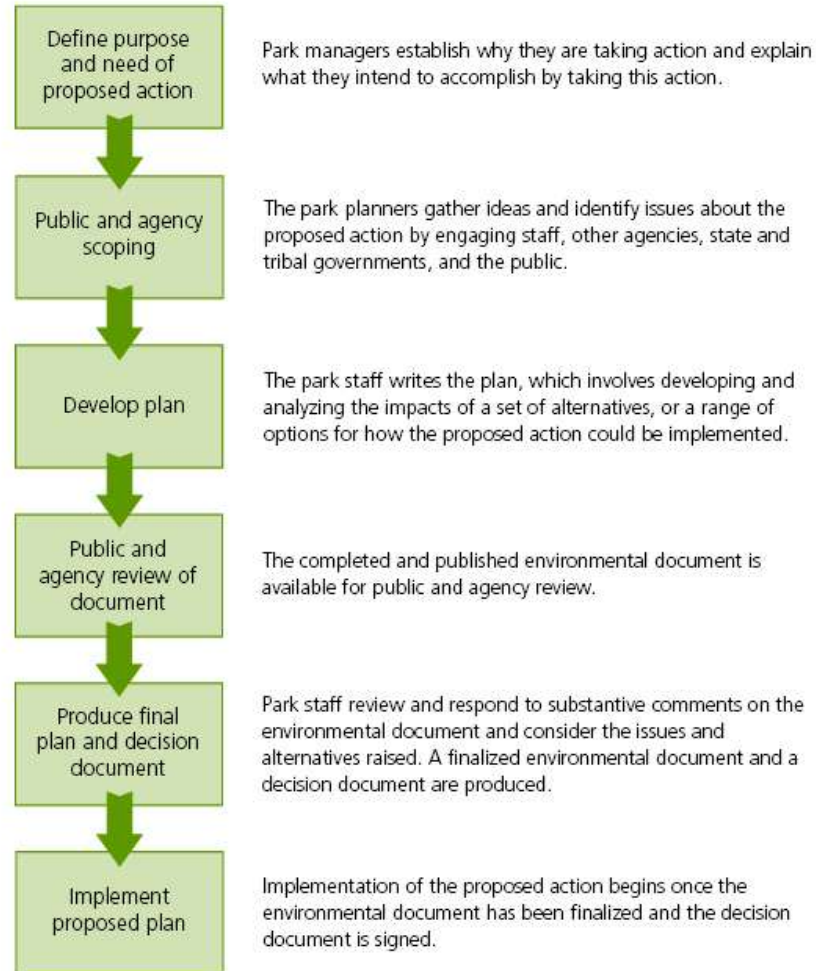
Process in Stages

Environmental Impact Statement Process



Public Participation and Informed Decision-Making

General Steps for Preparing an Environmental Document (EA or EIS)



Common NEPA Terms

In typical procedural order:

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – A law that requires all federal agencies to examine the environmental impacts of their actions, incorporate environmental information, develop a range of management alternatives, utilize public participation in the planning process, and implementation of all actions.

Federal agencies must integrate NEPA with other planning requirements and prepare appropriate documents to facilitate better environmental decision making.

Common NEPA Terms

Notice of Intent (NOI) - A notice published in the federal register that a major federal action will be considered in compliance with NEPA requirements.

This is often called the “Proposed Action” which could be as large as a forest-wide land use plan, to a small site specific projects. Smaller implementation plans are authorized by and “tiered” from larger comprehensive plans.

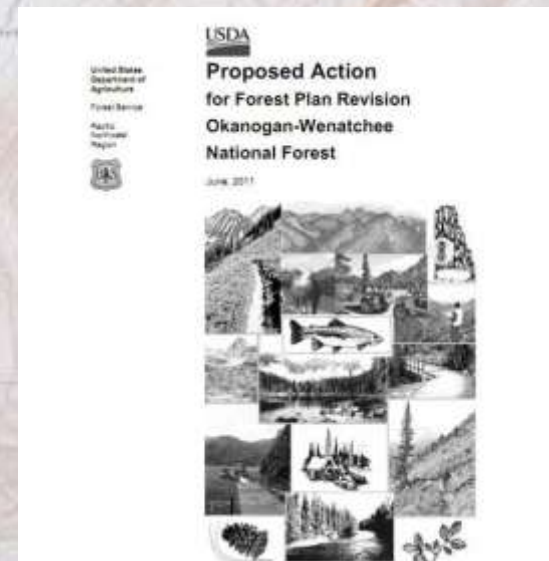


Common NEPA Terms

Categorical Exclusion (CE) - A category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and thus do not require an environmental analysis.

