



**File Code:** 1920  
**Date:** February 11, 2016

Dear Interested Citizen,

The 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219) requires the Deschutes National Forest to establish a land management transition monitoring plan that is consistent with the new Planning Rule's monitoring requirements by May 9, 2016, or as soon as practicable. We have reviewed our existing Deschutes Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) monitoring plan and developed modifications to conform to the new monitoring requirements. When finalized, this transition monitoring plan will be in effect until the Forest Plan is revised.

We want to take this opportunity to share our draft transition monitoring plan (attached) with you and request your input. Your input would be most helpful to us in finalizing the monitoring plan if we receive your comments by March 15, 2016.

#### **Background - 2012 Planning Rule**

The 2012 Planning Rule includes eight monitoring requirements where at least one monitoring question and indicator is established for each of the eight requirements and they are as follows:

- i. The status of select watershed conditions.
- ii. The status of select ecological conditions including key characteristics of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
- iii. The status of focal species to assess the ecological conditions required under §219.9.
- iv. The status of a select set of the ecological conditions required under §219.9 to contribute to the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species, conserve proposed and candidate species, and maintain a viable population of each species of conservation concern.
- v. The status of visitor use, visitor satisfaction, and progress toward meeting recreation objectives.
- vi. Measureable changes on the plan area related to climate change and other stressors that may be affecting the plan area.
- vii. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including for providing multiple use opportunities.
- viii. The effects of each management system to determine that they do not substantially and permanently impair the productivity of the land (16 U.S.C. 1604(g)(3)(C)).

The Forest's new monitoring plan must contain one or more monitoring questions and associated indicators to address each of the monitoring requirements. The monitoring questions tie to specific Forest Plan components. They focus on providing the information necessary to evaluate whether Forest Plan components are effective and appropriate, and whether management is being effective in maintaining or achieving progress toward the desired conditions and objectives for the Forest.



The first Deschutes National Forest monitoring report under the updated monitoring plan is expected to be published in 2018.

### **Draft Transition Monitoring Plan Development**

This draft monitoring plan was developed using an interdisciplinary team and takes into consideration data already being collected, work force capacity, and funding limitations. The monitoring questions reflect ecological, social and economic factors important to consider for informed management of the resources in the plan area.

When the forest embarks on the Forest Plan revision process in the future, the information gathered through the monitoring plan will also inform the revision analysis, and the monitoring plan itself will be updated to fit the revised Forest Plan. At this time, the Deschutes National Forest has not initiated the forest plan revision process.

### **Administrative Change**

In order to implement the new monitoring plan, the Forest will be making the following change. The draft transition monitoring plan, once finalized, would replace the existing monitoring plan described on Forest Plan pages 5-1 to 5-29. The changes will be made using an administrative change under the 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219). An administrative change (36 CFR 219.13(c)) is any change to a plan that is not a plan amendment or plan revision. Administrative changes include corrections of clerical errors to any part of the plan, conformance of the plan to new statutory or regulatory requirements, or changes to other content in the plan, including the monitoring program (§ 219.7(f)(iii)).

### **Your Comments**

We would appreciate your comments on the specific monitoring questions and indicators and the proposed administrative change to replace the current monitoring plan. Your comments will be utilized to identify deficiencies, changes, or other concerns associated with the draft monitoring plan. Once comments have been considered, a final monitoring plan will be developed and released.

The draft monitoring plan is also available electronically at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/deschutes/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd489801>

Comments may be submitted electronically to [comments-pacificnorthwest-deschutes@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificnorthwest-deschutes@fs.fed.us). Please put "Monitoring Plan" in the subject line. Documents submitted electronically should be an email or as an attachment in Microsoft Word (.doc), rich text format (.rtf) or portable format (.pdf) for ease of reading.

Please send your written hard copy comments to:

Deschutes National Forest  
Attn.: Gery Ferguson  
63095 Deschutes Market Road  
Bend, Oregon 97701  
FAX: (541) 383-5531

You may also hand-deliver your comments to the above address during normal business hours which are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. All those who comment will remain on our mailing list and receive future updates on this plan.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project, available for public inspection, and released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

If you have any questions concerning the draft transition monitoring plan, please contact Gery Ferguson at 541-383-5538.

Sincerely,



JOHN ALLEN  
Forest Supervisor

cc: Yewah Lau