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3 **FSM 1900 – Planning**

Proposed FSM 1920 Version—02/14/2013
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4
5 FSM 1920.12 - Regulations

6
7 **1920.1 - Authority**

8
9 **1920.11 – Statutory Authorities**

10
11 See FSM 1901 for a summary of the relevant acts and FSH 1909.12, chapter 90, for the text of the Forest
12 and Rangeland Renewable Resource Planning Act...

13
14 **1920.12 - Regulations**

15
16 Under the authority of Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 219–Planning, Subpart A–National
17 Forest System Land Management Planning, published April 9, 2012 (77 FR 21162) plans may be
18 developed, revised, amended or administratively changed under the 2012 Planning Rule (April 9, 2012
19 (77 FR 21162))....

20
21 Under the 2012 Planning Rule, plan amendments or plan revisions initiated prior to May 9, 2012, may
22 use provisions of the prior planning rule, which was the 2000 planning rule, including transition
23 provisions that permit use of the planning procedures of the 1982 planning rule. The provisions of the
24 prior planning regulation can be used under the following conditions: (see 36 CFR 219.17):

- 25
26 1. Plan development, plan amendments, or plan revisions initiated before May 9, 2012, may be
27 completed...
- 28
29 2. For plans approved or revised under a prior planning regulation, plan amendments initiated
30 during the transition period (until May 9, 2015) (36 CFR 219.17 (b)(2)) may be initiated and
31 completed under the provisions of the prior planning regulations or they may conform to the
32 2012 Planning Rule provisions. Any plan amendments initiated after May 9, 2015 must conform
33 to the applicable provisions of the 2012 Planning Rule ~~provisions~~.
- 34

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CHAPTER 1920 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING

1921 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING UNDER THE 2012 PLANNING RULE

The following sections of FSM 1921 sets forth Forest Service management objectives, policy, and responsibilities for meeting the requirements of Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 219 – National Forest System Land Management Planning, as published April 9, 2012 (77 FR 21162).

...

1921.02 – Objectives

1. Sustain the multiple uses of the National Forest System land’s renewable resources in perpetuity while maintaining the long-term health and productivity of the land and contributing to the social, cultural and economic vitality of affected communities for current and future generations, consistent with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 (36 CFR 219.1(b)).
2. Promote the ecological integrity of national forests and grasslands through the collaborative, science-informed development, revision, or amendment of land management plans (36 CFR 219.1(c)).
3. Broaden and deepen engagement of the American people in national forest planning.
4. Improve the resilience of national forests to climate change and other stressors.
5. Improve the efficiency, relevance, and effectiveness of forest planning.

1921.03 – Policy

See FSM 1903 and FSM 1920.03 for general policy for planning activities.

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1921.03 – Policy

- 2.
- 3.
4. When plans are developed or revised, responsible officials shall ensure that plans provide for ecological sustainability and contribute to social and economic sustainability, and must:
 - 5.
 - 6.
 - 7.
 8. a. Use information where available pertaining to ecosystem composition, structure, function and connectivity...
 - 9.
 - 10.
 11. b. Use information where available pertaining to social and economic systems when developing plan components to contribute to social and economic sustainability...
 - 12.
 - 13.
14. 3. Responsible officials shall conduct all aspects of land management planning (assessment; development, amendment or revision; monitoring) in a timely and efficient manner.
- 15.
- 16.
17. 4. It is the goal of the Forest Service to complete plan revisions in two to four years from initiation of assessment to plan approval. ~~Plan revision, from initiation of the assessment to final plan approval, should be completed if funding is available within two to four years.~~
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.
21. 5. Responsible officials shall use a continual assessment, planning and monitoring process...
- 22.
- 23.

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1921.04d – Forest, Grassland, Prairie, or Other Comparable Administrative Unit

1. Assistance with plan monitoring programs ...
2. Assistance with assessment information and data ...

1921.04d – Forest, Grassland, Prairie, or Other Comparable Administrative Unit Supervisor

1. The supervisor of the national forest, grassland, prairie, or other comparable administrative unit is the responsible official for preparing assessments; developing, and approving a plan or plan revision, plan amendments, and developing and implementing a plan monitoring program for lands under the responsibility of the supervisor, unless the regional forester, the Chief, the Under Secretary, or the Secretary chooses to act as the responsible official (36 CFR 219.2(b)(3)).
2. The authority for approving project-specific plan amendments cannot be delegated to district rangers.
3. The supervisor of the national forest, grassland, or prairie or other comparable administrative unit is responsible for:
 - a. Adapting, periodically, the plan to changing situations through amendments, administrative changes, and corrections.
 - b. Ensuring required assessments, monitoring reports...
 - c. Coordinating with research stations...
 - d. Using the best available scientific information...
 - e. Providing meaningful public participation opportunities early and throughout the planning process
 - f. Guiding the process to complete plan revisions within two to four years ~~as funds allow~~.
 - g. Conducting all aspects of land management planning (assessment; development, amendment, or revision; monitoring) in a timely and efficient manner and within the fiscal capability of the unit.
 - h. Ensuring the integration of assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring into an adaptive management framework that facilitates continued management and planning improvements and changes as suggested by monitoring results.

1 **FSH 1909.12 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK**

2 **DEFINITIONS**

FSH 1909.12 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK

05-DEFINITIONS

This handbook provides procedural guidance for implementing land management planning direction for the 2012 planning rule (77 FR 21165, April 9, 2012). The primary use is for interdisciplinary team members and line officers responsible for planning.

01 - AUTHORITY

The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act, as amended by the National Forest Management Act, and the implementing regulations found in Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, part 219 establishes a process for developing, amending, and revising land management plans for units of the National Forest System (NFS). Further planning direction is set forth in FSM 1920. The full text of the 2012 Planning Rule is included as an exhibit in chapter 90 of this handbook.

04 - RESPONSIBILITY

The forest supervisor is responsible for developing, amending, or revising plans, except when the regional forester; the Chief; the Under Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment; or the Secretary acts as the responsible official under Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, section 219.2(b)(3) (36 CFR 219.2(b)(3)). See FSM 1920 for a broad description of line officer responsibilities.

05 - DEFINITIONS

Adaptation. An initiative to reduce the vulnerability of natural or human systems to expected climate change effects. Adaptation strategies include the following:

1. Building resistance to climate-related stressors.
2. Increasing ecosystem resilience by minimizing the severity of climate change impacts, reducing the vulnerability and/or increasing the adaptive capacity of ecosystem elements.
3. Facilitating ecological transitions in response to changing environmental conditions.

Adaptive management. Adaptive management is the adaptive planning framework (§ 219.5) encompassing the three phases of planning: assessment, plan development, and monitoring. This framework supports decision making that meets management objectives while simultaneously accruing information to improve future management by adjusting the plan or plan implementation. Adaptive management is a structured, cyclical process for planning and decision making in the face of uncertainty and changing conditions with feedback from monitoring, which includes using the planning process to actively test assumptions, track relevant conditions over time, and measure management effectiveness.

Address. An individual's or entity's current mailing address used for postal service or other delivery services. An email address is not sufficient. (36 CFR 219.62)

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05 – DEFINITIONS

not limited to structural and nonstructural controls and operation and maintenance procedures. BMPs can be applied before, during, and after pollution-producing activities to reduce or eliminate the introduction of pollutants into receiving waters. (36 CFR 219.19)

Broader Landscape. The broader landscape always includes lands beyond the plan area. The spatial scale of the broader landscape to be considered will vary depending upon the elements of social, economic and ecological sustainability in question. Spatial scales to be considered should be sufficiently large to adequately address the interrelationships between conditions in the plan area and the broader landscape, but not so large that these interrelationships lose relevance in guiding land management planning. Spatial scales should consider the extent that social, economic and ecological attributes of the broader landscape support, or are supported by conditions in the plan area. Examples of factors that may affect the determination of appropriate spatial scales include: public interest in one or more specific resources or uses (demand), access to these resources or uses, available commercial markets, plant and/or animal species/community distribution and abundance, watersheds, landform patterns, connectivity (physical and social), fire and other forms/patterns of disturbance.

Candidate species

1. For U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species, a species for which the FWS possesses sufficient information on vulnerability and threats to support a proposal to list as endangered or threatened, but for which no proposed rule has yet been published by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
2. For National Marine Fisheries Service candidate species, a species that is:
 - a. The subject of a petition to list and for which the National Marine Fisheries Service has determined that listing may be warranted, pursuant to section 4(b)(3)(A) of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1533(b)(3)(A)), or
 - b. Not the subject of a petition but for which the National Marine Fisheries Service has announced in the Federal Register the initiation of a status review (36 CFR 219.19).

Collaboration or collaborative process A structured manner in which a collection of people, with diverse interests share knowledge, ideas, and resources, while working together in an inclusive and cooperative manner toward a common purpose. Collaboration, in the context of this part, falls within the full spectrum of public engagement described in the Council on Environmental Quality's publication of October, 2007: Collaboration in NEPA— A Handbook for NEPA Practitioners. (36 CFR 219.19)

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4 Coordination. Processes mandated by the National Forest Management Act (16 USC 1604(a)) and the
5 Federal Land Policy and Management Act (43 USC 1712(b)) that require the Forest Service to work
6 closely with state and local governments and Indian tribes on national forest planning and to give major
7 consideration to potential impacts of national forest plans on state and local plans and land use planning
8 and management programs of and for Indian tribes.

9
10 Critical habitat...

11
12 Designated area. An area or feature identified and managed to maintain its unique special character or
13 purpose. Some categories of designated areas may be designated only by statute and some categories
14 may be established administratively in the land management planning process or by other
15 administrative processes of the Federal executive branch. Examples of statutorily designated areas....
16 Examples of administratively designated areas are experimental forests, research natural areas, scenic
17 byways, botanical areas, and significant caves. (36 CFR 219.19)

18
19 Decision document. A concise public record of decision made in accordance with the policies and
20 purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that contains the elements specified in 40 CFR
21 part 1505 Section 1505.2.

22
23 Decision memo. A concise written record of the responsible official's decision to implement an action
24 that is categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation in an environmental impact
25 statement (EIS) or environmental assessment (EA), where the action is one of a category of actions
26 which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment, and does
27 not give rise to extraordinary circumstances in which a normally excluded action may have a significant
28 environmental effect. (36 CFR 219.62)

29
30 Desired conditions. A desired condition is a description of specific social, economic, and/or ecological
31 characteristics of the plan area, or a portion of the plan area, toward which management of the land and
32 resources should be directed. Desired conditions must be described in terms that are specific enough to
33 allow progress toward their achievement to be determined, but do not include completion dates. (36
34 CFR 219.7(e)(1)(i)). Desired conditions are key plan components and fundamental to determining
35 assessment and monitoring strategies and requirements. Desired conditions and other plan
36 components should be developed as part of the public outreach and collaborative process of
37 planning. Desired conditions should define the geographic and temporal scale of measurement. Desired
38 conditions should identify how they may differ from existing conditions. Desired conditions are
39 achievable goals, and may reflect social, economic or ecological attributes, including ecosystem
40 processes and functions.

41
42 Disturbance. Any relatively discrete event in time that disrupts ecosystem, watershed, community, or
43 species population structure and/or function and changes resources, substrate availability, or the
44 physical environment. (36 CFR 219.19)

FSH 1909.12 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK

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2 **05 - DEFINITIONS**

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4 Integrated resource management. Multiple use management that recognizes the interdependence of
5 ecological resources and is based on the need for integrated consideration of ecological, social, and
6 economic factors. (36 CFR 219.19)
7

8 Invasive Species. Executive Order 13112 defines an invasive species as “an alien species whose
9 introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” The
10 Forest Service relies on Executive Order 13112 to provide the basis for labeling certain organisms as
11 invasive. Based on this definition, the labeling of a species as “invasive” requires closely examining both
12 the origin and effects of the species. The key is that the species must cause, or be likely to cause, harm
13 and be exotic to the ecosystem it has infested before we can consider labeling it as “invasive”. Thus,
14 native pests are not considered “invasive”, even though they may cause harm. Invasive species infest
15 both aquatic and terrestrial areas and can be identified within any of the following four taxonomic
16 categories: Plants, Vertebrates, Invertebrates, and Pathogens. Additional information on this definition
17 can be found in Executive Order 13112.
18

19 Landscape. A defined area irrespective of ownership or other artificial boundaries, such as a spatial
20 mosaic of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, landforms, and plant communities, repeated in similar
21 form throughout such a defined area. (36 CFR 219.19)
22

23 Management area. A land area identified within the planning area that has the same set of applicable
24 plan components. A management area does not have to be spatially contiguous. (36 CFR 219.19)
25

26 Management system. For the purposes of this Handbook, a timber management system including even
27 aged management and uneven-aged management (36 CFR 219.19).
28

29 Mitigate: to cause to become less harsh or hostile
30

31 Monitoring. A systematic process of collecting information to evaluate effects of actions or changes in
32 conditions or relationships. (36 CFR 219.19)
33
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1
2 Multiple use. The management of all the various renewable surface resources of the NFS so that they
3 are utilized in the combination that will best meet the needs of the American people; making the most
4 judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources or related services over areas large enough to
5 provide sufficient latitude for periodic adjustments in use to conform to changing needs and conditions;
6 that some land will be used for less than all of the resources; and harmonious and coordinated
7 management of the various resources, each with the other, without impairment of the productivity of
8 the land, with consideration being given to the relative values of the various resources, and not
9 necessarily the combination of uses that will give the greatest dollar return or the greatest unit output,
10 consistent with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. 528–531). (36 CFR 219.19)

11
12 Name. The first and last name of an individual or the name of an entity. An electronic username is
13 insufficient for identification of an individual or entity. (36 CFR 219.62)

14
15 National Forest System. Includes national forests, national grasslands, and the National Tallgrass Prairie.
16 (36 CFR 219.62)

17
18 Native knowledge. A way of...

19
20 Native species. An organism that was historically or is present in a particular ecosystem as a result of
21 natural migratory or evolutionary processes; and not as a result of an accidental or deliberate
22 introduction into that ecosystem. An organism's presence and evolution (adaptation) in an area are
23 determined by climate, soil, and other biotic and abiotic factors. (36 CFR 219.19)

24
25 Natural Range of Variation. Spatial and temporal variation in ecosystem characteristics under historic
26 disturbance regimes during the reference period. The reference period considered should be
27 sufficiently long to include the full range of variation produced by dominant natural disturbance
28 regimes, often several centuries, for such disturbances as fire and flooding and should also include
29 short-term variation and cycles in climate. ~~Natural range of variation (NRV) is a term synonymously with~~
30 ~~historic range of variation or range of natural variation.~~ NRV is a tool for assessing the ecological
31 integrity, and does not necessarily constitute a management target or desired condition. The NRV can
32 help identify key structural, functional, compositional and connectivity characteristics, for which plan
33 components may be important for either maintenance or restoration of such ecological conditions.

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Plan components. Guide future project and activity decision making. The plan must indicate whether specific plan components apply to the entire plan area, to specific management areas or geographic areas, or to other areas as identified in the plan. Every plan must include the following plan components:

1. Desired conditions. A description of specific social, economic, cultural and/or ecological characteristics of the plan area, or a portion of the plan area, toward which management of the land and resources should be directed. Desired conditions must be described in terms that are specific enough to allow progress toward their achievement to be determined, but do not include completion dates.
2. Objectives. A concise, measurable, and time-specific statement of a desired rate of progress toward a desired condition or conditions. Objectives should be based on reasonably foreseeable budgets.
3. Standards. A mandatory constraint on project and activity decisionmaking, established to help achieve or maintain the desired condition or conditions, to avoid or mitigate undesirable effects, or to meet applicable legal requirements.
4. Guidelines. A constraint on project and activity decisionmaking that allows for departure from its terms, so long as the purpose of the guideline is met. (§ 219.15(d)(3)). Guidelines are established to help achieve or maintain a desired condition or conditions, to avoid or mitigate undesirable effects, or to meet applicable legal requirements.
5. Suitability of lands. Specific lands within a plan area will be identified as suitable for various multiple uses or activities based on the desired conditions applicable to those lands. The plan will also identify lands within the plan area as not suitable for uses that are not compatible with desired conditions for those lands. The suitability of lands need not be identified for every use or activity. Suitability identifications may be made after consideration of historic uses and of issues that have arisen in the planning process. Every plan must identify those lands that are not suitable for timber production (§ 219.11).

Plan monitoring program. The plan monitoring program sets out the plan monitoring questions and associated indicators, based on plan components. The plan monitoring program informs management of resources on the plan area and enables the responsible official to determine if a change in plan components or other plan content that guide management of resources on the plan area may be needed.