Scoping - An early and open process for determining the extent and variety of issues to be addressed in a major federal action and for identifying the significant issues related to the proposed action.

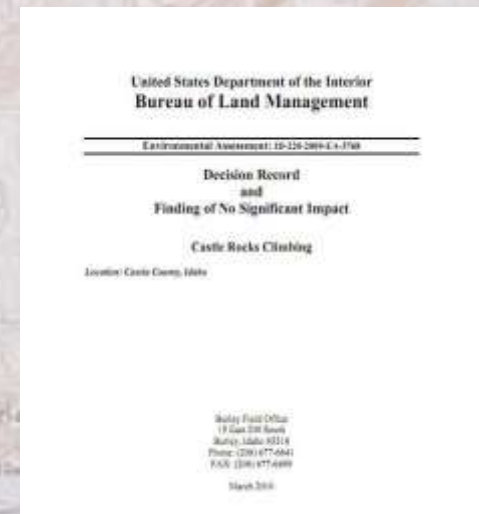
Scoping explores the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts to be considered through the NEPA process. Scoping precedes the analysis of planning alternatives.



Common NEPA Terms

Environmental Assessment (EA) – An EA briefly discusses the purpose and need for an action, alternatives to such action, and provides sufficient evidence and analysis of impacts to determine whether to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) or finding of no significant impact (FONSI).

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) - A document prepared in compliance with NEPA (supported by an EA) that analyzes whether a Federal action will have no significant effect on the human environment and for which an environmental impact statement, therefore, will not be prepared. It must include the EA or summary of the EA that supports the FONSI determination.



Common NEPA Terms

Environmental Impact Statement

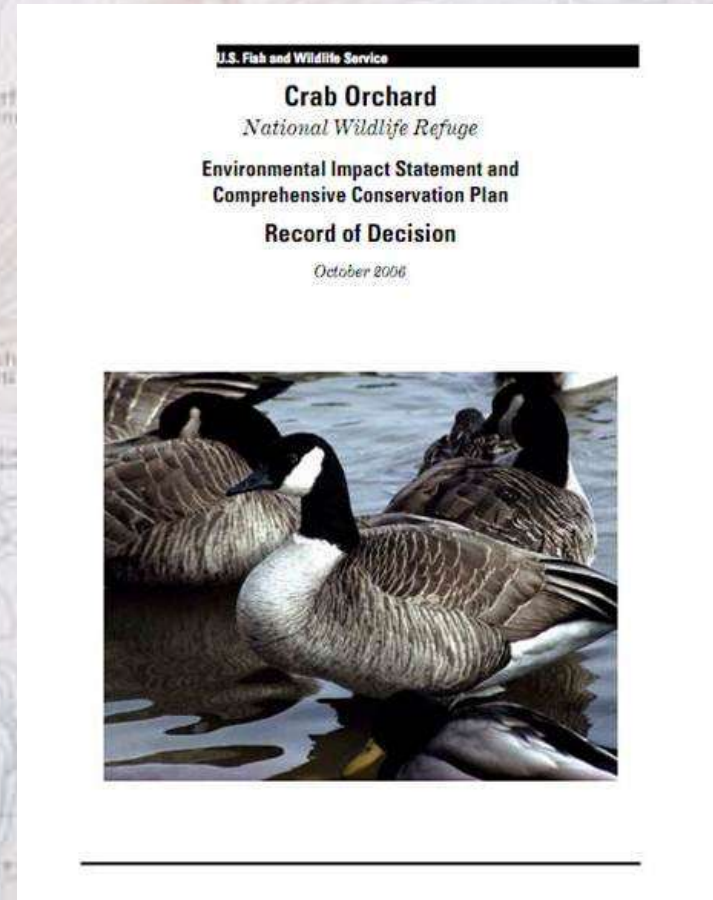
(EIS) - If it is determined that a proposed federal action does not fall within a designated categorical exclusion or does not qualify for a FONSI, then the responsible agency or agencies must prepare an EIS.

The purpose of an EIS (a much larger document and process than an EA but with similar elements) is to help public officials make informed decisions that are a reflection of an understanding of environmental consequences and the alternatives available.

