



File Code: 1900
Date: September 27, 2016

Interested Party

I am hereby approving administrative changes to the Monitoring Program of Bridger-Teton National Forest's 1990 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) in compliance with the Forest Service's 2012 Planning Rule codified at 36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 219 (36 CFR 219). The approved monitoring plan is attached to this letter and can also be found at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/btnf/landmanagement/planning>

The previous monitoring requirements are replaced entirely by the new program. The replaced monitoring program and additional information about this modification are also available at the same location.

The approved changes to monitoring address 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 will enable the responsible official to determine if a change in plan components is necessary. This will assist the Forest as we approach Forest Plan revision.

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 under 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. (At this time, species of conservation concern have not been identified for the Bridger-Teton National Forest, therefore the Forest Plan monitoring programs will not address 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)).



Following the 2012 Planning Rule, the proposed Forest Plan monitoring program consists of monitoring questions and associated indicators in order to evaluate if plan components are effective and appropriate and if management is effective in maintaining or achieving progress toward desired conditions and objectives. The specific methodologies for monitoring the indicators will be contained in a monitoring guide.

After interdisciplinary development of the proposed monitoring modification, a 30-day public comment period began with a letter from me to approximately 180 interested parties and the press on August 25, 2016. In addition, the letter, the proposed monitoring modification table, and the 2012 Planning Rule were posted to the website noted above.

Comments were received from representatives of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Grand Teton National Park, Western Watersheds Project, and the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance; these are available at the above website. These comments resulted in only minor clarifications to the monitoring questions and indicators.

The collected Forest Plan monitoring information will be evaluated every two years. The monitoring evaluation report will indicate whether or not a change to the plan, management activities, or the monitoring program itself may be warranted.

If you have questions about this administrative change to the Forest Plan or would like more information, please contact John Kuzloski (jkuzloskit@fs.fed.us or 307-739-5568). Thank you for your interest in the management of the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

Sincerely,



PATRICIA M. O'CONNOR
Forest Supervisor