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Subject: 2010 Implementation Monitoring Requirements for Southwest Idaho Eco-group Forests in regard to PACFISH/INFISH and the Effectiveness Monitoring Program

To: Forest Supervisors, Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth NFs

REPLY DUE DECEMBER 17, 2010
RF # 2010-31

This letter explains the Regional Forester's monitoring and data reporting requirements for Southwest Idaho Eco-group (SWIEG) forests associated with the PACFISH/INFISH Biological Opinions (PIBO) program.

Background: In 2003, the SWIEG forests plan revisions replaced the interim management strategies of PACFISH/INFISH. The revised forest plans do not repeat verbatim direction in PACFISH /INFISH, but demonstrate that management actions on Federal land meet or exceed the intent of PACFISH /INFISH since the distribution of ESA-listed salmon, steelhead, and bull trout are not limited to SWIEG boundaries.

Prior to adopting the revised forest plans in 2003, SWIEG forests reported range monitoring data and other information into the PIBO implementation monitoring (IM) database. During plan consultation, the forests and regulatory agencies recognized the need to continue to provide implementation monitoring data for upward reporting. In fact, NOAA provided a Term and Condition in the plan BO to "provide an oversight and accountability body that links to IIT (Interagency Implementation Team) by continuing to work with the IIT (or body implementing PACFISH/INFISH and 1995/1998 LRMP Opinions) and provide exchange of information regarding processes that are local in scope, but have broad-scale implications, such as sub-basin planning, watershed analysis, and monitoring."

SWIEG forests are **required** to provide IM data to PIBO by means of the PIBO implementation monitoring database. IM data provides critical input into the PIBO Effectiveness Monitoring project, but without implementation monitoring and entry of data into the IM database, the PIBO team cannot determine cause and effect of trends in watershed condition and can draw no conclusions regarding the effectiveness of Forest Service management. More importantly, by utilizing the PIBO IM database, forests will be providing monitoring data in a manner consistent with effectiveness monitoring and in compliance with mandatory Forest Plan BO Terms and Conditions.

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 1

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.
- These measurements will be made using the Multiple Indicators Method (MIM) protocol. 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

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://fswebgsc.gsc.wo.fs.fed.us/services/data_management/PIBO/ (select 'Implementation Monitoring/Pics_sitemaps').

Attachment 3 lists for each Forest the established 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*.

Carryover Funds and 'Missing' DMAs: Several HUCs still need DMAs to be established by the Forests, and some carryover funds are tied to the completion of this task. *Attachment 3* lists for each Forest the 'missing' DMA sites (highlighted in yellow) to be established and monitored in 2010 and 2011. Once all sites are selected, Forests should send UTM (or latitude-longitude) data, as well as maps of the sites, to the PIBO team lead, Eric Archer, earcher@fs.fed.us with a cc to Cynthia Tait ctait@fs.fed.us. After verification of the sites, carryover funds will be released to the Forests.

c. **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 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/ (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 Cynthia Tait ctait@fs.fed.us, or 801-625-5358.

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 Cynthia Tait at 801-625-5358, or your Field Unit Coordinator.

/s/ Harv Forsgren
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Enclosures

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