



File Code: 1920
Date:

Dear Interested Party,

The Boise National Forest is proposing changes to the [Forest Plan monitoring program that was developed in 2016](#) to comply with requirements in the 2012 Planning Rule. Changes to the monitoring program can be made outside the process of plan revision or amendment so long as notice to the public is provided of the intended change and comments are considered (36 CFR 219.13(c)(1)). Public notice of changes to the monitoring program may be made in any way the responsible official deems appropriate (36 CFR 219.16(6)).

Background

The 2012 planning rule, codified at 36 CFR 219, guides Forest Plan monitoring across the Forest Service. All Forest Plan monitoring programs were required to conform to the planning rule by May 9, 2016.

As required by 36 CFR 219.12(a)(5), each Forest Plan monitoring program must contain one or more monitoring questions and associated indicators addressing each of the following eight requirements:

- i. The status of select watershed conditions.
- ii. The status of select ecological conditions, including key characteristics of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
- iii. The status of focal species to assess the ecological conditions required under § 219.9.
- iv. The status of a select set of the ecological conditions required under § 219.9 to contribute to the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species, conserve proposed and candidate species, and maintain a viable population of each species of conservation concern.
- v. The status of visitor use, visitor satisfaction, and progress toward meeting recreation objectives.
- vi. Measurable changes on the plan area related to climate change and other stressors that may be affecting the plan area.
- vii. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including for providing multiple use opportunities.
- viii. The effects of each management system to determine that they do not substantially and permanently impair the productivity of the land (16 U.S.C. 1604(g)(3)(C)).

In November 2018, as required at 36 CFR 219.12(d), the Boise National Forest issued the first [Biennial Monitoring Evaluation Report \(for Fiscal Years 2016-2017\)](#) completed under the



recently revised monitoring program. During the process of addressing the questions, indicators and measures outlined in the monitoring program, opportunities and needs to improve some of these components were identified.

Proposed Changes to the Monitoring Plan

The following changes are proposed to the monitoring plan:

| Current Language | Proposed Change(s) & Justification |
|---|--|
| <p>Monitoring Question #10: Do implemented activities maintain or restore water quality to fully support beneficial uses?</p> <p>Indicator #1: Watershed Condition Framework (WCF) change in watershed condition class or key WCF attributes</p> <p>Indicator #2: Applicable Forest Service National Best Management Practices (BMP) monitoring</p> <p>Indicator #3: Applicable Forest Plan Pathways and Watershed Condition Indicators (WCIs)</p> <p>Indicator #4: Certified Accomplishments via Watershed Improvement Tracking (WIT) (core and integrated targets)</p> <p>Indicator #5: Idaho Division of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) Beneficial Use Reconnaissance Program (BURP)</p> | <p>No changes are proposed to the question itself. The following changes are proposed for indicators and indicators would be renumbered as needed:</p> <p>Remove Indicator #1: WCF is a landscape scale prioritization tool, and does not prescribe or evaluate implementation activities.</p> <p>Change Indicator #2 to read as “Applicable National Core Best Management Practices.” The National Core BMP Program is the primary guidance and formal framework for directing and monitoring water quality maintenance and/or restoration.</p> <p>Remove Indicator #4: This indicator (WIT) is a reporting mechanism and does not inform whether or how specific management activities support beneficial uses.</p> |
| <p>Monitoring Question #11: Are management activities in riparian conservation areas (RCAs) designed to maintain or restore riparian functions and ecological processes?</p> <p>Indicator #1: Acres of projects in RCAs to maintain and restore riparian functions and ecological processes</p> | <p>No changes are proposed to the question itself. The following change is proposed for the indicator:</p> <p>Change Indicator #1 to read as “Design-based preservation of RCA function and process as captured in the project record in three planning elements 1) IDT determination of RCA delineation process and within-RCA activities, 2) Stand-scale silvicultural prescriptions specific to PVG objectives, and 3) Burn Plan for prescribed fire activities as related to number one (above).”</p> |