1 FSH 1909.12 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK

2 CHAPTER 10

3

4 Recommendation: Chapter 40 should be moved and should become the new Chapter 10

FSH 1909.12 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK

11 – ASSESSMENTS

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3
4 b. Develop an understanding of the conditions and trends of the assessment topics that is useful
5 to making decisions about plan components and other content of the plan (36 CFR 219.6(a)(1)).
6

7 2. Build a common understanding of that information with the public and other interested parties
8 before starting plan development, plan amendment, or plan revision.
9

10 3. Develop relationships with interested parties to facilitate public and government participation
11 among government entities, Indian Tribes, private landowners, and other partners and interested
12 parties.
13

14 4. Develop readiness of both the Agency and the public to focus on topics appropriate to a plan, plan
15 revision, or amendment.
16

17 5. Develop a mutual understanding of the complex topics across landscapes that are relevant to
18 planning on the unit.
19

20 An assessment can also provide information for a plan amendment, although other documentation may
21 serve this purpose as well, such as a monitoring evaluation report or other source of new information
22 indicating changed conditions in the plan area.
23

24 To complete the assessment, the responsible official shall rapidly evaluate readily available information
25 that is relevant. The term “relevant” means the information must pertain to the topics under
26 consideration at spatial and temporal scales appropriate to the plan area and to a land management
27 plan. Relevance in the assessment phase is information that is relevant to the conditions and trends of
28 the 15 topics in 36 CFR 219(b) or to the sustainability of social, economic, or ecological systems. If no
29 relevant available information exists for the topic areas described in 36 CFR 219.6(b), or if there are gaps
30 in existing, available information, there is no requirement to begin new studies to acquire or develop
31 such information.
32

33 The term “available” means that the information is currently available in a form useful for the planning
34 process without further data collection, modification, or validation. In keeping with section 219.4 of the
35 Planning Rule (the section governing assessments) the Forest Service should seek out available
36 information related to social, economic and cultural needs and values. The assessment report should
37 identify information gaps, which the responsible official could fill in through inventories, plan
38 monitoring, or research.
39

40 In conducting the assessment, the responsible official should review the Paperwork Reduction Act
41 (PRA)(5 CFR 1320) and ensure that methods for identifying information to meet the requirements of 36
42 CFR 219.6 and this handbook are consistent with the PRA (see, in particular, 5 CFR 1320.3(h)). Unless
43 and until the appropriate PRA approval... that is prohibited (absent approval) by the PRA.
44

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11.11 – Content of the Assessment for Plan Development and Plan Revision

- (7) Benefits people obtain from the NFS planning area (ecosystem services);
- (8) Multiple uses and their contributions to local, regional, and national economies;
- (9) Recreation settings, opportunities and access, and scenic character;
- (10) Renewable and nonrenewable energy and mineral resources;
- (11) Infrastructure, such as recreational facilities and transportation and utility corridors;
- (12) Areas of tribal importance;
- (13) Cultural and historical resources and uses;
- (14) Land status and ownership, use, and access patterns; and
- (15) Existing designated areas located in the plan area including wilderness and wild and scenic rivers and potential need and opportunity for additional designated areas. (36 CFR 219.6(b))

If no relevant information exists for these topic areas, or if there are gaps in available information, there is no requirement to begin new studies to acquire or develop such information. The assessment report should identify information gaps, which the responsible official could fill in through inventories, plan monitoring, or research.

Information sources such as the examples listed in 36 CFR 219.6(a)(1) and those listed in sections 13 and 14 should be reviewed for content that is useful for making decisions about plan components and other plan content.

The assessment report should include an evaluation of the relevant available information, including important conditions and trends and the sustainability of the social, economic, and ecological systems relevant for making decisions about plan components and other plan content. However, for some topics of the assessment the evaluation may be minimal. For example, designated areas, land status, or utility corridors may only require a map.

The assessment report should provide a clear base of information related to management concerns and potential plan components. The report should make important information about the plan area accessible to the public and the responsible official to inform the planning phase. To complete the assessment, the Forest Service staff should collect existing information from a variety of communities including low-income and underserved communities and other communities with a social, economic or cultural connection to the plan area.

The responsible official should include the following in plan development or plan revision assessment reports: 1. Title page (title, names and addresses for further information, date of publication, abstract)

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11 - ASSESSMENTS

11.11- Content of the Assessment for Plan Development and Plan Revision

c. Describe the contribution that the plan area makes to ecological, social, or economic sustainability related to the topic; and

d. Identify information gaps as described in 36 CFR 219.6(a)(3).

e. Identify key assumptions, risks, areas of uncertainty, and how the assessment can inform the development of the monitoring program, for example by suggesting hypotheses for testing, as discussed in FSH 1909.12, Chapter 40, Section 41.

11.12 - Public Participation for the Assessment

The responsible official shall provide opportunities to the public and governmental entities for participating in the assessment process (36 CFR 219.4(a)). It must be clear to the public when these opportunities will occur and how information or feedback is to be provided. Publish a notice in the Federal Register and conduct other appropriate public notice at the beginning of the assessment process to inform the public that an assessment for plan revision has started.

For additional information, see 36 CFR 219.4 and FSH 1909.12, chapter 40, section 43.

11.13 - Tribal Consultation for the Assessment

For information on tribal consultation see 36 CFR 219.4 and FSH 1909.12, chapter 40, section 44.

12 - ASSESSING ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY AND DIVERSITY OF PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITIES

For information on assessments, see 36 CFR 219.5(a) and section 11 of this Handbook.

Sustainability is defined in FSH 1909.12, zero code, section 05. During the assessment process, the responsible official shall:

(1) Identify and consider relevant existing information in governmental or non-governmental assessments, plans. . . .

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12 - ASSESSING ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY AND DIVERSITY OF PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITIES
Section 12.14: Identifying and Assessing Key Ecosystem Characteristics of Terrestrial, Aquatic, and
Riparian Ecosystems

One or more of the following criteria should guide the selection of key ecosystem characteristics:

1. The characteristic is important to defining ecosystem integrity and meaningful in developing plan components. For example, the characteristic:
 - a. Is important to the functions and ecological processes that create or maintain ecosystems and their associated services;
 - b. Is important to defining representativeness (FSH 1909.12, zero code, sec. 05);
 - c. Describes stressors and possible effects of stressors (sec. 12.3);
 - d. Is important to defining redundancy (FSH 1909.12, zero code, sec. 05); or
 - e. Is important to defining existing ecological integrity using biological or ecological indices.
2. The characteristic is measurable or can be mapped, and may be analyzed at the scale appropriate to the plan area or can be ranked and assessed by experts;
3. The characteristic should respond to direct or indirect manipulation or modification that is within the control of the Forest Service, or indicate something about the limits to Forest Service authority or the inherent capability of the land;
4. The characteristic describes ecological conditions needed for threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate, or species of conservation concern;
5. The relevant information is available; or
6. The characteristic is useful for serving multiple purposes of the assessment.
7. The characteristic is useful for future monitoring including focal species.

12.15 - Assessing Ecosystem Integrity

The assessment of ecosystem integrity to the extent there is available information involves the following steps:...

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12.15a - Describing the Natural Range of Variation (NRV)

The NRV is one of two elements of the ecological integrity. NRV does not constitute a management target or desired condition. NRV can be compared to current conditions, allowing the responsible official to identify important compositional, structural, and functional elements to inform the development of plan components. The NRV is an analysis tool for assessing the ecological integrity of selected key ecosystem characteristics (FSH 1909.12, zero code, sec. 05 defines NRV). The NRV represents the distribution of conditions under which ecosystems developed. In this Handbook, the NRV approach is a tool for assessing ecological integrity and does not constitute a management target or desired condition. The NRV approach gives context for evaluating the integrity of current conditions, and identifying important compositional, structural, and functional elements that may warrant restoration. The responsible official may, however, use alternatives to the NRV approach for assessing ecological integrity as described in section 12.15b

The responsible official should describe the NRV through review and synthesis of available information relevant to the plan area and selected key ecosystem characteristics of terrestrial, aquatic, and riparian ecosystems. Information may include scientific journal articles, historical records and photographs, early surveys, pollen and sediment records, tree ring analyses, or descriptions of reference areas. The responsible official may adapt the NRV analysis from another NFS unit and make adjustments to fit the local conditions. Refer to Wiens et al. 2012 for further discussion and examples. The responsible official may, however, use alternatives to the NRV approach for assessing ecological integrity as described in section 12.15b.

When used, the NRV should be described as a range of conditions over the time period selected for analysis. Some conditions may have occurred frequently, and others may have occurred rarely. When describing the NRV, the responsible official may consider the following:

1. Determine the reference period. A reference period is the time period used to estimate the NRV under the relevant disturbance regimes within the plan assessment area. The time period may vary for different characteristics:
 - a. The temporal scale considered should be sufficiently long to include the full range of variation produced by dominant natural disturbance regimes. This often encompasses several centuries for such disturbances as fire and flooding;
 - b. The reference period should generally be a period to include the time before prior to the extensive depopulation of Native Americans resulting from the introduction of European diseases and the subsequent widespread European or European-American settlement; and
 - c. Human influences during the reference period should be described.

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12.23 – Assessing Water Resources

When there is available information that is important to inform the development of plan components and other plan content, the responsible official should consider the following at the appropriate watershed scale:

1. The condition of watersheds relevant to the plan area, paying particular attention to the presence of impaired or contaminated waters within or adjacent to the plan area and the larger area of analysis. For NFS lands, the responsible official should consider the information generated through the Watershed Condition Classification Technical Guide (WCC) (USDA Forest Service 2011a), step A of the Watershed Condition Framework (WCF) (USDA Forest Service 2011b), and the designated WCF Priority Watersheds;
2. The quantity, quality, timing, and distribution of water across the plan area and the area of analysis, including for groundwater resources and groundwater-dependent ecosystems;
3. The historic context (such as NRV) for water resources under which the hydrologic systems developed;
4. The flow regimes needed to sustain the biotic and abiotic integrity of aquatic ecosystems;
5. The nature, extent, and role of existing and reasonably foreseeable future consumptive (most human uses) and non-consumptive uses (such as, for recreation, species habitat conservation, restoration, and so on) and water withdrawals, diversions, storage, and the associated infrastructure, paying particular attention to aquatic listed species and population centers in proximity to the area of analysis.
6. Characterize the nature and distribution of Federal and non-federal water rights across the plan area;
7. Any Essential spawning, rearing and other fish habitat for native fish assemblages designated by NOAA Fisheries or similar designations by US Fish and Wildlife Service or state or tribal fish and wildlife agencies;
8. The reasonably anticipated future patterns of perturbation (such as, influence of changing climate, flood, drought, altered precipitation, and evapotranspiration patterns) and reasonably foreseeable future water withdrawals and diversions, water storage facilities (surface and subsurface), municipal watersheds, sole source aquifers, and source water protection areas within the plan area and the area of analysis;
9. The effects of land use, projects, and activities, and other stressors on hydrologic and geomorphic processes and water resources; and
10. The ecological, social, and economic roles (both process and services) that water resources play in the context of the broader landscape.

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1
2 **12.32 – Consideration of Stressors**
3

4 The responsible official should identify and characterize stressors that directly or indirectly degrade or
5 impair key ecosystem characteristics and ecological integrity. When identifying and characterizing
6 stressors the responsible official may consider the following:

- 7 1. Geographic extent;
- 8 2. Duration and return interval, if applicable;
- 9 3. Severity and trends in severity;
- 10 4. Environmental consequences, including whether the changes in conditions of key ecosystem
11 characteristics related to stressors are approaching breaking points of ecosystems at which the
12 pressures lead to abrupt changes in the ecosystem;
- 13 5. Reversibility (manageability); and
- 14 6. Cumulative and indirect effects of multiple stressors.

15
16 The responsible official should use existing climate change tools such as vulnerability assessments,
17 scenario planning and the National Roadmap for Responding to Climate Change during the
18 consideration of stressors and should identify information gaps and uncertainties when assessing
19 current and future stressors. When there is available information, the responsible official may assess
20 stressors by considering the following:

- 21 1. Stressors associated with irreversible conditions, beyond which ecosystems reorganize and
22 transition to an alternate state;
- 23 2. Stressors not controllable through management of the plan area that may affect conditions
24 within the plan area, such as influences of changing climate, alterations of precipitation
25 patterns, changing land-use patterns adjacent to NFS units, water storage facilities, or
26 hydropower facilities upstream or downstream from NFS units;
- 27 3. Influence of changing climate and other large-scale stressors on the key ecosystem
28 characteristics, and their resulting vulnerability to likely future conditions;
- 29 4. The ability of ecosystems within the plan area to adapt to changes imposed by stressors
30 while retaining their ecological integrity; and
- 31 5. Stressors and threats to riparian conditions, such as changes in flow regime, hydrograph
32 timing, water withdrawals and dewatering, channelization...

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12.51 - Identifying Federally Recognized Species

As a part of the assessment and planning process, the responsible official shall coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), as appropriate, to identify federally listed threatened and endangered species, species proposed for Federal listing, and candidate species that are relevant to the plan area and planning process.

12.52 - Identifying Potential Species of Conservation Concern

~~The regional forester is responsible for identifying the species of conservation concern (SCC) for the plan area and determining that the identification of each SCC for a plan area is based upon the best available scientific information (36 CFR 219.9(c)).~~ Determination of species of conservation concern is the responsibility of the regional forester.

The role of the responsible official is to provide the regional forester with information about species occurrence and their capability of persisting in the plan area, and to identify potential SCC for the plan area based on best available scientific information (36 CFR 219.9(c)). The regional forester should determine SCCs early enough so that their integration, including identification of key ecological conditions, expedites the planning process.

Public Engagement

To increase efficiency and efficacy, the Regional Forester and responsible official are encouraged to leverage expertise in local, state and Tribal natural resource agencies in the identification of potential species of conservation concern. The regional forester and responsible official shall engage the public in developing the list of potential SCCs and invite public input on the identified potential SCCs upon release of the assessment. The Regional Forester should consider this input when determining SCCs.

Regional forester SCC determinations, including additions or subtractions to the list of SCCs based on new information during plan implementation, shall involve public participation, and the regional forester shall make the list of determined SCCs available to the public. The responsible official shall similarly involve the public in determining whether plan components need to be added, removed or changed based on new SCC determinations.

(3) The regional forester shall identify the species of conservation concern for the plan area in coordination with the responsible official. (36 CFR 219.7(c))

(b) Content of the assessment for plan development or revision. In the assessment for plan development or revision, the responsible official shall identify and evaluate existing information...

(5) . . . potential species of conservation concern present in the plan area. . . (36 CFR 219.6)

(c) Species of conservation concern. A species of conservation concern is a species... in the plan area. (36 CFR 219.9)

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12.52 - Identifying Potential Species of Conservation Concern

All potential SCCs must meet the following mandatory requirements for their identification as an SCC:

1. The species must be a native species in the plan area, with a plan area occurrence record for the species within the last 10 to 15 years; and
2. The best available scientific information indicates substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long term in the plan area. This information may be derived from the scientific literature, species studies, habitat studies, analyses of information obtained from a local area, and/or the result of expert opinion or panel consensus.

A species should not be identified as a potential SCC if:

1. The species is secure and its continued long-term persistence in the plan area is not at risk based on knowledge of its abundance, distribution, lack of threats to persistence, trends in habitat, and responses to management.
2. There is insufficient scientific information available to conclude that there is a substantial concern about the species capability to persist in the plan area over the long term.
3. Its occurrence is thought to be "accidental," well outside its current range.

The list of potential SCCs identified in the assessment may be further modified during the planning process before approval of the plan.

Document the rationale for identifying potential SCCs and the best available scientific information supporting the identification process in the planning record.

The responsible official shall identify and evaluate information relevant to: 1) knowledge of occurrence in the plan area and 2) substantial concern about a species' capability to persist over the long-term in the plan area based on best available scientific information as filters during the assessment process, to aid in the efficiency and efficacy of the process used to identify potential SCCs.

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NRM databases. The public may access information about NRM at:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/nrm/index.shtml>. Forest Service employees may access support and training at:
<http://fsweb.nrm.fs.fed.us/>.

13.1 - Assessing Social, Cultural, and Economic Conditions

The responsible official shall identify and evaluate available information relevant to the plan area for social, cultural, and economic conditions. (36 CFR 219.6(b))

~~When there is~~ Using available information, the responsible official ~~should~~ shall:

1. Identify and evaluate the social, cultural, and economic context of the landscape to which the plan area contributes.
2. Identify and evaluate the important social, cultural, and economic influences on the plan area.
3. Identify and evaluate how the plan area influences key social, economic, and cultural conditions.

13.11 - Social, Cultural, and Economic Context

The responsible official ~~may identify an area of influence~~ should identify primary and other areas of influence to serve as the ~~primary~~ spatial scale to evaluate social, cultural, and economic conditions. The responsible official ~~must~~ may solicit public input and conduct intergovernmental outreach to determine ~~on~~ the appropriate boundaries of the area of influence. This area of influence should be commensurate with the important influences of the plan area on social, cultural, and economic conditions. Social and economic information as well as some cultural information is often available at the level of counties, so the area of influence may be a set of counties. Readily available social, cultural, and economic information may be used to characterize the social, economic, and cultural conditions in the area of influence. This area of influence can be used later to describe social, cultural, and economic effects of the plan alternatives in the environmental impact statement (EIS) for a plan revision. This may include information such as:

1. Demographic data such as age, gender, and home ownership.
2. Health information and statistics, including disabilities.
3. Safety information about risks to the public related to the plan area.
4. Levels of education.
5. Important cultural traditions.
6. Communities (urban, rural, suburban) and their characteristics and values.

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7. Concentration or dispersion of populations....

The responsible official may choose to evaluate multiple areas of influence if there are different spatial areas for economic, social, or cultural influences of the plan area. The responsible official may also identify and evaluate other important social, economic, or cultural conditions influenced by the management of the plan area beyond the area of influence.

13.12 - Important Social, Cultural, and Economic Influences on the Plan Area

Using available information, the responsible official should briefly describe the types of social, economic or cultural influences that are affecting the plan area in all seasons. These may include:

1. Demand from local, regional, state, tribal, and national interests and the public for specific resources and ecosystem services including but not limited to clean air and water, flood risk management, recreation opportunities (motorized and non-motorized, passive and active), forest products, minerals and food and fiber production
 - a. ~~Recreation opportunities – motorized and non-motorized, passive and active, etc.~~
 - b. ~~Ecosystem services such as clean water, flood risk management, etc.~~
2. ~~Social pressure for...~~ Opportunities for young people and others who have not traditionally been engaged as stakeholders in forest management
3. Interest in specific uses, environments or management – including calls for specific treatments, restoration activities or fire management strategies
4. Cultural influences related traditional and historic uses of the plan area by various communities, Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations

13.13 - How the Plan Area Influences Key Social, Cultural, and Economic Conditions

The key social, cultural, and economic conditions for the assessment are those conditions that are influenced by the management of the plan area and the likely components of the land management plan. Many of the social, cultural, and economic conditions identified in the social, cultural, and economic context may not be substantially influenced by the management of the plan area.

