USDA FOREST SERVICE REGION 5

SIERRA CASCADES DIALOG #14

MONITORING FOR ADAPTIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Dialog Held January 22, 2015

Lions Gate Hotel, near Sacramento, California, and Inyo National Forest, Bishop, California

Purpose of this Document

This document serves as a brief overview of the proceedings of Sierra Cascades Dialog #14. During this session, participants discussed the "Why, What, and How" of selecting indicators and characteristics to be monitored for adaptive forest management. This overview and summary describes the goals, activities and key themes that arose from this Dialog session.

The bulk of the discussion and suggestions for monitoring are captured in the attached appendices. Appendix B includes a tabulation of the suggestions for potential indicators that were submitted in written form and also those captured by facilitators at the small-group workstations. Appendix A includes a list of "other considerations" that participants offer to the Forest Service for the development of future monitoring regimes. The information contained in these appendices have been formatted, but have not been altered or edited, in order to most accurately reflect the input of participants.

Goals of Dialog #14

There were two goals for this session of the Sierra Cascades Dialog:

- Contribute to learning and shared understanding of the complex issues related to monitoring and adaptive management.
- Provide a list of potential indicators, characteristics, challenges and opportunities for monitoring and adaptive management for consideration by Forest Service Region 5 Pacific Southwest.

Activities and Structure of Dialog #14

117 participants were present in Sacramento, and 12 participated from the satellite meeting location in Bishop, California for this session.

Dialog #14 followed the following structure and format:

- Presentations on Monitoring for Adaptive Management.
    - Monitoring defined and current examples – Marc Meyer, US Forest Service.
    - The 2012 Planning Rule and directives for plan monitoring programs – Patricia Flebbe, US Forest Service.
    - Scales for monitoring in adaptive management: project, forest and bioregional – Don Yasuda, US Forest Service.

- Plenary question and answer session: Why is monitoring for adaptive forest management important?
- Small Group exercises focused on the following questions:
    - What are potential indicators or characteristics to be monitored?
    - For each potential indicator, describe the value, importance, or information that can be gained.
    - For each potential indicator, describe the resources necessary to collect, analyze and interpret data over time.
    - What other considerations do you have for the Forest Service regarding monitoring?

Key Themes

The following are some of the key themes that arose from plenary and small group discussion. These themes should not be considered as points of agreement nor recommendations, but instead are topics that received substantial attention during the proceedings.

For a more comprehensive list of topics and information, please refer to the Appendices 1 and 2.

- "Good" and useful management questions should precede the development of monitoring indicators and regimes.
- Many agencies, businesses, communities have valuable monitoring data and information. Most or all of these sources of information require substantial work in translation or format in order to be integrated into new or existing USFS monitoring efforts.
- It is critically important that monitoring indicators and subsequent management decisions be accessible and understandable for different publics and users.
- Monitoring for adaptive management is a complex effort which requires a commitment of substantial and stable funding and resources overtime. Therefore it is critically important to select those indicators which provide the greatest return on investment and which can be collected, stored and analyzed over time.
- In addition to identifying useful indicators, successful adaptive management requires that land managers accurately identify trends and thresholds in ecosystem processes.