

**National Advisory  
Committee for  
Implementation of the  
National Forest System  
Land Management  
Planning Rule**

- Mike Anderson, *The Wilderness Society*
- William Barquin, *Kootenai Tribe of Idaho*
- Susan Jane Brown, *Blue Mountains Forest Partners*
- Robert Cope, *Lemhi County Commissioner, ID (Ret.)*
- Adam Cramer, *Outdoor Alliance*
- Daniel Dessecker, *Ruffed Grouse Society*
- Russ Ehnes, *National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council*
- James Magagna, *Wyoming Stock Growers Association*
- Joan May, *San Miguel County Commissioner, CO*
- Peter Nelson, *Defenders of Wildlife*
- Martin Nie, *University of Montana*
- Candice Price, *Urban American Outdoors*
- Vickie Roberts, *Shelton Roberts Properties*
- Greg Schaefer, *Arch Coal, Inc. (Ret.)*
- Angela Sondenaa, *Nez Perce Tribe*
- Rodney Stokes, *Michigan Governor's Office (Ret.)*
- Christopher Topik, *The Nature Conservancy*
- Thomas Troxel, *Intermountain Forest Association*
- Ray Vaughan, *Noted Author and Raconteur*
- Lindsay Warness, *Boise Cascade Company*

April 18, 2016

Tom Vilsack  
Secretary, Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Thomas L. Tidwell  
Chief, U.S. Forest Service  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-0003

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Chief Tidwell:

The National Advisory Committee for Implementation of the National Forest 2012 Planning Rule (Committee) has developed the attached series of questions for the Forest Service's use in evaluating the implementation of the 2012 Planning Rule based on its multiple goals, objectives and requirements.

The Committee envisions an adaptive evaluation process where individual national forests can use the questions to evaluate planning outcomes, as well as to identify challenges and make improvements to the planning process. By compiling and analyzing the cumulative information gathered from individual Forests, the Forest Service can comprehensively evaluate the long-term performance of the planning rule. These questions can also be used to support the 219.2(b)(5)(ii) requirement that the Chief 'establish and administer a national oversight process for accountability and consistency of NFS land management planning'.

The Committee looks forward to continuing to work with the Forest Service on developing efficient and effective means of evaluating and improving implementation of the planning rule. Further, the Committee recommends that the Forest Service engage non-Forest Service sectors, including academia, tribes, state and local governments, non-governmental organizations and the public, in developing and implementing an evaluation process. Gathering insight from a broad spectrum will be key in order to truly evaluate and improve the process and outcomes of planning under the 2012 Planning Rule.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the National Advisory Committee,