Using available information, the responsible official should identify and evaluate information about the plan area's relationship to these key social, cultural, and economic conditions such as:

1. Identifying the key social, cultural, and economic conditions influenced by plan area management and how management of the plan area influences these conditions.

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2. Direct contributions of ecosystem services and multiple uses in the plan areas as described in sections 13.2-14 and opportunities derived from recreational visitors that generate local business opportunities (also indirect and induced economic impacts).
3. Aesthetics of the plan area that may enhance the attractiveness of the area for residents or businesses.
4. Indirect and induced economic impacts generated by the direct contributions of plan area in items 1-3 of this list.

13.14 - Sources of Relevant Existing Information for Social, Cultural, and Economic Conditions

There are varieties of sources that may provide relevant information for the assessment (sec. 13.2 through 13.9). This includes both internal Forest Service information and information from external sources.

Internal sources include:

1. Economic Profile System – Human Dimensions Toolkit for general conditions and trend data on employment, income, demography, and so on for counties, regions, or states. Free software, created under a Forest Service contract and owned by the Service is available at <http://headwatereconomics.org/tools/eps-hdt>. (Forest Service employees may access the software at http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/em/HD/eps_hdt.htm.)
2. Resources Planning Act assessment data and reports.
3. National Report on Sustainable Forests (<http://www.fs.fed.us/research/sustain/>).
4. IMPLAN (IMPact analysis for PLANning) to identify economic and social conditions (including jobs and income) affected by contributions of the plan area such as grazing, recreation, timber, and restoration.
5. Other social science or economic analysis from local Forest Service research stations.
6. Information on specific uses of the plan area described elsewhere within section 14 of this Handbook such as information specific to the timber and recreation programs (sec. 13.3 and 13.4, respectively).

External information sources include:

1. Reports produced or data evaluated by collaborative partners or special use permittees.
2. Local governments or non-governmental organizations for reports on social and economic relationships between plan-area management and local communities.

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3. Community, county, or State economic assessments and reports.
4. Plans and associated documents of local counties and communities.
5. University publications or other similar academic studies.
6. Indian Tribes or Alaska Native Corporations for information on social, economic, and cultural conditions, local land use, and forest-tribal relations.
7. Relevant analysis or information offered for consideration by the public about social, economic, and cultural conditions.
8. The Forest Service should find ways to gain information from non-traditional sources, including user-generated content and should use social media to expand its search for plan-related information.

13.2 - Assessing Benefits People Obtain from the NFS Plan Area

The responsible official shall identify and evaluate available information relevant to the plan area for benefits people obtain from the NFS planning area (ecosystem services). (36 CFR 219.6(b))

The responsible official should identify and evaluate key ecosystem services provided by the plan area that may be influenced by the land management plan. This evaluation should include the condition and trend of these key ecosystem services and the ability of the plan area to provide these ecosystem services in the future. The intent is not to identify all possible ecosystem services provided by the plan area but to identify those ecosystem services that are most important to people in the broader landscape and those that would be most affected by the land management plan. The key ecosystem services identified in the assessment are expected to be tracked further in the planning process.

Ecological, social, and economic conditions and trends on other lands within a broader landscape, as well as drivers or stressors outside the control of the plan area, are likely to affect the provision of and demand for ecosystem services. Those effects may complement, supplement, or hinder the capability of the plan area to contribute ecosystem services.

Using available information, the responsible official should identify and evaluate information about ecosystem services such as:

1. Key ecosystem services contributed by the plan area.
2. The geographic scale at which the plan area contributes to ecosystem services (for example, watersheds, counties, regional markets, or ecoregions).
3. The condition and trend of these key ecosystem services.

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13.32 – Range

rangelands and transitory forage range contributes to ecological, social, and economic sustainability.

Using available information, the responsible official should identify and evaluate information about range such as:

1. The current range condition in the plan area and trends influencing the range conditions
2. The current level of grazing activity in the plan area and within the broader landscape.
3. ~~The current range condition in the plan area.~~ The capability of the plan area to support grazing activity.
4. Sustainability of the ecological conditions on which grazing depends.
5. The contribution of plan area grazing to social, economic and ecological sustainability.

Internal sources of information include:

1. Forest Service NRM database system.
 - a. IWEB (within Infra) for summary, monitoring, and riparian condition data as well as role of plan area in context or broader landscape.
 - b. Rangeland Inventory and Monitoring.
2. Assessment reports, either broadscale or finescale, that evaluate range conditions.
3. Monitoring information about range conditions or management of livestock.
4. Completed National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses.
5. Summarized information from,
 - a. 2210 – Range Allotment Management Plan folders, and
 - b. 2230 – Permit Case File folders.
6. Local research station reports or analysis.

External information sources include:

1. Information describing rangeland and grazing conditions.

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2. The conditions and trends in availability and balance of seasonal grazing on private and public lands and its social and economic role.
3. Community, county, and State agricultural and ranching economic assessments and reports.
4. Relevant analysis or information offered for consideration by the public about range conditions or management of grazing.

13.33 - Timber

Timber harvest and production can play an important role in attaining desired conditions for ecological sustainability and can contribute to social and economic sustainability. The assessment should identify and evaluate how timber harvest and production contributes to social, economic, and ecological sustainability. Using available information, the responsible official should identify and evaluate relevant information such as:

1. The current condition of forests in the plan area, including standing inventory, age classes, growth and mortality.
2. The current levels of timber harvest and production in the plan area and within the broader landscape.
3. The ability of timber harvest to affect forest resistance and resilience to stressors such as fire, insects, and disease.
4. The ability of timber harvest to maintain or restore key ecosystem characteristics identified in the assessment of ecological sustainability (sec. 13).
5. The current capacity and trend for logging and restoration services and infrastructure for processing wood within the broader landscape.
6. Key trends that drive the supply and demand for timber or the need for timber harvest in the plan area.
7. Contribution of timber harvest and production in the plan area for ecological, social, and economic sustainability.

Internal sources of information include:

1. Forest inventory data.
2. GIS data on forest cover type, forest health, fuels, or fire activity.
3. Forest management reports (available on the internet at (<http://www.fs.fed.us/forestmanagement/products/index.shtml>)).

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5. State Wildlife Action Plans.
6. Federal fisheries management plans (NOAA-Fisheries) and multi-state coastal fisheries management plans (for example, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission).
7. ESA-related documents, for example, biological opinions, critical habitat designations, and recovery plans (FWS, NOAA-Fisheries).
8. State Division of Natural Resources (Fish and Game).
9. NatureServe. (<http://www.natureserve.org/>)
10. Reports of organizations focused on the needs of particular species enjoyed by the public (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Wild Turkey Federation, Trout Unlimited, and State native plant societies).
11. Conservation Success Index.
12. Center for Plant Conservation.
13. Other relevant analysis or information offered for consideration by the public about fish, wildlife, and plant resources used or enjoyed by the public.

13.4 - Assessing Recreation Settings, Opportunities and Access, and Scenic Character

The responsible official shall identify and evaluate available information relevant to the plan area for recreation settings, opportunities and access, and scenic character. (36 CFR 219.6(b))

Recreation contributes to social and economic sustainability and provides opportunities to connect people with nature. The focus of the assessment for recreation is to identify and evaluate information about recreation settings and the uses, trends and sustainability of recreation opportunities in the plan area, recreational preferences of the public, recreational access, and scenic character.

Using available information, the responsible official should identify and evaluate information about recreational settings, opportunities, access, and scenic character of the plan area such as:

1. The types of recreational settings in the plan area, Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), should be used to describe this and map these settings.
2. The types of recreational opportunities currently available in the plan area including their distribution and seasonal variation, and the natural features and topography that enable the recreational opportunities.

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13.4 – Assessing Recreation Settings, Opportunities and Access, Scenic Character

3. The existing and potential scenic character of the plan area, Scenery Management System (SMS), should be used to describe this and map scenic character.
4. The important recreational sites or areas in the plan area and their condition.
5. ~~The compatibility or incompatibility of different recreation activities...~~ The relationship among recreation activities including the degree of compatibility or incompatibility
6. The nature, extent, and condition of trails, roads, and other transportation and other infrastructure to provide recreational access (see also sec. 13.6).
7. The opportunities within the plan area to foster greater connection between people and nature through education, experience, recreation, and stewardship.
8. The conditions and trends that are affecting the quality of recreational settings and scenic character...
9. Information about the sustainability of the set of recreation opportunities and scenic character, including the fiscal capacity for sustaining the opportunities.
10. Issues or dynamics, involved in social, cultural or economic conditions that may prevent or preclude, minorities and, other historically disadvantaged groups from seeking, accessing, (meaningful access), or participating in recreational activities typically, demanded by others.
11. The potential of the plan area to expand or enhance existing, sustainable recreational opportunities and to offer new, sustainable recreational opportunities consistent with present or anticipated future public demand or to otherwise enhance the plan area's contribution to social, cultural and economic conditions.

The FS should analyze the socio-economic and cultural tool set – the NRM data base system, ROS, and other social, economic and cultural tools – in light of the new rule and update them if necessary.

In addition, the responsible official should evaluate how influences outside the plan area may influence the demand for recreation in the plan area or the ability of the plan area to meet those demands. Using available information, the responsible official should identify and evaluate relevant information such as:

1. The preferences of the public and demand for specific recreation opportunities or settings.
2. The availability of recreation opportunities on other lands within the broader landscape.
3. The stated goals in approved plans or other published reports of Tribes, States, or local governments, for recreational opportunities in the plan area.
4. Social, cultural, and economic conditions or trends such as changing population demographics, traditional uses, or income levels that influence the demand for various types of recreation activities.
5. Emerging new or unique recreational trends or interests that may affect future demand for recreation in the plan area.
6. Assessment of whether recreational settings and opportunities have regional, national or international significance to the public or to recreational users.

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13.4 – Assessing Recreation Settings, Opportunities and Access, Scenic Character

Based on the information above, the responsible official should evaluate the extent to which plan area meets the demand for recreational opportunities and the ability of the plan area to sustain these recreation settings, opportunities, access, and scenic character. The responsible official should evaluate how recreation contributes to social, economic, and ecological sustainability.

Internal sources of information include:

1. NRM.
 - a. National visitor use monitoring.
 - b. Wilderness and wild and scenic rivers.
 - c. Infra (for information on trails, cultural properties, and recreation sites).
 - d. Heritage.
2. ROS.
3. SMS.
4. Motor vehicle use map and travel management plan.
5. Recreation facility analysis.
6. Travel and tourism reports.
7. Local research station reports or analyses.
8. US Forest Service National Survey on Recreation and the Environment

External information sources include:

1. State comprehensive outdoor recreation plans.
2. State or county land management planning and strategy documents.
3. National, state and regional surveys on recreation such as the Outdoor Industry Association Participation Survey
4. Volunteered data from special use permittees.
5. ~~Relevant~~ Analysis or information offered for consideration by the public about recreation or scenic character.
6. The USFWS National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation
7. Public, online resources maintained by local, regional or national recreation organizations or recreation communities
8. Recreation directors at the national and regional levels and other internal recreation specialists (employees or contractors)

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13.4 – Assessing Recreation Settings, Opportunities and Access, Scenic Character

The responsible official shall identify and evaluate available information relevant to the plan area for renewable and nonrenewable energy and mineral resources. In addition, the responsible official should coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regarding energy and mineral resources. (36 CFR 219.6(b))

Energy sources may include wind, hydropower, solar, biomass, geothermal, coal, oil, or natural gas. Mineral resources include locatable mineral deposits, leasable minerals, and mineral materials. Each type of energy or mineral development may require specialized expertise to understand the specific considerations of that type of development.

Using available information, the responsible official should identify and evaluate relevant information such as:

1. Current type, extent, and general location of energy and mineral activity and energy facilities in the plan area.
2. Potential of the plan area for energy and mineral activity.
3. Trends that affect energy and mineral activity in the plan area.
4. Known abandoned mines or mining related hazards in need of reclamation or restoration.
5. Existing energy transmission corridors and the potential need for new transmission corridors.
6. The contribution of energy and mineral activity in the plan area to social, economic and ecological sustainability, including an analysis of taxes, royalties and fees.

The responsible official may also identify and evaluate known geologic hazards such as landslides, rock falls, mud flows, debris flows, earthquakes, karst collapse, volcanoes, flooding, subsidence, and naturally occurring gases and minerals, such as asbestos, erionite, radon, and methane if they occur at a scale that would merit evaluation for a land management plan.

Internal sources of information include:

1. NRM and Infra.
 - a. Minerals and geology information.
 - b. Abandoned mines information.
 - c. Locatable minerals information.
2. Local or analyses including research station reports and analyses.

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13.9 – Assessing Land Status and Ownership, Use, and Access Patterns

management status of public lands (such as wilderness) for public lands. The status for public lands may include surface and subsurface estates and other specific restrictions that may apply to use of public lands by the Forest Service. Land use is the current use of land, such as residential, commercial, industrial, or agricultural use. Access is transportation access to or through the plan area, including pedestrian access from properties adjacent to the plan area.

Using available information, the responsible official should identify and evaluate information such as:

1. Existing patterns of land ownership, status, and use both within and near the plan area.
2. Trends affecting land status, ownership, and use with particular attention to trends within or near the plan area's boundary.
3. Influence of the plan area on land ownership, status, and use within the broader landscape.
4. Access to the plan area for various modes of transportation and from urban and rural locations near the plan area.
5. Opportunities to provide open space connections with lands in other ownerships.
6. Trends of land status and ownership affecting access to the plan area and how these trends affect use of the plan area.
7. Influence of these conditions and trends of land ownership, status, use, and access on social, cultural, economic, and ecological conditions (for example, invasive species or wildland urban interface).

Internal sources of information include:

1. Infra lands database of NRM;
2. Transportation atlas, records, and analysis;
3. Travel management plans;
4. Motor vehicle use maps;
5. The Economic Profile System-Human Dimensions Toolkit government and land use reports, created under a Forest Service contract and owned by the Service (<http://headwaterseconomics.org/tools/eps-hdt>);
6. GIS layers; and

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10-ASSESSMENTS

7. Information from the Resources Planning Act assessment (<http://www.fs.fed.us/research/rpa/>).

External information sources include:

1. Plans, reports, or other information from Indian Tribes, States, counties, or other local governments on land ownership, status and use, access, or transportation. This may include spatial data or maps maintained by these governments.
2. Relevant analysis or information offered for consideration by the public about land ownership, status and use, access or transportation.

14 - ASSESSING DESIGNATED AREAS

The responsible official shall identify and evaluate available information relevant to the plan area for existing designated areas located in the plan area including wilderness and wild and scenic rivers and potential need and opportunity for additional designated area. (36 CFR 219.6(b))

~~Designated areas direct specific kinds of management on areas within the plan area. The assessment also identifies designated areas and evaluates the potential need and opportunity for additional designated areas. The assessment may include but does not require an inventory and evaluation of individual land areas within the plan area for potential designation. Before the responsible official invites comments on the proposed plan, an inventory and evaluation is required for wilderness lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (see FSH 1909.12, ch. 70), and an inventory of the eligibility of rivers for inclusion in the Wild, and Scenic Rivers System is required (see FSH 1909.12, ch. 80) ; but these inventories are not required during the assessment (36 CFR 219.7(c)(v) and (vi)). The inventories may begin during or after the assessment using existing information to the extent possible, and must provide opportunities for public and intergovernmental participation. The inventories may only become final and evaluation of the inventories may only begin after the assessment is complete.~~

Some categories of designated areas may be designated only by statute and some categories may be established administratively in the land management planning process or by other administrative processes of the Federal Executive Branch.

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21 – DEVELOPING, REVISING, AMENDING, OR ADMINISTRATIVELY CHANGING A PLAN

The adaptive planning framework for the National Forest Service (NFS) system includes three general stages: assessment (ch. 10); developing, amending or revising a plan (ch. 20); and monitoring (ch. 30). Plan revisions and amendments may be initiated either to accommodate the 15-year planning cycle or to respond to needs or changing circumstances. If a need to change the plan is identified that cannot be made through administrative changes (36 CFR 219.13), or by changing management practices rather than plan components, an amendment or revision should be initiated, as appropriate.

This section describes the process for how to develop a new plan or revise an existing plan that reflects public and governmental participation and the use of the best available scientific information (BASI) to inform the planning process (FSH 1909.12, ch. 40). The planning process is iterative. The responsible official has the discretion to determine the scope, methods, forum, and timing of the process, subject to public notification requirements listed in 36 CFR 219.16 (see FSH 1909.12, ch. 40, sec. 43.2). However, the process is designed to be transparent and efficient, to reflect principles of adaptive management, and to engage the public through meaningful opportunities for participation early and throughout the process.

The planning process, which builds on public and governmental participation and information gathered during the assessment phase, may be conducted in many different ways, depending on the circumstances. The responsible official shall establish an interdisciplinary team (ID Team) to carry out the planning process (sec. 219.5(b)) and provide the team direction regarding the scope and nature of the new plan or plan revision. While a detailed approach to planning procedures is not specified, in general, the steps for conducting the planning process are as follows:

1. Plan revision, from initiation of the assessment to final plan approval should be completed within two to four years.
2. Continue outreach to the public that was initiated during development of the assessment (36 CFR 219.4). In particular, invite public input on the following:
 - a. The preliminary need to change the plan (36 CFR 219.7(c)(2)(i), sec. 21.1);
 - b. The plan area's distinctive roles and contributions in the broader landscape (36 CFR 219.7(f)(1)(ii), sec. 22.32); and
 - c. The list of potential species of conservation concern (36 CFR 219.9(c)); FSH 1909.12, ch. 10, sec. 12.52).

