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**File Code:** 1910  
**Date:** December 10, 2015

Interested Party:

In 2012, the USDA Forest Service adopted a new Planning Rule that directs the revision of forest plans, which are the documents that guide the management of National Forests. The current Ottawa Forest Plan was approved in 2006 (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/ottawa/forestplan>.) Input from other agencies, partners and the public was an important part of the entire Forest Plan revision process. The 2012 Planning Rule states every forest must update their monitoring program by May 9, 2016.

Your agency is receiving this letter because we are requesting a review of the enclosed document, "*Draft Monitoring Questions and Indicators*", which outlines the draft changes to our monitoring program.

### **Forest Plan Monitoring**

The current monitoring program consists of 44 questions, which are outlined in Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan. Answering these questions help to determine whether the activities implemented are resulting in desired conditions stated in Forest Plan direction or if adjustments need to be made.

### **Proposed Updates to the Monitoring Program**

The 2012 Planning Rule requires the following eight elements to be monitored by each National Forest:

1. Status of select watershed conditions.
2. Status of select aquatic and terrestrial ecological conditions.
3. Status of focal species.
4. Status of a select set of ecological condition required 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.
5. Status of visitor use, satisfaction, and progress toward meeting recreation objectives.
6. Measurable changes on the plan are related to climate change.
7. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including providing multiple use opportunities.



8. The effects of each management system to determine they do no substantially and permanently impair the productivity of the land.

We propose to retain the majority of the existing monitoring questions; introduce four new questions; and delete some questions for reasons outlined in the attachment. The resulting monitoring program would consist of a total of 37 questions.

### **Request for Your Review of the Monitoring Program**

The 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219.4) outlines that the Forest Service engage with agencies and partners to assist in the development of questions and indicators for this process.

To be most helpful, we are requesting that your review include the following:

- Provide Recommended changes for any content changes to ensure that questions and/or indicators provide information for the stated resource as outlined in the attachment.
- Identify opportunities to refine our information to be more consistent or complementary with other monitoring approaches or options to carry out multi-party monitoring.

We would appreciate your recommendations no later than January 22, 2016.

### **Next Steps**

Input received from this outreach will be reviewed for incorporation into the proposed monitoring program. In February 2016, we anticipate releasing the monitoring program for a 30-day public review and comment period in accordance with the 2012 Planning Rule requirements (36 CFR 219.16(c)(6)). After public comments are addressed, the Forest Plan's monitoring program will be updated.

If you are interested in learning more about this process, or have questions, please contact Marlanea French-Pombier, Forest Planner, at 906-932-1330, extension 303, or e-mail: [mfrenchpombier@fs.fed.us](mailto:mfrenchpombier@fs.fed.us).

Sincerely,



LINDA L JACKSON  
Forest Supervisor