

Chapter I. Introduction

A. Purpose

The NFMA (National Forest Management Act) requires monitoring the implementation of Forest Plans. The *Plan* (1996 National Forests and Grasslands in Texas Revised Land and Resource Management Plan) contains a monitoring strategy with particular focus on questions designed to meet certain information needs associated with implementing and maintaining the *Plan*. Each year, the forest management team and resource specialists examine projects, gather and evaluate data and prepare a monitoring report. The purpose of this annual monitoring report is to inform the Forest Supervisor, other federal, state, and local agencies, federally recognized Native American tribal governments and the public about information and data collected to track the progress towards achieving the goals, objectives, and standards and guidelines as stated in the *Plan*. Contents of the report include:

- A report on *Plan* implementation.
- An evaluation of the effectiveness of actions.
- Internal communication and feedback.
- Identification of new issues.
- Identification of the need for *Plan* amendments or revision.
- Accountability to the public.

Earlier reports can be found at: www.fs.usda.gov/texas.

B. Monitoring and Evaluation

The M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) Report is intended to assess progress in implementing the *Plan* and whether projects designed to implement the *Plan* are achieving the DFCs (Desired Future Conditions) envisioned when the *Plan* was developed. *Plan* monitoring and evaluation is the tool that allows the Forest Service to gauge the level of production of goods and services the *Plan* originally anticipated and to determine if projects and activities are executed according to project design and associated NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) documents. It also allows us to determine whether mitigation measures are preventing or minimizing undue environmental hazards.

It is important to note that elements in the *Plan* addressing monitoring and evaluation are an effort to provide the public and managers a simple, clear and straightforward assessment of the current situation on the forest. The report is not an effort to publish scientific-level research.

For this current report, data was submitted by forest specialists and individual units from data collected between October 1, 2009 and September 30, 2010 – FY 10 (Fiscal Year 2010). Information submitted is voluminous and cannot always be shown in complete detail in this report. All information used for this report is on file at the Forest Supervisor’s Office in Lufkin, Texas or at appropriate district offices.

C. Report Organization

The FY 10 M&E Report tiers directly to the FY 09 M&E Report and indirectly to all previous NFGT M&E Reports since the 1997-1999 report. This report does not repeat general information in previous reports, but does bring forward information that is needed to indicate trends. In FY 09, the report only included those items that are required to be addressed by the NFMA. This FY 10, report includes all the items addressed in the FY 09 report along with several added activities. We felt these additions were needed in order to keep management and the public fully informed on important activities that are ongoing. Appendix C, the NFMA checklist, includes a list of the appropriate CFRs (Code of Federal Regulations) and where they are addressed in the body of the report.

The report is divided into chapters that address major issues and sub-issues found in the NFMA Monitoring Checklist. It provides a direct correlation between NFMA’s requirements and the related CFRs that were in effect at the time the *Plan* was written (36 CFR 219). Since the *Plan* was prepared utilizing the 1982 regulations, the older regulations were used during the preparation of this report.

This report contains four chapters: **Chapter I** introduces the monitoring and evaluation process; **Chapter II** provides monitoring item descriptions, variability, findings and recommendations; **Chapter III** is an overview and evaluation of issues; and **Chapter IV** contains the FY 2011 Action Plan to address areas where changes are needed. Chapter IV also provides an update on “Action Items” identified in the FY 09 report.

Appendices were provided as additional information to assist the reader’s understanding.