Develop a proposed new plan or revised plan with public participation. There is flexibility in how a new or revised plan is developed, including the mechanisms and timing of public participation, beyond the minimum public participation and notification requirements of 36 CFR 219.4 and 219.16 (FSH1909.12, ch. 40)

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22 – REQUIREMENTS FOR PLAN CONTENT

§ 219.10 Multiple Use. ...

(a) Integrated resource management for multiple use. The plan must include plan components, including standards or guidelines, for integrated resource management to provide for ecosystem services and multiple uses in the plan area. (36 CFR 219.10(a))

§ 219.17 (b)(2) ... After the 3-year transition period, all plan amendments must be initiated, completed, and approved under the requirements of this part.

Plan amendments initiated after May 9, 2015 must conform to the applicable requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule. For example, as discussed in Section 21.3, the requirements for riparian areas (36 CFR 219.8(a)(3)) apply only if amending plan guidance for riparian areas.

§ 219.19 Definitions. . . .

Integrated resource management. Multiple use management that recognizes the interdependence of ecological resources and is based on the need for integrate consideration of ecological, social, and economic factors.

The responsible official shall use an interdisciplinary process to achieve integration of resource concerns into a set of plan components, take into account a wide range of resource conditions and values, strive to achieve multiple benefits, and manage the risk of adverse effects to interconnected systems. The interdisciplinary process requires an ID Team (36 CFR 219.5(b)). The responsible official should consider the applicable goals, outcomes, objectives, and performance measures of the Forest Service Strategic Plan so that the plan components contribute to the strategic priorities of the Agency. Finally, the responsible official shall base the plan on likely budgets and other assumptions that are realistic as required by 36 CFR 219.1(g):

(g) The responsible official shall ensure that the planning process, plan components, and other plan content are within Forest Service authority, the inherent capability of the plan area, and the fiscal capability of the unit.

The recommended layout for plan components and other plan content is illustrated by the plan model, described in the technical guide “Foundations of Forest Planning” available on the Ecosystem Management Coordination Web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/index.htm>.

22.1 - Plan Components

(e) Plan components. Plan components guide future project and activity decisionmaking. The plan must indicate whether specific plan components

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22 - REQUIREMENTS FOR PLAN CONTENT

22.1 - Plan Components

When revising a plan, the ID Team should address issues from comments on the need to change the plan and any other relevant public comment (sec.21.1). Plan components may be used to carry out laws, regulations, or policies, but should not merely repeat existing direction from laws, regulations, or directives. Notwithstanding, plans must include plan components that apply the specific National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA) timber requirements of 36 CFR 219.11(d) and may, in some instances, need to repeat the words of the law. See FSH 1909.12, chapter 60 for further guidance on NFMA timber requirements.

Plan components must be structured to allow for monitoring to test effectiveness and verify assumptions of objectives, desired conditions, standards, and guidelines.

Plan components must meet the following:

1. Are written so that they are in accord with Agency authorities, and the inherent capability of the plan area.
2. May apply to the entire plan area, to a specific management or geographic area, or to land of specific character.
3. Are not commitments or final decisions approving projects and activities.
4. Guide the development of future projects and activities and the plan-monitoring program.
5. Are informed-by the assessment, monitoring, public and governmental participation, and the BASI. (For more information on BASI see FSH 1909.12, ch. 40).
6. Guide and constrain Forest Service personnel; not the public.
7. Meet the requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219, subpart A).
8. Give direction for integrated resource management for multiple uses (36 CFR 219.10(a)).

See exhibit 01, Example Plan Components, for examples of desired conditions, objectives, standards, and guidelines. Plans should be written clearly and concisely, see <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/>. Plan components should not include explanatory narrative; see section 22.4 of this Handbook for direction on how to include explanatory narrative as other plan content.

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22.11 - Desired Conditions

Desired conditions. A desired condition is a description of specific social, economic, and/or ecological characteristics of the plan area, or a portion of the plan area, toward which management of the land and resources should be directed. Desired conditions must be described in terms that are specific enough to allow progress toward their achievement to be determined, but do not include completion dates. (36 CFR 219.7(e)(1)(i))

Desired conditions should reflect an overall vision for the future of the plan area as a whole. The set of desired conditions are the focus of the plan and are the basis for developing all other plan components and other plan content. The plan's set of desired conditions describe a picture of the desired social, cultural, economic, and ecological attributes that characterize the desired outcome of land management in the plan area. It is important that managers and the public and governmental entities share a common understanding of the desired conditions, since desired conditions drive the development of other components.

All aspects of the desired conditions must be integrated within the plan so the overall desired condition is feasible. In addition, the five plan components must be integrated with each other and should be tied back to desired conditions.

Desired conditions, together with the other plan components, must be designed to move toward ecological and social and economic sustainability (36 CFR 219.8) and should clearly articulate management's intent over the life of the plan. Responsible officials should include sufficiently detailed descriptions of desired conditions so that long lists of standards, guidelines, and suitability determinations are not needed to determine the "purpose and need" for future projects and activities .

When designing desired conditions, the responsible officials should take into account the uses on land adjacent to the plan area and the larger surrounding landscape. The desired conditions developed or expressed by adjacent agencies, landowners, interested and affected individuals, or communities should be considered when designing desired conditions for the plan area. The statement of desired conditions should integrate the ecological, economic, social, and cultural desired conditions.

An individual desired condition:

1. May be the same as an existing condition, so that efforts to achieve the desired condition would focus on maintenance;
2. May be described in a way that is achievable in any time frame – short, medium, or long term;

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3. Must not direct taking action or prohibit taking action, or indicate specific agency actions or tools (for example, prescribed fire and thinning) to be used for its attainment or maintenance;
4. Should be expressed in a way that helps managers determine the uses that are suitable and the possible management actions that may be proposed during the planning period;
5. Must be written with enough detail so that the intent is clear and progress toward their achievement can be measured;
6. May be stated in comparative terms such as “more,” or “less,” or “increased,” or “decreased” if the baseline is clearly stated;
7. May be stated in terms of a range of conditions; and
8. May be described by a photograph or illustration.

22.12 - Land Management Plan Objectives

Objectives. An objective is a concise, measurable, and time-specific statement of a desired rate of progress toward a desired condition or conditions. Objectives should be based on reasonably foreseeable budgets. (36 CFR 219.9(e)(1)(ii))

Objectives are each linked to desired conditions and reflect the responsible official’s priorities. Objectives must be attainable within the fiscal capability of the unit. The fiscal capability should be based on a trend analysis of the recent past budget obligations for the unit (3 to 5 years).

Plan objectives:

1. Describe the focus of management in the plan area within the plan period;
2. Must be based on making progress toward attaining desired conditions;
3. Must be stated in measurable terms with specific reasonable time frames;
4. Help set the basis for priority areas or activities, with a timing expectation that near-term objectives would be completed first, depending on funding;
5. Should be based on likely reasonably foreseeable budgets and other assumptions that are for the plan period, but may include a realistic option that anticipates enhanced resources or policy efficiencies that would facilitate positive trends in making progress towards attaining desired conditions; expectations for the selected period of time;
6. Should be expressed in terms of outcomes, not actions; and
7. Are neither actions nor commands to take action and are not to be written as such.

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22.15 – Suitability of Lands

identify those lands that are not suitable for timber production (§ 219.11). (36
CFR 219.7(e)(1)(v))

NFS lands are generally suitable for a variety of uses such as outdoor recreation, viewing scenery, livestock grazing, timber production, providing habitat for fisheries and wildlife, cultural resource interpretation, and protecting watersheds. The identification of the suitability of lands in a plan area for various uses involves social, economic, and ecological considerations. When establishing a baseline for suitability analysis, forest planners should refer to adopted plans including but not limited to, fire management plans, travel management plans, watershed plans and other activity-level plans.

As part of the land management plan, the identification of suitability of lands helps achieve the desired social, cultural, economic, and ecological conditions—which reflect public and governmental participation and the distinctive role and contributions of the plan area. The identification of suitability helps the responsible official determine if projects and activities are consistent with the desired conditions. The identification of land that may be suitable for particular uses involves interpretation of social, economic, and resource tradeoffs—not just an inventory. The identification of suitability, or non-suitability, of lands is based upon the desired condition for those lands and the inherent capability of the land to support the use. The responsible official should make available to the public the rationale for suitability determinations and the information sources, tools, standards, technical guidance documents and data bases used in suitability determinations. The identification of the suitability of lands in a plan area should stress integration of social, economic cultural and ecological considerations.

Responsible officials should not make suitability of lands identifications for the use of any resource, such as minerals if an entity other than the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has authority over the disposal or leasing of minerals. Congress has given the Secretary of the Interior authority over the disposal of locatable minerals (gold, silver, lead, and so forth) and leasable minerals (oil, gas, coal, geothermal, among others). The Secretary of Agriculture has authority over saleable minerals (sand, gravel, pumice, among others). The Forest Service regulation for minerals is detailed at Title 36 CFR 228, “Minerals.” For example, analysis of the availability of lands for oil and gas leasing is at 36 CFR 228.102 and is a project decision that may be made at the same time as a plan revision.

~~The identification of the suitability of lands in a plan area should involve social, economic and ecological considerations. In designating suitability of lands to achieve desired ecological conditions, the Forest Service shall give preference to suitability determinations that also benefit social, economic and cultural values.~~

Identifying lands as suitable for a use is notably different from identifying lands as not suitable for a use when deciding whether a project or activity is appropriate on those lands. The difference is discussed in the following enumerated paragraphs.

1. Lands identified as suitable for certain uses or activities. Identification in... might...

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22.21 – Identification of Management Areas and Geographic Areas

Geographic areas are based on place, while management areas are usually based on purpose. The following paragraphs discuss management areas and geographic areas:

1. Management areas. The typical management area (MA) map in existing plans often represents the potential future land uses on landscape basis. MA maps often show lands with integrated packages of compatible resource direction. For example, traditional MA maps might be labeled as follows: MA 1—areas emphasizing developed recreation use, MA 2—areas that are suitable for timber production, MA 3—areas providing for off highway vehicle trails, MA 4—areas designated by Congress as Wilderness, MA 5—areas emphasizing primitive backcountry recreation experiences, and so forth.
2. Geographic areas. The typical geographic area (GA) of existing plans often represents larger areas that have desired conditions with a range of possible resource management emphasis. Rather than a management emphasis map, a geographic area map tends to focus on a place (Red Rock Canyon, Mount Whitney, or perhaps a specific watershed).

A geographic-based approach is based on the idea that the plan serves as a long-range vision for an area. However, the boundaries for different suitable uses within a geographic area may be displayed by using multiple overlays of maps. For example, overlays of maps could identify how suitability for non-motorized use, winter motorized use, and timber production differs across one geographic area.

To the extent practicable, implementation of the forest planning rule should serve as an umbrella for other planning activities and rulemaking efforts, such as a travel management planning. If that is not possible, forest plans should identify inconsistencies created by the forest plan (the plan changes a suitability designation, for example), prioritize these and set a schedule for project-level planning that creates consistency with the plan.

Desired conditions, suitability of land for uses, and standards for uses could be identified by using a description of the specific character of the land or by describing the circumstances under which different land uses may occur. For example, timber harvest or motorized vehicle use may be limited to within a certain distance from an existing road.

A hybrid of GA and MA approaches may be useful. Above all, the approach must fit the plan area and people need to understand where each plan component applies and what type of areas and maps you are using and why.

The following names should not be used as a “management area” or “geographic area” name unless the area has been so designated or unless the responsible official is designating or recommending the area as an administratively designed area under FSM 2372-Areas Designated Administratively:

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22.32 – Describe Distinctive Roles and Contributions of the Plan Area

The planning rule (36 CFR 219.2(b)) explains the types of things the responsible official considers when describing distinctive roles and contributions within the broader landscape:

. . . A plan reflects the unit’s expected distinctive roles and contributions to the local area, region, and Nation, and the roles for which the plan area is best suited, considering the Agency’s mission, the unit’s unique capabilities, and the resources and management of other lands in the vicinity. . . .

Once described, the plan area’s roles and contributions within the broader landscape can serve as a focused foundation or context that should be a unifying— used to guide plan development. A plan area may have multiple roles and contributions within the broader landscape. These roles and contributions will not necessarily lead to a single compelling direction for the plan area. This description is important because it is a source of motivation or reasons behind some desired conditions.

The development of the description of the distinctive roles and contribution of the plan area within the broader landscape should occur in the new plan development or plan revision phase. The responsible official should consider the information collected during the assessment phase on multiple uses and ecosystem services as a starting point for developing the distinctive roles and contributions.

The description of the plan area’s ~~distinctive~~ roles and contribution within the broader landscape ~~must not be a list~~ should be inclusive, reflecting ~~of~~ all the roles of the plan area. ~~Rather it should reflect those things that are truly unique and distinctive.~~ Consider the following when describing the plan area’s distinctive roles and contributions within the broader landscape:

1. The plan area’s distinctive roles and contributions within the broader landscape:
 - a. Are truly unique attributes of the plan area, or are unique benefits (uses, values, products, and services) provided by the plan area to the broader landscape;
 - b. Are important and relevant at the local, regional, and/or national level; and
 - c. Contribute toward social, economic, and ecological sustainability.
2. Descriptions of a plan area’s roles and contributions may reflect the:
 - a. Ecological role of the plan area in the broader landscape;
 - b. Public input on plan area description of conditions, contributions, unique capabilities, and how the plan area provides for multiple uses and ecosystem services;
 - c. Economic benefits of uses, products, and services provided by the plan area;

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species whose specific habitat needs or other influences on their life requirements may not be fully met under the coarse-filter provisions.

b. At-risk species. At-risk species are federally recognized species under ESA (threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species) and species of conservation concern (SCC). A SCC is a “species, other than federally recognized threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species, that is known to occur in the plan area and for which the regional forester has determined that the best available scientific information indicates substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long-term in the plan area” (36 CFR 219.9(c)). SCCs are those species that are native species known to occur in the plan area. The best available scientific information indicates substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long- term in the plan area.

This directive requires the responsible official to develop coarse-filter plan components, and fine-filter plan components if necessary, to contribute to the recovery of listed species and conserve proposed and candidate species.

In addition, the directive requires the development of coarse-filter plan components, and fine-filter plan components if necessary, to provide the desired ecological conditions necessary to maintain viable populations of SCC within the plan area, or to contribute to maintaining a viable population of a SCC across its range where it is not within the Agency's authority or is beyond the inherent capability of the plan area to provide the ecological conditions to maintain a viable population of that species within the plan area.

4. Social and economic sustainability. The directives require plan components to guide the plan area's contribution to social and economic sustainability (employment, income, community wellbeing, culture, and so on). In developing these plan components, the responsible official is to take into account, through the collaborative planning process and the results of the assessment—the social, cultural, and economic conditions relevant to the area influenced by the plan, the distinctive roles and contributions of the unit within the broader landscape; sustainable recreational opportunities and uses; multiple uses, including ecosystem services, that contribute to local, regional, and national economies in a sustainable manner; and cultural and historic resources and uses. In selecting plan components to achieve desired ecological conditions, the Forest Service shall give preference to components that also benefit social, economic and cultural values should stress the integration of social, economic, cultural and ecological values.

23.1 - Ecological Sustainability and Diversity of Plant and Animal Communities

To develop the land management plan consistent with maintaining ecological sustainability, the plan must include plan components designed to maintain, restore, or promote the ecological integrity of terrestrial, riparian, and aquatic ecosystems; maintain the diversity of plant and animal communities;

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23.1 – Ecological Sustainability and Diversity of Plant and Animal Communities

(sec. 23.11-23.11d) and Plan Components for Air, Soil, and Water (sec. 23.12-23.12c) provide direction for design of plan components for the ecosystem and watershed level of the plan area. The third subsection, Additional Species-Specific Plan Components (sec. 23.13-23.13c), gives direction for when the plan components developed under sections 23.11 and 23.12 would not provide for the ecological conditions necessary to contribute to the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species, conserve species that are proposed or candidates for Federal listing, and maintain viable populations of species of conservation concern within the plan area (36 CFR 219.9(b)(1)). The plan development process for ecological sustainability and diversity of plant and animal communities should first and foremost focus on the ecosystem and watershed level plan components, especially those that also support ecological conditions for at-risk species. The combination of plan components developed for these three sections must incorporate a complementary ecosystem (coarse-filter) and species-specific (fine-filter) approach, and be designed to maintain ecological sustainability, the diversity of plant and animal communities, and the persistence of native species within the plan area. See section 22.1, exhibit 01 for hypothetical examples of plan components for ecological sustainability and ecosystem diversity.

When developing integrated plan components for ecological sustainability and diversity of plant and animal communities, based on the need to change (sec. 21.1), the responsible official should consider the following:

1. Plan components related to:
 - a. Major vegetation types and their successional stages, patch sizes, spatial arrangement, and connectivity;
 - b. Dominant ecological processes and disturbance regimes for the plan area;
 - c. Ecosystems and unique habitat types including those that are rare or at risk;
 - d. Stressors, including invasive species, loss of connectivity, or disruption of a natural disturbance regime by catastrophic fire, changed climate, or changes in human dimensions within the plan area;
 - e. Soil resources and soil productivity;
 - f. Air resources; and
 - g. Water quality and quantity, stream and other natural water flows, stream and lake morphology, wetlands, riparian areas, floodplains, and other groundwater-dependent ecosystems.
 - h. Management strategies that mitigate the effects of stressors or increase resiliency and adaptation,

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23.1 – Ecological Sustainability and Diversity of Plant and Animal Communities

Whether plan components are designed to maintain or restore key ecosystem characteristics depends upon:

- a. The distribution and abundance of the key ecosystem characteristic within the planning area.
 - b. The social and economic factors related to the maintenance or restoration of the key ecosystem characteristic, if applicable.
 - c. The opportunities and potential for maintenance or restoration of the key ecosystem characteristics.
 - d. The level of risk (as determined in FSH 1909.12, ch. 10, secs. 12.15d and 12.55) and the specific threats to the key ecosystem characteristic, and the ability to affect these.
3. The range of ecological conditions established within the limits of the natural landforms, vegetation, and disturbance processes that existed prior to extensive human alteration (FSH 1909.12, ch. 10, sec. 12.15a).
 4. The variation in physical and biological conditions exhibited by ecosystems as a consequence of climatic fluctuations and disturbance regimes (FSH 1909.12, ch. 10, sec. 12.3).
 5. The concept that the environmental conditions that sustained species and other ecosystem components in the past are likely to sustain them, at least over the short term, in the future (Weins et al, 2012).
 6. The potential influences of threats of stressors on key ecosystem characteristics, including those that are beyond control of the agency, including those that are beyond the control of the agency that are likely to affect ecological conditions on the plan area during the life of the proposed plan (15 years) (FSH 1909.12, ch. 10, sec. 12.32). The term stressor is defined at FSH 1909.12, zero code, section 05.

