



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Pacific
Southwest
Region

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File Code: 1920

Date: April 27, 2022

Dear Interested Party,

The Inyo National Forest has completed a biennial Monitoring Report for the Inyo National Forest Land Management Plan as required of the 2012 Planning Rule at 36 CFR 219.12(d). It evaluates monitoring questions and indicators presented in the 2019 Land Management Plan monitoring plan chapter, in relation to management actions carried out in the plan area. Providing timely, accurate monitoring information to the responsible official and the public is a key requirement of the plan monitoring program.

Monitoring results are evaluated in order to make findings on the status or existing conditions of plan components selected for monitoring. Based on the findings, recommendations can be made for changes needed in forest plan direction, such as plan components or other plan content that guide management of resources in the plan area (e.g. forest plan, management activities, monitoring program, or forest assessment). The Monitoring Report is designed to provide the necessary information to help the responsible official determine a course of action based on the recommended management adjustments of this report. It is not a decision document. Future management decisions with appropriate environmental documentation may occur based on the Monitoring Report recommendations. The full 2021 biennial Monitoring Report for the Inyo National Forest Land Management Plan is available at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/inyo/landmanagement/planning>.

This is the first Monitoring Report for our 2019 land management plan, so there has not been a long-term monitoring period to understand the effects of the 2019 plan. However, we were able to gather baseline data for future comparison, and track trends of some of the focal resources in the 2019 plan.

There are no Monitoring Report recommendations for changes to the land management plan component language.

There are some minor recommended changes to the monitoring plan itself. Based on the Monitoring Report recommendations for changes to the monitoring plan, administrative changes are proposed for public notice and consideration of comments [36 CFR 219.16(c)(6)]. These recommended changes are summarized below, in Table 1, and explained more fully in the Monitoring Report. Only those changes to content in the land management plan itself are included in Table 1.



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Questions or comments on the Monitoring Report findings and recommendations and/or the proposed administrative change may be directed to the Forest Environmental Coordinator Erin Noesser at erin.noesser@usda.gov. Comments will be accepted until June 2, 2022 (FSH 1909.12, 21.5). Administrative changes are not subject to the objection process (36 CFR 219.50). Upon considerations of comments, the proposed changes to the LRMP Monitoring Plan will be finalized and effective upon signature of the responsible official Lesley Yen, Forest Supervisor, and published to the Inyo National Forest Planning website:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/inyo/landmanagement/planning>.

Sincerely,

Acting for
LESLEY YEN
Forest Supervisor



Table 1. Recommended administrative changes to the monitoring plan in the Inyo National Forest 2019 land management plan.

CURRENT LANGUAGE			PROPOSED CHANGES TO PLAN CONTENT			
Plan Component Evaluated	Monitoring Item and Question	Indicator(s)	Plan Component Evaluated	Monitoring Item and Question	Indicator(s)	Rationale for Change
WTR-FW-DC-03	WS01 To what extent are watersheds in proper functioning condition being maintained, and watersheds in altered or impaired condition being improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watershed Condition Framework classification 	No change	No change	No change	NA
WTR-FW-DC-05	WS02 To what extent has erosion from temporary and permanent roads and trails affected water quality and soil sustainability in the national forest?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road and motorized trail condition Implementation and effectiveness monitoring results from the Best Management Practice Evaluation Program Number and type of stream crossing and bank stabilization projects 	No change	No change	No change	NA
TERR-OLD-DC-03	TE01 What is the status and trend of large trees in the Sierra Nevada montane forest?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of area with large trees Number of large trees, snags, large downed logs per acre by forest type 	No change	TE01 What is the status and trend of large trees and old forests in the Sierra Nevada montane forest?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of area with large trees and old forests Number of large trees and snags per acre by forest type 	Include “old forests” in the monitoring question to cover important aspects of old forests like spatial extent. Remove logs from monitoring indicator 2 because desired conditions for log densities are not provided in the Plan.
TERR-PINY-DC-01	TE02 What is the status of pinyon-juniper woodlands?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pinyon-juniper spatial extent Number, type, and extent of disturbance events in pinyon-juniper woodlands (such as wildfire, disease, drought) 	No change	No change	No change	NA

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TERR-SAGE-DC-01	TE03 What is the condition of sagebrush communities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportions of seral classes, sagebrush cover • Acres of treatment to improve age class distribution • Acres of wildland fire • Percent native understory vegetation 	No change	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportions of seral classes, sagebrush cover • Acres of sagebrush regeneration • Acres of treatment to improve age class distribution • Acres of wildland fire • Percent native understory vegetation 	Add an indicator to the monitoring question for sagebrush regeneration to see if decadence is balanced by new growth.
RCA-MEAD-DC-05	AE01 What is the vegetative condition of selected grazed and ungrazed meadows?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rangeland ecological condition • Species richness, species diversity, and plant functional groups • Range greenline monitoring • Vegetation community types 	No change	No change	No change	No change
MA-RCA-DC-05	AE02 To what extent are riparian areas functioning properly across different management areas and levels of disturbance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation cover, structure, and composition • Floodplain and channel physical characteristics 	No change	No change	No change	No change
WTR-FW-DC-02	AE03 What is the status of water quality in national forest waterbodies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator bacteria levels forestwide • 303(d) status 	No change	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator bacteria levels in site-specific locations • 303(d) status 	Forestwide monitoring for water quality is insufficient for informing management
TERR-SAGE-DC-02 TERR-PINY-DC-01	FS01 How is the abundance of Cheatgrass and red brome (nonnative <i>Bromus</i> spp.) changing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial extent and percent cover 	No change	FS01 How is the abundance of Cheatgrass and red brome (nonnative <i>Bromus</i> spp.) changing in sagebrush ecosydstems.?	No change	Focus on sagebrush ecosystems, rather than across the entire Forest. To better address the land management plan desired conditions tied to this question, which relate to sage brush and sage grouse habitat.

