

Lands that May Be Suited for Timber Production

As described in the *HLC Suitability Whitepaper*, the identification of lands as suitable for timber production involves several steps. The first step is a preliminary designation to identify lands that *may be suited* based on legal and technical factors. This document displays the results of a GIS analysis conducted to map lands that may be suited. In some lands that are not suitable for timber production (the purposeful growing, tending, harvesting and regeneration of regulated drops of trees), harvest may be used to achieve other resource objectives.

The analysis methodically subtracted unsuitable lands from the total NFS land ownership area based on legal or technical factors. More detailed metadata and rationale is available in the project file. Table 1 displays the sequence of subtractions. Table 2 lists the approximate acres by geographic area.

Table 1: Areas Eliminated from the May Be Suitable for Timber Production Map Based on Legal or Technical Factors

Factor	Area Eliminated	Approx. Acres	Result
Total HLC NFS Administrative Lands		2.9 Million*	
36 CFR 219.11(a)(i) and (ii) – <i>lands that have been withdrawn by statute, executive order, the secretary of agriculture, the Chief of the forest service, or regulation prohibits timber production.</i>	Designated Wilderness	566,567	The areas eliminated for this factor represent roughly 68% of the HLC.
	Designated Wild & Scenic Rivers	0	
	Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Management Areas	191,929	
	Wilderness Study Act Areas	161,688	
	Research Natural Areas	11,938	
	Tenderfoot Experimental Forest	7,671	
	Inventoried Roadless	1,019,071	
	Total Acres Eliminated for this Factor	1,958,863	
36 CFR 219.11(a)(vi) – <i>the land is not forest land</i>	Administrative Sites & Campgrounds	181	These areas represent roughly an additional 6% of the HLC.
	Roads, railroads, and utility corridors	19,846	
	Water bodies and streams >120' wide	927	
	Non-forest lifeforms	148,330	
	Total Acres Eliminated for this Factor	169,284	
36 CFR 219.11(a) (iv) & (v) – <i>lands for which the technology is not currently available to harvest without irreversible soil damage; or there is no reasonable assurance of re-stocking within 5 years after harvest</i>	Areas with soil stability or damage concerns.	15,156	These areas represent roughly an additional 3% of the HLC.
	Areas with low growth potential likely to not regenerate well.	72,241	
	Total Acres Eliminated for this Factor	87,397	
Lands Remaining – May be Suitable for Timber Production		667,511	Roughly 23% of the HLC

*Includes the Beaverhead-Deer Lodge portion of the Elkhorns GA

Table 2: Acres that May be Suited for Timber Production, by Geographic Area

Geographic Area	Total NFS acres	May Be Suited Acres	% of GA
Big Belts	312,983	89,865	29%
Castles	69,610	21,253	31%
Crazies	57,618	13,897	24%
Divide	202,577	108,107	53%
Elkhorns	160,599	52,079	32%
Highwoods	42,315	1,391	3%
Little Belts	802,711	265,706	33%
Rocky Mountain Range	777,963	14,685	2%
Snowies	117,989	17,395	15%
Upper Blackfoot	333,215	83,133	25%

The layer of area that may be suited for timber production will be used to:

- Display the total acres on the HLC NFs that could be considered suitable for timber production;
- Inform the next step of delineating timber suitability (suitable versus unsuitable lands based on desired conditions and objectives) for the proposed action and subsequent alternatives;
- Calculate potential timber outputs from both suitable and unsuitable lands (where harvest can be used for other resource objectives).

To address factor 36 CFR 219.11(a)(iii) – *lands where timber production is not compatible with desired conditions and objectives* – additional analysis will be conducted to develop the proposed action and subsequent alternatives. Additional factors that would be considered may include, but are not limited to, recommended wilderness, eligible wild and scenic rivers, and other areas where the desired conditions and objectives are not compatible with timber production.

During the implementation phase of Forest planning, site-specific suitability must still be determined at the project level.