United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Boise National Forest
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File Code: 1920
Date: October 20, 2026

Dear Interested Party,

The Boise National Forest is proposing changes to the Forest Plan Monitoring Program that was developed in 2016, and then updated in 2020, 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 36 CFR 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, conservation of proposed and candidate species, and maintenance of 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)).

Since publication of the 2020 report, two more biennial monitoring reports have been published (2022 for years 2020-2021 and 2024 for years 2022-2023). 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
Monitoring Question #6: Are special forest product gathering activities resulting in resource depletion (e.g., overharvest of fungi, bear grass, berries)?	This question has not been fully addressed since its establishment in 2016. The Boise National Forest only issues personal use/free use permits for firewood and Christmas trees; products such as mushrooms and huckleberries, etc. are typically gathered in personal use quantities and are not tracked. In addition, the Forest does not have any baseline or foundational information to which to compare the number of personal use/free use permits issued to assess whether Forest visitors are overharvesting. **The Boise National Forest proposes removing this monitoring question.**
Monitoring Question #7: Has winter recreation affected source environments in priority watersheds identified in the Forest Plan Source Environment Restoration Strategy?	**Change Monitoring Question #7** to read as **"Has human activity affected species diversity and/or populations across the Boise National Forest?"** The previous question was narrow and used a one-time data source. Without replication of the study in winter recreation it is not possible to determine long term trends on impacts. The proposed new question looks at a national long-term analysis that shows trends in populations and species diversity. The indicator would remain the same.
Monitoring Question #15: Is the Forest maintaining or restoring soil quality? **Indicator #3:** Applicable National Core Best Management Practices	No changes are proposed to the question itself. The following changes are proposed for indicator #3: In 2024, **Indicator #3 - Applicable National Core Best Management Practices** was deemed inadequate for responding to this question. Instead, data from on-the-ground forest soil disturbance monitoring protocol (FSDMP) surveys as well as project planning analysis will be used to estimate pre- and post- project detrimental disturbance (DD) on a forest-wide scale. This will be expressed as **Indicator #3 – FSDMP Survey Results**

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-intermtn-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 Tuesday, November 17, 2026.

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,

DAVID FRANCOMB Digitally signed by DAVID FRANCOMB Date: 2026.10.20 10:11:50 -06'00'

DAVID FRANCOMB
Acting Forest Supervisor