



File Code: 1950**Date:** 'APR 27 2016**Subject:** Administrative Change to the Monitoring Program**To:** File

NATIONAL FOREST in MISSISSIPPI
Revised Land and Resource Management Plan
Administrative Change
2012 Planning Rule Monitoring Program Transition
April, 2016

This Administrative Change – the 2012 Planning Rule Monitoring Program Transition – to the 2014 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) for the National Forest in Mississippi, brings the plan monitoring program into conformance with the requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule. The 2012 Planning Rule allows for corrections or adjustments to the Forest Plan using a process called “Administrative Changes.” “Administrative changes” as defined by 36 CFR 219.13(c) in the 2012 Planning Rule is “... any change to a plan that is not a plan amendment or revision. Administrative changes include corrections of clerical errors to any part of the plan, conformance of the plan to new statutory or regulatory requirements, or other content in the plan (219.7(f)).”

Administrative Change

The administrative changes to the plan monitoring program are as follows:

Evaluation Reports

Monitoring Evaluation Reports will be produced on a biennial schedule. It is anticipated that the next Monitoring Evaluation Report will be available by August, 2016.

Climate Change

In meeting the requirement to monitor “measurable changes on the plan area related to climate change and other stressors that may be affecting the plan area” (36 CFR 219.12(a)(5)(vi)), the following monitoring questions and indicators are added to the Forest’s Monitoring Program:

Monitoring Question D.6 – How has climate variability changed and how is it projected to change across the region?

Monitoring Question D.7 – How is climate variability and change influencing the ecological, social, and economic conditions and contributions provided by plan areas in the region?



Monitoring Question D.8 – What effects do national forests in the region have on a changing climate?

Indicators and Procedures for these three Monitoring Questions:

These three monitoring questions will be addressed and evaluated through the Region 8 Broader-Scale Monitoring Strategy, which the Forest will incorporate into the Forest Evaluation Reports. To see the indicators and procedures that will be used at the broader-scale for these monitoring questions, see the Region 8's Broader-Scale Monitoring Strategy at:

www.fs.usda.gov/main/r8/landmanagement/planning.

In addition to including Monitoring Questions D.6, D.7, and D.8, the following Monitoring Questions from the Monitoring Program in the existing Forest Plan provide monitoring information to evaluate “other stressors that may be affecting the plan area.” These Monitoring Questions and their Indicators are:

- A.1 – Has progress been made toward maintaining and restoring desired conditions so that native ecological systems occupy appropriate sites? (*indicators: Ecosystem Diversity*).
- A.2 – Are wetland systems present on appropriate sites and functioning across the landscape? (*indicators: Ecosystem Diversity*).
- A.3 – Are annual average forestwide and ecological system objectives being achieved? (*indicators: Ecosystem Diversity*).
- B.1 – Are threatened and endangered species recovered or moving toward recovery? (*indicators: Species Diversity*).
- B.2 – Are populations of rare species robust and secure? (*indicators: Species Diversity*).
- B.3 – Are species diversity and game abundance supporting nature viewing and quality hunting opportunities? (*indicators: Species Diversity*).
- B.4 – Are habitat conditions sufficient to allow aquatic and riparian-dependent species to complete all phases of their life cycles? (*indicators: Species Diversity*).
- B.5 – Are conditions needed for sustaining healthy populations of native plants and animals being maintained? (*indicators: Species Diversity*).
- B.6 – Are annual average T&E species recovery treatment objectives being accomplished? (*indicators: Species Diversity*).
- C.1 – Are conditions needed to sustain ecological function and productivity of the land being maintained? (*indicators: Healthy Watershed*).
- C.2 – Are stream mitigation and restoration measures being implemented? (*indicators: Healthy Watershed*).
- D.1 – Are forests in healthy condition? (*indicators: Healthy Forests*).
- D.2 – Are disturbance events, including those that may be related to climate change, changing in frequency? (*indicators: Healthy Forests*).
- D.3 – Are disturbance events, including those may be related to climate change, affecting desired conditions on the forest? (*indicators: Healthy Forests*).
- D.4 – Are healthy forest objectives being achieved? (*indicators: Healthy Forests*).
- D.5 – Are disturbance events impacting the accomplishment of forest plan objectives? (*indicators: Healthy Forests*).

Social, Cultural and Economic Sustainability

In meeting the requirement to monitor plan contributions to the social, cultural, and economic sustainability of communities, which is a part of monitoring the progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives, including providing multiple use opportunities (see 36 CFR 219.12(a)(5)(vii)), the following monitoring questions and indicators are added in to the Forest's Monitoring Program:

Monitoring Question F.5 – What changes are occurring in the social, cultural, and economic conditions in the areas influenced by national forests in the region?

Indicators and Procedures:

This monitoring question will be addressed and evaluated through the Region 8 Broader-Scale Monitoring Strategy, which the Forest will incorporate into the Forest Evaluation Reports. To see the indicators and procedures that will be used at the broader-scale for this monitoring question, see the Region 8's Broader-Scale Monitoring Strategy at:

www.fs.usda.gov/main/r8/landmanagement/planning.

In addition to including Monitoring Question F.5, the following Monitoring Questions from the Monitoring Program in the existing Forest Plan provide information to evaluate social, cultural, and economic sustainability. The premise is that by producing or contributing to the ecosystem services that provide benefits to people and communities, social, cultural, and economic sustainability is enhanced. The following Monitoring Questions and Indicators from the exiting Monitoring Program in the Forest Plan provide information needed to evaluate ecosystem service benefits that are relevant to plan implementation:

A.1 – Has progress been made toward maintaining and restoring desired conditions so that native ecological systems occupy appropriate sites? (*indicators: Ecosystem Diversity*).

