

§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

area. Paragraphs (a) through (e) of this section describe the decisions in a plan.

(a) *Desired resource conditions.* These plan decisions define the resource conditions sought within all or portions of the plan area. Desired resource conditions may include, but are not limited to, the desired watershed and ecological conditions and aquatic and terrestrial habitat characteristics.

(b) *Objectives.* These plan decisions are concise statements describing measurable results intended to contribute to sustainability (§219.19), including a desired level of uses, values, products, and services, assuming current or likely budgets and considering other spending levels as appropriate. Objectives include an estimate of the time and resources needed for their completion.

(c) *Standards.* These plan decisions are the requirements and limitations for land uses and management actions necessary for the achievement of desired conditions and objectives and compliance with applicable laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and policies. Standards include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Limitations on even-aged timber harvest methods;
- (2) Maximum size openings from timber harvest;
- (3) Methods for achieving aesthetic objectives by blending the boundaries of vegetation treatments; and
- (4) Other requirements to achieve multiple-use of the national forests and grasslands.

(d) *Designation of suitable land uses.* These plan decisions identify lands within the National Forest System that are or are not suitable for specific uses (§219.26), including, but not limited to: the transportation system; livestock grazing; special designations as described in §219.27; and lands where timber production is an objective (§219.28).

(e) *Monitoring strategy.* A monitoring strategy is required by each plan as described in §219.11(a).

§219.8 Amendment.

(a) *Amending plans.* A plan amendment may add, modify, or rescind one or more of the decisions of a plan (§219.7). An amendment decision must

be based on the identification and consideration of issues (§219.4), applicable information (§219.5), and an analysis of the effects of the proposed amendment (§219.6). In developing an amendment, the responsible official must provide opportunities for collaboration consistent with §219.12 through §219.18.

(b) *Environmental review of a proposed plan amendment.* For each proposal for a plan amendment, the responsible official must complete appropriate environmental analyses and public involvement in accordance with Forest Service NEPA procedures. A proposed amendment that may create a significant environmental effect and thus require preparation of an environmental impact statement is considered to be a significant change in the plan. If a proposal for amendment requires the preparation of an environmental impact statement, the responsible official must give public notice and an opportunity to comment on the draft environmental impact statement for at least 90 calendar days.

§219.9 Revision.

(a) *Application of the revision process.* Revision of a plan is required by 16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(5). The revision process is a review of the overall management of a unit of the National Forest System and an opportunity to consider the likely results if plan decisions were to remain in effect.

(b) *Initiating revision.* To begin the revision process, the responsible official must:

(1) Provide opportunities for collaboration consistent with §219.12 through §219.18;

(2) Summarize those issues the responsible official determines to be appropriate for consideration (§219.4), any relevant inventories, new data, findings and conclusions from appropriate broad-scale assessments and local analyses, monitoring and evaluation results, new or revised Forest Service policies, relevant portions of the Forest Service national strategic plan, and changes in circumstances affecting the entire or significant portions of the plan area;

(3) Develop the information and complete the analyses described in §219.20(a) and §219.21(a);