



SNAPSHOT: VEGETATION

1 Status and Trends

- See separate map of existing vegetation.
- The Forest is highly diverse vegetatively, ranging from alpine tundra to grasslands. The Forest includes many types of conifer and deciduous trees.
- Ponderosa pine is the only conifer cover type present on the Ashland and Sioux Ranger Districts. Juniper is present while aspen and green ash are common in the moist areas. Old forest is rare in this part of the Forest.
- Large fires from 2000 to 2012 have resulted in non-forested areas, shown as “Transitional” on the vegetation map.
- Whitebark pine is a candidate species for ESA protection.
- Riparian areas are important components across the Forest as they provide food and shelter for livestock and wildlife, slow erosion and water runoff, and furnish aesthetic value to recreationists. The amount of riparian area is higher in the western part of the Forest and very limited in the Sioux and Ashland Districts.
- Green ash woodlands are an important feature of the Sioux and Ashland Districts as they provide food and shelter for livestock and wildlife, slow erosion and water runoff, and furnish aesthetic value to recreationists. Past and present management activities have affected portions of woody draws. There is a continued need to improve hardwood regeneration.
- Baseline carbon stocks and trends from 1990 to 2013 were compiled using live trees, standing dead trees, down dead wood, understory, forest floor and soil organic carbon. During this period, ecosystem forest carbon stocks increased on both the Custer and Gallatin Forests.

2 Need to Change Existing Forest Plans

- Update management direction for the protection, maintenance, and restoration of riparian and wetland vegetation and channel morphology.
- Recognize that plan components may need to be tailored to particular forest types. For example, one old growth standard forest wide may not be obtainable or sustainable in all forest types.
- Contribute to the recovery and conservation of federally recognized plant species, maintain viable populations of the species of conservation concern, and maintain common and abundant species within the plan area.