

# Climate Change and the 2012 Planning Rule

## Applying Science to Planning

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FFACTS series

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# Where to find 'Climate Change' in the Rule

- \* Preamble
  - \* Expresses the intent and rationale
- \* Rule
  - \* Describes the regulatory requirements to develop, amend, and revise a land management plan
- \* Directives
  - \* Explains the methods to accomplish the Rule

# Preamble

- \* **Purpose and Need for the New Rule**
- \* “...the Department and the Forest Service find that a planning rule must address the following... purposes and needs:
  - \* Emphasize restoration of natural resources to make our NFS lands more resilient to **climate change**, protect water resources, and improve forest health.
  - \* Contribute to ecological, social, and economic sustainability by ensuring that all plans will be responsive and can adapt to issues such as the challenges of **climate change**; the need for forest restoration and conservation, watershed protection, and species conservation; and the sustainable use of public lands to support vibrant communities...”

# Preamble (cont.)

- \* Response to Comments
  - \* “The rule sets forth an adaptive land management planning process informed by both a comprehensive assessment and the **best available scientific information.** “

# Rule

- \* Assessments

- \* Section 219.6(b)(3)–(4)

- \* Requires responsible officials to identify and evaluate information on climate change and other stressors **relevant to the plan area**, along with a baseline assessment of carbon stocks, as a part of the assessment phase.

- \* Sustainability

- \* Section 219.8(a)(1)(iv)

- \* Requires **climate change** be taken into account when the responsible official is **developing plan components** for ecological sustainability.
    - \* Climate change is viewed as one of many system drivers

# Rule (cont.)

- \* Multiple Use

- \* Section 219.10(a)(8)

- \* When providing for ecosystem services and multiple uses, the responsible official is required by to consider **climate change**.

- \* Climate change is viewed as one of many system drivers

- \* Monitoring

- \* Section 219.12(a)(5)(vi)

- \* **Measureable changes** to the plan area related to **climate change** and other stressors affecting the plan area are to be monitored.

- \* Symbiotic relationship with the Climate Change Scorecard

# Scorecard relationship with the Rule

- \* Combined with the requirements of the Forest Service Climate Change Roadmap and Scorecard, these requirements will ensure that Forest Service land management planning **addresses climate change** and **supports adaptive management** to respond to new information and changing conditions.

# Directives

- \* FSH 1909.12, Chapter 10 – Assessments
  - \* Not much “how to” guidance for assessing the influence of climate change
    - \* Could provide the responsible official the necessary flexibility to assess the relevance of climate change in light of developing, revising, and amending a land management plan
  - \* Climate change is one of several “system drivers” to consider along with dominant ecological processes, disturbance regimes, and stressors, such as natural succession, wildland fire, and invasive species
  - \* Carbon stocks is an exception
    - \* More specific guidance exists on how to obtain and evaluate a baseline assessment



# “Take Away” messages

- \* Climate Change is clearly a necessary (and required) topic to address for developing, amending, and revising a land management plan
- \* Climate science must be relevant to the plan area
- \* The use of climate science needs to be focused on developing plan content (i.e., plan components, monitoring)
- \* Scientific certainty/uncertainty
  - \* Take modeling seriously, but not literally
  - \* Models are not a substitute for professional judgment

# Questions/Discussion

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