Amendment No.: 2000-2016-1

Effective Date: May 27, 2016

Duration: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

Approved: GREGORY SMITH
Acting Associate Deputy Chief

Date Approved: 09/04/2014

Posting Instructions: Amendments are numbered consecutively by title and calendar year. Post by document; remove the entire document and replace it with this amendment. Retain this transmittal as the first page(s) of this document. The last amendment to this title was 2000-2013-1 to FSM 2060.

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Digest:

2020 - Incorporates id_2020-2015-1 in its entirety.

2020.5 - Revises terminology in several definitions: (1) for consistency with definitions used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Climate Change 2007, Synthesis Report, Annex II Glossary; and (2) in response to public comment received on the proposed planning rule Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 219—Planning, Subpart A--National Forest System Land Management Planning (36 CFR part 219, subpart A).
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FSM 2020 provides policy for reestablishing and retaining ecological resilience of National Forest System lands and resources to achieve sustainable multiple use management and provide a broad range of ecosystem services. Resilient ecosystems have greater capacity to survive disturbances and large-scale threats, especially under changing and uncertain future environmental conditions, such as those driven by climate change and human uses. The directive reaches across all program areas and activities applicable to management of National Forest System lands and resources so as to ensure integration and coordination at all levels and organizational units. It does not directly affect land management plans or the occupancy and use of National Forest System lands, leaving to responsible officials the discretion to decide when and how to authorize restoration projects and activities. When applying or implementing this policy, the Forest Service must comply with applicable laws and regulations, including the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act (MUSYA), and the principal statutes in section FSM 2020.11.

2020.1 – Authority

The authority for sustainably managing the National Forest System derives from laws enacted by Congress that set out the purpose for which it has been established and is to be administered. These laws are cited throughout the Forest Service Manual and Handbooks. FSM 1010 lists the most significant laws and provides guidance on where to obtain copies of them.

The history of federal policies, treaties, statutes, court decisions, and Presidential direction regarding Indian Tribes and tribal rights and interests is extensive. FSM 1563.01a through FSM 1563.01i set out the legal authorities relevant to Forest Service relationships with Tribes.

The President issued direction through several Executive Orders relevant to protection of resources or restoration of ecosystem processes and functions (FSM 2020.12). Also, numerous regulations governing the sustainable management and restoration of National Forest System lands are found in the Code of Federal Regulations under Title 36, Chapter II, parts 200-299.

2020.11 – Laws

The principal statutes governing the reestablishing and retaining ecological resilience of National Forest System lands and resources to achieve sustainable multiple use management and provide a broad range of ecosystem services, include but are not limited to, the following statutes, which are listed in alphabetical order. Except where specifically stated, these statutes apply to all National Forest System lands and resources.

1. Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) of 1974, as amended by National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1600-1614, 472a). This Act states that the development and administration of the renewable resources of the National Forest System are to be in full accord with the concepts for multiple use and sustained yield of products and services as set forth in the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield
Act of 1960. The Act establishes the policy of the Congress that all forested lands in the National Forest System be maintained in appropriate forest cover with species of trees, degree of stocking, rate of growth, and stand conditions designed to secure the maximum benefits of multiple use sustained yield management in accordance with land management plans. It sets forth the requirements for land and resource management plans for units of the National Forest System, including requiring guidelines to provide for the diversity of plant and animal communities based on the suitability and capability of the specific land area and within multiple use objectives.

2. Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6501-6591). This Act provides processes for developing and implementing hazardous fuel reduction projects on certain types of “at-risk” National Forest System and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, and also provides other authorities and direction to help reduce hazardous fuels and protect, restore, and enhance healthy forest and rangeland ecosystems.

3. Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. 528-531). This Act states that the National Forests are to be administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes, and adds that the establishment and maintenance of wilderness areas are consistent with this Act. This Act directs the Secretary to manage renewable surface resources of the National Forests for multiple use and sustained yield of the several products and services obtained therefrom. Multiple use means the management of all the various renewable surface resources of the National Forests in the combination that will best meet the needs of the American people; providing for periodic adjustments in use to conform to changing needs and conditions; and harmonious and coordinated management of the resources without impairment of the productivity of the land. Sustained yield of the several products and services means achieving and maintaining in perpetuity a high-level annual or regular periodic output of renewable resources without impairment of the productivity of the land.

4. Organic Administration Act (at 16 U.S.C. 475, 551). This Act states the purpose of the National Forests, and directs their control and administration to be in accord with such purpose, that is, “[n]o national forest shall be established, except to improve and protect the forest within the boundaries, or for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of citizens of the United States.” Authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to “make such rules and regulations . . . to preserve the [national] forests from destruction.”

Other statutes, regulations, and Executive Orders related to the policies in the restoration policy are referenced in FSM 2020.6.
2020.2 – Objective

Ecosystems ecologically or functionally restored, so that over the long term they are resilient and can be managed for multiple use and provide ecosystem services, including but not limited to carbon storage and sequestration.

2020.3 – Policy

1. The Forest Service will emphasize ecosystem restoration across the National Forest System and within its multiple use mandate.

2. The Forest Service land and resource management plans, project plans, and other Forest Service activities may include goals or objectives for restoration. The goals or objectives for ecosystem restoration must be consistent to all applicable laws and regulations. In development of restoration goals or objectives, the Forest Service should consider:

   a. factors such as the following:

      (1) public values and desires;

      (2) the natural range of variation (NRV);

      (3) ecological integrity;

      (4) current and likely future ecological capabilities;

      (5) a range of climate and other environmental change projections;

      (6) the best available scientific information; and,

      (7) detrimental human uses.

   b. technical and economic feasibility to achieve desired future conditions.

   c. ecological, social, and economic sustainability.

   d. the recovery, maintenance, and enhancement of carbon stocks.

   e. opportunities to incorporate restoration objectives into resource management projects to achieve complementary or synergistic results.

   f. the concept that an ecological system is dynamic and follows an ecological trajectory.
3. The Forest Service may reestablish, maintain, or modify the composition, structure, function, and connectivity of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems in order to sustain their resilience and adaptive capacity.

4. Activities with localized, short-term adverse effects may be acceptable in order to achieve long-term restoration objectives.

5. The definitions for following terms in this policy are identical to the definitions for the same terms in the National Forest System, Land Management Planning Directive: adaptation, adaptive capacity, adaptive management, disturbance, disturbance regime, ecological integrity, ecosystem, ecosystem services, landscape, natural range of variation (NRV), resilience, restoration–ecological, restoration–functional, stressors, and sustainability. (FSH 1909.12, zero code, section 05).

6. When ecosystems have been altered to such an extent that reestablishing key ecosystem characteristics within the NRV may not be ecologically or economically possible, the restoration focus should be to create functioning ecosystems.

7. Resource managers should consider ecological conditions across ownerships and jurisdictions to develop and achieve landscape restoration objectives by engaging the public, State and local governments, and consultation with Indian Tribes.

8. Not all natural resource management activities are required to include restoration, and not all National Forest System lands require restoration.

2020.4 – Responsibility

The responsible officials to carry out the Ecosystem Restoration Policy are the Agency employees who have the delegated authority to approve land and resource management plans, project plans, or other Forest Service activities.

2020.5 – Definitions

2020.6 – References

This section displays references to statutes, regulations, and Executive Orders related to the policies in FSM 2020.

2020.61 – References to Statutes


2020.62 – References to Federal Regulations


2020.63 – References to Executive Orders


