

Silviculture Appendix M. Forest Inventory Analysis Methodology

Thinning units were inventoried using the current Forest Inventory and Analysis User's Guide for the Pacific Southwest Region. The Forest Inventory and Analysis system was used to collect data from a series of systematic points located within a number of stands with a possible need for treatment. Sample points consisted of up to five nested plots: (1) A variable radius prism plot to gather data on large (greater than 4.9 inches diameter at breast height [dbh]) live trees; (2) a 1/100-acre fixed-radius plot for live saplings and seedlings; (3) a 1/2-acre fixed-radius plot for understory vegetation (brush species); (4) a 1/4-acre rectangular plot for large (greater than 19.9 inches dbh) snags, and (5) a 1/8 acre plot for small snags and large down logs. The following data were recorded for each live tree sampled in variable radius prism plots: species, diameter, crown position, and live crown ratio. Height and age measurements were also recorded.

In the four remaining plots, information was collected on the number of seedlings present, the species, percent cover and average height of understory brush, and the size and condition of standing snags and large down logs. The field data were loaded into the Forest Inventory and Analysis program and then translated into the Forest Vegetation Simulator—a forest growth model that predicts forest stand development. This model was used to obtain present conditions of stands as well as predict stand development after alternative treatments.