



USDA Forest Service National Forest System Briefing Paper

Date: April 4, 2006

Topic: National Framework for Land Management Plan Monitoring

Issue: The agency lacks a comprehensive strategy for efficiently and effectively monitoring progress towards achieving land management plan desired conditions, learning from the results, and making needed adjustments and improvements.

Background: The 2005 Planning Rule requires managers to acquire condition and trend information on social, economic, and ecological attributes for the planning area. The rule requires annual monitoring reports and 5-year comprehensive evaluations and reports that characterize outcomes and identify the need to change the plan. The planning rule also identifies three management questions for monitoring and evaluation:

- Is implementation achieving multiple use objectives?
- What is the impact of activities on land productivity?
- Is the plan area moving towards desired conditions?

Establishing a plan monitoring framework requires coordination within NFS and leveraging processes among Deputy Areas.

Monitoring and Evaluation Team: The Director of EMC has established a Monitoring and Evaluation Team (MET). This team will develop a LMP framework for monitoring progress towards achieving both standard and unique desired conditions and objectives on NFS land. The framework will be simple, identify key information needs, link data and information across scales, address both renewable and non-renewable resources, and accommodate shifting priorities over time. Deliverables for this project will include the identification and development of: 1) a core set of standard desired conditions for use in plans; 2) key monitoring questions for each standard desired condition; 3) indicators of change and/or performance; 4) data requirements; 5) additional national protocols and standards; and 6) any additional system and application support. Standard data requirements will not only result in more efficient information management (i.e., standard data collection and systems technology) at the local level but will also assist in meeting national resource information assessment and reporting requirements, including the ability to determine the collective progress towards meeting national goals and objectives on NFS lands.

Key Points: A national framework and strategy for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting to satisfy requirements of the 2005 planning rule includes:

- A core set of monitoring requirements that flow from standard desired conditions and related monitoring questions.
- National direction for LMP monitoring and evaluation (FSM, FSH, Technical Guides)
- Options for leveraging other internal processes for more effective data delivery, systems support and reporting capability.

Contact: Al Abee, Project Team Leader, EMC 202-205-1720