§ 219.11 Monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management.

(a) Plan monitoring strategy. Each plan must contain a practicable, effective, and efficient monitoring strategy to evaluate sustainability in the plan area (§§ 219.19 through 219.21). The strategy must require monitoring of appropriate plan decisions and characteristics of sustainability.

(1) Monitoring and evaluation of ecological sustainability. The plan monitoring strategy for the monitoring and evaluation of ecological sustainability must require monitoring of:

(i) Ecosystem diversity. Monitoring must be used to evaluate the status and trend of selected physical and biological characteristics of ecosystem diversity (§ 219.20(a)(i)). The plan monitoring strategy must document the reasons for selection of characteristics to be monitored, including the degree of risk to the species, the factors that put the species at risk, and the strength of association between ecological conditions and population dynamics.

(ii) Species diversity. Monitoring must be used to evaluate focal species and species-at-risk as follows:

(A) The status and trends of ecological conditions known or suspected to support focal species and selected species-at-risk must be monitored. The plan monitoring strategy must document the reasons for selection of species-at-risk for which ecological conditions are to be monitored, including the degree of risk to the species, the factors that put the species at risk, and the strength of association between ecological conditions and population dynamics.

(B) In addition to monitoring of ecological conditions, the plan monitoring strategy may require monitoring for some focal species and some species-at-risk. This monitoring may
be accomplished by a variety of methods including population occurrence and presence/absence data, sampling population characteristics, using population indices to track relative population trends, or inferring population status from ecological conditions.

(C) A decision by the responsible official to monitor populations and the responsible official’s choice of methodologies for monitoring selected focal species and selected species-at-risk may be based upon factors that include, but are not limited to, the degree of risk to the species, the degree to which a species’ life history characteristics lend themselves to monitoring, the reasons that a species is included in the list of focal species or species-at-risk, and the strength of association between ecological conditions and population dynamics. Monitoring of population trend is often appropriate in those cases where risk to species viability is high and population characteristics cannot be reliably inferred from ecological conditions. The reasons for selection of species, monitoring objectives, and methodologies must be documented as part of the plan monitoring strategy. The responsible official must evaluate the effectiveness of selected characteristics of ecosystem diversity and species diversity in providing reliable information regarding ecological sustainability.

(iii) Monitoring effectiveness. As a part of the plan monitoring strategy, the responsible official must evaluate the effectiveness of selected characteristics of ecosystem diversity and species diversity in providing reliable information regarding ecological sustainability.

(2) Monitoring and evaluation of social and economic sustainability. The plan monitoring strategy for the monitoring and evaluation of social and economic sustainability should provide for periodic review of national, regional, and local supply and demand for products, services, and values. Special consideration should be given to those uses, values, products, and services that the National Forest System is uniquely poised to provide. Monitoring should improve the understanding of the National Forest System contributions to social and economic sustainability. The plan monitoring strategy must require the responsible official to evaluate the effectiveness of information and analyses described in §219.21(a) in providing reliable information regarding social and economic sustainability.

(b) Monitoring of site-specific actions. The decision document authorizing a site-specific action should describe any required monitoring and evaluation for the site-specific action. The responsible official must determine that this is a reasonable expectation that anticipated funding is adequate to complete any required monitoring and evaluation prior to authorizing a site-specific action.

(c) Monitoring methods. Unless required by the monitoring strategy, monitoring methods may be changed to reflect new information without plan amendment or revision.

(d) Use of monitoring information. Where monitoring and evaluation is required by the plan monitoring strategy, the responsible official must ensure that monitoring information is used to determine one or more of the following:

(1) If site-specific actions are completed as specified in applicable decision documents;
(2) If the aggregated outcomes and effects of completed and ongoing actions are achieving or contributing to the desired conditions;
(3) If key assumptions identified for monitoring in plan decisions remain valid; and
(4) If plan or site-specific decisions need to be modified.

(e) Coordination of monitoring activities. To the extent practicable, monitoring and evaluation should be conducted jointly with other federal agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, scientific and academic communities, and others. In addition, the responsible official must provide appropriate opportunities for the public to be involved and utilize scientists as described in §219.23.

(f) Annual monitoring and evaluation report. The responsible official must prepare a monitoring and evaluation report for the plan area within 6 months following the end of each fiscal year. The report must be maintained with the plan documents (§219.30(d)(5)), and include the following:

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(1) A list or reference to monitoring required by the plan; and
(2) A summary of the results of monitoring and evaluation performed during the preceding fiscal year and appropriate results from previous years. The summary must include:
(i) A description of the progress toward achievement of desired conditions within the plan area; and
(ii) A description of the plan area’s contribution to the achievement of applicable outcomes of the Forest Service national strategic plan.

§219.12 Collaboration and cooperatively developed landscape goals.

(a) Collaboration. To promote sustainability, the responsible official must actively engage the American public, interested organizations, private landowners, state, local, and Tribal governments, federal agencies, and others in the stewardship of National Forest System lands. To engage people in the stewardship of National Forest System lands, the responsible official may assume many roles, such as leader, organizer, facilitator, or participant. The responsible official must provide early and frequent opportunities for people to participate openly and meaningfully in planning taking into account the diverse roles, jurisdictions, and responsibilities of interested and affected organizations, groups, and individuals. The responsible official has the discretion to determine how to provide these opportunities in the planning process.

(b) Cooperatively developed landscape goals. (i) The responsible official and other Forest Service employees involved in planning must invite and encourage others to engage in the collaborative development of landscape goals. Using information from broad-scale assessments or other available information, and subject to applicable laws, the responsible official may initiate or join ongoing collaborative efforts to develop or propose landscape goals for areas that include National Forest System lands.

(ii) During collaborative efforts, responsible officials and other Forest Service employees, must communicate and foster understanding of the nation’s declaration of environmental policy as set forth in section 101(b) of the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321–4347), which states that it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government to use all practicable means, consistent with other essential considerations of national policy, to improve and coordinate federal plans, functions, programs, and resources to the end that the Nation may—
(i) Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
(ii) Ensure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
(iii) Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;
(iv) Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity, and variety of individual choice;
(v) Achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities; and
(vi) Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

(3) Cooperatively developed landscape goals, whether the result of efforts initiated by the Forest Service or others, must be deemed an issue for the purposes under §219.4.

§219.13 Coordination among Federal agencies.

The responsible official must provide early and frequent coordination with appropriate Federal agencies and may provide opportunities:
(a) For interested or affected Federal agencies to participate in the identification of issues and formulation of proposed actions;
(b) For the streamlined coordination of Federal agency policies, resource management plans, or programs; and