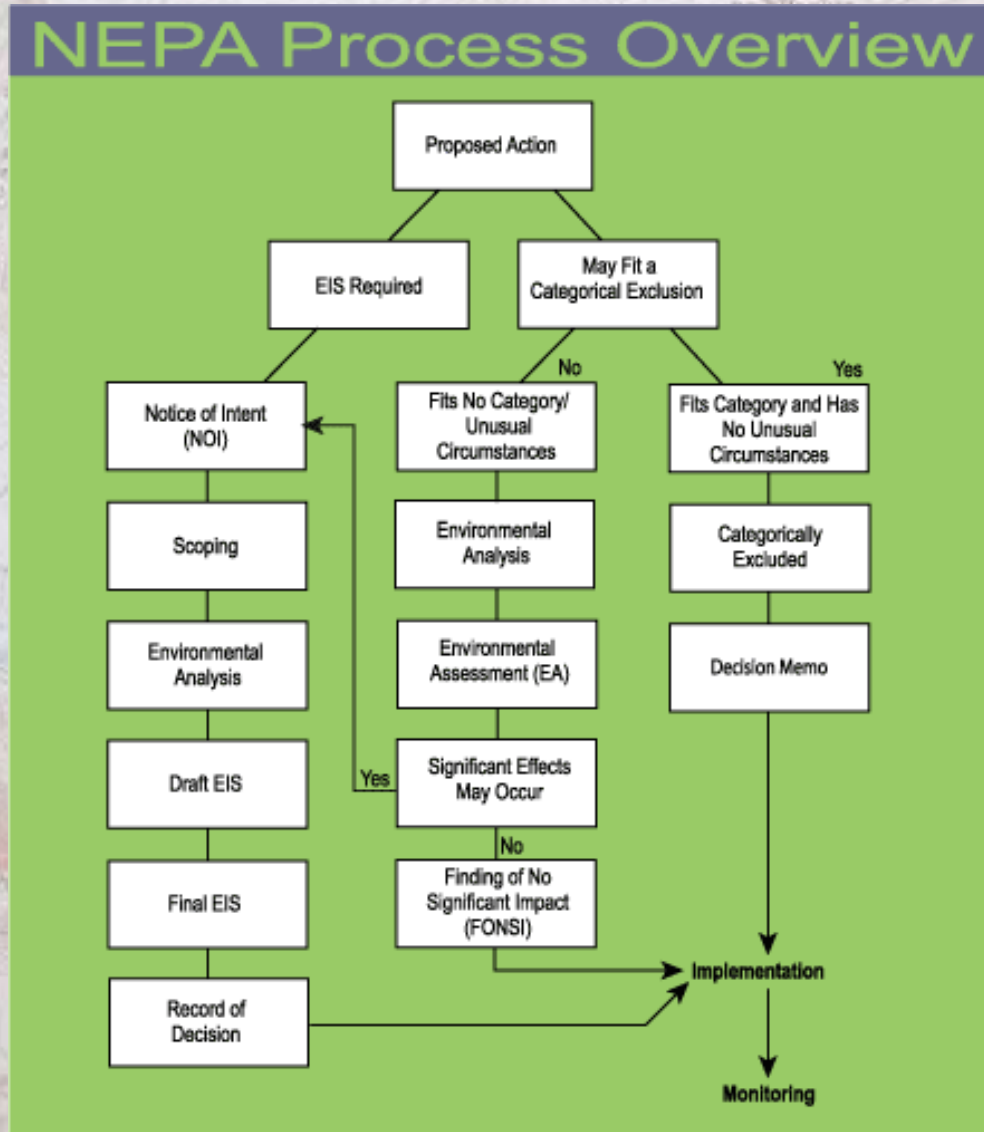


Common NEPA Terms

Record of Decision (ROD) - A concise public record of decision prepared by the Federal agency pursuant to NEPA that contains a statement of the decision, identification of all alternatives considered, identification of the environmentally preferable alternative, a statement as to whether all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the alternative selected have been adopted (and if not, why they were not), and a summary of monitoring and enforcement where applicable for any mitigation.



NEPA Decision Tree



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Know your land managers.
- Know where in the planning process you are.
- Identify friends and foes.
- Research other options for your desired outcome.
- Know how to help implement the outcomes you like, and what to do about the outcomes you don't like.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Make sure you're in regular contact with your local land manager. Develop a relationship. Do an Adopt-a-Crag.**
- **Get on the list for any management actions.**
- **Request meetings and reach out to other stakeholders.**
- **Attend public meetings.**
- **Submit helpful scoping comments; not a vote, constructive ideas are valuable.**



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Get others to engage planning process, cultivate coalitions.
- Meet with other climbers.
- The Scoping phase is often the most important as planning ideas haven't yet solidified.
- Draft helpful comments to draft phase that specifically address proposed alternatives and promote the combination of planning options you think best. Make sure to copy important stakeholders and policy makers.

