

Monitoring Study Group

http://www.bof.fire.ca.gov/board_committees/monitoring_study_group/

The Monitoring Study Group (MSG) has been an Advisory Committee to the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF) since January 2000. From 1990 to 1999, the MSG was an "ad hoc" committee which met periodically. The MSG provides guidance and oversight to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) in implementing a long-term program to test the implementation and effectiveness of California's Forest Practice Rules (FPRs). It also serves as an open public forum for sharing monitoring-related information. CAL FIRE has funded numerous water quality-related monitoring projects since 1990 to ascertain if the FPRs are adequately protecting the beneficial uses of California's water.

Capacity

The MSG and its cooperators have the capacity to conduct monitoring and collect data on FPR implementation and effectiveness, erosion and sediment transport related to timber operations, riparian zone canopy and stream temperatures, instream water quality, and aquatic habitat quality. Much of the emphasis has been on collecting hillslope monitoring data related to timber operations, since impacts can be tied to a specific practice and response time is minimal. Additionally, four cooperative instream monitoring projects located in different parts of the state complement data collected out of stream channels. These projects provide water quality data that includes suspended sediment concentrations, turbidity, and water temperature.

Purpose and Audience

The purpose of the MSG monitoring program is to provide abundant data and information on the implementation and effectiveness of those Forest Practice Rules (FPRs) specifically designed protect water quality and beneficial uses, such as riparian/aquatic habitat. The audience for this information includes the BOF, CAL FIRE, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) with timberland within their jurisdictions, California Department of Fish and Game, other state and federal agencies, environmental groups, timber companies, and the interested general public.

Availability

Twelve MSG monitoring reports and over 30 MSG supported reports are available on-line at the MSG website. These reports contain information, analyses and abstracts of the data. With the exception of the cooperative Caspar Creek watershed study, with data located on the USFS-PSW website, the original monitoring data is archived. The reports, however, provide information on how to contact the author(s) for the original data.

Additional Needs

Long-term monitoring requires long-term funding. Adequate funding has been problematic over the last decade and has been an increasing problem in recent years. MSG and CAL FIRE have had to reassess priorities to keep the most critical multi-year monitoring ongoing. Moreover, the FPRs are not static. A new set of FPRs was adopted this year to better protect salmon and steelhead riparian habitat. A comprehensive effectiveness monitoring program will be needed to determine if these rules are effective in protecting salmonid habitat, or if further modification is required.

MSG Participation

The MSG is composed of representatives from nine state and federal agencies, the timber industry, and the public. Each agency and organization is responsible for determining the appropriate person to serve as its representative on the MSG. The MSG chair is selected from the BOF and the group is staffed by CAL FIRE. Meetings are generally held every three months, either on the North Coast of California or in the Sacramento Valley. Interested parties are encouraged to attend. Agendas are available in advance and are posted on the website, with opportunity for public comment. For more information regarding the MSG, please contact Pete Cafferata, CAL FIRE, P.O. Box 944246, Sacramento, California 94244; (916) 653-9455; or pete_cafferata@fire.ca.gov.