| Current Language | Proposed Change(s) & Justification |
|---|--|
| <p>Monitoring Question #15: Is the Forest maintaining or restoring soil quality?</p> <p>Indicator #1: Amount of activity area in non-detrimentally disturbed condition</p> <p>Indicator #2: Amount of activity area Total Soil Resource Commitment (TSRC)</p> | <p>No changes are proposed to the question itself. The following changes are proposed for indicators and indicators would be renumbered as needed:</p> <p>Change Indicator #1 to read as “Amount of activity area in detrimental soil disturbance (DSD) condition”: Aligns indicator with agency protocol (FSDMP 2009a, 2009b) for evaluating soil resource impacts.</p> <p>Change Indicator #2 to read as “Acres of Total Soil Resource Commitment (TSRC) added or restored”: Refines language to enable clearer reporting and evaluation.</p> <p>Add Indicator #3 to read as “Applicable National Core Best Management Practices”: Links monitoring to primary Forest Service program directing watershed conservation actions and reporting.</p> |
| <p>Monitoring Question #20: Is the Forest meeting the expected outcomes as by-products of restoration?</p> <p>Indicator #1: Amount of commercial and non- commercial wood products provided Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) and Total Sale Program Quantity (TSPQ)</p> <p>Indicator #2: Number of stewardship contracts awarded</p> <p>Indicator #3: Acres treated that contribute to achievement of desired restoration conditions</p> | <p>No changes are proposed to the question itself. The following change is proposed for Indicator #2:</p> <p>Change Indicator #2 to read as “The number of a suite of contracting tools and agreements utilized to allow for implementation of restoration activities”: The Boise National Forest uses more than just stewardship contracting and other types of timber sale contracts to implement restoration activities. Contracting and partnership authorities are often created through legislation and made available to the Forest Service, such as the Good Neighbor Authority and negotiated agreements entered into under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, which allow personnel from other agencies to complete authorized restoration activities on Forest Service lands. The Boise National Forest has been taking advantage of some of these new authorities and this change to the indicator would better reflect how use of broader authorities is facilitating implementation of more restoration work and providing expected outcomes.</p> |

| Current Language | Proposed Change(s) & Justification |
|--|---|
| <p>Monitoring Question #23: Are tribal interest and rights identified through consultation being addressed?</p> <p>Indicator #1: Challenges to addressing tribal interests and rights identified are reviewed with tribal representatives through the agreed upon consultation forum to determine opportunities to improve consultation processes to better achieve desired outcomes</p> <p>Indicator #2: Results of consultation are reported annually</p> | <p>No changes are proposed to the question itself. The following is proposed for Indicator #2:</p> <p>Remove Indicator #2: Other laws and regulations dictate requirements for conducting government-to-government consultation with American Indian Tribes. There is no regional or national requirement to report on consultation results as a whole and generating this documentation as part of Forest Plan monitoring is not necessary. Consultation results are more appropriately considered on a timely and project/topic/issue basis and in context with relationships established with the different tribes, is described in Indicator #1.</p> |

Revised Versions of Questions and Indicators

If the changes proposed above are implemented as described, the questions and indicators would read as follows:

Monitoring Question #10: Do implemented activities maintain or restore water quality to fully support beneficial uses?

Indicator #1: Applicable National Core Best Management Practices

Indicator #2: Applicable Forest Plan Pathways and Watershed Condition Indicators (WCIs)

Indicator #3: Idaho Division of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) Beneficial Use Reconnaissance Program (BURP)

Monitoring Question #11: Are management activities in riparian conservation areas (RCAs) designed to maintain or restore riparian functions and ecological processes?

Indicator #1: Design-based preservation of RCA function and process as captured in the project record in three planning elements 1) IDT determination of RCA delineation process and within- RCA activities, 2) Stand-scale silvicultural prescriptions specific to PVG objectives, and 3) Burn Plan for prescribed fire activities as related to number one (above)

Monitoring Question #15: Is the Forest maintaining or restoring soil quality?

Indicator #1: Amount of activity area in detrimental soil disturbance (DSD) condition

Indicator #2: Acres of Total Soil Resource Commitment (TSRC) added or restored

Indicator #3: Applicable National Core Best Management Practices

Monitoring Question #20: Is the Forest meeting the expected outcomes as by-products of restoration?

Indicator #1: Amount of commercial and non-commercial wood products provided Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) and Total Sale Program Quantity (TSPQ)

Indicator #2: The number of a suite of contracting tools and agreements utilized to allow for implementation of restoration activities

Indicator #3: Acres treated that contribute to achievement of desired restoration conditions

Monitoring Question #23: Are tribal interest and rights identified through consultation being addressed?

Indicator #1: Challenges to addressing tribal interests and rights identified are reviewed with tribal representatives through the agreed upon consultation forum to determine opportunities to improve consultation processes to better achieve desired outcomes

How You Can Comment

As required by 36 CFR 219.13(c)(1), the Forest invites comments on the proposed changes to the plan monitoring program. Comments on the proposed changes may be submitted via email to comments-intermttn-boise@usda.gov. Include “proposed forest plan monitoring modifications” in the subject line of your email. For comments to be considered please submit your input by Friday, July 17, 2020.

For more information about the Forest Plan monitoring program, please contact Brian Lawatch, brian.lawatch@usda.gov, or at 208-590-3345. Thank you for your interest in the Management of the Boise National Forest.

Sincerely,

TAWNIA BRUMMETT
Forest Supervisor