



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Crafting Plan Components from BIC-Endorsed Desired Conditions

Presentation for the Blues Intergovernmental Council

USDA Forest Service - Pacific Northwest Region

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Overview

Example of how BIC Desired Condition relates to Standards and Guidelines using Wildfire as the example

- Using what the BIC wrote and comparing it to what is in the 2018 Draft plans and what is required by the 2012 Planning rule
- Finding – there's a need to create new Plan Components to address BIC Wildfire Desired Condition.

Refresher: Defining Plan Components

Desired Conditions: Specific social, economic, or ecological characteristic of the plan area (or portion) toward which management is directed

Goals: Broad statements of intent, other than DCs

Objectives: Concise, measurable, and time-specific statement of a desired rate of progress toward DCs

Standards: Mandatory constraint on projects or activities to meet DCs, avoid or mitigate effects, or meet legal requirements

Guidelines: Constraint on projects or activities that allows for departure from its terms so long as its *purpose* is met

Suitability: Specific lands identified as suitable or not-suitable for a use or activity

Refresher: Ensuring Consistency Between Plans and Projects

36 CFR 219.15(d) – Every project and activity must be consistent with the applicable plan components ... by meeting the following criteria:

- (1) Contributes to the maintenance or attainment of **goals, desired conditions, or objectives** (or does not foreclose them from being maintained/attained).
- (2) Complies with applicable **standards**.
- (3) Complies with applicable **guidelines** (or achieves the purpose of those guidelines).
- (4) Occurs in an area the plan identifies as **suitable** for that type of project or activity; or where the plan is silent with respect to suitability.

BIC-endorsed Concepts: Wildfire Example

- Achieve ecological, social, and economic resilience across the landscape and in surrounding communities.
- Protect communities and the landscape from high severity wildfire while using managed fire to decrease fuel loads & promote appropriate stand composition
- Landscapes that are in fire regime condition class 1 or exhibit a low vegetation departure score and conditions are maintained over time.
- Wildland fire disturbances and their associated effects occur within natural fire historical regimes similar to those that occurred prior to the modern fire exclusion (suppression) era.

Comparing BIC-endorsed concepts to the 2018 draft plans, we find:

There is no conflict between wildfire-related plan components from the 2018 drafts and BIC-endorsed Desired Conditions for Forest Health. However, the 2018 draft plans do not address all the BIC's interests related to wildfire.

Additionally, the 2018 plans contain no forest-wide direction on wildfire. Guidelines for specific management areas focus on restoring impacts of fire suppression activities rather than holistic wildland fire management. This fails to satisfy requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule:

36 CFR 219.8(a): The plan must include plan components, including standards or guidelines, to maintain or restore ecological integrity ... taking into account:

- (iv) System drivers, including dominant ecological processes, disturbance regimes, and stressors, such as ... wildland fire
- (v) Wildland fire and opportunities to restore fire adapted ecosystems

So, we'll need to develop new standards and guidelines for Wildfire.

Considering Ideas from Other Recent Plan Revisions

Guidelines from the 2018 Flathead National Forest Land Management Plan:

- When designing fuels reduction projects, the Forest should work with partners and adjacent landowners to identify areas and resources of value to improve effectiveness of fuel treatments.
- Fire management activities should be designed to use wildfires forestwide to meet multiple resource management objectives where and when conditions permit, keeping risk within acceptable limits. Meeting resource objectives generally means progress towards or maintaining desired conditions.
- To reduce the negative impacts of wildfires or improve fire control opportunities, treatments should be designed to remove or rearrange the material necessary to achieve at least one of the following outcomes: reduce flame length, rate of spread, or torching and crowning indices.
- To protect private property and other values at risk, fire management strategies should be designed to suppress wildland fires that threaten neighboring property and resources when time, assets, and prevailing conditions allow for action without undue risk to responders.

What Comes Next?

There are a couple of important pieces we need to have in place to move forward quickly from here:

- We need to get a project team in place.
- And we need a governance structure that allows us to get new plans in place in a reasonable amount of time.

Expedited Planning Process

