



March 15, 2016

Dear Interested Party,

I am writing to inform you of proposed changes that the Wayne National Forest (WNF) will make to the monitoring plan to comply with the 2012 Planning Rule. The current monitoring plan can be found in Chapter 4 of the WNF 2006 Land and Resource Management Plan (2006 Forest Plan). We would like your feedback about the changes we are proposing.

The 2012 Planning Rule, found in the Code of Federal Regulations at 36 CFR 219, provides direction to national forests on how to develop, revise, amend, and change Forest Plans. It also directs those national forests that are not currently revising Forest Plans to change their monitoring plans to meet the requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule. We are not revising our 2006 Forest Plan at this time; therefore, we must complete the monitoring plan transition. This process must be completed by May 9, 2016.

Several things must be completed to be in compliance with the monitoring requirements in the 2012 Planning Rule. First, the Monitoring and Evaluation Report will switch from annual to biennial publication. Monitoring, in most cases, will be completed biennially for the previous two-year period. In some cases monitoring will continue to be conducted annually, but will be reported biennially.

Second, there are content requirements. The monitoring plan must include questions that address each of the following elements:

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 the ecological conditions required under 36 CFR 219.9.
4. The status of a select set of the ecological conditions required under 36 CFR 219.9 to contribute to the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species, conserve proposed and candidate species, and maintain viable populations of each species of conservation concern<sup>1</sup>.
5. The status of visitor use, visitor satisfaction, and progress toward meeting recreation objectives.

<sup>1</sup> Species of conservation concern have not been identified for the WNF, so this transition effort will not address species of conservation concern.



6. Measurable 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<sup>2</sup>.
8. The effects of each management system to determine that they do not substantially and permanently impair the productivity of the land (16 USC 1604(g)(3)(C)).

The WNF monitoring plan already includes six of the above elements (numbers 1, 2, 3<sup>3</sup>, 4, 5, and 7). New questions are proposed to satisfy elements 6 and 8.

Lastly, the monitoring plan must contain questions and associated indicators. Questions are broadly framed and should be focused on assessing progress towards meeting Forest Plan desired conditions, goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines. Indicators are the specific things that are measured to quantify that progress (i.e. acres treated, miles improved, etc).

The WNF monitoring plan currently contains items designated as monitoring questions. However, once we reviewed these questions we realized most were actually indicators. The indicators were developed to tie directly back to certain Forest Plan Goals and Objectives. In our proposal to change the monitoring plan we have now re-labeled this column “Monitoring Indicators”. A new column was added for monitoring questions. Most of these are a re-statement of a Plan Objective as a question.

For example, the original monitoring plan has the following entry:

**Table 1. Existing element from monitoring plan**

Goal	Objective	Monitoring Questions
3.1 – Promote healthy riparian and aquatic ecosystems that sustain ecological processes and functions and a variety of plant and animal communities, including viable populations of native and desired non-native species.	3.1b – Improve habitat along streams for aquatic and riparian-dependent species.	How many miles of stream were treated to improve or restore habitat for aquatic and riparian-dependent species?

Once it was recognized the number of miles treated was an indicator, the question was re-labeled as such and a new question was developed as displayed in Table 2.

<sup>2</sup> Further direction, provided in the Forest Service Handbook, clarifies that this requirement should focus on the economic and social contributions the Forest is making to communities.

<sup>3</sup> While not termed “focal species” in the monitoring plan, the WNF already monitors for management indicator species. We have identified 3 of these species to be a good fit for focal species, and thus the requirement is met. The term management indicator species will no longer appear in the monitoring plan.

**Table 2. Proposed change to existing element in monitoring plan**

Goal	Objective	Monitoring Questions	Monitoring Indicators
3.1 – Promote healthy riparian and aquatic ecosystems that sustain ecological processes and functions and a variety of plant and animal communities, including viable populations of native and desired non-native species.	3.1b – Improve habitat along streams for aquatic and riparian-dependent species.	Has habitat for aquatic or riparian dependent species improved along and within streams? (NEW)	How many miles of stream were treated to improve or restore habitat for aquatic and riparian-dependent species?

In a few instances the existing question is broadly framed and directed at measuring progress towards Forest Plan desired conditions, goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines. These questions were retained and new indicators were developed.

We have also considered if there are any existing questions that are no longer relevant or are not feasible to obtain. We are proposing to drop these from the monitoring plan.

More information about this process, including a table showing the questions and indicators, can be found on the WNF planning webpage at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/wayne/landmanagement/planning> and select “Forest Plan Monitoring”.

We are now at a point in the process where we would appreciate your feedback on the monitoring plan transition proposal. We are holding a 30-day comment period during which you can provide your comments on the proposed changes to the Wayne National Forest’s monitoring plan. Comments will be most useful if they are received by April 15, 2016 - the end of the 30-day comment period.

Comments can be submitted in any of the following manners:

- Email messages or attachments. Attachments should be in the form of a plain text document (.txt), Microsoft Word document (.doc), portable document format (.pdf), or any software supported by Microsoft applications. Emails should be sent to [comments-eastern-wayne@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-wayne@fs.fed.us) with the title “Monitoring Plan Transition”
- Faxes. Faxed comments should be sent to 740-753-0119, Attn: Rachel Orwan.
- Oral comments. Oral comments can be given in person at the Supervisor’s Office located at 13700 US Hwy 33, Nelsonville, OH 45764 between the hours of 8:00 am – 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday, or by phone: 740-753-0101 and ask for Rachel Orwan.
- Written comments. Letters should be mailed to the Supervisor’s Office at the same address listed above with attention to Rachel Orwan, Forest NEPA Planner.

Questions can be directed to Rachel Orwan, Forest NEPA Planner, at [rorwan@fs.fed.us](mailto:rorwan@fs.fed.us) or 740-753-0101.

Following the 30-day comment period, I will consider the feedback you and others have provided. I may consider if there is a need for a meeting to discuss the monitoring plan proposal. The transition process must be completed by May 9, 2016. Since the monitoring plan makes up Chapter 4 of the 2006 Forest Plan, changing the monitoring plan will change the Forest Plan. The proposed changes to the monitoring plan and Forest Plan will be completed by using an Administrative Change. This is not a Forest Plan Amendment or Plan Revision. Analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act is not required and there will not be an opportunity to object to or appeal the changes after the Administrative Change is completed.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Wayne National Forest.



ANTHONY V. SCARDINA  
Forest Supervisor