A.2 – Are wetland systems present on appropriate sites and functioning across the landscape? (*indicators: Ecosystem Diversity*).

A.3 – Are annual average forestwide and ecological system objectives being achieved? (*indicators: Ecosystem Diversity*).

B.1 – Are threatened and endangered species recovered or moving toward recovery? (*indicators: Species Diversity*).

B.2 – Are populations of rare species robust and secure? (*indicators: Species Diversity*).

B.3 – Are species diversity and game abundance supporting nature viewing and quality hunting opportunities? (*indicators: Species Diversity*).

B.4 – Are habitat conditions sufficient to allow aquatic and riparian-dependent species to complete all phases of their life cycles? (*indicators: Species Diversity*).

B.5 – Are conditions needed for sustaining healthy populations of native plants and animals being maintained? (*indicators: Species Diversity*).

B.6 – Are annual average T&E species recovery treatment objectives being accomplished? (*indicators: Species Diversity*).

- C.1 – Are conditions needed to sustain ecological function and productivity of the land being maintained? (*indicators: Healthy Watershed*).
- C.2 – Are stream mitigation and restoration measures being implemented? (*indicators: Healthy Watershed*).
- D.1 – Are forests in healthy condition? (*indicators: Healthy Forests*).
- D.2 – Are disturbance events, including those that may be related to climate change, changing in frequency? (*indicators: Healthy Forests*).
- D.3 – Are disturbance events, including those may be related to climate change, affecting desired conditions on the forest? (*indicators: Healthy Forests*).
- D.4 – Are healthy forest objectives being achieved? (*indicators: Healthy Forests*).
- D.5 – Are disturbance events impacting the accomplishment of forest plan objectives? (*indicators: Healthy Forests*).

Focal Species

Another requirement is that the plan monitoring program must include monitoring questions and indicators on the status of a select set of focal species to assess ecological conditions (see 36 CFR 219.12(a)(5)(iii)). A “focal species” is defined as a “species whose status permits inference to the integrity of the larger ecological system to which it belongs and provides meaningful information regarding the effectiveness of the plan in maintaining or restoring the ecological conditions to maintain the diversity of plant and animal communities in the plan area” (36 CFR 219.19).

The following table shows the species that are identified as “focal species” for this plan’s monitoring program, along with ecological system/ecological conditions that each focal species serves as an indicator of:

Focal Species	Ecological System/Conditions
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Threatened and Endangered Species, Special Habitat Indicator, Biological Community Indicator
Pileated Woodpecker	Special Habitat Indicator, Biological Community Indicator
Wood Thrush	Biological Community Indicator
Longleaf Pine	Biological Community Indicator
Southern Pine Beetle	Biological Community Indicator

These species were already being monitored in the existing monitoring program and they will continue to be monitored according to the protocols already established. However, the evaluation of the information gathered from the monitoring of these species will now be used within the context of evaluating the integrity of the ecological system the species is a part of, along with the effectiveness of the plan in maintaining or restoring those ecological conditions.

The following is a list of the existing species related monitoring questions and indicators that will now serve to meet the requirement of monitoring species identified as “focal species”:

B.1 – Are threatened and endangered species recovered or moving toward recovery?

(indicators: *Species Diversity*).

B.6 – Are annual average T&E species recovery treatment objectives being accomplished?

(indicators: *Species Diversity*).

D.4 – Are healthy forest objectives being achieved? (indicators: *Healthy Forests*).

D.5 – Are disturbance events impacting the accomplishment of forest plan objectives?

(indicators: *Healthy Forests*).

D.1 – Are forests in healthy condition? (indicators: *Healthy Forests*).

D.3 – Are disturbance events, including those may be related to climate change, affecting desired conditions on the forest? (indicators: *Healthy Forests*).

C.1 – Are conditions needed to sustain ecological function and productivity of the land being maintained? (indicators: *Healthy Watershed*).

Threatened and Endangered Species List

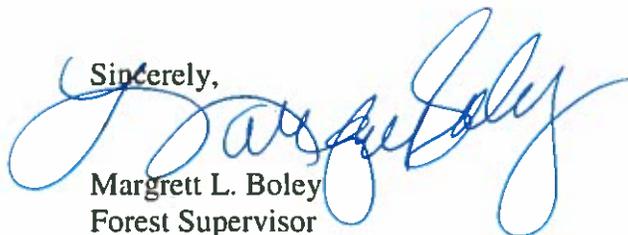
The Black Pinesnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus lodingi*) is being adding to the list of T&E species in the National Forest in Mississippi Forest Plan (2014). The Forest Plan already contains the direction needed to address the Black Pinesnake (Pgs. 28 & 58; Sec. 2.4 & 3.3). The addition of any further management direction is not needed in the Forest Plan. Timber management activities exempted and decision on critical habitat delayed to 2016.

Approval and Effective Date

This Administrative Change becomes effective upon signature below, and being posted online at the Forest’s website. Administrative changes are not subject to the objection process (36 CFR 219.50). This Administrative Change will remain in effect until the 2014 Revised LRMP is revised.

If you have questions about this Administrative Change or would like more information, please contact Marc Weathersby, Forest Planner (maweathersby@fs.fed.us) or at 601-965-1629.

Sincerely,



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