The development of these ecosystem scale plan components is an iterative process as emerging plan components are evaluated and adjusted to meet the ecological conditions of at-risk species within the plan area (sec. 23.13).

23.11 - Plan Components for Ecosystem Integrity and Ecosystem Diversity

23.11a – Natural Range of Variation

The plan components designed to maintain or restore the ecosystem integrity of the diversity of terrestrial, riparian, and aquatic ecosystems and habitat types throughout the plan area provide the ecosystem (coarse-filter) approach to maintaining the persistence of native species. When

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developing such plan components, the responsible official shall consider the role of the natural range of variation as follows:

1. The responsible official should design plan components to facilitate maintenance or restoration of specific key ecosystem characteristics needed to maintain or restore ecosystem integrity. The intent is to restore ecosystem integrity in the plan area not necessarily to return key characteristics to some past condition. ~~By moving... alteration~~
2. For specific areas within an ecosystem, the responsible official may determine that ~~certain key ecosystem characteristics are outside the NRV and that~~ it is not appropriate, practical, or possible, or desirable to contribute to the restoration of NRV conditions. NRV includes a wide range of characteristics, some more common than others. In order to achieve social, economic, cultural or ecological objectives it may be desirable to manage for uncommon conditions. In order for an ecosystem to withstand or recover from perturbations from novel circumstances imposed by natural dynamics or human influence, it may be necessary to manage for characteristics outside NRV. Examples of situations when restoring within NRV for specific areas within an ecosystem is not appropriate, practical, or possible, or desirable include when:
 1. ~~NRV should be used to design plan components if appropriate. If appropriate, the responsible official should design plan components to facilitate maintenance or restoration of specific key ecosystem characteristics needed to restore ecosystem integrity by moving conditions towards those created under ecological processes and landscape disturbance regimes that occurred before extensive human alteration.~~
 2. ~~Exceptions~~ In some situations, the responsible official may determine that certain key ecosystem characteristics are outside the NRV and that it is not appropriate, practical, or possible, or desirable to contribute to the restoration of NRV conditions. Examples of situations when restoring conditions to NRV is not appropriate, practical, or possible, or desirable include when:
 - a. The system is so degraded that restoration is not possible.
 - b. Restoration is ~~needs are either socially unacceptable undesirable or are not economically feasible. or NRV conflicts with desired conditions~~
 - c. The system is no longer capable of sustaining key ecosystem characteristics relative to NRV based upon likely future environments.
 - d. The ability to restore the desired ecological condition or key ecosystem characteristic is beyond the authority of the Agency or the inherent capability of the plan area.
 - e. Conditions outside NRV, for a specific area, will better contribute to long-term ecosystem sustainability and resiliency.
 - f. Management for specific areas to address public health and safety concerns.
 - g. For specific areas, NRV is antithetical to an integrated desired conditions (a desired condition that represents a balance of social, economic, cultural and ecological needs.)
3. If NRV is not appropriate, practical, possible, or desirable, use Best Available Scientific Information (BASI) and public input to inform design of plan components. In these situations, the responsible official should...

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23.12c – Water Quality and Water Resources

The development of plan components to maintain or restore water resources in the plan area, including lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater should be based on the select set of ecological conditions and key ecosystem characteristics that were identified in the assessment phase (FSH 1909.12, ch. 10, secs. 12.23 and 13.34) or brought forward during the public and governmental participation process. In addition, the responsible official should consider the surface and subsurface quality and the public water supplies associated with water quality from the plan area watersheds. The responsible official should develop desired conditions for water quality in the plan area and consider plan components to:

1. Maintain or restore the water quality, quantity, timing, and distribution necessary to sustain ecosystems and downstream ecosystem services into the future by:
 - a. Including guidance to prevent or mitigate detrimental changes in quantity, quality, and availability, including temperature changes and inputs of sediment and other pollutants.
 - b. Carrying out the national best management practices program (FSM 2532) (USDA Forest Service, 2012) (see sec. 20.4) [note: this was returned to the original language]
 - c. Quantifying the water needs necessary to maintain and restore terrestrial, riparian, and aquatic ecosystems and associated dependent species, including groundwater dependent ecosystems, and specify the appropriate environmental flows and water levels, when appropriate and practical. Environmental flows and water levels describe the quantity, quality, timing and range of variability of water flows and levels required to sustain or restore freshwater and estuarine ecosystems and the functions and services they provide. Environmental flows include instream flows for environmental purposes, geomorphic and flood flows, groundwater levels, and lake and wetland levels, and floodplain flows established for environmental purposes.
 - d. Coordinating with state, local and tribal water managers and with water users and others to ensure appropriate resource protection, consistent with applicable law.
2. Support the restoration of designated impaired waters within or adjacent to NFS lands with primary or secondary impairments that have the potential to be influenced through Forest Service land management activities in the plan area.
3. Maintain or restore the integrity of public water supplies, sole source aquifers, source water protection areas, and other sources of drinking water in the plan area.
4. Maintain or restore lakes, streams, wetlands and groundwater in the plan area. Identify plan components that will maintain ecological integrity and help support the demand for water resources both within and beyond the plan area.

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1
2 species. An example is the warming trends of temperatures at higher elevations in the West
3 which are altering the capability of national forests in California and other areas of the West
4 to maintain viable populations of American pika on some NFS units.

5 d. Where water quality conditions in Appalachian Mountain streams that provide habitat
6 for eastern brook trout have been altered through acid deposition, due to past and current
7 acid rain, rendering many of them unsuitable for brook trout and compromising the ability
8 of some Appalachian national forests to maintain viable populations of this species.

9
10 5. Duties of the responsible official. If the responsible official determines that it is beyond the
11 authority of the Forest Service or not within the inherent capability of the plan area to maintain
12 or restore the ecological conditions to maintain a viable population of a SCC in the plan area,
13 then the responsible official shall do the following for that SCC:

14 a. Document the basis for the determination.

15 b. Include plan components, including standards or guidelines, to maintain or restore
16 ecological conditions within the plan area to contribute to maintaining a viable population
17 of the species within its range. For additional guidance see 36 CFR 219.9(b)(2) and the
18 principles about viable populations at paragraph 1 of this section.

19 c. Coordinate, to the extent practicable, with Federal, State, tribal, and private land
20 managers relevant to the species population. In doing so, consider:

21 (1) The range of the species beyond the plan area, and the ecological role of the plan area
22 to contribute to a viable population across the broader landscape.

23 (2) Working towards an all-lands approach to species conservation with other land
24 managers across the range of the species.

25 26 **23.2 - Social and Economic Sustainability and Multiple Use**

27
28 Plans are required to have plan components for social and economic sustainability and multiple use
29 integrated with the plan components for ecological sustainability and species diversity described in
30 section 23.1. The outcomes of ecological sustainability create a foundation to support contributions for
31 social and economic sustainability. The integration shall be achieved in a manner that enhances
32 social, economic and cultural sustainability while assuring ecological integrity.

33 The 2012 Planning Rule sections on social and economic sustainability (36 CFR 219.8(b) and multiple use
34 (36 CFR 219.10) cover some of the same elements (or topics). This section presents these elements
35 once; combining into a single section the applicable rule text and considerations pertinent to the
36 identified element.

37

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23.21 – Social, Cultural and Economic Conditions

Plans must include plan components that guide the plan area’s contribution to social and economic sustainability to provide people and communities with a range of social and economic benefits for present and future generations. The desired conditions should include a description of the plan area’s contribution to social, economic and cultural sustainability, while enhancing multiple use. Economic, ~~and~~ social and cultural sustainability require that the needs of the present generation are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The ability to contribute to social and economic sustainability is built on the foundation provided by ecological sustainability. The general requirements for social and economic sustainability are set out at 36 CFR 219.8 as follows:

§ 219.8 Sustainability.

The plan must provide for social, economic, and ecological sustainability within Forest Service authority and consistent with the inherent capability of the plan area, as follows:

(b) Social and economic sustainability. The plan must include plan components, including standards or guidelines, to guide the plan area’s contribution to social and economic sustainability, taking into account:

- (1) Social, cultural, and economic conditions relevant to the area influenced by the plan;**
- (2) Sustainable recreation; including recreation settings, opportunities, and access; and scenic character;**
- (3) Multiple uses that contribute to local, regional, and national economies in a sustainable manner;**
- (4) Ecosystem services;**
- (5) Cultural and historic resources and uses; and**
- (6) Opportunities to connect people with nature. (36 CFR 219.8)**

This section on plan components for social and economic sustainability (sec. 23.21) expands on (b)(1) of the list above. The other elements (2-6) are addressed in the following respective sections: 23.22b (sustainable recreation), 23.22 (multiple use), 23.22a (ecosystem services), 23.22h (cultural and historic resources), and 23.22b (opportunities to connect people with nature).

In addition to the guidance in this and the following sections, when developing plan components, the responsible official shall consider the following:

(7) Reasonably foreseeable risks to ecological, social, and economic sustainability.

(8) System drivers, including dominant ecological processes, disturbance regimes, and stressors, such as natural succession, wildland fire, invasive species, and climate change; and the ability of the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems on the plan areas to adapt to

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23 – RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATED PLAN COMPONENTS

23.22 j-Wilderness

sustainability (FSH 1909.12, ch.10, sec. 14). ...(16 U.S.C. 1131–1136, 78 Stat 890), and the law that established the particular wilderness area and any other applicable laws.

In developing plan components for designated wilderness ~~or recommended wilderness areas~~, the responsible official should consider:

1. Measures to protect and enhance the wilderness characteristics of the areas;
2. Management on adjoining lands in other Federal, tribal or state ownership especially when adjoining other congressionally designated wilderness areas. If the adjoining lands are part of the same designated wilderness area, the responsible officials should coordinate with the responsible officials of the adjacent administrative units to ensure compatible management of the wilderness area in both plan areas.
3. Content of FSM 2320, which provides guidance for management of wilderness areas.

In developing plan components for recommended wilderness areas, the responsible official has discretion to implement a range of management options. All management prescriptions must protect the social and ecological characteristics that provide the basis for wilderness designation. The responsible official may propose the following management prescriptions in RWAs:

1. Enhance the ecological and social characteristics that provide the basis for wilderness designation;
2. Continue existing uses, provided that such uses do not prevent the protection and maintenance of the social and ecological characteristics that provide the basis for wilderness designation;
3. Alter existing uses, subject to valid existing rights;
4. Eliminate those existing uses that are incompatible with ecological and social characteristics that provide the basis for wilderness designation, except those uses subject to valid existing rights; or
5. Select any combination thereof.

The responsible official should strive to maintain consistency with the provisions of 16 U.S.C. § 1133(d), and the content of FSM 1923.03(3) in developing plan components for the management of recommended wilderness areas.

Content of FSM 1923.03(3), which provides guidance for management of wilderness study areas or RWA's. The plan must clearly identify existing wilderness, wilderness study, and recommended...

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3

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32 - PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM

1
2 **development of the plan monitoring program must be coordinated with the**
3 **regional forester and Forest Service State and Private Forestry and Research and**
4 **Development. Responsible officials for two or more administrative units may**
5 **jointly develop their plan monitoring programs.**

6 **(2) The plan monitoring program sets out the plan monitoring questions and**
7 **associated indicators. Monitoring questions and associated indicators must be**
8 **designed to inform the management of resources on the plan area, including by**
9 **testing relevant assumptions, tracking relevant changes, and measuring**
10 **management effectiveness and progress toward achieving or maintaining the**
11 **plan’s desired conditions or objectives. Questions and indicators should be based**
12 **on one or more desired conditions, objectives, or other plan components in the**
13 **plan, but not every plan component needs to have a corresponding monitoring**
14 **question.**

15 **(3) The plan monitoring program should be coordinated and integrated with**
16 **relevant broader-scale monitoring strategies (paragraph (b) of this section) to**
17 **ensure that monitoring is complementary and efficient, and that information is**
18 **gathered at scales appropriate to the monitoring questions. (36 CFR 219.12)**
19

20 The plan monitoring program sets out the plan monitoring questions and associated indicators to meet
21 the requirements of 36 CFR 219.12.
22

23 1. The plan monitoring program must:

- 24 a. Use the BASI to inform the plan monitoring program and subsequent decisions based on
25 monitoring information.
26 b. Provide opportunities for public participation, collaboration, and multi-party monitoring in the
27 development and implementation of monitoring for the plan area.
28 c. Make data sets and results transparent, consistent, and available to the public where possible
29 (i.e. except for sensitive data). Must design relevant questions and associated indicators to
30 measure management effectiveness and assess progress towards the desired conditions or
31 objectives.
32 d. Test relevant assumptions, track relevant conditions over time, and measure management
33 effectiveness to inform management of resources on the plan area.
34 e. Must be designed to be implemented in light of strategic monitoring priorities, to evaluate
35 risks and reduce key uncertainties, and within the financial and technical capabilities of the
36 Agency.
37 f. Require the collection and ~~public~~ reporting to the public of plan monitoring data on a regular
38 basis except for sensitive data.
39
40

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- 1 2. The plan monitoring program should:
 - 2 a. Build from existing internal and external monitoring efforts to design and carry out
 - 3 monitoring for the plan.
 - 4 b. Integrate complementary monitoring information with partners to gain efficiencies for
 - 5 adaptive management across the landscape including data collection methodologies that
 - 6 facilitate data aggregation across units or with partners.
 - 7 c. Provide for coordination monitoring with other agencies and partners that have relevant
 - 8 information and with monitoring programs that overlap with NFS units that may help meet
 - 9 the needs for land management plans.
 - 10 d. Include relevant information gathered through project and activity monitoring, and
 - 11 information gathered through plan monitoring should be used to inform development of
 - 12 projects or activities.
 - 13 e. Build public trust to support adaptive management.

14 **32.1 - Developing the Plan Monitoring Program**

15
16 The process for developing the plan monitoring program should start early in the planning process. The
17 responsible official may start identifying potential monitoring questions and associated indicators in the
18 assessment phase, but shall develop and select the monitoring questions and associated indicators
19 during the plan development phase.

20
21 The plan monitoring program consists of a set of monitoring questions and associated indicators to
22 evaluate whether plan components are effective and appropriate and whether management is being
23 effective in maintaining or achieving progress toward the desired conditions and objectives for the plan
24 area. The responsible official has the discretion to set the scope, scale, and priorities for plan
25 monitoring within the financial and technical capabilities of the Agency, but shall include monitoring
26 questions and indicators for the eight items set out in the planning rule at 36 CFR 219.12(a)(5); see
27 section 32.13 of this chapter.

28
29 Plan components form the basis for developing the monitoring questions and associated indicators in
30 the plan monitoring program, see sections 32.11 and 32.12 of this chapter. Desired conditions and
31 objectives should be stated in terms that are specific enough to determine whether progress toward
32 their achievement is being made. In addition, standards and guidelines should be stated in terms that
33 are specific enough to determine whether or not they are effective in achieving their purpose.

34
35 The responsible official has discretion to determine the methodology and scale of rigor needed to
36 achieve credible monitoring information, ranging from statistically tested methods to professional
37 observation and judgment. National inventory and monitoring protocols should be used to provide
38 standard data collection, where appropriate, to provide consistency across the Agency.

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32.1 - Developing the Plan Monitoring Program

The responsible official should use available public and governmental information in developing the plan monitoring program where it is relevant and appropriate. Such information would include traditional ecological knowledge, land ethics, cultural issues, and sacred and culturally significant sites. Where appropriate, the responsible official is encouraged to utilize existing monitoring plans, such as those developed under the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act, to inform the monitoring program.

The responsible official shall protect the confidentiality of sensitive monitoring information when required by law.

Exhibit 01, Example of a Subset of a Plan Monitoring Program, identifies a sample subset of a possible plan monitoring program that includes selected plan components to monitor, monitoring questions, and indicators associated with each question.

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32.1- Exhibit 01—Continued

Selected Plan Components	Monitoring Questions	Indicators
Conservation of Biological Diversity		
<p>Desired Condition: Alpine ecosystems sustain their diversity and maintain the attributes and processes that allow them to provide watershed values, habitat for native biota, panoramic vistas, and solitude. They display a diverse composition of desirable native plant species and vegetation communities. Invasive plant species are absent or rare.</p>	<p>Are plant communities of alpine ecosystems being protected, maintained, and restored?</p>	<p>Areal extent of plant community of alpine ecosystems.</p> <p>Presence of fragmentation characteristics such as patch size, edge, and proportion of habitat interior.</p> <p>Status of disturbance processes that shape the community.</p> <p><u>Incorporate results from new and revised tools pursuant to section sec. 13.4</u></p>
Maintenance and Enhancement of Social-Recreational Benefits		
<p>Desired Condition: Recreation settings and opportunities provide high visitor satisfaction, meeting current and future public demands in sustainable ways.</p>	<p>Are the current recreation settings and opportunities moving toward desired recreation settings and opportunities?</p> <p>What is the trend in visitor use and satisfaction?</p>	<p>Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) acres, location, and distribution (mapped ROS).</p> <p>Satisfaction levels from National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) data.</p>
Maintenance and Enhancement of Social, Economic and Cultural Benefits		
Selected Plan Components	Monitoring Questions	Indicators
<p>Desired Condition: Positive contribution to the economic, social and cultural vitality of communities within the area of influence while providing opportunities for people of all income, ethnic and age groups.</p>	<p>1. <u>Are the communities and their economies in the area of influence of the plan experiencing positive changes that can be associated with the implementation of the plan while moving toward desired conditions?</u></p> <p>2. <u>To what extent are young people, people of low income and members of minority groups engaged in a meaningful way in plan monitoring and implementation?</u></p>	<p><u>Levels of production of resources including timber, grazing and minerals</u></p> <p><u>Assessments of effectiveness of outreach activities to specific groups</u></p> <p><u>Economic impacts from recreational uses</u></p>

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- 1
- 2 3. Are the recreational objectives identified in the plan being achieved and are they
- 3 sustainable?
- 4 4. Is the set of recreation opportunities effective for connecting people with nature?
- 5 5. Was the set of recreation opportunities successfully designed to reduce or minimize user
- 6 conflict?
- 7 6. How are the recreation settings and opportunities contributing to the plan’s desired
- 8 condition(s) and objective(s) for ecological, social, and economic sustainability?
- 9 7. Are the existing scenic resources meeting or trending toward desired conditions for the
- 10 scenic resources?
- 11 8. Is the recreation opportunity spectrum on the plan area supporting a sustainable set of
- 12 recreation opportunities to meet current and future demands?
- 13 9. Do the demographic characteristics of visitors demonstrate ~~ensure~~ that the plan is meeting
- 14 the desired condition of increased visits from young people, those with low incomes and
- 15 members of minority groups?

16
17 National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) survey results may be used for visitor-related monitoring.
18 Infrastructure (Infra) recreation site module may be used to monitor opportunities of recreation sites,
19 facilities, and interpretive services. (See section 13.4)

20
21 The interpretive services component of this Infra module and the Forest Service program, NatureWatch,
22 may be used collectively as the basis to monitor whether the plan provides opportunities to connect
23 people to nature.

24 Coordinate monitoring with other agencies and partners that have relevant information and with
25 monitoring programs that overlap with NFS units that may help meet the needs for land management
26 plans.

27 28 **32.13e - Climate Change and Other Stressors**

29
30 The plan monitoring program must contain one or more monitoring questions and associated indicators
31 to address the measurable changes on the plan area related to climate change and other stressors that
32 may be affecting the plan area. This monitoring requirement may relate to other monitoring
33 requirements or to interactions with other stressors that individually or collectively may be affecting the
34 plan area. Interacting stressors may include fire, insects, invasive species, loss of spatial connectivity,
35 disruption of natural disturbance regimes, geologic hazards, water withdrawals and diversions, changes
36 in successional trajectories, and changes in human dimensions within the plan area, among others.

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1 32.13e – Climate Change and other Stressors – [NOTE – this page was returned to the original text]
2

- 3 a. Plan area vulnerabilities to projected climate changes and other associated stressors,
4 especially those that are tied to the implementation of plan components.
- 5 b. Coordinating monitoring needs for the plan with the Agency climate change monitoring
6 requirements.
- 7 c. Existing monitoring that addresses the status of stressors within the plan area, such as
8 watershed condition monitoring, soil disturbance monitoring, and ongoing forest
9 inventories, repeated over time, that detect changes in forest composition and structure.
- 10 d. Broader-scale monitoring strategies of the Forest Service and other agencies for climate
11 data and monitoring impacts broader than the planning area. National monitoring
12 programs, such as air monitoring and climate change research, can provide information and
13 be incorporated into monitoring for the plan area.
- 14 e. Ecosystem characteristics that may change over time, such as a change in precipitation
15 amount or timing, and be affected by stressors, such as insects, disease, fire, or changes in
16 human dimensions within the plan area.
- 17 f. Identifying monitoring questions and indicators (combined with paragraph 5 of this section)
18 capable of recognizing uncertainty and providing early warnings of ecosystem response to
19 climate change or other stressors. Potential indicators include direct and indirect impacts of
20 changes in natural disturbance regimes, including uncharacteristic drought, flooding, wind,
21 and storm frequency, and severity. Indirect impacts may include insect outbreaks and
22 wildfires in areas impacted by drought, or the spread of invasive species in areas where
23 forest cover is lost due to flooding.
- 24 g. Selecting indicators of vegetative communities that are likely to be among the first affected
25 by climate change, to help identify opportunities for managing their adaptation.

26 2. The responsible official has discretion to identify one or more monitoring questions, such as:

- 27 a. What stressors are impacting the plan area?
- 28 b. How are trends in stressors affecting the plan area?
- 29 c. How are these stressors affecting progress towards achieving or maintaining the plan's
30 desired conditions or objectives?
- 31 d. Are the plan components effectively designed to reduce or adapt to the various projected
32 stressors?
- 33 e. Are there plan components that need to be changed to better respond to climate change
34 and other stressors?
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32.13f - Desired Conditions and Objectives

The plan monitoring program must contain one or more monitoring questions and associated indicators to monitor progress toward meeting desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including those that would provide for multiple use opportunities. The intent of this requirement is to monitor progress toward meeting desired conditions, objectives, or other plan components for multiple use management that are not covered by the other monitoring items listed in 36 CFR 219.12(a)(5).

32.13g – Social, Cultural and Economic Monitoring

The social, cultural and economic plan monitoring, conducted in partnership with other agencies, tribal, state and local governments and partners with relevant expertise, should contain questions and associated indicators addressing the plan components’ ability to achieve social, economic and cultural desired conditions. The purpose for monitoring social, economic and cultural indicators is to:

1. Understand the changes in the economic circumstances in the area of influence of the plan
2. Monitor progress toward desired social, economic and cultural conditions
3. Ensure that the expected contributions to social, economic and cultural sustainability are realized
4. Ensure management consistency with other plan components

The responsible official shall identify one or more monitoring questions, such as those contained in 32.13 g – Exhibit 01

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32.13g – Exhibit 01: Sample Social, Economic and Cultural Monitoring Questions

1. Are the communities and their economies in the area of influence of the plan experiencing positive changes that can be associated with the implementation of the plan while moving toward desired conditions?
2. Are the realistic expectations of state, local and tribal governments in the area of influence of the plan being met?
3. To what extent are young people, people of low income and members of minority groups engaged in a meaningful way in plan monitoring and implementation?
4. Does the plan meet the needs of low-income people, members of minority groups and young people, including providing employment and training opportunities?
5. Are predictable levels of resources including timber, grazing, minerals and recreation being made available and being produced in a timely manner?
6. Is the area of influence of the plan experiencing positive changes in employment attributable to plan implementation?
7. What is the trend in local business capacity within the area of influence to perform a broad range of land management services to support the plan components?
8. To what extent are businesses and workers in the plan area of influence benefiting from the full suite of activities in the plan?
9. What is the trend in the breadth of and depth of collaborative engagement and partnership across the plan components?
10. To what extent has the plan led to agency investments in areas of lower social vulnerability as compared to areas of higher social vulnerability?
11. To what extent have plan components and their implementation strengthened local capacity to respond to and recover from ecological, social, and economic disturbance and change?
12. To what extent are social institutions embedded in the local culture engaged in the planning process?
13. Does the plan respect and when possible contribute to the values, traditions, and culture of the community?
14. How does the plan help to build capacity of traditional communities to engage in the planning process?
15. How will traditional communities and their institutions benefit from activities in the plan?
16. Will the activities in the plan result in a sustainable development future that is beneficial to traditional communities and future generations?

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32.13gh - Productivity of the Land

The plan monitoring program must contain one or more monitoring questions and associated indicators to determine that the effect of each management system is not to substantially and permanently impair the productivity of the land (16 U.S.C. 1604(g)(3)(c)). To address this requirement, the responsible official should focus on key ecosystem characteristics in the plan area related to soils and soil productivity identified in the assessment and planning process. Productivity is defined as the capacity of NFS lands and their ecosystems to provide the various renewable resources in certain amounts in perpetuity. For the purposes of this subpart, productivity is an ecological term, not an economic term (36 CFR 219.19).

~~Many scientific studies have been published on effects of silvicultural practices on soil productivity. If research has shown the effect of current practices, there is no need for intensive soil monitoring. A possible monitoring question is whether the silvicultural practices on the plan area are considered appropriate based on existing scientific information?~~

The responsible official may consider the following when developing monitoring questions and establishing indicators with respect to the productivity of the land:

1. Soil quality monitoring that may include disturbance monitoring as well as measures of chemical and biological properties, and physical properties beyond soil disturbance. Soil quality monitoring guidance is found in FSM 2551.6, and soil disturbance monitoring protocols are described in General Technical Report (GTR) WO-82a.
2. Coordinating with research stations to obtain results from the Long-Term Soil Productivity Study for the region around the plan area, to the extent that results are available, to solicit input to the monitoring design and information related to organic matter/carbon loss and soil compaction.
3. Differentiating between resource management and climate change effects on soil productivity.

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32.3 – Transitioning to the Plan Monitoring Program

plan monitoring program, units must meet other related rule requirements, such as using the BASI, involving the public, and updating the planning record.

1. In transitioning to the plan monitoring program requirements in 36 CFR 219.12(a), the responsible official may consider:
 - a. Coordinating across the Agency and with partners to develop consistent or complimentary monitoring approaches for the plan monitoring program.
 - b. Assessing where current land management plans already include questions and associated indicators related to the items listed in 36 CFR 219.12(a)(5) for the plan monitoring program.
 - c. Using broader-scale monitoring information where available, such as NVUM and FIA, to help develop efficient questions in the plan monitoring program.
2. In transitioning to the plan monitoring program requirements in 36 CFR 219.12(a), the responsible official should:
 - a. ~~Use an administrative change to establish the plan monitoring program after notice to the public of the intended monitoring program and consideration of public comment.~~ Incorporate the monitoring questions in 219.12(a)(5) into the forest plan monitoring program through an administrative change that includes public notice of the intended changes to the monitoring program and consideration of public comment. Changes to the underlying forest plan, for example to identify focal species or species of conservation concern, are not required.
 - b. Notify the public of the establishment of the plan monitoring program in any way the responsible official deems appropriate and at the same time notify the public of the expected date of the first biennial monitoring evaluation report (to be published no later than 2 years from date of the new monitoring program).
 - c. ~~Before initiating modification of the monitoring program, ensure that funding and manpower are sufficient the monitoring plan transition does not without adversely affecting ongoing management programs. Balance funding needs for monitoring with other program needs.~~
 - d. Use results of the modified monitoring plan to inform the assessment for forest plan revisions.
 - e. Coordinate the transition of the plan monitoring program with the development of the regional broad-scale monitoring program, to the degree possible.

32.4 - Changing the Plan Monitoring Program

(c) Administrative changes. . . .

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33.1 - Exhibit 01—Continued

Possible Approaches for Developing Broader-scale Monitoring	Examples of Broader-scale Monitoring Elements
<p>Broader-scale monitoring developed with partners and the public. Regional foresters jointly develop a large landscape monitoring program with partners and the public to monitor keys issues across multiple plan areas.</p>	<p>The Pacific Northwest Region developed a broad-scale monitoring program to address several issues that are found across coastal and Cascade Range National Forests. These issues include trends in old forest habitat, trends in spotted owls and marbled murrelets, watershed health, <u>producing a predictable level of timber sales, special forest products, livestock grazing, minerals, and recreation opportunities, maintaining the stability of local and regional economies on a predictable, long-term basis, and assisting with long-term economic development and diversification to minimize adverse impacts associated with the loss of timber jobs.</u>and information and the distribution of a number of other lesser known plant and animal species. The monitoring program was collaboratively developed with substantial science input to develop rigorous protocols and methods for each major element of the program. Multiple Federal agencies including Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Marine Fisheries Service have been involved in the development, execution, and evaluation of the monitoring program.</p>

4
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33.2 - Documenting the Broader-scale Monitoring Strategy

6 The regional forester ~~should~~ must document the broader-scale monitoring strategy for the region and
 7 make it publicly available. Documentation for a broader-scale monitoring strategy may include:

- 8 1. Identifying the appropriate monitoring questions and associated indicators for broader-scale
 9 monitoring for planning and the appropriate scale and units where these would apply;
- 10 2. Identifying the monitoring methods, protocols, and sample designs that are to be used
 11 across multiple plan areas (including corporate applications that are used to store data and
 12 conduct analysis);

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- 3. Describing how the broader-scale monitoring is to be carried out;
- 4. Including a feedback mechanism to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the broader-scale monitoring strategy, looking at the best available scientific information and opportunities to collaborate with partners and the public.

~~The regional forester may provide a broader-scale monitoring evaluation report to summarize the findings from the broader-scale monitoring for the NFS units in the region to reference in the biennial monitoring evaluation report. A broader-scale monitoring evaluation report is not required.~~

Documented results from the broader-scale monitoring strategy must be made publicly available on at least a 5 year cycle.

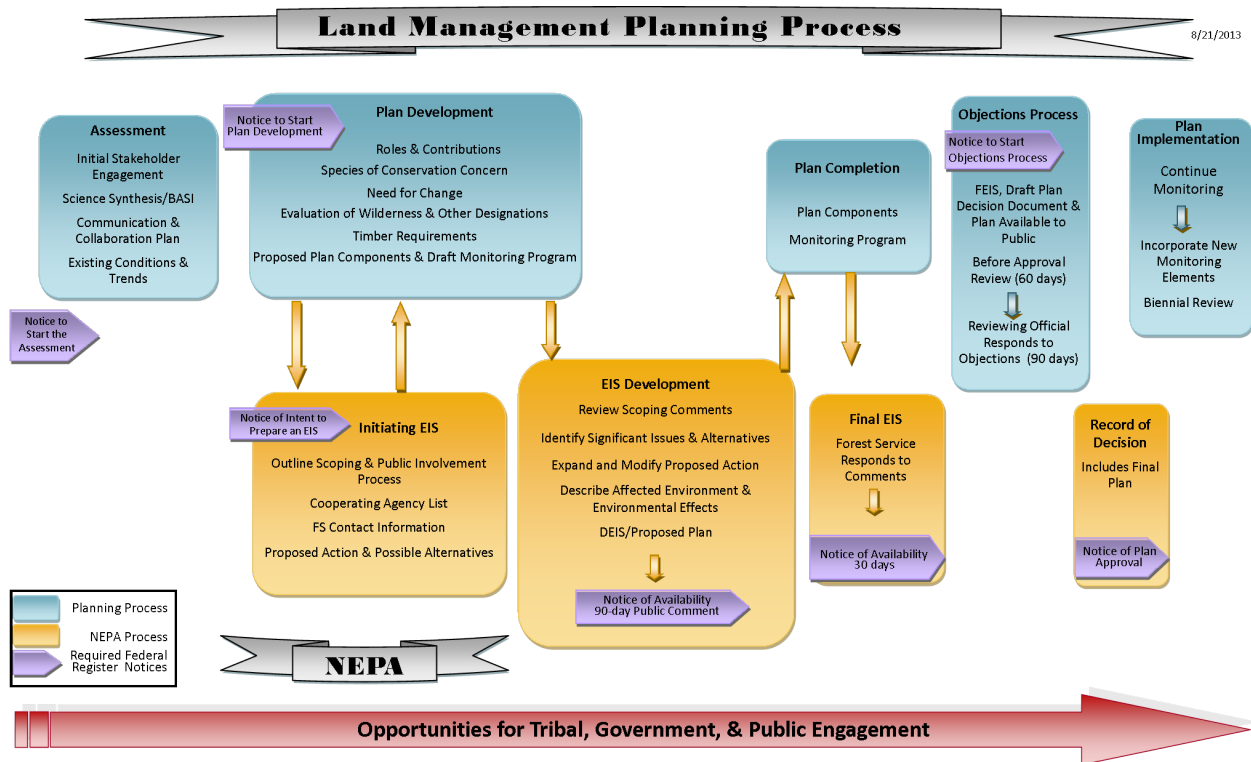
An evaluation of broader-scale monitoring information applicable to the plan area ~~should~~ must be included in the biennial monitoring evaluation report for each NFS unit where relevant and available. See section 34 below.

- 1 **FSH 1909.12 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK**
- 2 **CHAPTER 40**
- 3 **Recommendation: Chapter 40 should be moved and should become the new Chapter 10**

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43.1 – Guidance for Public Participation

The list of public involvement tools in the definition of “participation” is not meant to be exhaustive, and other forms of involvement such as fact sheets, newsletters, media releases, websites, social media, or creative local methods are encouraged. For the purpose of this Handbook, participation is assumed to include the full spectrum of engagement (see 43.1 ex. 01). The responsible official should select public participation methods that are most effective for the particular issue or stage in the process. Public participation activities described in this Handbook fulfill public engagement requirements of both the planning rule (36 CFR part 219) and the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1600 et seq.) and are consistent with public participation requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4331 et seq.) and implementing regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508, 36 CFR part 220).



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Proposed FS1909.12, Version—02/14/2013
Information on how to comment is available online at
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/planningrule/directives>.

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2

3 **43.12 - Developing a Public Participation Strategy**

4

5 A public participation strategy should be developed at the beginning of the planning process. The
6 responsible official is strongly encouraged to work with the public to develop a broadly-supported
7 strategy for public participation recognizing that public participation opportunities will likely evolve as
8 more participants engage and the process develops. The type and exact timing of public participation
9 opportunities may not be known at the beginning of the process.

