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Route To:

Subject: Considering Climate Change in Land Management Planning

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, Deputy Chiefs and WO Directors

One year ago, guidance was provided on considering climate change in the revisions of land management plans (forest plans) for units of the National Forest System. That guidance emphasized the evaluation of adaptation to and mitigation of climate change in the forest plan revision process. The guidance stressed collaboration between regions and research stations in this evaluation. Results of the evaluation were to be documented in the comprehensive evaluation report that was described in the 2008 planning rule. The guidance paper contained other references specific to the 2008 planning rule.

When the 2008 planning rule was enjoined on June 30, 2009, by the United States District Court for the Northern District of California (Citizens for Better Forestry v. United States Department of Agriculture, 632 F. Supp. 2d 968 (N.D. Cal. June 30, 2009), the comprehensive evaluation report and several other sections of the climate change guidance for forest plan revision that referenced the 2008 rule were no longer appropriate. On December 18, 2009, the Department reinstated the previous planning rule, commonly known as the 2000 planning rule in the Federal Register (Federal Register, Volume 74, No. 242, Friday, December 18, 2009, pages 67059 thru 67075). The transition provisions of the reinstated rule allow use of the provisions of the National Forest System planning rule in effect prior to November 9, 2000 (commonly called the 1982 planning rule), to amend or revise plans.

To be consistent with the change in the regulation, the climate change guidance for plan revisions has been adjusted. The enclosed guidance contains most of the same basic content, but now emphasizes placing much of the material related to climate change evaluation in either an environmental impact statement or in other basic documents (such as an Analysis of the Management Situation document).

This guidance document will continue to be dynamic and adaptive as we discover more about climate change science and emerging federal laws, regulations and policies related to climate change and land management planning.

Please direct planning questions to Bill Connelly (202) 205-0962 on the Ecosystem Management Coordination Staff.

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Enclosure

