

§219.3

chooses to act as the Responsible Official. Requirements for project or activity planning are established in the Forest Service Directive System. Except as specifically provided, none of the requirements of this subpart applies to projects or activities.

(d) *Developing, amending, and revising plans.* (1) *Plan development.* If a new national forest, grassland, prairie, or other administrative unit of the National Forest System is established, the Regional Forester, or a forest, grassland, prairie, or other comparable unit Supervisor identified by the Regional Forester must either develop a plan for the unit or amend or revise an existing plan to apply to the lands within the new unit.

(2) *Plan amendment.* The Responsible Official may amend a plan at any time.

(3) *Plan revision.* The Responsible Official must revise the plan if the Responsible Official concludes that conditions within the plan area have significantly changed. Unless otherwise provided by law, a plan must be revised at least every 15 years.

§219.3 Nature of land management planning.

(a) *Principles of land management planning.* Land management planning is an adaptive management process that includes social, economic, and ecological evaluation; plan development, plan amendment, and plan revision; and monitoring. The overall aim of planning is to produce responsible land management for the National Forest System based on useful and current information and guidance. Land management planning guides the Forest Service in fulfilling its responsibilities for stewardship of the National Forest System to best meet the needs of the American people.

(b) *Force and effect of plans.* Plans developed in accordance with this subpart generally contain desired conditions, objectives, and guidance for project and activity decisionmaking in the plan area. Plans do not grant, withhold, or modify any contract, permit, or other legal instrument, subject anyone to civil or criminal liability, or create any legal rights. Plans typically do not approve or execute projects and activities. Decisions with effects that

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can be meaningfully evaluated (40 CFR 1508.23) typically are made when projects and activities are approved.

§219.4 National Environmental Policy Act compliance.

(a) In accordance with 16 U.S.C. 1604(g)(1) this subpart clarifies how the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321-4346) (hereinafter referred to as NEPA) applies to National Forest System land management planning.

(b) Approval of a plan, plan amendment, or plan revision, under the authority of this subpart, will be done in accordance with the Forest Service NEPA procedures and may be categorically excluded from NEPA documentation under an appropriate category provided in such procedures.

(c) Nothing in this subpart alters the application of NEPA to proposed projects and activities.

(d) Monitoring and evaluations, including those required by §219.6, may be used or incorporated by reference, as appropriate, in applicable NEPA documents.

§219.5 Environmental management systems.

The Responsible Official must establish an environmental management system (EMS) for each unit of the National Forest System. The scope of an EMS will include, at the minimum, the land management planning process defined by this subpart. An EMS for any unit may include environmental aspects unrelated to the land management planning process under this subpart.

(a) Plan development, plan amendment, or plan revision must be completed in accordance with the EMS and §219.14. An EMS may be established independently of the planning process.

(b) The EMS must conform to the consensus standard developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and adopted by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as "ISO 14001: Environmental Management Systems—Specification With Guidance For Use" (ISO 14001). The ISO 14001 describes EMSs and outlines the elements of an EMS. The ISO 14001 is available from the ANSI