



File Code: 1900

Date:

FEB 22 2016

Interested Party,

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest intends to modify its forest plan monitoring programs to comply with the Forest Service's 2012 planning rule. We would like to hear your comments and concerns about the modifications.

The 2012 planning rule (36 CFR 219.12), guides forest plan monitoring across the Forest Service. All forest plan monitoring programs must conform to the requirements of the 2012 planning rule by May 9, 2016. Both the forest plan monitoring program for the 1986 Land and Resource Management Plan for the Humboldt National Forest ("Humboldt Forest Plan") and for the Toiyabe National Forest ("Toiyabe Forest Plan") need to be modified to conform with the planning rule.

The Humboldt-Toiyabe N.F. conformance strategy focuses on addressing the purpose of the forest plan monitoring program as described in 36 CFR 219.12(a)(1), which includes the need for monitoring information that enables the responsible official to determine if a change in plan components in the plan area may be needed.

In addition, each forest plan monitoring program must contain one or more monitoring questions and associated indicators addressing each of the following eight requirements, which are noted at 36 CFR 219.12(a)(5):

1. The status of select watershed conditions.
2. The status of select ecological conditions including key characteristics of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
3. The status of focal species to assess the ecological conditions required under 36 CFR 219.9.
4. The status of a select set of the ecological conditions required under 36 CFR 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.
5. The status of visitor use, visitor satisfaction, and progress toward meeting recreation objectives.
6. Measurable changes on the plan area related to climate change and other stressors that may be affecting the plan area.
7. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including for providing multiple use opportunities.
8. 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)).



Under the 2012 planning rule, the forest plan monitoring programs will consist of only monitoring questions and associated indicators to evaluate if plan components are effective and appropriate and if management is effective in maintaining or achieving progress toward desired conditions and objectives for the plan area. Additional information for implementing the forest plan monitoring programs may be documented in a separate monitoring guide that would, for example, identify methods for data collection, how the data are stored, and responsibilities for managing monitoring information. The monitoring guide would not be part of the forest plan and could be changed as needed.

The forest plan monitoring information will be evaluated every two years. The monitoring evaluation report must indicate whether or not a change to the plan, management activities, the monitoring program, or a new set assessment, may be warranted based on the new information. The monitoring evaluation report must be used to inform adaptive management of the plan area. The expected publication date of the first biennial monitoring evaluation report is expected to be no later than two years from the date of approval of the administrative change for the modified forest plan monitoring programs.

Current Forest Plan Monitoring Plans

Monitoring plans for the Humboldt Forest Plan and the Toiyabe Forest Plan were developed to evaluate potential changes to the management direction for each national forest, including goals, objectives, and standards and guidelines. The monitoring plans identify monitoring elements and processes that would be used to evaluate key components of the forest plans. Current forest plan monitoring plans (Chapter V) for the Humboldt National Forest and the Toiyabe National Forest can be found at:

http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/htnf/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fsm9_026859

Preliminary Draft Monitoring Programs

An interdisciplinary team for the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest has developed preliminary draft monitoring programs for the Humboldt Forest Plan and the Toiyabe Forest Plan that would meet the requirements of the 2012 planning rule. Links to the draft monitoring programs can be found at the following website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/htnf/landmanagement/planning>

New Information and Approval Framework

The modifications to the forest plan monitoring programs are being conducted under the administrative change procedures of 36 CFR 219.13(c). The public is provided an opportunity to provide comment on the intended modifications. During this comment process, the public may identify other monitoring needs and additional information.

As the responsible official for the proposal, I will review public comments to identify new information for consideration in bringing the current monitoring programs into compliance with the 2012 planning rule, and will then work with the interdisciplinary team to determine which elements will be included in the programs and which elements will be deleted. I will then notify the public of my approval of the administrative change to modify the forest plan monitoring programs.

How You Can Comment

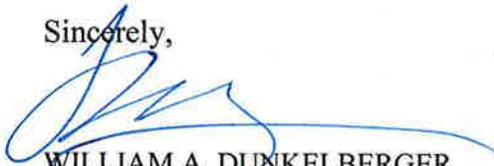
This letter begins the period for public participation in this process, and it is important that anyone who is interested in this process participate by providing comment or new information for my consideration. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the end of the 30-day comment period, March 25, 2016. You may mail or hand-deliver your comments between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays, or mail them to:

William A. Dunkelberger
Forest Supervisor
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
1200 Franklin Way
Sparks, NV 89431

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, rich text format (.rtt) or Word (.doc) to comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe@fs.fed.us. Please refer to the "Proposed forest plan monitoring modifications" in the subject line of your email. Additional information will be available on Humboldt-Toiyabe N. F. website:
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/htnf/landmanagement/planning>

For more information about this project, please contact James Winfrey (jwinfrey@fs.fed.us or (775) 355-5308). Thank you for your interest in the management of the Humboldt-Toiyabe N.F.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM A. DUNKELBERGER
Forest Supervisor