

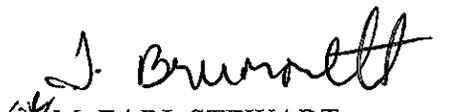
**File Code:** 1920**Date:** May 9, 2016**Route To:****Subject:** Monitoring Plan Administrative Changes**To:** Beth Pendleton, Regional Forester

Enclosed is a copy of the new Tongass National Forest Plan Monitoring Program. It is also posted on our website (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/R10/Tongass/Monitoring>). By my signature, I am adopting administrative changes to the previous monitoring plan, which was included as Chapter 6 of the 2008 Forest Plan, in order to comply with the 2012 Planning Rule, specifically the monitoring section at 36 CFR 219.12. Administrative changes are not subject to the objections process (36 CFR 219.50) and become effective immediately. These modifications were required to be completed by May 9, 2016. The first biennial monitoring evaluation is expected in 2018 to meet the requirement to complete the first evaluation two years from when changes take effect.

Substantive changes to the monitoring program made outside a forest plan revision or amendment process require notice to the public of the intended changes and consideration of public comments (36 CFR 219.13(c)(1)). A Draft Plan Monitoring Program was released for a 30-day public comment period on March 9, 2016. Seven external comment letters were received in addition to internal comments from resource specialists. Those comments have been considered and a few changes were made to the Final Plan Monitoring Program as a result (see enclosed). I also considered the financial and technical capabilities of the Agency when setting the scope and scale of the Plan Monitoring Program, as stated in 36 CFR 219.12(a)(4)(ii).

Future administrative changes may be necessary after completion of the ongoing Forest Plan Amendment. In addition, the Tongass is deferring action on two requirements: focal species and species of conservation concern. The requirement to monitor the status of focal species to assess ecological conditions is in 36 CFR 219.12(a)(5)(iii) and the requirement to monitor the status of ecological conditions to maintain viable populations of species of conservation concern is location at 36 CFR 219.12(a)(5)(iv). Once these species and their associated ecological conditions have been identified, relevant monitoring questions will be added or modified as necessary. The public would be notified of any substantial administrative changes and would have the opportunity to comment at that time.

Questions on the Plan Monitoring Program can be directed to Cathy Tighe via email, [ctighe@fs.fed.us](mailto:ctighe@fs.fed.us), or phone, 907-228-6274.

  
M. EARL STEWART  
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