

## **Forest Plan Monitoring Program Transition on the Huron-Manistee National Forest Revised Chapter IV for the Forest Plan Available for Review**

The new Land Management Planning regulations (36 CFR 219) published in 2012 (2012 Planning Rule) changed Forest Plan monitoring program requirements. All units that will not initiate a revision to their Forest Plan prior to May 9, 2016 must update their monitoring programs to meet the requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule (*this task is referred to as monitoring program transition*). This transition must be completed by May 9, 2016. Changes to the monitoring program are considered an administrative change and do not require a Forest Plan Amendment.

Because the Huron-Manistee National Forests will not initiate the process of Forest Plan revision prior to May 9, 2016, we will be making changes to our Forest Plan monitoring program in the upcoming months as part of the required monitoring program transition.

To successfully complete the transition, the 2012 Planning Rule requires that our monitoring program includes at least one monitoring question to address each of the following eight elements (36 CFR 219.12(a)(5)):

1. The status of select watershed conditions.
2. The status of select ecological conditions including key characteristics of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
3. The status of focal species to assess ecological conditions required for diverse plant and animal communities.
4. The status of a select set of ecological conditions that 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.
5. The status of visitor use, visitor satisfaction, and progress toward meeting recreation objectives.
6. Measureable changes on the plan area related to climate change and other stressors that may be affecting the plan area.
7. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including for providing multiple use opportunities.
8. The effects of each management system to determine that they do not substantially and permanently impair the productivity of the land.

The rule also directs the responsible official (the Forest Supervisor) to ensure that planned actions are within the fiscal capability of the Forests. The majority of these required monitoring elements are already addressed in the Huron-Manistee National Forests' monitoring program. For any of the eight elements that are not currently being monitored, a new monitoring question was developed and added to the monitoring matrix found in Chapter IV of the Forests Plan ([http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5442514.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5442514.pdf)).

As the Forests reviewed our existing monitoring program for compliance with the monitoring program transition requirements, we evaluated our current monitoring questions to see if they maintain relevance and will continue to provide us with meaningful information between now and our next Forest Plan revision, when the entire monitoring program will be reviewed for possible revision. We propose to drop monitoring questions that are no longer relevant, or require an expertise or funding level we do not have.

We invite your review and comments on the proposed changes to our monitoring program. We will accept comments for 30-days following the publication of this notice on our website. The Forest Supervisor will consider your comments prior to making any changes to our monitoring program.

Documents showing our proposed monitoring questions, those proposed to be dropped, and the draft of the updated monitoring program (Chapter IV of the Forest Plan) are also on this website.

This action will not be subject to administrative review as it is considered an administrative change to the Forest Plan (36 CFR 219.13(c)).

Comments may be submitted to: [comments-eastern-huron-manistee@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-huron-manistee@fs.fed.us), mailed to us at 1755 S. Mitchell Street, Cadillac MI 49601, or faxed to 231-775-5551. Comment must be submitted by April 7, 2016.

If you are interested in knowing more, please send us an email to the above listed site.