



File Code: 2600**Date:** July 1, 2020**Route To:****Subject:** Botany Field Protocol**To:** Forest and Grassland Supervisors

As part of our efforts to increase efficiencies in NEPA through implementing Environmental Assessment and Decision Making (EADM) efforts in the Northern Region, I am happy to reveal the new Botany Field Survey Protocol. This protocol has been in development for almost two years with many people from across the region providing input, suggestions, edits and content, on how to determine the level and type of surveys needed for botany.

This protocol outlines the steps followed during project evaluation, and tools that are used for efficient incorporation of these plant conservation goals in USFS management activities. Most of the approaches described have been used for many years by botanists in state and federal agencies and are designed to balance efficiency in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and the management of National Forest System lands with agency requirements for the conservation of at-risk plant species.

This new protocol also applies a risk-based management approach that considers the likelihood of species present in a project area to the consequences of the impact or disturbance from the proposed activity. The assessment is used to determine the need for field surveys and the level of survey where needed. The risk assessment is to be used to inform decisions with line officers and lead discussions in interdisciplinary team meetings.

I want to thank all those that helped in developing this protocol, especially Steve Shelly who completed this before he retired. I believe it will serve as an excellent template as we look at other efforts within the region around how we make decisions on how we conduct field surveys. Please share this with your line and staff officers. For any questions, please feel free to contact Chris Savage at 406-291-9982 or Mary Manning at 406-214-9134.

LEANNE M. MARTEN
Regional Forester

cc: Christopher Savage, Julie Schaefer, Mary Manning

