

§219.6

analyses, or monitoring results to determine if additional information is desirable and if it can be obtained at a reasonable cost and in a timely manner. The responsible official, at his or her discretion, may choose the methods and determine the scope of information development and interpretation for an issue under consideration. A broad-scale assessment or a local analysis may be developed or supplemented if appropriate to the scope and scale of an issue. Broad-scale assessments, local analyses, monitoring results, and other studies are not site-specific or plan decisions or proposals for agency action (§219.6(a)) subject to Forest Service NEPA procedures.

(a) *Broad-scale assessments.* Broad-scale assessments provide information regarding ecological, economic, or social issues that are broad in geographic scale, sometimes crossing Forest Service regional administrative boundaries. Ecological information and analyses that may be provided in an assessment are addressed in §219.20(a). Social and economic information and analyses that may be provided in an assessment are addressed in §219.21(a).

(1) Broad-scale assessment should provide the following as appropriate:

(i) Findings and conclusions that describe historic conditions, current status, and future trends of ecological, social, and/or economic conditions, their relationship to sustainability, and the principal factors contributing to those conditions and trends. The responsible official may use these findings and conclusions to identify other issues (§219.4), develop proposals for action (§219.6), or for other purposes.

(ii) Identification of needs for additional research to develop new information or address conflicting interpretations of existing information.

(2) Station Directors and Regional Foresters must have joint responsibility for Forest Service participation in broad-scale assessments. Each broad-scale assessment should be designed and conducted with the assistance of scientists, resource professionals, governmental entities, and other individuals and organizations knowledgeable of the assessment area.

(b) *Local analyses.* Local analyses provide ecological, social, or economic in-

36 CFR Ch. II (7-1-02 Edition)

formation as deemed appropriate by the responsible official. Local analyses may cover watersheds, ecological units, and social and economic units, and may tier to or provide information to update a broad-scale assessment. Local analyses should provide the following, as appropriate:

(1) Characterization of the area of analysis;

(2) Description of issues within the analysis area;

(3) Description of current conditions;

(4) Description of likely future conditions;

(5) Synthesis and interpretation of information; and

(6) Recommendations for proposals (§219.6(a)) or identification of other issues (§219.4).

§219.6 Proposed actions.

(a) *Proposal.* The responsible official may propose to amend or revise a plan, propose a site-specific action, or both.

(b) *NEPA requirements.* Unless otherwise provided by law, the responsible official must analyze the effects of the proposal and alternative(s) in conformance with Forest Service NEPA procedures. The responsible official may use issues identified and information reviewed pursuant to §§219.4-219.5 for scoping required in Forest Service NEPA procedures.

§219.7 Plan decisions.

Plan decisions guide or limit uses of National Forest System resources and provide the basis for future agency action. Plan decisions link the requirements of laws, regulations, Executive Orders, policies, and the Forest Service national strategic plan to specific national forests and grasslands. While plan decisions generally do not commit resources to a site-specific action, plan decisions provide a framework for authorizing site-specific actions that may commit resources. In making decisions, the responsible official should seek to manage National Forest System resources in a combination that best serves the public interest without impairment of the productivity of the land consistent with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960. Plan decisions may apply to all or part of a plan