

## **PAC Vegetation Sub Group 4/25/06 Meeting Notes**

**In attendance:** Steve Buck, Albert Roberts, Liz Tanke, Jen Watkins, Scott King, Mike McFeeley, Arnie Arneson, Phil Jahns, Phil Jahns, Rick Acosta

### **Group Agreements**

We're just analyzing "white" area of map in all we do.

"Un-roaded" = Inventoried roadless areas of 5,000 acres in size and larger (latest Plan Revision Inventory 2006).

Virtually everything today was reached by consensus by the PAC vegetation sub group.

**The group discussed the characteristics and qualities of a desired condition statement.** The result of this discussion follows. Desired Condition statements are overarching statements. They explain and describe the condition of vegetation across the landscape. Desired Condition statements describe the variability of vegetation across the landscape. The function of vegetation/land, and all resources are also described by desired condition statements. The relationships of people to/with vegetation are also described by desired condition statements. Relationships between vegetation and wildlife and fish are also described by desired condition statements. Desired condition statements answer the questions, "What do we want it to look like? What are we doing here?" When developing desired condition statements, we should keep in mind different timeframes (long range 20 years, short range 5 years, and seasonal).

**The group reviewed desired condition bullets developed by Group 3 (WUI group) at the 4-20-06 PAC meeting. Today, participants looked to see if any of the desired condition bullets developed by the WUI group applied to the Dry Forest as well. As a result of this exercise the group decided that some of the bullets developed by the WUI group (on 4/20) were also good forest wide desired conditions. In these notes, the WUI desired condition bullets have been incorporated into either forest wide desired condition statements listed below and/or into management themes which are listed as Dry Forest (also listed below).**

**The group developed the following desired condition statements that would apply Forest-Wide.**

The national forest supports diverse resilient, productive, sustainable, & healthy ecosystems with natural processes & function.

There would be a mosaic of vegetation structures in different successional stages.

Areas of national forest are present which can be harvested for timber.

Promote conditions to benefit wildlife, social conditions, & fish habitat.

Secondary forest products such as Christmas trees, firewood, mushrooms, bio fuel, etc. are produced & made available on national forest.

Potential for uncharacteristic fire is limited by a landscape mosaic of natural conditions & strategic treatments resulting in a variation of fuel conditions, vegetation structure, & age classes across the landscape.

Proper function of riparian/aquatic fish, wildlife, soils, and plant communities, etc.

Active restoration work is strategically & collaboratively designed to benefit ecosystems & local communities.

Forest pathogens operate at endemic levels.

Local demand for & capacity to process and utilize materials removed from forest is present. (Balance & Predictability)

Treatments produce jobs & materials which contribute to local community economics in a sustainable way.

The public supports fire risk reduction & restoration projects.

Provide passive, active, & intense management, depending on current seral stages that would expedite conditions that approximate historic species composition/plant association groups governed by fire regimes within stand classes/mosaics.

The national forest supports viable populations of fish & wildlife on sustainable habitat which may shift with the mosaic in conjunction with local State agencies.

The best available science & local monitoring results in guiding project planning & implementation. (adaptive management)

A skilled & motivated work force (Forest Service & private sector) contributes to the desired conditions.

Recovery & rehabilitation treatments including salvage after emergency events are accomplished in timely, economically & environmentally appropriate manner using pre-approved treatment criteria.

Strategic treatments & routine maintenance are designed to produce effective results.

Strategic and variable fuels and vegetation structure, vegetation exists in patterns of mosaic across the landscape exists.

Proper function of streams, soils, and habitat conditions are prevalent.

Minimize introduction and spread of noxious weeds, cheat grass, and other exotic species.

Strategic treatment to produce effective results and provide periodic maintenance.

Utilize prescribed fire where feasible. Use strategic treatments to reduce risk of fire. Can use prescribed fire as one form of maintenance.

Adjacent private lands and national forest facilities take reasonable measures to reduce fire risk.

The group also needs to deal with “high economic priority in the front country, WUI. Use Arnie’s vision statement? Need the ideas: “social, economic flow to communities/local employment”?

**The following management themes were validated and/or developed by the group.**

1. Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), roaded
2. Roaded Dry Forest & not WUI
3. Roaded Mesic Forest, Roaded Cold Moist Forest, & Roaded Cold Dry Forest Not WUI
4. Unroaded (everything except dry forest) not WUI
5. Unroaded WUI
6. Unroaded, Dry Forest, Not WUI

The group then validated developed/validated desired condition statements for each of the six management themes identified above.

**Management Theme: WUI Roaded**

**Desired Condition Statements:**

The main desired condition is to reduce the high risk of high intensity fires near occupied structures and facilities.

Manipulate vegetation to ensure defensible space for structures & to easily provide a safe environment to fire fighters including escape routes & safety zones.

Reduce the risk of high intensity &/or high rate of spread of fires near structures & facilities by reducing ground & ladder fuels. Reduce risk of crown fire, emphasizing retention of fire resistant trees.

