



# Designing a Broad-scale Monitoring Framework – Summer 2015

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## Introduction and Intent

Monitoring is one of three critical components of the 2012 US Forest Service (USFS) Planning Rule framework. The monitoring section of the rule calls for monitoring at the unit level and also directs “the development of a broader-scale monitoring strategy for plan monitoring questions that can best be answered at a geographic scale broader than one plan area.” At the same time, the USFS is implementing the national Inventory Monitoring and Assessment (IMA) Strategy to more effectively and collaboratively collect and assess resource information and make management decisions.

The intent of broad-scale monitoring is to inform decision-making regarding the effectiveness of the forest plan within the context of the all-lands approach. Broad-scale monitoring will include the monitoring questions and indicators that would respond to scales larger than a forest or unit.

## Project Timeline

This is a two-year project to develop the broad-scale monitoring strategy **framework** and a **process** to achieve the framework. The framework will include the monitoring questions, indicators and associated parameters (scale, databases, and potential governance) for USFS Regions 2 and 3.

Work completed to date:

- Specified goals and objectives for USFS Broader-scale monitoring.
- Reviewed existing monitoring plans, monitoring transition efforts, and partner efforts that address broad-scale indicators.
- Identified key internal (USFS) and external (Federal Agencies, State Agencies, University and NGOs) partners for interviews.

May – August 2015:

- Complete interviews with Forest Service staff from the Washington Office, Regional Offices, Research Stations, National Forests and external stakeholders.

November – March 2016

- Facilitate workshops with partner land managers and diverse stakeholders as a platform to refine and expand the monitoring strategy as well as to identify monitoring resources that can be leveraged into broader-scale monitoring.
- Produce recommendations and a draft broad-scale monitoring framework.
- Develop communication tools and deliver outcomes of final report and recommendations to appropriate audiences.

## Broader-scale Monitoring Goals

The Project Team developed specific goals of the Region 2 and 3 Broader-scale Monitoring Strategy utilizing the Planning Rule and final directives.

- Help determine if management adjustments are needed as guided by Land Management Plans (LMPs) (this may or may not require plan amendment)
  - Test relevant assumptions of LMPs.
  - Measure management effectiveness in order to assess progress toward achieving or maintaining desired conditions in LMPs.
  - Track relevant changes, including, but not limited to: Risks, stressors and conditions beyond unit boundaries.
  - Assess the interrelationship between planning area(s) and the larger landscape.
- Improve coordination and communication of monitoring efforts internally in the Forest Service and externally with partners.
  - Identify questions best answered at geographic scales greater than one forest.
  - Create a more systematic and unified monitoring approach to test management effectiveness, test relevant assumptions, and track relevant changes.
  - Leverage resources via multi-party monitoring resources including all FS branches, other government agencies, non-government agencies, and the public.
  - Identify a feedback mechanism (i.e. a process of adaptive management) to improve effectiveness and efficiency of broader-scale monitoring, collaboration with partners, and communication to LRMP decision-makers.
  - Provide opportunities to communicate broad trends across NFS lands to a variety of stakeholders.

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## Project Website

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*The Broad-scale Monitoring Project is convened by the Southwestern Ecological Restoration Institutes*