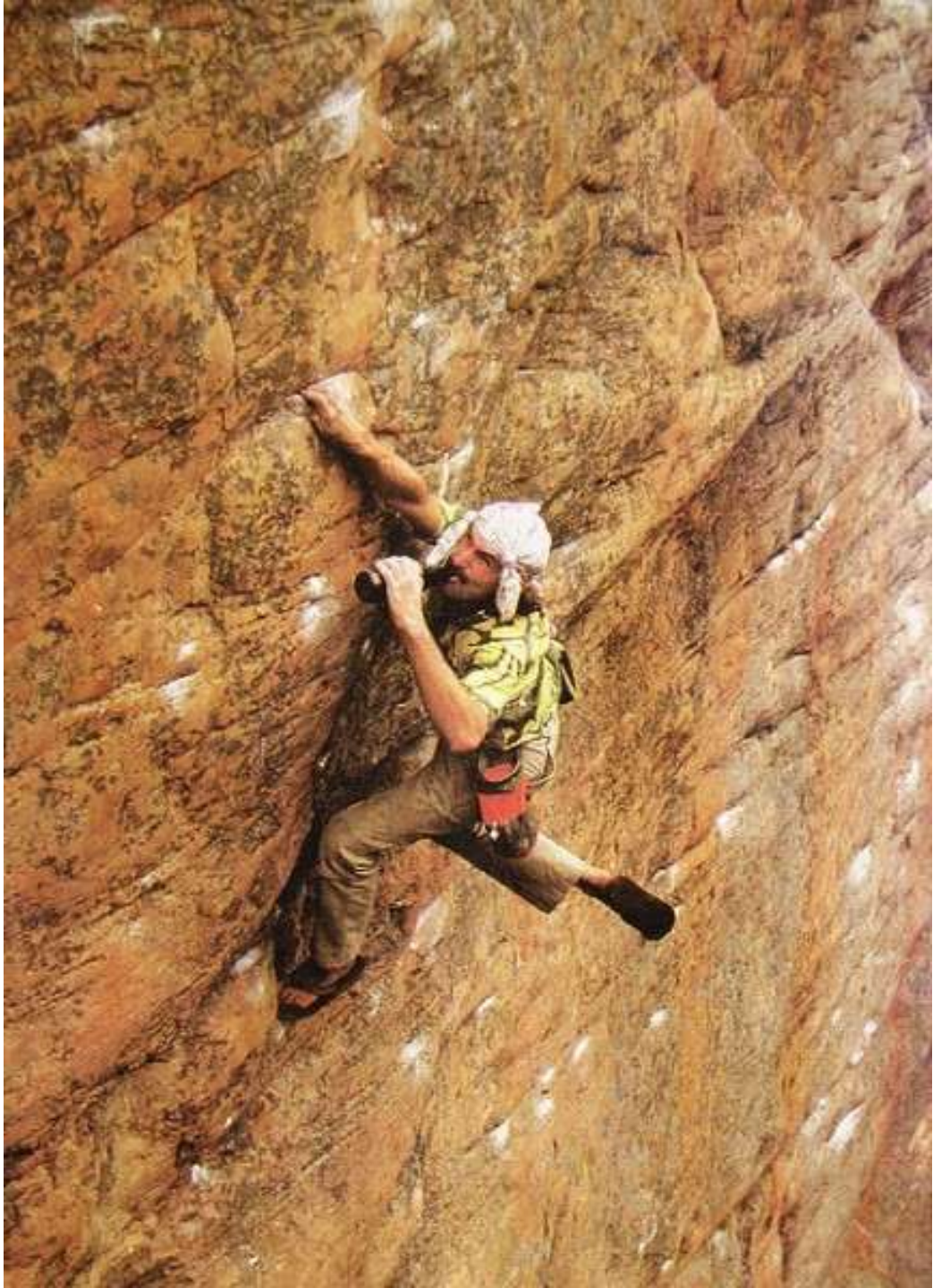


WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Request follow up meetings, conduct additional community outreach, and wait for the ROD.**
- **Review ROD consider options including assistance with implementation, efforts to modify negative outcomes, or appeal.**
- **Maintain positive relations and continue to monitor new plan/policies and watch for new initiatives.**

