



File Code: 2670/2200

Date: August 5, 2010

Route To:

**Subject:** 2010 Implementation Monitoring for PACFISH/INFISH and the 1998 Biological Opinions for Salmon, Steelhead, and Bull Trout

**To:** Forest Supervisors, Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Bitterroot, Clearwater, Flathead, Helena, Idaho Panhandle, Kootenai, Lolo, and Nez Perce National Forest

### REPLY DUE DECEMBER 17, 2010

This letter explains the Regional Deputy Team's Monitoring Program requirements under the PACFISH/INFISH Biological Opinions (PIBO) for 2010. Grazing is the only management activity that is required to be reported in 2010.

**Background:** Region 1 has made commitments through the PACFISH and INFISH Management Strategies to improve aquatic resources found in the Interior Columbia River Basin. Since the Region began implementing these strategies, there has been improvement in management for aquatic and riparian resources in many areas.

In order to meet the terms of the 1998 PIBO, implementation monitoring is required with respect to livestock grazing. It is expected that Forest Service line officers will continue to work with their staffs and grazing permittees to ensure that Implementation Monitoring (IM) requirements are met for 2010. Compliance with this requirement is being monitored and will be presented to the Deputy Team during their annual review. We appreciate the work accomplished throughout the Region in 2009 and look forward to your continuing monitoring efforts for the 2010 grazing season.

**Link between Implementation and Effectiveness Monitoring:** PIBO Implementation Monitoring monitors annual grazing indicators (e.g. stubble height, bank alteration, woody browse) and provides critical input into the PIBO effectiveness monitoring (EM) project, which examines the long-term effectiveness of range management in maintaining or restoring riparian and aquatic systems. Field units establish Designated Monitoring Areas (DMAs) on stream reaches where livestock have access and which reflect a typical level of grazing use. The DMAs are the sites where IM is done by the field units, and also are the sites measured every five years for EM by the PIBO team. Therefore, first priority is placed on ensuring that the exact locations of DMAs are documented (using UTM's or lat/longs) and monumented (as with a fence post or other permanent marker) so that all monitoring teams can measure the site at the same location, resulting in consistent and repeatable data (*See Attachment 1—PIBO IM Protocol for Establishing DMAs*). It is important that PIBO Field Unit IM Coordinators (*Attachment 2—List of PIBO IM Contacts*) work closely with the PIBO EM Team to coordinate the locations of DMA sample sites used in both monitoring efforts.



To evaluate overall trends in stream and riparian area conditions using the information collected by the Effectiveness Monitoring Team at DMAs, it is beneficial to have 2 years of IM data for each site. *Units are required to collect and report IM data on sites evaluated by the EM team the year **before** and the year **of** the EM visit.* The site condition and data collected at a site the year before the EM visit will influence the site characteristics the following season when EM surveys the site. Having 2 years of use data will strengthen our understanding of overall grazing at a site and ultimately lead to stronger correlations between cause (IM) and effect (EM) data sets because we will have use data for 2 of the 5 years instead of just one.

**Monitoring Methods at DMAs:** It is important that Forests collect data that reflect the livestock use indicators most important to stream banks and stream channels. Accordingly, **the following IM requirements will apply to DMAs:**

- Measurements will be on the greenline (first perennial vegetation above the water's edge).
- Measurements must include, at minimum: (1) bank alteration, (2) stubble height (unless no herbaceous vegetation is present on the greenline, as would be the case in deep shade), and (3) woody use (browse) along the greenline, assuming that woody vegetation is present.
- Data collection absolutely needs to follow an established monitoring protocol such as the R1 Bank Alteration Protocol or BLM Multiple Indicators Method (MIM). The R1 Bank Alteration protocol is available at [http://fswweb.r1.fs.fed.us/wildlife/wwfrp/aq\\_eco/monitoring.htm](http://fswweb.r1.fs.fed.us/wildlife/wwfrp/aq_eco/monitoring.htm) The Draft 2010 version of MIM is available at the following website: [http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/boise/research/techtrans/projects/pacfish\\_grazingdocs.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/boise/research/techtrans/projects/pacfish_grazingdocs.shtml)

**Compliance/ Non-Compliance Feedback for Line Officers:** The PIBO monitoring program implements the monitoring requirements of PACFISH, INFISH and the 1998 Biological Opinions for salmon, steelhead, and bull trout. Line officers should assure that all actions they take are consistent with these requirements. A Line Manager Certification Report will once again be required for the 2010 grazing season. More information concerning the LMCR will be sent out this fall.