10

11 The strategy should be flexible enough to easily adapt to public feedback and new ideas and
12 information. Consider strategies that most efficiently use Forest Service and external resources. It may
13 be most efficient to offer more intensive opportunities (such as collaboration) at critical points in the
14 planning process and for issues that may be controversial. Alternatively, an email update or similar
15 action may be appropriate for progress reports to keep people informed about the process. Other times,
16 a series of public meetings may be the most effective way to engage.

17

18 In developing a public participation strategy for plan revision or development, the following process may
19 be used as a guide. The intention is to offer a process that may be used while allowing for flexibility to
20 meet the unique needs of each planning area. The planning rule requires public participation at certain
21 stages of the planning process. These required public participation opportunities are listed below and
22 are described in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

- 23 1. During the assessment process,
- 24 2. When developing a plan proposal and conducting NEPA scoping,
- 25 3. When providing an opportunity to comment on a draft proposal and accompanying NEPA
- 26 documents,
- 27 4. At the beginning of the objection period for a new plan, amendment, or revision,
- 28

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43.12 – Developing a Public Participation Strategy

- a. At the initiation of the planning process. Having a dialogue as early as possible about goals, principles, and expectations helps create a transparent foundation for planning and begins to build relationships among and with stakeholders.
- b. During the assessment process. Publication of notice in the Federal Register is required at the beginning of an assessment. Consider providing opportunities
 - (1) At the start of the assessment to encourage participants to offer existing relevant information.
 - (2) To gather feedback and additional specific information during the assessment process including:
 - i. When a draft set of key ecosystem characteristics has been developed.
 - ii. When a potential list of species of conservation concern has been developed.
 - iii. When planning unit contributions to social and economic sustainability have been identified.
 - (3) To comment on the entire assessment, such as by providing a public comment period on the draft assessment. Make it clear that assessment information will continue to be available for public review and comment throughout the planning process.
- c. When developing a plan proposal. For new plans, plan revisions, and plan amendments that may create significant effects, publish in the Federal Register a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement and conduct scoping to identify significant issues as soon as a proposed action can be identified (40 CFR 1501.2, 40 CFR 1501.7, 36 CFR 220.5(b), 36 CFR 219.13(b)(3)). The proposed action can vary in the level of detail as appropriate to facilitate an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to the proposed action (40 CFR 1501.7). The public must have meaningful input into the development of a proposed action and alternatives to it. The notice of intent to prepare an EIS can be combined with the notice to initiate development of a new plan revision or where appropriate a plan amendment. (36 CFR 219.5 (a)(2))
 - 1) As the preliminary need for change is developed.
 - 2) To provide feedback on the BASI used in plan development.
 - 3) To provide feedback on potential desired conditions, objectives, plan components, and other plan content.
 - 4) To propose or provide feedback on priority watersheds....

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43.14 - Engaging a Diverse Set of Stakeholders

Outreach should be appropriate for the target populations, and the responsible official should use contemporary tools, such as the Internet, to engage the public. Reach out to youth, minority, and low-income populations for ideas on how to best engage them in different phases of planning. ... Translators should be provided at meetings as appropriate.

Consider choosing spokespeople and partners that low-income and minority audiences will relate to and trust, including appropriate media celebrities, grass-roots community leaders, and popular culture personalities. Be prepared to answer the question 'why should I care about forest planning' by connecting national forests to the basic necessities of life:

- Clean drinking water and fresh air,
- Nutrition-rich food (from hunting, fishing, gathering and grazing),
- Job and career opportunities (e.g. in forest and stream restoration, fire-fighting, Forest Service leadership, recreation management, timber harvesting, etc.),
- Wood products,
- Cultural and religious practices, and
- Healthful lifestyles, outdoor recreation, and exercise.

Address people's reluctance to venture out of their communities where they may not feel welcome. Look for partnership opportunities with organizations such as Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS). Build the connection with national forests by making them accessible and affordable, such as through group outings and public transportation. Make it easy, enjoyable, and rewarding to participate in forest planning by focusing on people's visions for the future and making a better world for their children and grandchildren.

Engage younger audiences in the planning process and beyond, by appealing to their curiosity about the natural world through visual experiences and physical contact with the outdoors and forest environment. Work with teachers, parents, and curriculum developers to educate youth about forest and wildlife ecology and connections to their own lives (e.g. honey from bees, water from forests and mountains, career opportunities). Design activities that are fun and produce take-home reminders of what they have learned. Involve young adults in managing, monitoring, and responsibly using the national forests by partnering with organizations like the Student Conservation Association and state conservation corps.

Monitor the success of reaching low-income and minority communities, and young people in the planning process (see section 32.13 g)

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- 1
- 2 1. Facilitate and support appropriate consistency between the current plan area plan and external
- 3 efforts and contribute to social, economic, and ecological sustainability of the planning area.
- 4 2. Improve a community’s capacity to enhance sustainability.
- 5 3. Increase a community’s willingness to work collaboratively with the agency and other participants
- 6 in carrying out the planning unit’s plan.
- 7 4. Assist a community in identifying priority lands for conservation and restoration (for example,
- 8 parks, source water protection) including for the purpose of providing ecosystem services and
- 9 recreational opportunities (such as is described in the “Forest Service Open Space Conservation
- 10 Strategy” http://www.fs.fed.us/openspace/national_strategy.html).
- 11

12 See also CEQ’s NEPA Handbook for requirements related to Cooperating Agencies
13 (http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/ntf/Collaboration_in_NEPA_Oct_2007.pdf).

14 43.16a - Participation during Phases of Planning

15 The collaborative role of state, local and tribal governments in the planning process is unique. The
16 opportunity for their involvement throughout the planning process is both required by law and essential
17 to the successful development and implementation of forest plans. Their participation should be
18 actively sought prior to initiation of the planning process and continue through monitoring and adaptive
19 management under the plan. State, local and tribal involvement can occur in several ways:

- 20
- 21
- 22 1) Collaboration—Special emphasis should be given to encouraging participation by state, local and
23 tribal governments in defining opportunities for public collaborative processes and in participating in
24 such processes.
- 25
- 26 2) Cooperation—The planning process should build upon existing cooperative relationships with state,
27 local and tribal governments. Consider designation of a single primary point of contact within the
28 agency for purposes of the planning process.
- 29
- 30 3) Coordination—Coordination with state, local and tribal governments is mandated by the NFMA and
31 FLPMA. From NFMA, “the Secretary of Agriculture shall develop, maintain and, as appropriate, revise
32 land and resource management plans for units of the National Forest System, *coordinated with the*
33 *land and resource management planning processes of State and local governments and other Federal*
34 *agencies,*” [emphasis added] [16 USC 1604(a)]. From FLPMA, “[i]n the development and revision
35 of land use plans, the Secretary of Agriculture shall coordinate land use plans for lands in the National
36 Forests with the land use planning and management programs of and for Indian tribes by, among
37 other things, considering the policies of approved tribal land resource management programs” [43
38 USC 1712(b)]. See the definition of “Coordination” in the Zero Code. Recognize that, while the Forest
39 Service cannot delegate its ultimate decision making authority, a goal of the planning process should
40 be to achieve mutually agreeable outcomes with tribal, state and local governments.

1
2 4) Cooperating Agency Status—Cooperating Agency status is made available to state, local and tribal
3 governments under NEPA. (40CFR 1508.5) Thus it applies only to that portion of the planning process
4 that occurs concurrently with NEPA, i.e. scoping through ROD. It must be requested by the
5 governmental entity and should, under most circumstances, be granted by FS when the
6 cooperator has “special expertise” or “jurisdiction by law” and can be expected to meet the
7 cooperating agency requirements in 40 CFR 1501.6(b). While not required, the Forest
8 Service and the cooperating agency are encouraged to develop a formal MOU outlining the
9 terms of the cooperation. Cooperating agency status should include an opportunity for
10 involvement on interdisciplinary planning teams and access to pre-decisional NEPA
11 documents.

12
13 5) Tribal Consultation—Executive Order 13175 and Department of Agriculture and Forest Service
14 policies require agency officials to pursue regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with
15 tribal officials in the development of Federal policies that have tribal implications and to strengthen
16 the United States’ government-to-government relationships with Indian tribes. Memoranda of
17 Understanding or Agreement should be used as tools to clarify the respective roles and
18 responsibilities of the Forest Service and tribal governments early in the process and to ensure that
19 consultation occurs throughout plan development, implementation and adaptive management. See
20 Section 44 for additional guidance on tribal consultation.

21
22 **43.17 - Participation during Phases of Planning...**

23
24 **43.17a - Participation during Assessments...**

25

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1

2 **43.17b - Participation during Development, Revision, or Amendment of Plan Components**

3

4 The intent of public participation during plan development, revision, or amendment is to identify
5 significant issues regarding the proposed action, identify potential alternatives for NEPA analysis,
6 develop and identify zones of agreement relevant to plan components, where possible, acquire
7 assistance in designing effective plan components, and obtain other feedback as needed. Topics that
8 may be included in public participation include potential desired conditions, objectives, other plan
9 components, and other plan content.

10

11 The NEPA process must be well integrated into the opportunities for public participation in plan
12 development, revision, or amendment. NEPA scoping can begin as soon as the assessment is complete
13 and prior to or early in the development of plan components and other plan content. NEPA scoping
14 should encourage comments on the completed assessment as it relates to the proposed action and
15 other possible alternatives.

16

17 Consider the most effective ways of presenting data and information such as by using visual displays (for
18 example GIS-derived resource maps or historic and current photographs), tables, and so on. Ensure
19 materials comply with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42, U.S. C. 12101 et seq.).

20 **43.17c - Participation during Monitoring Program Development**

21

- 1 **FSH 1909.12 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK**
- 2 **CHAPTER 50**

FSH 1909.12 - LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK

51.63 - Notice of Objections Filed

Within 10 days after close of the objection filing period, the responsible official shall provide the notice of the beginning of the 10-day period to file a request to participate in an objection resolution process directly, through postal mail or email, to those who have requested the environmental documents or are eligible to file a request as an interested person.

In addition, within 10 days after close of the objection filing period, the responsible official shall publish a notice of all objections in the applicable newspaper of record and post the notice online (36 CFR 219.56(f)). The notices must include, at a minimum, the following information:

1. Name of the plan, plan revision, or plan amendment and the name and title of the responsible official and reviewing officer(s).
2. The name of the objector and affiliation, if any, for each objection filed.
3. Instructions on how to obtain a copy of any of the objections.
4. An explanation that those recognized by the reviewing officer as interested persons have an opportunity to participate in any objection resolution meetings.
5. Information regarding the deadline for requests to be recognized as an interested person (10 days after publication of the notice of objections filed in the newspaper of record).
6. Instructions on how to request recognition as an interested person, including the name, title, and contact information for the reviewing officer. Requests must include the name and affiliation, if any, of the individual; mailing address; phone number; email address for the requester; the name(s) of the objector(s) whose objections they have an interest in; ~~and~~ a brief explanation of their interest; and a statement that demonstrates the individual's prior participation in the planning process. Include a description of how a request stating an interest in an objection or part of an objection pertaining to the identification of species of conservation concern will be forwarded to that the reviewing officer for the identification of species of conservation concern.

The responsible official shall ensure that tribal governments are aware of objections filed, and the objections process. The responsible official shall provide the opportunity for the tribe to participate in the objections process as designated interested persons. The responsible official shall continue to consult with tribal government on the objections process and objections resolution.

The responsible official shall ensure that cooperating agencies are aware of objections filed, and the objections process and resolution. The responsible official shall provide the opportunity for cooperating agencies to participate in the objections process as designated interested persons.

The responsible official shall ensure that state and local governments that are not cooperating agencies and that have participated in the planning process are aware of objections filed, and the objections process and resolution. Such state and local governments that are not cooperating agencies may file for interested person status.

Post all objections online at the Forest Service objections web page. See exhibit 01 for a sample notice of objections filed.

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1
2 Individual meetings may be structured to address some or all of the objection issues. Interested
3 persons' participation should be limited to discussions of those issues or objections they specified when
4 they submitted their request. Neither objectors nor interested persons may be permitted to introduce
5 new issues into the discussion, unless those issues are directly related to resolutions proposed for issues
6 raised in objection. This does not preclude presentation of additional documentation relevant to
7 objection issues by the objectors, the reviewing officer, or the responsible official.
8 The reviewing officer has the discretion to determine the use of procedures, such as "alternative dispute
9 resolution" methods, to resolve issues associated with the objection.

10 11 **51.65 - Interested Persons**

12
13 **The reviewing officer must allow other interested persons to participate in**
14 **such meetings. An interested person must file a request to participate in an**
15 **objection within 10 days after publication of the notice of objection by the**
16 **responsible official (§ 219.56(f)). . . .**
17 (36 CFR 219.57)
18

19 As a more collaborative approach to conducting administrative reviews and addressing unresolved
20 concerns, the objection process for planning includes the requirement to allow others who are
21 interested in how objections are resolved to participate in meetings to resolve objections. These are
22 termed "interested persons". Interested persons are individuals or entities who have submitted
23 substantive formal comments during the planning process and/or who have generally participated in the
24 planning process and have demonstrated valid interest. The Responsible Official may, in his or her
25 discretion, make exceptions to this provision in extenuating circumstances.
26

27 The reviewing officer shall acknowledge and respond promptly to all requests to be given interested
28 person status. Requests should generally be approved. If the request is denied, the response must
29 include the explanation for the denial.

30 Once an individual or entity is recognized as an interested person, they shall receive notification of all
31 meetings, including conference calls, concerning resolution of the objection(s) for which they indicated
32 an interest, and shall be permitted to participate in those meetings or calls as determined by the
33 reviewing officer. The reviewing officer is encouraged to contact interested parties in advance of the
34 objection resolution meeting to understand the interested parties' concerns. The reviewing officer
35 should explain that the purpose of the objection resolution meeting is to resolve the objection with the
36 objector, and not to resolve the concerns of the interested party.
37

38 **51.66 - Reviewing Officer Response to Objections**

39
40 The reviewing officer shall issue a written response(s) to objections and provide such response to
41 objectors, interested persons (sec. 51.62), and the responsible official. When appropriate, the response

- 1 **FSH 1909.12 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK**
- 2 **CHAPTER 60**

FSH 1909.12 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK

64.1 - No Timber Harvest for the Purpose of Timber Production on Lands not suited for timber production

... (1) No timber harvest for the purpose of timber production may occur on lands not suited for timber production. (36 CFR 219.11(d))

To meet this requirement, plans should have standards that no timber harvest for the purpose of timber production may occur on lands not suited for timber production. This requirement does not prevent plans from having plan components that allow timber harvest on lands that are not suited for timber production in order to protect other multiple-use values, and for salvage, sanitation, public health, or safety (see 36 CFR 219.11(c) and sec. 63).

64.2 – Timber Harvest Cannot Occur if It Leads to Irreversible Damage

... (2) Timber harvest would occur only where soil, slope, or other watershed conditions would not be irreversibly damaged; (36 CFR 219.11(d))

To meet this requirement, plans ~~should~~ must have standards to ensure that a project decision to harvest timber may only be made when it is determined the project would not cause irreversible damage to soil, slope, or watershed condition, as well as at least one monitoring question designed to ensure that this regulatory requirement is being met through plan implementation (see Sec. 32.1g). A standard stating that no timber harvest could occur on lands where technology to harvest timber is not currently available without causing irreversible damage (see sec. 61.13) would partially meet this requirement by removing these lands from potential harvest. Plans ~~should~~ must also have standards that the timber harvest practices and technology will only be applied if the harvest would not cause irreversible damage to soil, slope or other watershed conditions. These standards may require a site-specific finding that the timber harvest would not cause irreversible damage.

64.3 – Timber Harvest Must Be Consistent With Other Resource Protection

- 1 **FSH 1909.12 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK**
- 2 **CHAPTER 70**

FSH 1909.12 - LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK

70.5 - Definitions

such as W-18-1 “No Traffic Signs,” may be posted at intersections. Motorists should have no expectations of being alerted to potential hazards while driving these roads. Traffic is normally minor, usually consisting of one or a combination of administrative, permitted, dispersed recreation, or other specialized uses. Log haul may occur at this level. Appropriate traffic management strategies are either to “discourage” or “prohibit” passenger cars. “Accept” or “discourage” strategies may be employed for high clearance vehicles.

3. LEVEL 3. Assigned to roads open and maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car. User comfort and convenience are not considered priorities. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is applicable. Warning signs and traffic control devices are provided to alert motorists of situations that may violate expectations.

....

70.6 - Process

The responsible official must provide the opportunities for public participation and collaboration, intergovernmental coordination with state and local governments and tribal consultation required as part of the broader planning process (36 CFR 219.4 and FSH 1909.12, ch. 40) to engage the public and other governments early and throughout the process identified in this Chapter to provide feedback and input on the inventory, evaluation, and analysis of areas for wilderness recommendation. The responsible official may provide additional participation opportunities specifically on this topic as necessary.

The responsible official shall use the following process for identifying and evaluating lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the NWPS and determine whether to recommend any such lands for wilderness designation. All plan revisions or new plans must complete this process (36 CFR 219.7 (c)(2)(v)).

The Forest Service is making the process of determining whether to recommend lands for wilderness designation pursuant to the Wilderness Act or Eastern Wilderness Act more transparent and consistent across forests. Each forest, however, is unique and responsible officials should set the scope for this effort to meet the unique needs of their forests; no prescribed scope is intended.

This process has a sequence of steps, all of which include intergovernmental coordination and tribal consultation, as well as opportunities for public participation and collaboration: identification and inventory, evaluation, analysis, and decision.