Adjacent private lands & national forest facilities take reasonable measures to reduce fire risk. (Collaborative effort with State & Private)

Treatments blend ecologically & visually with surrounding national forest lands.

Strategic treatments & routine maintenance are designed to produce effective results.

Stands are resistant to stand replacing fire.

## **Management Theme: Roaded Dry, Not WUI**

### **Desired Condition Statements:**

Fire resistant trees/adaptive species are predominately present.

Use best management practices especially in areas close to roads.

Vegetation patterns over most of the area (in the dry forest types) are maintained in more open and lower-density forest communities than currently. Dry forest types would include ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and dry grand fir associations. There would be a variety of structures and different successional stages present on the landscape. Scattered, large old trees would be part of the landscape. North slopes would be maintained at higher diameters and could serve as special wildlife habitat.

Ground/surface fuels are reduced to a level consistent with low intensity fire.

Reduce ground fuels and ladder fuels.

Reduce risk of crown fire.

The use of prescribed fire is emphasized as a tool for maintenance in dry forest.

Objectives are accomplished using a variety of management tools (examples: timber thinning, chemical, pruning, timber harvest, “let it burn” prescribed fire, grazing, etc.)

Stands are resistant to stand replacing fire.

**Management Theme: Roaded Mesic Forest, Roaded Cold Moist Forest, Roaded, Cold Dry Forest – Not WUI.**

**Desired Condition Statements:**

**See some of forest wide desired conditions to find some that apply here.**

Emphasize management of special wildlife habitat requiring closed canopy, dense forest in this management type.

Reduce ground fuels and ladder fuels.

Reduce risk of crown fire.

Fire resistant trees/adaptive species are predominately present.

Stands are resistant to stand replacing fire (depending on scale).

**Management Theme: Unroaded (everything except Dry Forest), Not WUI**

**Desired Condition Statements:**

Natural processes are generally allowed to occur.

Utilize wildfire for multiple resource benefits where possible.

These areas provide examples of resilient and healthy ecosystems.

These areas contribute to security habitat for wildlife species sensitive to disturbance.

These areas contribute to high water quality/quantity and proper hydrologic function.

**Management Theme: Unroaded, WUI**

**Desired Condition Statements:**

Minimize treatments to the level that would protect structures and facilities.

Treatments for reduction of fuels are conducted in cooperation with state and private concerns.

Treatments blend ecologically and visually with surrounding national forest lands.

The main desired condition is to reduce the high risk of high intensity fires near occupied structures and facilities.

Stands are resistant to stand replacing fire.

**Management Theme: Unroaded, Dry, Not WUI**

**Desired Condition Statements:**

Restoration is a priority.

Utilize wildfire for multiple resource benefits where possible.

These areas provide examples of resilient and healthy ecosystems.

These areas contribute to security habitat for wildlife species sensitive to disturbance.

These areas contribute to high water quality/quantity and proper hydrologic function.

Historic forest structure and succession data is gathered from these areas.

Reduce ground fuels and ladder fuels.

Reduce risk of crown fire.

Fire resistant trees/adaptive species are predominately present.

Stands are resistant to stand replacing fire.

**The group decided to eliminate the following. Reasons for elimination are also given below.**

**Get multiple benefits from treatments.** Eliminate the previous statement because it's too general. This idea will be taken care of when we deal with suitability and prioritizing. Look at this again when we deal with suitability.

Eliminate the following: **Within the WUI, any treatment or management would vary depending upon proximity of structures that you are trying to protect (variance of management intensity by structures) Variance – difference in treatments, a picnic table and cabin are very different from a home where people are living. Emphasize protection right around structures and facilities.** Deal with at “suitability” time.

**Some loose ends from flip charts follow. What does the group want to do with the following?**

#### **Back Country Roaded**

Beyond WUI at national forest edge

Optimal biological capacity

Similar management tools as management category 3.

Less intensive management as management category 4.

Mosaic of age classes (timber)

A tool is controlled fire use.

Opportunity for commercial timber harvest.....**See Arnie's statement.**

#### **Back Country Unroaded**

Controlled fire selectively is a tool.

Natural fire to benefit resources is a tool and is a part of suitability.

Selective logging is a tool.

Define mosaic for different situations?.....This is also restricted by suitability.

**Forest Wide desired conditions/thoughts needing more work by the group are listed below.**

Using historic range of variability, concept of resiliency, and “chosen” biological capacity.....**Group needs to finish this statement.**

**Group needs to finish following:** Thinned tree stands – mosaic in age class.....

**“Don’t want black stumps.....Use “catastrophic”.....Use “characteristic”.**

**Group needs to finish considering the following statements:**

1. Reduce overall surface and ladder fuels and fuel continuity to limit the potential for uncharacteristic fire.
2. Restore stand maintenance fire regimes appropriate to Plan Association Groups.
3. Restore forest conditions that approximate historical species compositions and stand ages.
4. Sustain and restore the land’s capacity to absorb, store, and distribute quality water.

Next PAC vegetation sub group meeting is planned for 5/18/06, 9:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.