**Required IM monitoring for 2010:** The following monitoring is required for all authorized livestock grazing activities that have been completed during the current year:

- a. **Monitoring at PIBO Effectiveness Monitoring DMAs:** The PIBO IM program provides critical input to the PIBO EM project; therefore, first priority is placed upon the districts to complete PIBO IM at DMAs selected by the EM Team. This includes DMAs in HUCs to be monitored in both 2010 and 2011. DMA location information, topographic maps, and photos of each site are available at the following website: [http://fswwebgsc.gsc.wo.fs.fed.us/services/data\\_management/PIBO/](http://fswwebgsc.gsc.wo.fs.fed.us/services/data_management/PIBO/) (select 'Implementation Monitoring/Pics\_sitemaps').

*Attachment 3* lists the established R1 DMA sites scheduled for EM/IM monitoring in 2010 and 2011.

- b. **Establishing and Monitoring ‘Missing’ DMAs:** For some HUCs that were originally selected by PIBO for monitoring, DMAs were never established by the Forests. These are grazed HUCs with PIBO ‘integrator’ monitoring sites at low gradient portions of the watershed, but that do not have the corresponding implementation monitoring to explain trends in watershed condition. Monitoring locations should be selected following guidance given in *Attachment 1—PIBO IM Protocol for Establishing DMAs*. In HUCs where no DMA was established, DMAs must be set up and monitored in 2010 and 2011. These ‘missing’ HUCs are listed in *Attachment 3*.
- c. **The PACFISH/INFISH rule requiring monitoring of 20 percent of Category I pastures has been discontinued** to allow units to focus resources on monitoring at PIBO EM DMAs (see (a) above). However, data from any additional sites the Forest chooses to monitor in PIBO watersheds are extremely valuable for analysis of trends. Please also enter these data into the PIBO IM Web database.
- d. **Monitoring Pastures with Little or No Livestock Use:**
  - i. **Temporary Non-use by Livestock:** Established DMAs must be sampled (according to the protocol, Attachment 1) in pastures under non-use, which can include post-fire rest or other range restoration work that requires non-use; rest rotation or deferred grazing; and permittee requests for nonuse for resource protection or personal convenience.
  - ii. **Sheep Use or Physical Barriers:** DMAs that were established where there is currently little or no grazing in stream/riparian areas, whether due to use by sheep or physical barriers such as exclosures or canyon rims, should still be monitored. The effects of rest from grazing need to be analyzed **along with** effects of higher grazing intensities to obtain the complete picture of grazing impacts on PACFISH/INFISH watersheds.
  - iii. **Permanently Closed to Grazing:** For all DMAs in pastures **permanently** closed to livestock grazing, sampling is NOT required. Please notify the PIBO EM team lead (Eric Archer, [earcher@fs.fed.us](mailto:earcher@fs.fed.us)) of any permanent closures.

*For the 2010 and 2011 DMAs, download the site descriptions from the PIBO website [http://fswebgsc.gsc.wo.fs.fed.us/services/data\\_management/PIBO/](http://fswebgsc.gsc.wo.fs.fed.us/services/data_management/PIBO/) (select ‘Implementation Monitoring/Pics\_sitemaps’) and take them along as you do the end-of-season IM monitoring this fall. Check the accuracy of location information and appropriateness of these DMAs. Any discrepancies or issues must be addressed with the EM Team prior to April 2011.*

**Update on the new PIBO IM Web Database:** The new database will be tested this summer and will be ready to use by early Fall 2010. It will have a one-page data entry design and will be considerably simpler to use than the previous version. Training (or an instructional document)

will be provided at a later date. Field units are required to enter all IM data into this database. If technical questions arise, please refer your questions to Ann Carlson ([adcarlson@fs.fed.us](mailto:adcarlson@fs.fed.us), 406-329-3087).

**Validating IM Monitoring in 2010:** This year, the PIBO EM team plans to collect IM data at the same sites that FS or BLM units did their IM monitoring in order to validate the accuracy of our sampling efforts. PIBO will select 30-40 DMAs across a variety of geographic areas and field units slated for monitoring in 2010 or 2011. This information will provide valuable insights and a double check on our own agency's monitoring proficiency.

**Coordination:** If new DMAs are established in 2010, the PIBO EM team will need to receive maps and UTM information prior to the 2011 EM monitoring season, which begins in April. As in previous years, the IM Program will rely on coordination between IM Core Team members and Field Unit Coordinators (local contacts). IM Core Team and Field Unit Coordinators are listed in *Attachment 2*.

**Timeframe:** Data shall be entered into the PIBO IM Web Database by December 17, 2010.

**Contact:** Questions about the Implementation Monitoring program should be directed to Eric Archer at 435-755-3565 or Ann Carlson at 406-329-3087, or your Field Unit Coordinator.

*/s/ Jane L. Cottrell (for)*  
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Enclosures: