
File Code: 1920

Date: April 6, 2016

Dear Interested Party,

The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (ARP) is seeking your input as we transition our monitoring plan to be consistent with the 2012 National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule (2012 Planning Rule). This monitoring transition effort affects *Chapter 4: Monitoring and Evaluation of the 1997 Revision of the Land and Resource Management Plan of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland* [Forest Plan]. The ARP's proposal is to replace our existing monitoring chapter with a new monitoring chapter that is consistent with the requirements for monitoring in the 2012 Planning Rule.

The 2012 Planning Rule requires all National Forests to update their respective monitoring plans "within 4 years of the effective date of this part [May 9, 2012], or as soon as practicable" (36 CFR 219.12(c)), and to consider public comment on the proposed changes. Accordingly, a 30-day solicitation for public comments for the ARP's proposed Monitoring Plan will begin on Friday, April 8 and end on Monday May 9, 2016.

Information concerning the 2012 Planning Rule can be found at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/planningrule/home/?cid=stelprdb5359471>

The ARP's Forest Plan and Monitoring information can be found at:

http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/arp/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fsm91_058277

The modifications to the Monitoring Plan are being conducted under the administrative change procedures of 36 CFR 219.13(c), and are not subject to appeal, objection, or other administrative review.

The 2012 Planning Rule requires that monitoring items should appear in the form of a question, with a specific monitoring indicator. Monitoring items should incorporate the best available scientific information, but remain within the fiscal and technical capabilities of the ARP. The 2012 Planning Rule also requires that Forest Plan monitoring be reported biennially (every two years), starting from the date of the monitoring plan transition.

Questions and indicators contained in the ARP's proposed Monitoring Plan were developed to inform the management of resources by 1) testing relevant assumptions; 2) tracking relevant changes; and 3) measuring management effectiveness and progress toward achieving desired conditions or objectives described in the ARP's Forest Plan.

Monitoring questions and indicators were developed to address the eight monitoring categories outlined in the 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219.12(a)(5)). The ARP's monitoring plan contains at least one question for each of the following eight categories:



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;
4. The status of a select set of the ecological conditions that contribute to the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered 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 (including social and economic considerations); and
8. The effects of each management system to determine that they do not substantially and permanently impair the productivity of the land.

As the ARP developed the proposed Monitoring Plan, we reevaluated existing monitoring items contained in our Forest Plan and considered new items that more efficiently or effectively address the goals, objectives, and other plan components found in our Forest Plan. Several existing monitoring items are being recommended for removal because they are obsolete, redundant, or are too expensive to consistently implement. Some monitoring items have been retained with modification and others are newly added with the goal of more accurately or efficiently monitoring changes to National Forest System (NFS) lands within the ARP.

Please note that the Rocky Mountain Regional Office is concurrently working on a broader-scale monitoring strategy, to identify monitoring items that are best addressed at a geographic scale larger than a single National Forest or National Grassland. This broader scale strategy will be completed after the ARP's monitoring transition, but it will help monitor and track changes of broader scale issues that are still important to the ARP.

Your comments on the proposed Monitoring Plan are very important and will help guide how future monitoring occurs on the ARP. As the responsible official for the proposed changes, I will review your comments on the proposed changes, as well as new information that you may present. After reviewing and considering public comments, my decision will be documented in a letter that can be found on the ARP Forest Plan monitoring website:

http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/arp/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fsm91_058277

Comments may be hand-delivered (between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, excluding federal holidays) or mailed to:

Forest Supervisor
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests
and Pawnee National Grassland
2150 Centre Avenue, Building E
Fort Collins, CO 80526

Electronic comments must be submitted to: comments-rm-arapaho-roosevelt@fs.fed.us . Please include "Proposed Monitoring Transition" in the subject of your email.

For more information, please contact Karen Roth at 970-295-6621 or kroth@fs.fed.us. Thank you for your interest in the management of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland

Sincerely,

/s/Ron J. Archuleta (for)

MONTE WILLIAMS
Forest Supervisor