

A Hands-on Monitoring Workshop

The Situation

As directed in the salmon, steelhead and bull trout Biological Opinions issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the U.S. Forest Service (FS) and U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) were to develop a mechanism for improved monitoring accountability and oversight. Guidance was to be provided by an Interagency Implementation Team (IIT). The goals established were 1) to improve monitoring efforts and increase efficiency, 2) to ensure that the level of monitoring is commensurate with the level of on-the-ground activities, and 3) to provide feedback on the effects of activities.

The implementation module, the first of three to be developed to meet these goals, was designed to provide a consistent protocol for land management agencies to collect and report results of short-term monitoring on grazing allotments. The module was intended to more efficiently meet monitoring requirements and provide scientifically credible results while minimizing additional workloads. Participation in the annual monitoring by the permittee currently is voluntary. However, the requirement for permittees to be responsible for these efforts as a condition of their permit is only a matter of time.

Our Response

In conversations with the permittees, most permittees do not feel comfortable doing the monitoring work since they have not had the training necessary to do the monitoring. To address this need for education, two things happened. First, I attended a workshop on how the monitoring was to be conducted to meet the requirements of NMFS and USFWS. Second, I put together a workshop that was designed to teach producers how to monitor their riparian areas in accordance to the adopted protocol developed by the Interagency Implementation Team. Instructors included an interagency crew from the Forest Service, BLM, State Department of Agriculture and the University of Idaho.

Achievements

Two one-day workshops were scheduled. In total, 38 permittees and 14 agency personnel attended. The first half of the day was spent inside going over the basics. The afternoon was spent “on the ground” actually running the greenline (the method agreed to in consultation). This hands-on approach was well received by the participants. As part of the evaluation of the workshop, the participants were asked if they would help do the monitoring on their own allotment. Of the 38 outfits represented at the two workshops, 21 indicated that they would help with the monitoring of their allotment.

The Future

We are not out of the woods yet. There are still more permittees in need of training. And as the next two monitoring modules are developed there will be a need for programs on these as well.

For More Information

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