1. Inventory (sec. 71): The responsible official shall identify and create an inventory of all lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the NWPS. ~~The inventory must be broad and inclusive.~~ To develop the inventory, the responsible official shall identify lands based on

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1
2 information obtained during the assessment and using a set of inventory criteria. In addition,
3 the responsible official shall review information provided during the assessment (FSH 1909.12,
4 ch. 10). Inclusion in the inventory is not a designation that conveys or requires a particular kind
5 of management. Lands included in the inventory must be documented and identified on a map.
6 This map will be available for public participation opportunities during the plan revision or
7 development process.

8 2. Evaluation (sec. 72): The responsible official shall evaluate the wilderness characteristics of
9 each area in the inventory using a set of criteria based on the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the
10 Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975 and document each of the evaluations completed. The
11 responsible official shall include the documentation of the inventory and evaluation of these
12 areas in the planning record. This documentation will be available for public participation
13 opportunities during the plan revision or development process.

14 3. Analysis (sec. 73): The responsible official shall consider the areas evaluated and determine,
15 based upon the evaluations and input from the public, which the specific areas to carry forward
16 in the applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document for further analysis and
17 public participation opportunities. These areas must be identified within the applicable NEPA
18 document as part of one or more alternatives. Not all lands included in the inventory and
19 subsequent evaluations are required to be analyzed carried forward for further analysis.

20 4. Decision (sec. 74): The responsible official shall decide, based upon the analysis disclosed in
21 the applicable NEPA document and input from tribes, state and local governments and the
22 public, which areas, if any, to recommend for inclusion in the NWPS, and shall identify any such
23 lands in the final decision document for the plan.
24

25 The responsible official should use the public participation opportunities provided as part of the
26 broader planning process (FSH 1909.12, ch. 40) to engage the public and other governments to provide
27 feedback and input on the inventory, evaluation, and analysis of areas for wilderness recommendation,
28 and may provide additional participation opportunities specifically on this topic as necessary.
29

71 - IDENTIFICATION AND INVENTORY OF AREAS THAT MAY BE SUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM

30
31
32
33 The primary function of the identification and inventory step is to comprehensively efficiently and
34 effectively identify all lands that may have wilderness characteristics as defined in the Wilderness Act
35 within the plan area, using a transparent process. Lands included in the inventory will be carried forward
36 for further evaluation. Inclusion in the inventory is not a designation that conveys or requires a
37 particular kind of management.

38
39 The inventory is intended to be reasonably broad and inclusive, based on a set of inventory criteria and
40 additional information provided to the responsible official during the assessment (FSH 1909.12, ch. 10).
41 The responsible official will document the inventory and make a map of the lands

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1 included in the inventory and make both available to the public during the public participation process
2 and as part of the applicable NEPA documents. The responsible official will also coordinate with State
3 and local governments and consult with Tribes and ANCs during the inventory

4 5 **71.1 - Inventory**

6 Start the inventory by considering ~~all lands within the planning area. For these lands, existing, relevant~~
7 information assembled during the assessment, including information about designated areas (e.g.
8 inventoried roadless areas) and transportation infrastructure (e.g. road maintenance levels). With this
9 information, identify and create an inventory of all lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the NWPS
10 using the criteria and steps outlined in section 71.2.

11 12 **71.21 - Size Criteria**

13 **According to the Wilderness Act, a wilderness area “[h]as at least five thousand acres of land or is of**
14 **sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.”**

15
16 ~~Include areas meeting~~ Areas to be included must meet one of the following criteria:

- 17 1. The area contains 5,000 acres or more....2. The area contains less than 5,000 acres but is of
18 sufficient size... 3. Areas contiguous to existing wilderness...

19 20 **71.22 - Improvements Criteria**

21 Pursuant to the Wilderness Act, include in the inventory areas “where the earth and its community of
22 life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness
23 is further defined to mean ... as an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and
24 influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so
25 as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by
26 the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding
27 opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation;”

28 29 **71.22a - Roads Improvements**

30 When considering road-related criteria, the responsible official shall use existing information about
31 roads and routes within the plan area that are contained in the Assessment.

- 32 1. ~~Include in the inventory, areas that~~ Areas to be included in the inventory may contain the
33 following improvements:

- 34 a. Areas that contain forest roads maintained to level 1;
35 b. Areas with any routes that are decommissioned, unauthorized or temporary, or forest roads
36 that are identified for decommissioning in a previous decision document, or as identified in a
37 Travel Management Plan (36 CFR 212.51) or a Travel Analysis (36 CFR 212.5(b));
38 c. Areas with forest roads that ~~are anticipated during other planning processes for disinvesting~~
39 future road maintenance activities to a level 1; 1 will be reclassified to level 1 through a previous
40 decision document, or as identified in a Travel Management Plan (36 CFR 212.51) or a Travel
41 Analysis (36 CFR 212.5(b));

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- 1
2 d. ~~Areas with historical wagon routes, historical mining routes, or other settlement era~~
3 ~~transportation features considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Areas in~~
4 ~~the eastern national forests with forest roads maintained to level 2 that are identified as closed to~~
5 ~~motor vehicle yearlong in a previous decision document, or as identified in a Travel Management~~
6 ~~Plan (36 CFR 212.51) or a Travel Analysis (36 CFR 212.5(b));~~
7 e. ~~Forest roads in areas that have been proposed for consideration as recommended wilderness~~
8 ~~through public involvement during the assessment or previous forest planning processes.~~
9 ~~d.f. Areas with historical wagon routes, historical mining routes, or other settlement era~~
10 ~~transportation features considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area.~~
11 g. ~~Areas of maintenance level 2 roads that do not meet any of the criteria in subsection 2 below.~~
12
13 2. Except as provided in (1)(b) ~~or (c) or (d)~~ above, exclude from the inventory areas that contain:
14 a. Permanently authorized roads validated by a Federal court or the Department of the Interior for
15 which a valid easement or interest has been properly recorded, ~~or~~
16 b. Forest roads maintained to levels 3, 4, or 5,
17 c. Level 2 roads that meet one or more of the following criteria and are not in proposed areas as
18 provided in (1)(e) above: (1) have been improved and are maintained by mechanical means to
19 ensure relatively regular and continued use, (2) have cumulatively degraded wilderness character or
20 precluded future preservation of the area as wilderness, (3) have been identified for continued
21 public access and use in a project level or travel planning decision supported by NEPA, or (4)
22 otherwise preclude evaluation and consideration of the area during the public participation and
23 intergovernmental outreach processes as potentially suitable for wilderness, based on Assessment
24 information or on-the-ground knowledge.
25
26 3. Evaluate areas that contain forest roads maintained to level 2, or levels 3, 4 or 5 where those roads
27 are anticipated to be disinvested to a level 2. Include such areas in the inventory unless they are clearly
28 unsuitable for inclusion in the NWPS, based on one or more of the following factors:
29 a. The road has been improved and is maintained by mechanical means to ensure relatively regular
30 and continuous use.
31 b. Road density is so high that either wilderness character is clearly not present, or future
32 preservation of the area as wilderness would not be possible.
33 c. A project level decision supported by NEPA analysis has been made in favor of continuous public
34 access to and use of the road.
35 d. Other on the ground knowledge of the level 2 road that would preclude evaluation and
36 consideration of the area during the public participation process as potentially suitable for
37 wilderness recommendation.
38

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3. Evaluate areas that contain...

- a. The road...
- b. Road density...
- c. A project level...
- d. Other...

71.22b - Other Improvements

Include in the inventory areas with other improvements as follows:
Recognize the need to provide for passive or active restoration of wilderness character in previously modified areas consistent with the Eastern Wilderness Act.

Areas to be included in the inventory may include the following improvements:

- 1. Airstrips and heliports.
- 2. ~~Vegetation treatments that are not substantially noticeable, or if wilderness character can be maintained or restored through appropriate management actions. This can include plantations or plantings where the use of mechanical equipment or evidence of vegetative manipulation (cultivation, terrain contouring, and vegetative type conversions) is present from past management practices.~~
- 3. Timber harvest areas where logging and prior road construction are not substantially noticeable, or if wilderness character can be maintained or restored through appropriate management actions.

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4. Permanently installed vertical structures, such as electronic installations including cell towers, television, radio, and telephone repeaters, and the like, provided their impact, as well as their maintenance and access needs, is minimal.
5. Areas of historic mining where impacts are not substantially noticeable ~~or if wilderness character can be maintained or restored through appropriate management actions.~~
6. Areas of mining activity where impacts are not substantially noticeable, ~~or if wilderness character can be maintained or restored through appropriate management actions.~~
7. Range improvement areas (FSM 2240.5), involving minor structural improvements (for example, fences or water troughs) and nonstructural improvements (chaining, burning, spraying, potholing, and so forth) that are not substantially noticeable, ~~or if wilderness character can be maintained or restored through appropriate management actions.~~
8. Recreation improvements, such as occupancy spots, or minor hunting, or outfitter camps. As a general rule, do not include developed sites. Areas with minor, easily removable recreation developments may be included.
9. Ground-return telephone lines, electric lines, and power lines if a right-of-way has not been cleared. Exclude power lines with cleared right-of-ways, pipelines, and other permanently installed linear right-of-way structures.
10. Watershed treatment areas (contouring, diking, channeling) that are not substantially noticeable, or if wilderness character can be maintained or restored through appropriate management actions. Areas may include minor watershed treatments that have been accomplished manually such as small hand-constructed gully plugs.
11. Lands adjacent to development or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. The fact that non-wilderness activities or uses can be seen or heard from within any portion of the area, shall not, of itself, preclude inclusion in the inventory. It is appropriate to extend boundaries to the edges of development for purposes of inclusion in the inventory.
12. Structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area.

71.3—Inventory Review

~~Review the information provided as part of the planning assessment done pursuant to FSH 1909.12, chapter 10 to determine whether any areas in addition to those identified in 71.2~~

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1
2 should be included in the inventory for the purpose of carrying them forward to the evaluation stage.
3

4 **71.4 - Documentation for the Identified and Inventoried Areas**

5
6 The responsible official shall document the process used to identify and inventory areas. The purpose is
7 to present a transparent description of how the inventory process was conducted.
8

9 Record each area included in the inventory on a map of the planning area. In addition, identify on the
10 same map (or a series of maps), at a minimum, the following lands:

- 11 1. Existing designated wilderness and primitive areas.
- 12 2. Congressionally designated wilderness study areas, and any wilderness proposals pending
13 before Congress. Indicate relevant statutory dates, if any.
- 14 3. Areas identified in the Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact
15 Statement (Volume 2, November 2000), or in a Forest Service State-specific roadless rule, or
16 identified as undeveloped or for primitive non-motorized management in the current land
17 management plan.
- 18 4. Areas that are undeveloped but which did not meet the inventory criteria in section 71.2 (for
19 example, because the area is less than 5,000 acres and is not of sufficient size to make
20 practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition, or because a vegetation
21 treatment is substantially noticeable).
- 22 5. NFS lands statutorily designated for management for non-wilderness purposes. Indicate
23 effective dates, if any.
- 24 6. Other areas that the responsible official determines would be useful to show on the map to
25 facilitate effective and transparent public participation and input on this topic.
26

27 **72 - EVALUATION**

28
29 The primary function of the evaluation step is to comprehensively evaluate, pursuant to criteria set forth
30 in the Wilderness Act of 1964, the wilderness characteristics of each area identified during the inventory
31 process outlined in section 71. The responsible official shall provide opportunities for public
32 participation when evaluating lands identified in the inventory. Not all lands evaluated are required to
33 be carried forward for further NEPA analysis for potential recommendation for inclusion in the NWPS
34 (secs. 73 and 74).
35

36 **72.1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Characteristics**

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72.1 Wilderness Evaluation

For each area identified and inventoried as outlined and documented in section 71, evaluate its potential suitability for inclusion in the NWPS using criteria included in the Wilderness Act of 1964, section 2 (c), as follows:

1. Evaluate the degree to which the area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable (naturalness).

Consider such factors as:

- a. The composition of plant and animal communities. The purpose of this factor is to determine if plant and animal communities have been substantially impacted by man; for example, past management has resulted in single-species forests.
- b. The extent to which the area reflects ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area absent human intervention; and
- c. The extent to which improvements included in the inventory (sec. 71.22) represent a departure from naturalness.

2. Evaluate the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Consider impacts that are pervasive and that influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude. Factors that may be considered include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and sights and sounds from outside the area.

Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature. Factors that may be considered include the degree of challenge or risk while using outdoor skills. Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include wildlife observation, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature.

3. Evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

4. Evaluate the degree to which the area may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the NWPS, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist. Such features or values may include:

- a. Rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems. Rare can be determined locally, regionally, nationally, or within the system of protected designations.

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- b. Outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, water bodies, or geologic features.
 - c. Historic and cultural resource sites—Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resources sites must be respected.
 - d. ~~Potential or existing~~ Research natural areas.
 - e. High quality water resources or important watershed features.
5. Evaluate the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics. Consider such factors as:
- a. Shape and configuration of the area;
 - b. Legally established rights or uses within the area;
 - c. Specific Federal or state laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics;
 - d. The presence and amount of non-Federal land in the area; and
 - e. ~~Special circumstances affecting Management of adjacent lands, including the presence, and amount, and management designation of non-Federal land or Indian reservations in the vicinity~~

72.2 - Documentation for Evaluated Areas

Document the evaluation and include this documentation, along with the map(s) required by section 71.4, in the planning record. The intent is to ensure that the process for inventory and evaluation is transparent and accessible to the public for input and feedback. This documentation will be available for public participation opportunities during the plan revision or development process.

73 - ANALYSIS

Based on the evaluation and input from the public participation opportunities, the responsible official shall identify which specific areas, or portions thereof, from the evaluation to carry forward in the applicable NEPA document (36 CFR 219, FSM 1920, and FSH 1909.15). These areas must be identified within the applicable NEPA document as part of one or more alternatives of lands to be included in a recommendation for wilderness. Not all lands included in the inventory and subsequent evaluations are required to be carried forward in an alternative.

These documents will be made available for public review and comment and include, at a minimum:

1. Name and number of acres included in the area to be considered for recommendation.
2. Location and a description of a recommended boundary for each area. To identify a clearly defined boundary for each area, evaluate how the location of the boundary will

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1
2 support management of the area for wilderness and other adjacent uses. Where possible,
3 boundaries should be easy to identify and to locate on the ground. Potential boundaries can be
4 identified as follows, listed in descending order of desirability:
5

- 6 a. Use of natural features that are locatable both on the map and on the ground. Examples
7 include, but are not limited to perennial streams, well-defined ridges, mountain peaks, and
8 well-defined natural lake shorelines. If a stream is used, note whether the thread (centerline
9 of a stream) or either bank (to mean high water line) has been used.
- 10 b. Use of human-made features that are locatable on the map and on the ground. Examples
11 include, but are not limited to roads, trails, dams, powerlines, pipelines, and bridges. Where a
12 human-made feature is used, note whether the feature itself forms the boundary or whether
13 the boundary has been set back from the feature, and by what distance. Setbacks should be
14 used only where necessary for future maintenance of the human-made feature.
- 15 c. Use of previously surveyed lines or legally determined lines such as section and township lines,
16 section subdivision lines, metes and bounds property lines, county or State boundaries, or
17 national park or Indian reservation boundaries.
- 18 d. Use of a straight line from one locatable point to another. These points should normally be
19 high points in the landscape as they must be visible to be effective.
- 20 e. Use of a series of bearings and distances between locatable points as in a metes and bounds
21 survey. Use this technique when other methods are not available or practicable.
22

- 23 3. A brief description of the general geography, topography, and vegetation of the recommended area.
- 24
- 25 4. A brief description of the current uses and management of the area.
- 26
- 27 5. A description of the area's wilderness characteristics and the ability to protect and manage the area
28 so as to preserve its wilderness characteristics.
- 29
- 30 6. A brief summary of the factors considered and the process used in evaluating the area and
31 developing the alternative(s).
32

33 **74 - DECISION**

34
35 A decision on specific areas to recommend for inclusion in the NWPS will be made by the responsible
36 official based on the analysis disclosed in the applicable NEPA document and input received during
37 public participation opportunities. This decision will be included in the final decision document for the
38 plan. The final decision document will identify the wilderness
39

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74. Wilderness

recommendation proposal as a “preliminary administrative recommendation” and qualify it by stating that:

This recommendation is a preliminary administrative recommendation. The Congress has reserved the authority to make final decisions on wilderness designation. Plan implementation is not dependent on final outcome of the areas recommended for wilderness designation.

The decision must include a summary of the information required in steps 1-6 in section 73 for each area recommended for inclusion in the NWPS. Furthermore, the plan must include plan components to provide for the management of areas recommended for wilderness designation to protect and maintain the ecological and social characteristics that provide the basis for their suitability for wilderness designation 36 CFR 219.10 (b) (iv) and FSH 1909.12, chapter 20). ~~Management prescriptions for RWA’s could be employed which could allow for the enhancement of wilderness values or could allow for existing uses provided that such management will protect and maintain the social and ecological characteristics that provide their suitability for wilderness designation.~~

In developing plan components for recommended wilderness areas, the responsible official has discretion to implement a range of management options. All management prescriptions must protect the social and ecological characteristics that provide the basis for wilderness designation. The responsible official may propose the following management prescriptions in RWAs:

1. Enhance the ecological and social characteristics that provide the basis for wilderness designations;
2. Continue existing uses, provided that such uses do not prevent the protection and maintenance of the social and ecological characteristic that provide the basis for wilderness designations;
3. Alter existing uses, subject to valid existing rights;
4. Eliminate those existing uses that are incompatible with ecological and social characteristics that provide the basis for wilderness designation, except those uses subject to valid existing rights or
5. Select any combination thereof.

The responsible official should strive to maintain consistency with the provisions of 16 USC 1133(d) and the content of FSM 1923.03(3) in developing plan components for the management of recommended wilderness areas.

Additionally, the final decision document must recognize lands in the inventory...