WHAT'S OUT OF YOUR CONTROL

- **Hostile 3rd-party stakeholders and unfriendly land managers (but advance relations can help prevent).**
- **The law: sensitive wildlife, cultural resources, bolts (maximize your chances by know the ESA, NHPA, and local fixed anchor policies).**
- **Other climbers that do stupid things (local peer groups like LCOs tend to prevent climbers being own worst enemy).**



Endangered Species Act

New River Gorge, Corte Madera/San Diego, Williamson Rock

- **Birds, frogs, lichen, mice, flowers all can close down climbing areas.**
- **Little management policy guidance; local land managers often make up their own policies.**
- **Federal v. State listings. Very little specific guidance even for the most common climbing closures. Little really known about human disturbance on cliff-nesting raptors.**
- **Any federal action that could affect listed species requires consultation with Fish & Wildlife Service who often significantly affect extent of management alternatives.**



National Historic Preservation Act

Cave Rock, Twin Sisters/City of Rocks, Castle Rocks, Christmas Tree Pass, etc.

- Difference between archaeological sites and sacred site. Again, some land managers make up their own policies. DOI 50-foot policy.
- The Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) is designed to protect archeological resources on Federal and Indian lands. Unlike NHPA, ARPA provides both civil and criminal penalties for failure to comply with the act. ARPA does contain a confidentiality provision similar to NHPA. Also NAGPRA.
- The NHPA is the primary federal law governing the preservation of cultural and historic resources and establishes a national preservation program.
- Identifies historic and cultural resources for listing in the National Register of Historic Places: Traditional Cultural Property (TCP)
- Requirement that federal agencies take into consideration actions that could adversely affect historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the NRH, known as the Section 106 Review Process.
- Section 106 “consulting party” requirements.

Fixed Anchors

Red Rocks, Christmas Tree Pass, Yosemite, City of Rocks, etc.

- Local, state and federal policies differ.
- Climbers care about style, land managers care about impacts.
- Wilderness and other special land designations and rules.

