



File Code: 1920
Date: May 9, 2016

Dear Interested Party:

The Salmon-Challis National Forest is modifying its forest plan monitoring programs to comply with the Forest Service's 2012 planning rule. The 2012 planning rule (36 CFR 219.12) guides forest plan monitoring across the Forest Service. All forest plan monitoring programs must conform to the requirements of the 2012 planning rule by May 9, 2016.

Both the forest plan monitoring programs for the 1987 Land and Resource Management Plan for the Challis National Forest (Challis Forest Plan) and for the 1988 Land and Resource Management Plan for the Salmon National Forest (Salmon Forest Plan) have been modified to conform to the direction in the planning rule.

On March 28, 2016 I wrote a letter asking for review and comment on the draft monitoring program documents which were made available on the Forest website. A legal notice asking for the public's review and comment was published in the Salmon Recorder Herald on April 7, 2016. The forest plan monitoring program sets out the plan monitoring questions and associated indicators that will inform the management of resources across the Salmon-Challis National Forest. We received one comment on the draft. I am now approving the draft monitoring programs for the Challis Forest Plan and the Salmon Forest Plan as presented in March 2016. The final monitoring programs for the Challis and Salmon Forest Plans are available on the Salmon-Challis Forest website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/scnf/>.

These monitoring programs will be used to develop a set of monitoring protocols used by the Forest to prepare the first biennial evaluation to be published in the spring of 2018 as required by 36 CFR 219.12(d). The biennial report will use the monitoring questions and indicators to assess whether or not a change to the plans, management direction, the monitoring program, or a new assessment may be warranted. The monitoring evaluation will be used to inform adaptive management of the plan area. As the Forest develops these protocols, we will be looking for opportunities to design and carry out multi-party monitoring with federal, state, and local governments and members of the public.

Our first biennial report (2018) will be critical as the Forest begins the plan revision process in 2017. This monitoring information will enable the Forest Supervisor to determine if a change on plan components or other plan content that guide management of resources across the Salmon-Challis National Forest is needed.

Sincerely,

CHARLES A. MARK
Forest Supervisor



Challis and Salmon National Forest LRMP Monitoring Plan Modification

Introduction

The 2012 planning rule, which is found at 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 219, guides forest plan monitoring across the Forest Service. The planning rule at 36 CFR 219.12 (c) (1) requires the responsible official to modify the monitoring program to meet the requirements of the 2012 planning rule by May 2016. The Salmon-Challis National Forest conformance strategy focuses on addressing the purpose of the forest plan monitoring program as described in 36 CFR 219.12(a)(1), which includes the need for monitoring information that enables the responsible official to determine if a change in plan components in the plan area may be needed.

In addition, each forest plan monitoring program must contain one or more monitoring questions and associated indicators addressing each of the following eight requirements, which are noted at 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 the ecological conditions required at 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 a viable population of each species of conservation concern.
5. The status of visitor use, visitor satisfaction, and progress toward meeting recreation objectives.
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.
8. 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 purpose of forest plan monitoring and evaluation is to evaluate, document, and report how well the forest is implementing the forest plan, how well the forest plan is working, and if the forest plan purpose and direction remain appropriate. Monitoring determines actual conditions and circumstances and compares them with assumptions and expected or desired results. Monitoring information should enable the responsible official to determine if a change in plan components or other plan content that guide management of resources on the plan area may be needed.

Types of Monitoring

The monitoring identified in this forest plan is not all of the monitoring conducted on a national forest. Other forms of monitoring, which address other laws, policies, and site-specific decisions are also ongoing. Three categories of monitoring (see Forest Service Manual 1925.21) comprise both forest plan and individual project monitoring:

- Implementation Monitoring – Used to determine if plans, prescriptions, projects, and activities were implemented as designed and in compliance with the forest plan;
 - Effectiveness Monitoring – Used to determine if plans, prescriptions, projects, and activities are effective in accomplishing Plan goals, and objectives, and moving toward desired conditions;
- and

