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Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Battle

By Chuck Quirnbach
Wednesday May 5, 2004

(MADISON) The US Forest Service and environmental groups are battling over a newly released management plan for the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Northern Wisconsin.

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest covers more than one and a half million acres in eleven counties. It's popular with groups ranging from timber cutters to hikers seeking solitude. The US Forest Service took in thousands of comments over the past year on its latest management proposal for the northern Wisconsin forest.

The service says its newly released final plan strikes a reasonable balance between competing users. But Rick Homarron of Habitat Education Center in Madison says the plan has too many holes. Homarron says the plan manages too much for aspen and other species that grow quickly after fires or logging, and therefore attract popular animals like deer.

Homarron says the plan should instead manage for more older, mixed hardwoods and white pines. He says those have more long-term value and create better recreational opportunities. But forest service planner Michael Miller says it's hard to go back to how the forest looked in pre-settlement times. He says some groups want more aspen.

The forest service and environmental groups also differ on how many roadless acres in the Chequamegon-Nicolet should get better protection as wilderness areas. Groups that don't like the new plan can appeal to the chief of the forest service, or look at going to court.

Changing Immigration Laws

By Chuck Quirnbach
Wednesday May 5, 2004

(WASHINGTON, DC) Some Wisconsin groups are joining a national push for a Democratic plan to change immigration laws. Senator Russ Feingold and other Democrats want to make it easier for some undocumented workers to become legal citizens, and for immigrants to bring in immediate family members.

Leonela Vega immigrated from Mexico about twenty years ago and now has a law degree from the UW Madison. She says if current restrictions had been in place ten years ago, she would not have done as well. Another Mexican immigrant, Jose Carillo, is active with the AFL-CIO and Latino groups in Rock County. He says undocumented