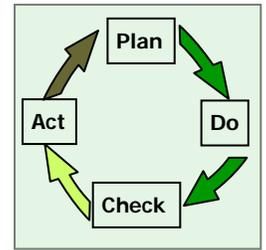


Northern Region Environmental Management System (EMS)

What is an EMS?

An EMS provides a systematic approach for continually improving environmental performance. An EMS identifies the major environmental aspects (activities, products or services) and associated impacts that occur on a National Forest or Grassland. There are controls already in place to manage these impacts – such as NEPA analysis, best management practices (BMPs), and resource monitoring – the EMS simply documents and ensures that these controls are in place and working as intended.



EMS is not a short term project that will be completed on a specific date. It is an ONGOING PROCESS that formalizes the Forest Service's commitment to adaptive management and continual improvement of the environment.

The EMS is based on the *plan-do-check-act* cycle to establish goals, implement plans to meet the goals, determine progress, and make improvements. The EMS uses the ISO 14001 international standard - the most widely used and respected standard. The EMS will account for performance through monitoring, required audits and management reviews. Management will take corrective and preventive actions to address the findings and suggested improvements.

EMS and the Northern Region

An EMS was established in 2006 for five National Forests (Bitterroot, Flathead, Idaho Panhandle, Kootenai and Lolo) using a regional approach with common procedures (hereafter R1 EMS). Other R1 National Forests and Grassland will begin implementing an EMS using a national approach in 2008.

Environmental Policy

The Environmental Policy is the foundation of an EMS and is the basis for environmental objectives and targets. The Forest Service Environmental Policy is:

“In conjunction with its mission, vision, and guiding principles; the Forest Service is committed to complying with applicable legal and other requirements, pollution prevention, and continual environmental improvement.”

EMS involves the whole organization—every employee is required to know our environmental policy and how they contribute. Persons working on behalf of the Forest Service (e.g. contractors, permittees) need to be aware of the environmental policy and how their activities contribute to environmental performance.

Environmental Objectives – *Make progress in improving the environment.*

1. **Invasive Weeds** (R1 EMS) - Reduce invasive weed introduction or spread through improved and more effective control and management.
2. **Vegetation Management** (R1 EMS) – 1) Manage for (restore or maintain) a range of forest and non-forest vegetation conditions (commensurate with natural disturbance regimes and current climatic conditions), including the improvement or maintenance of resilient, native wildlife habitat, and 2) Reduce fuels in a pattern and location to decrease fire intensity in the proximity of WUI or Community Wildfire Protection Plan areas.
3. **Travel Management** (R1 EMS) – 1) Reduce the existing road systems' contributed sediment and impairment of water quality and aquatic habitats and 2) Improve security for grizzly bears or elk through the designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use.
4. **Fleet Management** (R1 and National EMS) - Reduce petroleum-based fuel consumption.

Environmental Aspects – *Demonstrate that impacts on the environment are controlled or minimized.*

These aspects and associated impacts were selected considering the frequency of the activity, the potential severity of the impact, and level of public concern.

1. **Timber harvest** (including log hauling) and the impacts on native wildlife habitat, grizzly bear or elk security, watershed condition and aquatic habitats, soil productivity, and invasive weed introduction or spread. (R1 EMS)
2. **Fire suppression and wildland fire use** and the impacts on invasive weed introduction or spread. (R1 EMS)
3. **Motorized travel** and the impacts on invasive weed introduction or spread, grizzly bear or elk security, and watershed condition, and aquatic habitats. (R1 EMS)
4. **Fleet Management** and the impacts on the environment (greenhouse gas emissions) from using petroleum-based fuel consumption.

R1 EMS Website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/projects/ems/index.shtml>
National EMS Website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/ems/>