- National Park Service



- Bureau of Land Management

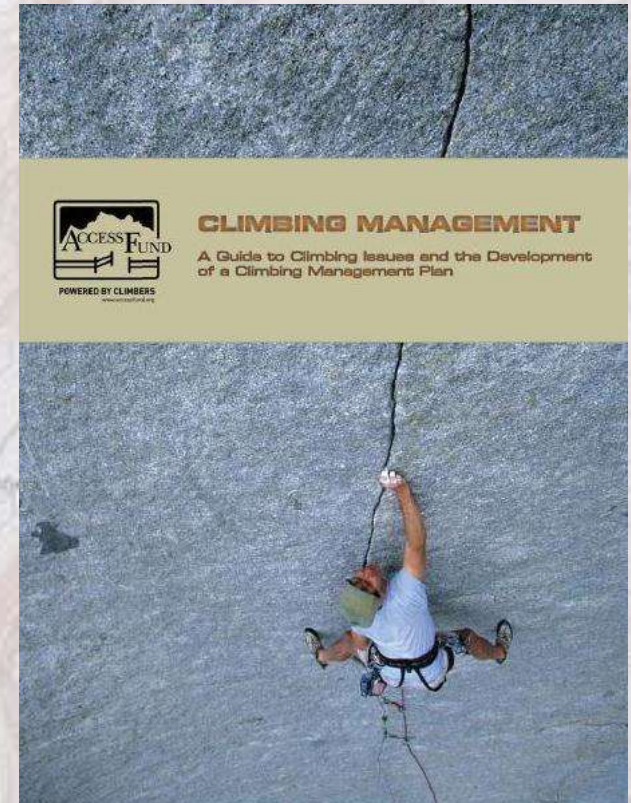


- US Forest Service

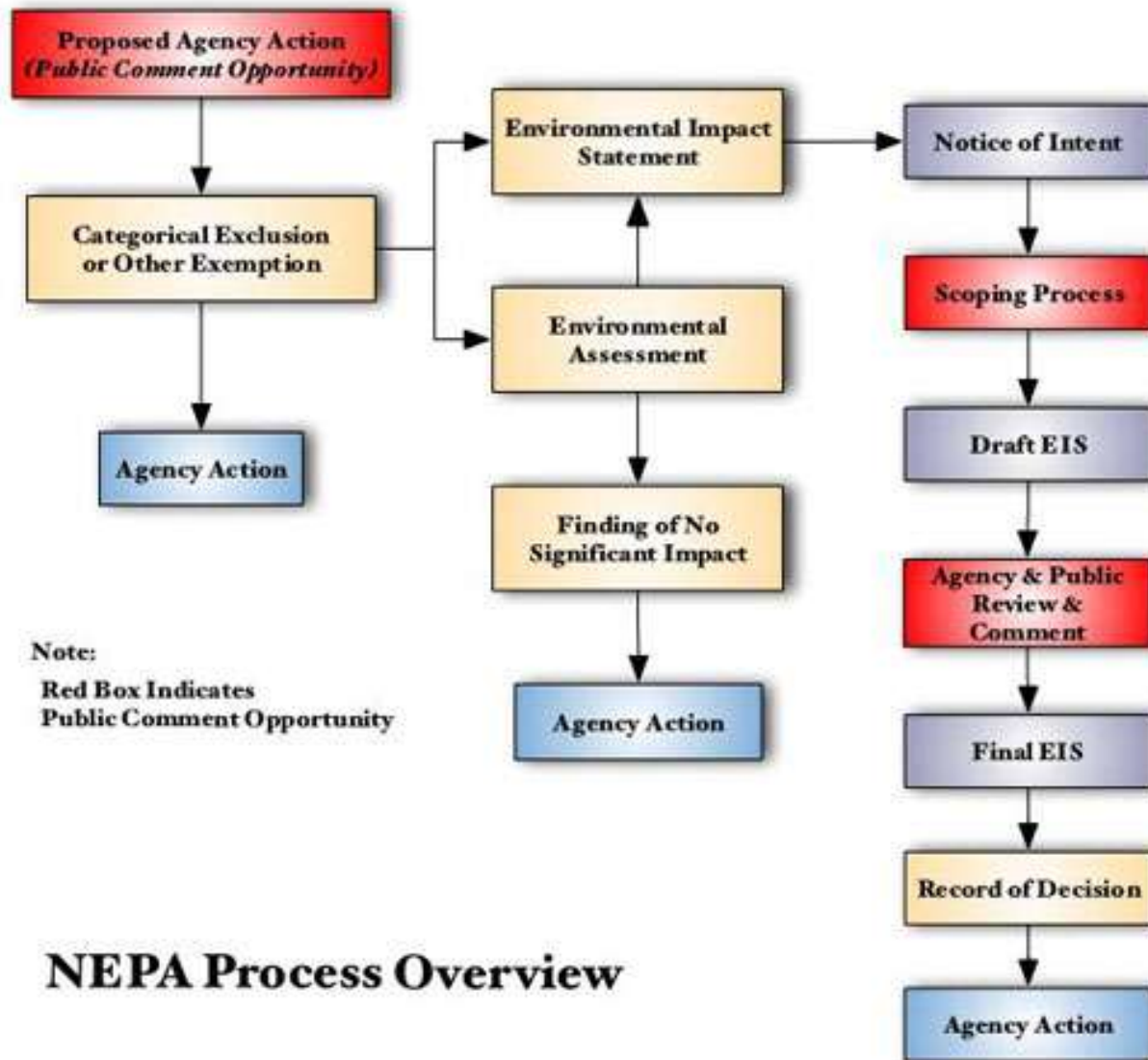


Other Issues

- Wilderness - *Black Canyon, Red Rocks*
- Wild and Scenic Rivers - *Merced*
- Land Exchanges - *Castle Rocks Ranch, Oak Flat*
- Climber Trails - *everywhere*
- Bivouac and Backcountry Camping - *Alpine Lakes W*
- Human Waste - *Indian Creek*
- Vegetation - *Boulder Canyon*
- Water Resources - *Williamson Rock*
- Pets - *Sinks Canyon*
- Noise - *Yosemite*
- Litter - *everywhere*
- Guide Services and Organized Climbing Groups - *NRG*
- Parking and Transportation - *Tuolumne*
- User Fees - *Denali NP*
- Search And Rescue - *Joshua Tree NP*
- Bouldering - *Rocky Mountain NP*
- Ice Climbing - *Hyalite Canyon*
- Alpine Areas, Wilderness and Solitude, and Caves.



www.climbingmanagement.org



NEPA Process Overview

SUCCESS STRATEGIES

- **Get in early and often.**
- **Make friends with policy makers.**
- **Make sure planners are aware you know your stuff and aren't going away.**
- **Get others involved.**
- **Stay persistently friendly with land managers.**
- **Go climbing!**



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