

Clearwater National Forest

Forest Plan Monitoring Program Proposed Questions

Introduction

Forest Plans are required to describe a monitoring program for the Forest (36 CFR 219.6(b)) that establishes monitoring questions and associated performance measures. Monitoring questions must link to one or more desired condition, objective or guideline. Not every desired condition, objective and guideline must be associated with a monitoring question.

Monitoring programs should include:

1. **Monitoring Questions** – These questions should help the Forest assess whether management within the plan area maintains or helps the Forest make progress attaining desired conditions. Selected questions should provide the most useful information while also being practical and affordable.
2. **Performance Measures** – Performance measures are necessary to help answer monitoring questions. They are a basis for accountability, both for near-term objectives and long-term desired conditions. Monitoring programs should include one or more performance measure associated with each monitoring question.

The Clearwater National Forest requires your assistance developing the Forest Plan monitoring program. Specialists have identified initial questions they think would be helpful to assess the Forest's progress in achieving desired conditions. You are encouraged to provide feedback regarding these questions. Please provide reasons for your thinking and suggest alternate questions or wording where you think it is necessary.

Ecosystem Integrity and Sustainability

Forest Vegetation

- What progress has been made achieving desired species composition and size classes in all settings?
- Are disturbance processes occurring at desired levels in appropriate settings?
- Are species being restored to the forest landscape in appropriate settings?
- Are species and size classes in short supply being conserved on appropriate settings?

Grassland and Shrubland Vegetation

- What progress has been made to increase native species' dominance on grasslands and shrublands?
- What progress has been made in reestablishing native grasses and forbs?

Rare Plants

- How have management practices restored or conserved rare plants habitats over time?

Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat

Terrestrial Habitat

- What progress has been made in distributing disturbances within historic sizes, types and frequencies?
- How have disturbance patterns influenced the availability of wildlife habitats?

Habitat Improvement

- How have vegetation treatments contributed to the achievement of Forest Plan desired conditions?
- Are unique habitats conserved?
- What progress has been made improving elk habitat?

Wildlife Security

- What progress has been made providing security for vulnerable species at vulnerable times?
- How has wildlife security been improved on the developed portions of the Forest?

Invasive Weeds

- What progress has been made reducing weed populations?
- Have cooperative weed management areas and forest management projects or actions influenced the attainment of invasive weed objectives?

Soil Productivity

- What progress has been made restoring soil productivity?
- How have landslide prone soils been safeguarded during project activities?
- Has progress to reduce the acreage of detrimentally impacted soils been made?
- How have vegetation management projects maintained soil productivity?

Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems

- What progress has been made conserving desired watershed and aquatic habitat conditions?

Watersheds

- Have stream sediment and water yields responded to watershed management and restoration actions as expected?

Watershed Restoration

- What actions have been implemented to restore biological integrity and watershed processes?

Water Quality and Water Uses

- What progress been made accomplishing the total maximum daily load implementation plan action items and water quality improvements identified for water bodies within the Clearwater National Forest?

Drinking Water

- What actions have been taken to reduce the risk of potential drinking water contaminant sources?

Instream Flow and Water Rights

- What progress has been made toward meeting instream flow and water rights objectives?

Watershed Condition

- What progress has been made toward improving watershed condition as indicated by road management and soil and water improvement projects?

Special Water Features and Riparian Vegetation

- What progress been made toward conserving and restoring flood plains, water tables, wetlands and streamside vegetation species composition, structure, and patterns while conserving watershed processes?

Aquatic Habitats

- Have land management practices been effective in maintaining or improving the desired stream habitat features at the Forest and subbasin scales?
- What progress has been made to improve stream and lake habitat conditions?

Fish Passage

- What progress has been made improving stream access for aquatic animals' movements and migrations?

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Partnerships

- Has the current high level of program coordination and partnership project implementation been maintained?

Cultural, Social and Economic

Designated Wilderness

- Have wilderness resources and values been protected according to approved wilderness management plans?

Designated and Eligible Wild, Scenic and Recreation Rivers

- Have the free-flowing status, classification and identified outstandingly remarkable values for each designated and eligible river segment been protected and maintained?

Research Natural Areas

- Have proposed research natural areas that contain the vegetation types recommended for the Clearwater National Forest been identified?

Road Management

- Are Forest system roads maintained according to approved maintenance plans?

Motorized and Non-Motorized Recreation Uses

- Do semi-primitive non-motorized and semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunities provide quality visitor experiences?
- What is the trend in the deferred maintenance backlog for roads and trails?

Dispersed Recreation

- Are sites and areas of concentrated use managed to minimize resource impacts and social conflicts?

Developed Recreation Sites

- Are developed facilities maintained to standard (safety, amenities, law enforcement, riparian conservation area features, and potable water) where appropriate?

Recreation Special Uses

- Are recreation special use authorizations managed to standard?

Scenery Resources

- How is the scenic integrity of the landscape changing?

Heritage Resources

- Are heritage resources managed to standard and according to existing site management plans?

Economic Contribution

- What is the employment and labor income contribution of the Clearwater National Forest to the local five-county area (Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis and Nez Perce Counties)?

Timber Availability

- What level of products is made available to local mills?
- Have commercial timber sales been offered from lands suitable for timber production or harvest?
- Has fire risk been reduced by mechanical treatment in the wildland-urban interface?

Wildland Fire, Fuels and Air Quality

- How are natural fires and management-ignited fires contributing to expected vegetation disturbance types and amounts?
- How have changes in stand densities, species composition and fuel levels in the wildland urban interface reduced fire risk to adjacent private lands?
- Is air quality meeting state, regional, and tribal standards?
- How many days have the Forest's fire management activities contributed to air quality standards not being met?

Livestock Management

- Are management practices for livestock grazing effective in maintaining or restoring riparian and sensitive habitat structure and function?
- What progress has been made attaining vegetation and aquatic desired conditions in livestock grazing areas as determined by implementation and effectiveness monitoring?
- Is monitoring consistent with established interagency protocols?

Minerals

- What is the trend in the level of activity of placer and locatable minerals projects?

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Lands

- How many and what kinds of non-recreation special use permits have been issued? What are the trends?
- What is the status of boundary survey and posting on the Clearwater National Forest?

Utilities and Communication Sites

- How many miles of utility corridors and communication sites are managed according to permit management plans?

Administrative Facilities

- How many administrative sites provide a facility that meets site plans for safety, sanitation and administrative uses?

Tribal

Tribal Treaty Rights and Trust Responsibilities

- What progress has been made maintaining and improving working relationships with the Nez Perce and Coeur d'Alene Tribes?