Challis National Forest LRMP Monitoring Plan

Plan Components	Monitoring Question	Monitoring Indicator
Provide developed outdoor recreation opportunities for the general public.	How is the Forest's developed recreation program meeting visitor needs and providing for public health and safety at Forest facilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of visitor satisfaction • Recreation facility condition • Recreation use at developed sites • Number of passing and failing tests per water system • Number of public water systems (ex. campground) in use or decommissioned
<p>Emphasize dispersed area recreation over developed site recreation.</p> <p>Provide a broad spectrum of dispersed recreation opportunities.</p>	How is the Forest's dispersed recreation program meeting visitor needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of visitor satisfaction • Trail miles maintained/improved to standard • Miles of new trail constructed • Trail miles meeting standard
Identify, protect, interpret and manage the significant cultural resources on Forest lands.	Are heritage resources being protected and are mitigation measures sufficient to prevent damage to heritage resources from federal actions, looting, environmental disturbance, and other actions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of historic properties recorded and evaluated for the National Register • Number of eligible historic properties being impacted by federal actions, looting, environmental disturbance, and other actions
Preserve and protect Wilderness as an example of natural ecosystems for future generations.	<p>What is the condition of campsites within of designated Wilderness areas?</p> <p>What is the amount, distribution, and potential conflicts among Wilderness visitors?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of upland and river campsites • Number of motorized and/or mechanized intrusions
Manage special areas consistent with the intent in which they were established.	Do water resource projects meet criteria established in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts to Outstandingly Remarkable Wild and Scenic River Values from projects within river corridors

Plan Components	Monitoring Question	Monitoring Indicator
<p>Maintain noxious weed control program at or above current level.</p>	<p>Are our management actions reducing the occurrence of invasive species?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acres of invasive plant infestations • Number of acres treated for invasive plants
<p>Meet needs of local dependent mills and allow for moderate growth in demand.</p> <p>Fuel wood offered will meet local demand throughout the planning period.</p> <p>Maintain or provide for increase in livestock grazing to maintain local ranching economy.</p> <p>Ensure that locatable, common variety, and energy minerals are developed in environmentally acceptable ways and in concert with other resources and in compliance with current laws and regulations.</p>	<p>Are goods and services being provided in accordance with forest plan goals, objectives, and desired conditions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total timber sale program quantity • Number of fuelwood cords sold • Level of authorized livestock grazing • Number of approved Locatable Plans of Operation (POOs) • Quantity of common variety mineral materials sold
<p>Provide soil and water guidance to other resource activities to protect and improve water quality and soil productivity.</p>	<p>What are the effects of forest plan management activities to soil and water resources?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of aquatic habitat for salmonid spawning and cold water aquatic life • Compliance with state water quality sediment, turbidity, and temperature standards and maintenance of beneficial uses • Effects of management activities on maintenance and protection of watershed health (e.g. sediment) • Changes in stream channel morphology • Function and condition of lentic riparian systems • Changes in riparian vegetation composition • Effectiveness and applicability of current practices to maintain water quality • Soil quality, productivity, and function

Plan Components	Monitoring Question	Monitoring Indicator
<p>Meet state air quality standards.</p> <p>Meet federal and state ambient air quality and visibility standards and other applicable air quality direction. (FCRONRW)</p>	To what degree are atmospheric pollutants changing natural ecosystems in the plan area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in water chemistry related to air pollution • Compliance with state air quality standards
Develop a well-planned and executed fire protection and fire use program that is cost efficient and response to land and resource management goals and objectives.	Are fires being managed to accomplish resource management and protection objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total acres burned (forested and non-forested) • Acres and number by type of fire (I-V) or by size class • Acres identified for resource benefit
Use prescribed fire to accomplish resource management objectives.	Are fuels reduction projects protecting property, human health and safety, and reducing the potential for unwanted fire effects (in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) and non-WUI)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acres of hazardous fuels reduction in WUI and non-WUI

Salmon National Forest LRMP Monitoring Plan

Plan Components	Monitoring Question	Monitoring Indicator
Improve the quality of recreation experience and increase the PAOT (Person At One Time) capacity of developed recreation sites in heavy use areas.	How is the Forest's developed recreation program meeting visitor needs and providing for public health and safety at Forest facilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of visitor satisfaction • Recreation facility condition • Recreation use at developed sites • Number of passing and failing tests per water system • Number of public water systems (ex. campground) in use or decommissioned
<p>Increase emphasis on managing dispersed recreation use in areas providing Semi primitive and Roded Natural recreation opportunities and maintain the generally high quality of these settings.</p> <p>Improve the condition of priority trails in designated wilderness management areas featuring semi-primitive recreation opportunities and nationally designated trails and maintain other high use system trails in a usable condition.</p>	How is the Forest's dispersed recreation program meeting visitor needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of visitor satisfaction • Trail miles maintained/improved to standard • Miles of new trail constructed • Trail miles meeting standard

Plan Components	Monitoring Question	Monitoring Indicator
<p>Provide National Forest portion of the habitat needed to meet Regional Wildlife and Fish Management objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Habitat for each vertebrate wildlife species on the Forest will be managed to insure viable or target populations. ○ Place emphasis on improving key ecosystems including but not limited to: riparian, aspen, aquatic, snag, and old growth. ○ Manage and provide habitat for recovery of endangered and threatened species as specified in the Species Management Plan for the Salmon National Forest. 	<p>How are forest management activities and/or natural events affecting 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 concern?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quality of aquatic habitat for salmonid distribution, spawning, and other cold water aquatic life ● Compliance with state water quality sediment, turbidity, and temperature standards and maintenance of beneficial uses ● Effects of management activities on maintenance and protection of watershed health (e.g. sediment) ● Anadromous and resident salmonid redd count trends ● Water temperature ● Changes in number of fish barriers ● Changes in stream channel morphology ● Sage-grouse habitat suitability and condition
<p>Maintain adequate structural diversity of vegetation on Forest lands to ensure habitat for minimum viable or target populations of all wildlife species and to provide representations of the various ecological stages of endemic plant communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide habitat diversity through vegetation treatments in conjunction with other resource activities designed to maintain or improve wildlife or fisheries habitat. ● Provide habitat for populations of all native vertebrate species of fish and wildlife. 	<p>How are forest management activities and natural events affecting the ecological conditions of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ground and vegetation cover and species composition in non-forested communities ● Water temperature ● Function and condition of lentic riparian systems ● Changes in riparian vegetation composition ● Forested ecosystem condition- species composition, disturbance, extent ● Aspen stand condition

Plan Components	Monitoring Question	Monitoring Indicator
<p>Maintain watershed conditions and water quality such that downstream beneficial uses are protected and compliance with State standards is achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain soil productivity, minimize man-caused soil erosion, and maintain the integrity of associated ecosystems. 	<p>What are the effects of forest plan management activities to the productivity of the land?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness and applicability of current practices to maintain water quality Soil quality, productivity, and function
<p>Maintain watershed conditions and water quality such that downstream beneficial uses are protected and compliance with State standards is achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct management and resource development within riparian zones in a manner compatible with protection of water quality and fish habitat. Prevent stream channel instability, loss of channel cross-sectional areas, and loss of water quality resulting from activities that alter vegetative cover. Riparian zones will be managed in a manner compatible with protection of water quality and fish habitat. Search out and apply techniques to resolve livestock grazing problems or conflicts with other resource uses within riparian areas. Manage forest cover types in riparian areas to perpetuate tree cover and provide healthy stands, high water quality and wildlife and fish habitats. 	<p>Are we effectively protecting and improving aquatic ecosystems and riparian conditions through forest plan management activities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of aquatic habitat for salmonid spawning and cold water aquatic life. Compliance with state water quality sediment, turbidity, and temperature standards and maintenance of beneficial uses Effects of management activities on maintenance and protection of watershed health (e.g. sediment) Changes in stream channel morphology Function and condition of lentic riparian systems Changes in riparian vegetation composition Effectiveness and applicability of current practices to maintain water quality. Soil quality, productivity, and function
<p>Meet state air quality standards.</p>	<p>What are the effects of atmospheric pollutants to natural ecosystems?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in water chemistry related to air pollution. Compliance with state air quality standards.