

Project Monitoring and Public Participation
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1. *What is monitoring?*

Monitoring is a systematic sampling or tracking of information. Applied to our group's focus, it means tracking changes (or lack of change) in the vegetation, soils, and water.

2. *Why should our group be interested in monitoring?*

There are three reasons for us to talk about this.

The first is to know our current conditions and to understand if they are healthy or not. Knowing how conditions change through time can help us to understand the process and how those current conditions have developed.

Most of us already do monitoring. We keep track in our heads of what things do under which conditions. We have an instinctive understanding of the changes in the vegetation around us. From photos or discussions with family and neighbors, we know what was here before, and what was done on the ground during that time.

However, there are good reasons to be systematic in your documentation of monitoring information. It could help you establish long-term goals with measurable objectives – in other words, a forest management plan for the life cycle of your forests.

If you want more information on this, NRCS is a hugely helpful resource. Visit this internet site, <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ecs/forestry/>, or go to the local office here and get information such as this Conservation Practice Job Sheet. It clearly documents your objectives and your resource concerns, and outlines a plan of treatments.

The second reason for us to monitor is to determine if our treatments have accomplished our objectives. For example, say we had a basal area of 150 and wanted to take it down to 80, our information would tell us if we had done that.

The third reason to monitor would be during treatment, especially for a contract. If things are going right or wrong, you can get with the contractor to anticipate and remedy problems, or to exemplify work that is particularly good.

3. *What about monitoring a BLM project?*

BLM could use help with any kind of monitoring. Types of monitoring we do in a project like this covers weeds, soil disturbance, and treatment success.

There are several ways in which you can monitor for you own interest or to share with BLM:

- Monitoring could simply be causal observations, for example, photos or a journal from recreational visits to the project area. You could set up some photo points.
- You could even set up plots and measure some trees. After treatment, you could re-measure your plot and compare observations to determine if the work accomplished the objectives.
- You could take it a step farther and volunteer for BLM to help with our monitoring program. We can sign you up as a volunteer, which enables us to provide equipment for the work.

During contract implementation, BLM must monitor alone. However, if you were to notice something unusual, we would welcome the information.

4. *Example monitoring forms/documents from Park Place Timber Sale:*

- Silvicultural Prescription Form. It outlines the current conditions, the desired conditions, and the constraints we could have to reaching the desired condition.
- General Monitoring Information is an explanation of the types of monitoring, using Park Place as an example.
- Timber Sale Inspection Report is the standard form we use to inspect contracts during implementation. This form may be useful to those of you that are planning a contract.