

Zobell, Richard A -FS

From: Zobell, Richard A -FS
Sent: Monday, June 4, 2018 8:22 AM
To: Holcomb, Adriene L -FS
Subject: FW: Issues and Indicators
Attachments: K-17_WildlifeIssuesAndIndicators_5-14-2018.docx

Adriene,

Per our discussion this morning. Looking forward to getting all of the issues finalized with you later today.

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From: Delong, Don -FS
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2018 4:05 PM
To: Zobell, Richard A -FS <richardazobell@fs.fed.us>
Subject: Issues and Indicators

Aaron,

I was not able to find a Pinyon link to put these on. I looked through all your email notes. So..... my apologies for sending another email with attachments, but I'll be out of the office for a bit and wanted you to have a copy of this.

The attachment is real similar to what I sent a month ago or so, and I've cut-and-pasted the issues below. The indicators are listed on pages 14 and 15 of the attached document.

Anyhow, I would appreciate it if you would send me the link again, and I will add the attached file to it.

Thanks,
Don

The four wildlife issues are as follows; note that issues 1 and 3 overlap with Range and Hydrology, respectively:

Wildlife Issue 1

Concerns about Herbaceous Species Composition — There is concern about the less-than-suitable conditions for wildlife that exist in a large majority of places where forbland communities and understories in the project area are dominated by mule ears, bicolor biscuitroot, Louisiana sagewort, western coneflower, orange sneezeweed, tarweed, smooth

brome, or nonnative bluegrass. There also is concern that desired plant species composition and desired effective ground cover do not reflect suitable conditions for wildlife. To the degree upward trends will not take place in altered plant communities under the Adjusted Proposed Action, there is concern that negative impacts to a wide range of wildlife species, including mule deer, raptors and other migratory birds, small mammals, and invertebrates (including beetles, bees, moths, and butterflies) in the K-17 project area will continue to contribute to negative effects on these wildlife species at larger geographic scales, including the BTNF scale. Negative effects on food webs is being increasingly recognized. Survival of young, reestablishing plants (which is important to plant species diversity and ultimately to wildlife) may be difficult in some situations even where overall grazing pressure is light. Another concern related to plant species composition is whether use of desired effective-ground cover thresholds of the Proposed Action — instead of using the established ground cover thresholds in R4 Amendment 2209.21-2005-1 and O'Brien et al. (2003) — will negatively impact wildlife.

Wildlife Issue 2

Concerns about Herbaceous Retention for Wildlife — There is concern that the Proposed Action's maximum 50% use of key forage species at key areas will not be sufficient to retain an adequate amount of suitable habitat (e.g., forage and cover) for wildlife and will not provide suitable protection of ground nests and amphibians (especially sensitive-amphibian metamorphs) from trampling. There is concern that retaining too little herbaceous vegetation and allowing for elevated levels of trampling potential will negatively affect a wide range of wildlife species that depend on herbaceous vegetation or that can be impacted by trampling, including mule deer, raptors and other migratory birds, small mammals, amphibians, and invertebrates (including beetles, moths, butterflies, and bees). These effects compound the effects of reduced herbaceous species composition across a large proportion of several vegetation types on the BTNF, thereby contributing to negative effects on wildlife at large geographic scales.

Wildlife Issue 3

Concerns about Riparian Functioning — There is concern that some riparian areas are in less-than-desired condition, and that some wildlife species (e.g., moose, migratory birds, sensitive amphibians) will continue to be negatively affected and that these effects will contribute to negative effects at larger geographic scales.

This wildlife issue can be integrated with the comparable issue statement developed by the hydrology and fisheries disciplines. In fact, the above wildlife-issue statement can be adjusted to reflect the wording by the hydrologist and fisheries biologist.

Wildlife Issue 4

Disease Transmission from Domestic Sheep to Bighorn Sheep — There is concern that continued occupancy of allotments by domestic sheep in the project area will maintain the potential for disease transmission from domestic sheep to bighorn sheep, which is a sensitive species.