

**US Forest Service
Climate Change Monitoring Team
Charter
March, 2009**

The Climate Change Monitoring team is appointed by the Climate Council and works under their guidance. The Strategic Framework for Responding to Climate Change and related documents serve as the guide for actions implemented by the Monitoring team.

The team is responsible for Action 1.4 - Unified Multi-scale Monitoring Approach. Coordination and consultation with the other chartered Framework teams is essential to avoid duplication and maximize effectiveness.

The Monitoring team is to provide a plan of work for their overall effort. The team is to complete the unified multi-scale monitoring approach by June 30, 2009. Extension or modification of the team's charter must be approved by the Climate Council.

Background

To successfully manage forests and grasslands in a changing environment, the Forest Service needs unified multi-scale monitoring system sufficient for:

- Evaluating national and regional trends;
- Assessing the effectiveness of management activities designed to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects;
- Assessing progress in working across landscapes and ownerships; and
- Understanding the interactions with environmental, social, and economic conditions
- Provide information for managers and policymakers to use in adjusting strategies, actions, and policies.

A unified multi-scale monitoring system will aid resource managers by monitoring trends and predicting future changes. Managers and policymakers will be able to better evaluate the effects of management actions, consider alternative scenarios, and make decisions in an uncertain changing environment. The integration of science, monitoring, and management will aid land managers – federal, State, Tribal, and private - and citizens in making decisions and taking actions affecting the Nation's forests and grasslands. It will also provide critical information towards understanding the role and contribution of United States forests and grasslands in international agreements addressing climate change.

Roles and Responsibilities

The work of the team should:

- Identify information needs

- Identify existing efforts and actions including Forest Inventory Analysis and Forest Health Monitoring programs and the extent to which current programs (or modifications to them) address critical information needs.
- Develop a unified multi-scale monitoring approach sufficient to:
- Evaluate national and regional trends in climate change impacts and forest and grassland health and productivity
- Assess the effectiveness of management activities designed to facilitate adaptation to climate change and to mitigate its effects
- Assess progress in working across landscapes and ownerships
- Quantify interactions with environmental, social, and economic conditions
- Provide information for managers and policymakers to use in adjusting strategies, actions, and policies.
- Design the system to be effective and cost-efficient.
- Provide an estimate of costs (money and people) to implement the planned system.

The team is to consult and coordinate with the other chartered Framework teams to avoid duplication and maximize effectiveness. The team will also consult with other experts and users during their work for advice, review and feedback.

Team Operations

Team members will carry out these roles in conjunction with the duties of their current position. Additional task teams and support staff from the Washington Office and the field can be requested as needed through the Climate Council, appropriate Directors and line officers. Monitoring team members may seek some relief of their current duties to meet limited duration high priority assignments if approved by the employee's Director or line officer and recommendation of the Climate Council Executive Sponsor, Dave Cleaves.