USDA United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Hiawatha National Forest Supervisor's Office | 820 Rains Drive Gladstone, MI 49837 906-428-5800

File Code: 1920
Date: May 9, 2016

Dear Forest Neighbor;

The Hiawatha National Forest (HNF) made changes to the Forest Plan monitoring program to comply with the Forest Service's 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219.12) and to update our existing monitoring program. These changes have been incorporated into a revised Chapter 4 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Forest Plan and posted on our website at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/hiawatha/landmanagement/planning/

Background
The monitoring program changes occur in two areas:

- Changes to our monitoring program to comply with a new planning rule.
- A review of our existing monitoring program to evaluate if we need to modify or drop some of the existing questions.

The new Planning Rule, which provides direction for the development and revision of Forest Plans, went into effect in March 2012. The 2012 Planning Rule requires, at a minimum, the following eight elements to be monitored by each National Forest:

1. Status of select watershed conditions.
2. Status of select aquatic and terrestrial ecological conditions.
3. Status of focal species.
4. Status of a select set of ecological conditions required to contribute to the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species, conserve proposed and candidate species, and maintain viable populations of each species of conservation.
5. Status of visitor use, satisfaction, and progress toward meeting recreation objectives.
6. Measurable changes on the plan are related to climate change.
7. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including providing multiple use opportunities.
8. The effects of each management system to determine they do no substantially and permanently impair the productivity of the land.

The majority of the existing monitoring questions were retained. Ten new questions were developed, three questions were revised, and seven questions were deleted for reasons outlined in the enclosure titled Revised Monitoring Questions and Indicators after Public Input. The resulting monitoring program consists of a total of 35 questions.

Tribal Consultation

Letters or e-mails with draft monitoring questions enclosed were sent to 25 tribal contacts. One comment was received from the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community asking for a question addressing Indian Trust responsibilities. A question was drafted, in collaboration with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and the Ottawa National Forest, and the final question was included in the final list of monitoring questions.

Public Involvement and Notification

In accordance with direction (36 CFR 219.16(c)(6)), changes to the monitoring program can be made through an administrative change, but only after the public has had an opportunity to comment on the intended changes. The following opportunities have been provided for public comment:

- The monitoring transition was first presented and discussed collaboratively at the biannual Eastern Upper Peninsula Partners in Ecosystem Management (EUPPEM) meeting on October 29, 2016. The EUPPEM group includes governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations involved in land management in the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Group members provided information on their own management planning documents and monitoring efforts.
- On March 9, 2016, letters or e-mails with draft monitoring questions enclosed were sent to the monitoring transition collaborative group. This group consisted of 25 tribal contacts and contacts from the Friends of HNF, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Ecological Services and Seney National Wildlife Refuge), Society of American Foresters, Pictured Rocks National Lake Shore, The Nature Conservancy, the Forest Land Group, and Plum Creek, some of which belong to the EUPPEM group described above. Input was received from Seney National Wildlife Refuge and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community.
- The notice for public review of the proposed changes to the monitoring questions was published on the HNF's website on March 30, 2016. Letters and e-mails were sent to the same collaborative group described above and the regularly-used NEPA e-mailing list. The public input period lasted through May 2, 2016.

Comments were received from three respondents. Their comments were considered, but they did not result in any changes to the proposed monitoring questions, indicators or monitoring program. See the enclosed Public Input Summary. Additional internal discussion of the monitoring questions did result in some revisions of a question and some indicators, which are indicated in the enclosed Revised Monitoring Questions and Indicators after Public Input. Two proposed questions about focal species were deleted after further internal discussion.

Implementation

This action is not subject to administrative review as it is considered an administrative change to the Forest Plan (36 CFR 219.13(c)) rather than a Forest Plan Amendment.

Administrative Change #1, Chapter 4 Monitoring and Evaluation (Revised May 2016), goes into effect immediately upon posting this notification on the Forest website.

If you have questions about the Monitoring Program changes, please contact Ginger Molitor, Forest Planner, at (906) 428-5835, or e-mail: nicolegmolitor@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

CID H. MORGAN
Forest Supervisor

Enclosures

cc: Louise Congdon, Ginger Molitor