



File Code: 2670/2200

Date: July 11, 2011

Route To:

Subject: 2011 Implementation Monitoring for PACFISH/INFISH and the 1998 Biological Opinions for Salmon, Steelhead, and Bull Trout

To: Forest Supervisors of: B-D, Bitterroot, Nez/Clearwater, Flathead, Helena, IPNF, Kootenai, Lolo

REPLY DUE DECEMBER 16, 2011

This letter explains the Regional Deputy Team's Monitoring Program requirements under the PACFISH/INFISH Biological Opinions (PIBO) for 2011. Grazing is the only management activity that is required to be reported in 2011. Please coordinate with your staff to insure these requirements will be met and that data are entered (December 16, 2011) into the Implementation Monitoring database as described below.

Background: Region 1 has made commitments through the PACFISH and INFISH Management Strategies to maintain and restore 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 (IM) is required for livestock grazing. It is expected that Forest Service line officers will continue to work with their staffs and grazing permittees to ensure that IM requirements are met for 2011. 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 2010 as numerous new IM monitoring sites (or Designated Monitoring Areas) were established where missing; and, we look forward to your continued efforts for the 2011 grazing season.

Link between Implementation and Effectiveness Monitoring: PIBO Implementation Monitoring collects data on 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 and 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 (stubble height, bank alteration and woody browse) is completed by the field units at the end of the grazing season. The DMA's selected by units are then surveyed once 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 UTMs 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 two 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 site visit.* Having two years of successive IM data will strengthen our understanding of grazing at a site and over time is expected to improve our ability to correlate cause (IM) and effect (EM).

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 shall 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://fsweb.r1.fs.fed.us/wildlife/wwfrp/aq_eco/monitoring.htm (under rangeland). Please let us know if you would like training this field season and we will coordinate efforts to assist this need. In the future we anticipate formal annual training for implementation monitoring.
- The Final version of MIM is available at the following website:
<http://www.rmsmim.com/Portals/0/MIMdoc.pdf>

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 (LMCR) will once again be required for the 2011 grazing season. More information concerning the LMCR will be sent out this fall.

Required IM monitoring for 2011: The following monitoring is required for all authorized livestock grazing activities that have been completed during the current year. Similarly, IM monitoring needs to occur at a DMA site even if it is on a pasture that is rested, has an enclosure, or not grazed yet still considered an active allotment (this is expanded on in d. below):

- 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 2011 and 2012. 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/ **Attachment 3 lists the established R1 DMA sites** scheduled for EM/IM monitoring in 2011 and 2012.

- 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 to evaluate watershed condition, but that do not have the corresponding implementation monitoring to evaluate grazing activities and trends in watershed condition. Monitoring locations should be selected following guidance given in *Attachment 1—PIBO IM Protocol for Establishing DMAs*. In ‘integrator’ HUCs where a DMA has yet to be established, DMAs must be set up and with concurrent implementation monitoring in 2011 and 2012. These ‘missing’ HUCs are listed in **Attachment 3 and maps showing HUC boundaries can be found at:** http://fswebgsc.gsc.wo.fs.fed.us/services/data_management/PIBO/
- 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. Additional data collected at DMA sites outside of the mandatory two year is also encouraged if workforce planning and capacity allows. Please also enter these data into the PIBO IM Web database. (http://fsweb.gsc.fs.fed.us/services/data_management/PIBO/imentry/index.php).
- 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, erarcher@fs.fed.us) of any permanent closures.

For the 2011 and 2012 DMAs, download the site descriptions and pictures 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 2012.

Update on the new PIBO IM Web Database: The new database is ready to use for data collected in 2011 and beyond (http://fsweb.gsc.fs.fed.us/services/data_management/PIBO/imentry/index.php). Field units are required to enter all IM data into this database by December 16th, 2011. If technical questions arise, please refer your questions to Scott Spaulding (scottspaulding@fs.fed.us, 406-329-3287) who will work with Cameron Thomas (cathomas@fs.fed.us, 329-3087) to resolve the issue. Cameron is getting established in his new position as Regional Aquatic Ecologist and will be the point of contact for Regional PIBO issues by the end of this summer.

Validating IM Monitoring in 2011: This year, as with 2010, the PIBO EM team plans to collect IM data at the same sites that FS or BLM units do their IM monitoring to compare results with our sampling efforts. PIBO will once again select 30-40 DMAs across a variety of geographic areas and field units slated for monitoring in 2011 or 2012. This information will provide valuable insights on our monitoring proficiency, as well as help test new methods of measuring bank alteration.

Coordination: If new DMAs are established in 2011, the PIBO EM team will need to receive maps and UTM information as soon as possible this summer. 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 16, 2011.

Contact: Questions about the Implementation Monitoring program should be directed to Eric Archer at 435-755-3565 or Scott Spaulding at 406-320-3287 (who will work with Cameron Thomas).

/s/ Jane L. Cottrell (for)
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