Susan Jane Brown  
Co-Chair



Rodney Stokes  
Co-Chair

<b>Federal Advisory Committee on the 2012 Planning Rule</b>
Programmatic Overview of Implementation of the Rule – Measuring Success
<p><b>BACKGROUND:</b> The Federal Advisory Committee (Committee) for the 2012 Planning Rule was chartered to give advice and recommendations on implementation of the 2012 Planning Rule. The Committee believes that it is important for the Forest Service to evaluate how the 2012 Rule is being implemented. 219.2b5(ii) requires the Chief of the Forest Service to ‘establish and administer a national oversight process for accountability and consistency of NFS land management planning’. The Committee believes that this oversight role could serve as a platform for comprehensive, long term evaluation. This evaluation will provide information on potential key challenges and/or lessons being learned that can then inform future revision efforts. Based on the broad spectrum of interests that Committee members represent and their knowledge of the rule and forest planning, the Committee has the ability to offer valuable input into the design of this process.</p>
<p><b>PURPOSE:</b> The Committee has developed a series of questions for the Forest Service to use as a tool in their development of a national oversight process to assess whether revised forest plans are meeting the requirements and intent of the 2012 Planning Rule.</p>
<p><b>AUDIENCE:</b> Forest Service Washington Office and Regional Offices</p>
<p><b>PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING CHECKLIST:</b> The following themes are contained in the 2012 Rule and preamble and reflect its aspirations to guide the collaborative and science-based revision and/or amendment of land management plans that promote the ecological integrity of national forests and grasslands while contributing to social and economic sustainability. In particular, this checklist includes key areas emphasized within the rule including: Increased Public Participation, Increased Efficiency, Use of an All Lands Approach, The Role of Science, Adaptive Management, Ecological Integrity, Landscape Restoration, Water Resources, Wildlife and Plants, Multiple Use, Monitoring, Wilderness, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.</p>
<p><b>IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATION:</b> The Committee recommends that the Forest Service engage non-Forest Service sectors, including academia, tribes, state and local governments and the public, in developing and implementing the oversight and evaluation process. It will be key to gather insight from a broad spectrum of entities in order to truly assess the success of the 2012 Planning Rule. The Committee further recommends compiling and analyzing the <u>cumulative</u> information gathered from reviewing this checklist for each national forest that has completed a plan revision under the 2012 Planning Rule to best assess the success of the Rule.</p>
<p><b>Increased Public Participation</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective was the forest in providing meaningful opportunities for public participation early and throughout the planning process that lead to increased transparency of decision-making?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What methods did the forest use to successfully reach diverse and underserved populations and incorporate their input into the planning process?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways did the planning process foster a shared understanding of the social, economic, and ecological factors of importance in the plan area?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What methods did the forest use to provide a platform to work across boundaries with local governments and other land managers to identify and share information and inform planning?</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways did the use of a pre-decisional review (objection) process provide a more collaborative approach and help the forest resolve conflicts?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was Local and Native Knowledge used to inform planning and plan decisions?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was public, governmental and tribal input incorporated into the development of Desired Conditions?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have states, counties, and local governments been given the opportunity to participate as cooperating agencies?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective was the forest in effectively reaching forest users and visitors from the local, regional, and national level using contemporary tools?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increased Efficiency</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long did the revision process take?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much did the revision process cost?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did the timeframe of the revision affect the public’s ability to remain engaged throughout the process?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What methods did the forest use to leverage their resources and knowledge with those of other agencies to allow for increased effectiveness and gaining efficiency in planning and future implementation of their plans?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective was the forest in utilizing existing information?</li> </ul>
<p><b>All Lands Approach</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the planning process, how effective was the forest in looking across boundaries throughout the assessment, plan development/revision, and monitoring phases of the planning process?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the landscape-scale context for management expressed within the Plan?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were states, counties, and tribes adequately included in the planning process?</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Role of Science</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was the use of best available scientific information used to inform planning and plan decisions?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was best available scientific information used in the development of Desired Conditions, Standards, Guidelines, and Objectives?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was best available science identified and selected? What criteria were used?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When there was uncertainty or disagreement in the scientific literature, how was this addressed?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How were social science and ecological science utilized to address sustainability?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adaptive Management</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective is the Plan in providing the ability to respond to the various social, economic, and ecologic needs across a very diverse system?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective is the Plan in setting up a strategic checklist for adaptive management? (Assess conditions on the ground using readily available information, build plan components recognizing that conditions may be changing, and monitor to determine if there are measurable changes related to climate change and other stressors on the plan area).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have the Plan’s Standards, Guidelines, and Objectives been developed to facilitate/expedite achievement of Desired Conditions?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have specific criteria been established with a goal of reducing uncertainty over time through monitoring?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ecological Integrity</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well does the Plan provide for the maintenance and restoration of the ecological integrity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and watersheds in the plan area, including structure, function, composition, and connectivity?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landscape Restoration</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well does the Plan identify and support needed landscape scale restoration work through Desired Conditions, Objectives, and Prioritized Areas?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways does the Plan provide a platform for working with the public and other land managers to identify restoration needs across the landscape and manage NFS lands to support meeting shared restoration objectives?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Water Resources</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well has the Plan provided for the maintenance and restoration of watersheds and aquatic ecosystems, water resources, and riparian areas in the plan area, including lakes, streams, wetlands, and sources of drinking water?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wildlife and Plants</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective is the Plan in providing a platform to maintain the diversity of plant and animal communities, keep common native species common, contribute to the recovery of threatened and endangered species, conserve proposed and candidate species, and maintain species of conservation concern within the plan area?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well did the Plan use the complementary ecosystem and species-specific approach to maintain biological diversity and connected ecosystems?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways does the Plan provide species-specific provisions to provide a safety net for those species whose specific habitat needs or other influences on their life requirements may not be fully met under the ecosystem provisions?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Multiple Use</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective is the Plan in providing for successful and sustainable multiple uses - supporting a sustainable flow of benefits, services, and uses of NFS lands that provide jobs and contribute to the economic and social sustainability of communities, help to maintain social cultures and long standing traditions, connect people to the land, and contribute to the quality of life for many Americans?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well does the Plan provide for sustainable recreation, including recreation settings, opportunities, access, and scenic character?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Monitoring</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective was the Forest in forming partnerships to ensure effective and efficient development and implementation of plan and broader-scale monitoring, supporting an all-lands approach?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has the monitoring plan been developed to provide timely information regarding the effectiveness of plan components to achieve desired conditions, including social, economic, and cultural conditions?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has the Focal species monitoring plan been developed to provide relevant and useful information regarding the effectiveness of the plan in providing the ecological conditions necessary to maintain the diversity of plant and animal communities and the persistence of native species in the plan area?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will monitoring provide the responsible official with the information needed to determine if plan objectives are being met and there is a trend toward the appropriate desired conditions?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a realistic plan to ensure implementation of the monitoring plan, considering likely funding, available staff, and contributions from partners?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the plan establish clear indicators, based on the best available science, to quantify visitor use and satisfaction?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How were social science and ecological science utilized to address sustainability?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wilderness</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective were the public participation methods used to explain the wilderness evaluation process and to engage people at each step of the process?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective and efficient were the inventory, evaluation, analysis, and decision-making methods used to identify lands that may be suitable for wilderness designation and to determine which areas, if any, to recommend for wilderness?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effectively do the plan components for recommended wilderness areas protect the areas' wilderness characteristics?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wild and Scenic Rivers</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective were the methods used to identify the eligibility of rivers for potential inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effectively do the plan components for eligible wild and scenic rivers protect the rivers' outstandingly remarkable values?</li> </ul>