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Route To:

Subject: 2007 Implementation Monitoring for PACFISH/INFISH and the 1998 Biological Opinions for Salmon, Steelhead, and the 2003 Biological Opinion for the Jarbidge Population of Bull Trout

To: Forest Supervisors

REPLY DUE DECEMBER 31, 2007
RF # 2007-39

This letter explains the Regional Deputy Team's Monitoring Program requirements under the PACFISH/INFISH Biological Opinions (PIBO) for 2007. Grazing is the only element of the module that is required to be reported in 2007.

Background: Region 4 of the Forest Service has made commitments through the PACFISH and INFISH Management Strategies to improve aquatic resources found in the Interior Columbia River Basin. Since the Region began implementing these strategies, and in some cases even before, there has been marked improvement in management for aquatic resources. This effort is recognized and commended. It is expected that FS line officers will continue to work with grazing permittees to ensure that this cooperative effort continues.

The application of the Implementation Monitoring Module will meet interagency grazing implementation monitoring requirements of the salmon, steelhead, and bull trout PACFISH and INFISH biological opinions issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service and by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1998.

1. LINK BETWEEN IMPLEMENTATION and EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING

The PIBO Implementation Monitoring (IM) program monitors annual grazing indicators (e.g. stubble height, bank alteration) and provides critical input into the PIBO Effectiveness Monitoring (EM) project, which examines the long-term effectiveness of current management in maintaining or restoring riparian and aquatic systems. Field units establish Designated Monitoring Areas (DMAs) on stream reaches where livestock have access and which reflect a typical level of grazing use. The DMAs are the sites where IM is done by the field units, and also are the sites measured for EM by the PIBO team. Therefore, high priority is placed on ensuring that the exact locations of DMAs are documented (as through UTMs) and monumented (as with a fence post or other permanent marker) so that all monitoring teams can measure the site in a consistent and repeatable way. *The protocol for selecting and monitoring DMAs is in Attachment 1.* Future Deputy Team Field Reviews will assess compliance with this protocol and will select the DMA sites to be reviewed.

In 2007, the Regional Office will work with field units to assure that end-of-season implementation monitoring occurs for each DMA site to be sampled by the EM Team this year (2007) and for those DMA sites scheduled for sampling next year (2008). Obtaining IM data in 2007 for the 2007 **and** 2008 EM sampling sites will make it easier to identify cause and effect relationships, especially for bank stability, and will increase the ability to detect trends in watershed condition. Both the 2007 and 2008 EM DMA sites can be included as part of the required 20% of Category I pastures (see Part 4, Sampling and Reporting), which will lessen the monitoring workload for field units.

For the Salmon Challis National Forest, the DMA sites that the EM Team will sample in 2007-2008 are listed in Attachment 2. The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest will establish and monitor DMA sites this year in subwatersheds receiving EM monitoring in 2007-2008 (see Attachment 3).

It is important that data the EM team collects at the DMAs reflect the livestock use indicators most important to stream banks and stream channels. Accordingly, the following IM requirements will apply to these DMAs:

- Measurements will be on the greenline (first perennial vegetation above the water's edge).

- Measurements must include, at minimum, bank alteration and stubble height (unless livestock do not use herbaceous vegetation on the greenline). Where woody vegetation dominates the DMA with little or no herbaceous vegetation along the greenline, woody use (browse) should be measured, and may be sampled in lieu of stubble height.

- These measures will be made using the Multiple Indicators Method (MIM). MIM (2007) is available at: *http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/info/publications/technical_bulletins/tb_07-01.html*

2. COMPLIANCE/ NON-COMPLIANCE FEEDBACK FOR LINE OFFICERS

The PIBO monitoring program implements the monitoring requirements of PACFISH, INFISH and the 1998 Biological Opinions for salmon, steelhead, and bull trout. Line officers should assure that all actions they take are consistent with these requirements. Accordingly, managers should review and act upon the results of implementation monitoring. The Implementation Monitoring Module and Database (see Part 5, Database) keeps track of any pastures that did not meet standards and any "non-compliance" corrective actions that may have been taken. Consequently, the Database can be used to evaluate the need to modify or refine management actions for a particular grazing activity. In addition, the Database has a "local" feature that keeps a record of compliance to local (non-PIBO) monitoring requirements, such as those of land use plans, projects under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) decisions, or local Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultations.

3. ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The adaptive management process for livestock grazing outlined in "Findings of University of Idaho Stubble Height Study Team"

(http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/boise/research/techtrans/projects/pacfish_grazingdocs.shtml) is being implemented in Forest Service Regions 1 and 4 and Idaho BLM. A "Decision Tree" that facilitates the process of grazing adaptive management was sent to you previously (Correspondence File Code 2200-3, July 6, 2005) and is available at http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/boise/research/techtrans/projects/pacfish_home.shtml under "Field Unit Direction."

4. SAMPLING AND REPORTING FOR 2007

Field units will use the PACFISH/INFISH Implementation Monitoring Module and Database (see Part 5, Database) to monitor all authorized livestock grazing use that began or was completed during the current year. **Grazing activities to be monitored should include:**

a. Those grazing activities occurring at DMAs within the subwatersheds (6th field Hydraulic Unit Codes [HUCs]) selected for monitoring by the EM Team. This includes DMAs in HUCs to be monitored in both 2007 and 2008. DMA access information and photos of each site are available at: ftp://fsweb.gsc.wo.fs.fed.us/pub/PIBO_New/IM/Pics_sitemaps/2007/Regions/R4/

   For the Salmon Challis National Forest, names and locations of DMAs to be re-monitored by PIBO EM crews in 2007 and 2008 are listed in Attachment 2.

   For the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest, subwatersheds that the PIBO EM crew will sample in 2007 and 2008 are shown on maps in Attachment 3.

b. All non-compliance grazing activities from the previous year.

c. Grazing activities in at least 20 percent of Category I pastures per year, based on field unit priorities and input from the Level 1 Team. Category I pastures are those within subwatersheds with ESA listed fish. Field units decide where to focus, although every Category I pasture use area should be sampled at least once within the life of the 10-year grazing permit. The 20 percent sample of Category I pastures may include pastures with DMAs monitored by the EM team; pastures that were in non-compliance from the previous year; or pastures with local ESA consultation monitoring requirements.

d. Grazing activities in Category II pastures. These pastures are those within PACFISH/INFISH subwatersheds that lack ESA listed fish.

e. Grazing actions where local ESA consultation requires implementation monitoring and reporting through the PACFISH/INFISH Implementation Monitoring Database.

5. DATABASE

The PACFISH/INFISH Implementation Monitoring Module and Database and instructions are available online at http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/boise/research/techtrans/projects/pacfish_home.shtml. Field units will enter all implementation monitoring data (see Part 4 (above)) into this Database. If technical questions arise with downloading or populating the database, please refer your questions to

Kerry Overton at 208-373-4357 (koverton@fs.fed.us) or Taylor Dixon at 208-373-4395 (tdixon@fs.fed.us).

The Database has been designed to accommodate stream or riparian monitoring data other than just for PACFISH/INFISH. Data for actions other than grazing, or activities outside the requirements of PIBO, can be entered, and the Database can generate customized reports. Consequently, field units are encouraged to use the Database for their non-PIBO monitoring needs.

6. COORDINATION

As in previous years, the IM Program will rely on coordination between IM Task Team members (Regional or State) and Field Unit Coordinators (local contacts). IM Task Team and Field Unit Coordinators are listed in Attachment 4.

Timeframe: Data should be entered into the PACFISH/INFISH Implementation Monitoring database by December 31, 2007, with submission of the files to the central location by January 15, 2008.

Questions about the Implementation Monitoring program should be directed to Cynthia Tait at 801-625-5358 or your Field Unit coordinator.

/s/ Mary Wagner for
JACK G. TROYER
Regional Forester