

Draft
Strategy to Accomplish Rangeland Monitoring
June 7, 2005

Introduction:

The monitoring task group brainstormed 21 possible actions to focus on completing priority rangeland monitoring in Idaho.

Proposed Action Items At State Level:

1. Idaho Annual Work Plan (AWP) directives should request that each District complete a monitoring plan which will include the prioritized monitoring to be completed in that year.
2. ISO and Districts should include temporary work force in base funding for prioritized monitoring.
3. ISO should contact WO and request that existing monitoring PEs are labeled as priority PEs for all programs in the WO AWP directives.
4. The Program Element (PE) dealing with Monitoring Grazing Allotments (ML) is not defined to show the level of complexity. (Example: monitoring a 40 acre allotment with no resource issues takes 1 day to monitor, and it is reported as 1-ML for the year; monitoring of a 40,000 acre allotment with numerous resource issues is also reported as 1 ML. Action, ISO should contact WO and have PE ML be re-defined to reflect the complexity of work to be accomplished.
5. ISO in conjunction with WO needs to explore opportunities to streamline processes and reduce time spent on litigation.
6. ISO in conjunction with WO needs to consider balancing the priority of accomplishing units in meeting 2009 permit renewal deadline with the need to do quality monitoring, assessments, and decisions.
7. ISO needs to look at streamlining our processes like NEPA, Rangeland Health, etc. to reduce the amount of time Districts have to spend on processes. (ex. Affected Environment is not required in EAs by CEQ; can we reduce analysis of impacts on the *true* affected environment and not a laundry list of resources)
8. Annual monitoring coordination meeting between ISO, DO and FO monitoring representatives.

Proposed Action Items At District Level:

9. Assign a District Monitoring Coordinator for each District.
10. If a major FOIA is requested prior to or during the field season, Districts should notify the requestor that their request will be processed when personnel are available to meet the request.
11. Districts need to look at RMP timeline to provide adequate time for field staffs to accomplish required prioritized monitoring while they are also involved in development of the RMP.
12. A large portion of our field staff will be retiring in the next ten years. To provide consistency and transition, build monitoring teams using SCEP students.

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Proposed Action Items At Field Office Level:

- 13. Assign a Monitoring Coordinator to each Field Office. Establish a monitoring organization that will oversee all aspects of monitoring and to train/retain quality people to do quality work and to provide consistency.
- 14. Field Office needs to look at their staff's workload to ensure that priority work is being accomplished. If non-priority work is being is proposed, Field manger will need to redirect workloads to accomplish priority workloads.
- 15. Field Office will need to establish a field season (dates). Ensure that field personnel are in the field at least 2-3 days a week completing priority monitoring.
- 16. Field Office should limit all required meetings and training sessions to Mondays during the field season. During the field season have interdisciplinary monitoring meetings to coordinate monitoring tasks and to provide increased efficiency.
- 17. Increase the number of career seasonals to maintain consistency and efficiency in the monitoring program. Put fuels crews under Field Managers so that they can be cross trained with other field personnel. Cross train all monitoring personnel to monitor all resources.
- 18. Field Offices should require written and/or photographic documentation of all site visits.
- 19. Field Offices should limit process-oriented paper work (EAs, plans, evaluations, etc.) to non-field season.
- 20. Field Offices should consider not issuing proposed decisions prior to and/or during the field season so that staff can complete prioritized monitoring.
- 21. Field Managers should eliminate funding for low-priority projects/tasks and re-direct to high-priority projects/tasks.