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WTR-FW-DC-02	FS02 How are aquatic benthic macroinvertebrate communities indicating stream ecosystem integrity is being maintained in high quality waters or improved in degraded waters?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benthic macroinvertebrate diversity, species composition, and related metrics 	Remove question	Remove question	Remove question	Forest-wide data with repeated measurements are unavailable , other monitoring questions better address aquatic ecosystems, and macroinvertebrates will be evaluated as part of the Region 5 broader-scale monitoring strategy.
TERR-SH-DC-01	AR01 To what extent is the integrity of special habitats for at-risk plants and animals being maintained or improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special habitat extent (acres) and health (e.g., species composition) Number, type, and extent of disturbance events (e.g., adverse effects from authorized or unauthorized use) 	No change	No change	No change	NA
SPEC-SHP-DC-01	AR02 What is the quality of bighorn sheep winter range?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acres of vegetation management in the winter range for bighorn sheep Tree cover in winter bighorn sheep range 	No change	AR02 What is the quality of bighorn sheep critical habitat?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acres of vegetation management in the critical habitat for bighorn sheep Tree cover in bighorn sheep critical habitat 	Change the monitoring question to include only critical habitat, not focus only on winter range, because winter range is not well defined.
SPEC-SG-DC-01	AR03 How is the condition of seasonal sage-grouse habitats and connectivity changing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sagebrush stand condition from monitoring plots (e.g., cover, species composition) Acres of treatment (e.g., conifer removal, meadow restoration, invasive removal) 	No change	No change	No change	NA
REC-FW-DC-03	VU01 What are the trends in visitor use and satisfaction?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor use and satisfaction (National Visitor Use Monitoring survey) Visitor recreational activity type 	No change	No change	No change	NA

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REC-FW-DC-11	VU02 To what extent are trails providing access to the activities as intended?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total miles of motorized and nonmotorized roads and trails • Percentage of miles maintained 	No change	No change	No change	NA
VIPS-FW-DC-04	VU03 How effective have Forest communications with the public been in considering diverse backgrounds?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and types of public outreach activities • Visitor demographics (National Visitor Use Monitoring survey) 	No change	No change	No change	NA
DA-WILD-DC-01	VU04 To what extent is designated wilderness being managed to preserve wilderness character?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilderness performance measures and elements classification 	No change	No change	No change	NA
TERR-ALPN-DC-03	CC01 How are high-elevation white pines responding to the effects of climate change and other stressors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial extent, by forest type • Tree mortality, incidence of insects, disease, and pathogens • Spatial extent of tree regeneration 	No change	No change	No change	NA
WTR-FW-DC-01	CC02 What changes have occurred to the timing, amount, and duration of natural and managed runoff into the national forest's waterways?	Annual in-stream flow regime for selected waterways (not those regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission)	No change	No change	Annual in-stream flow regime (center of mass of runoff and highest mean daily flows) for selected waterways (not those regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission)	Refined to better track changes related to climate, through more specific measures of instream flow, rather than just "instream flow".
FIRE-FW-DC-01	CC03 How are fire regimes changing compared to the desired conditions and the natural range of variation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire return interval departure • Number and acres of fire by ecosystem type • Fire severity by ecosystem type 	No change	CC03 How are fire regimes changing compared to the desired conditions and the natural range of variation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire return interval departure • Number and acres of fire by ecological zone • Fire severity by ecosystem zone 	Ecological zone is the term and concept used in the land management plan.

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LOC-FW-DC-03	PC01 What are the economic conditions in local communities that could affect the impact of national forest contributions to local economies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic health Economic diversity Local fiscal conditions 	Combine with PC02	Combine with PC02	Combine with PC02	Combine with PC02
LOC-FW-DC-03	PC02 What economic contributions are national forest-based recreation, forest products, mining and grazing making to local communities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conditions in forest-based sectors Forest contributions 	No change	PC02 What are the economic conditions in local communities and what are the economic contributions of forest-based uses such as recreation, forest products, mining and grazing, and ecological services, to the local community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local economic conditions Forest contributions 	Given the availability of new best available scientific information and the overlap of some indicators between the two questions, we will combine PC01 and PC02 into one question.
FIRE-FW-GOAL-01	PC03 What management actions are contributing to the achievement of desired conditions relating to fire regimes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acres of fires managed for resource objectives by ecosystem type Acres of fire by objective within each fire management zone Acres of prescribed fire Acres of mechanical treatment 	No change	PC03 What management actions are contributing to the achievement of desired conditions relating to fire regimes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acres of fires managed for resource objectives by ecosystem type Acres of fire by objective within each fire management zone Acres of prescribed fire, including pile burning Acres of mechanical and hand thinning 	Add pile burning and hand thinning to capture all fuels treatment. The intent of the indicators are the same, but captures all management actions.
VIPS-FW-DC-01	PC04 To what degree is the national forest using partnerships to provide additional capacity for visitor services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of agreements with partners, by activity type, that are supporting visitor services Number and type of projects completed with partners 	No change	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of agreements with partners, that are supporting visitor services Number of volunteers, partner personnel, hours contributed, and value of contributions by partners that are supporting visitor services. 	The updated indicators align with the categories of data available through the VSReports system.
WTR-FW-DC-04	PR01 How does soil disturbance differ from pre- and post-activity for timber management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil compaction, displacement, and erosion 	No change	No change	No change	NA

