

Aspen

Threats



Understory Conifer Growth

As aspen stands age and are not renewed by fire or other disturbances conifer species grow up from below and eventually outcompete and overtake the aspen. Many stands on the forest are in this condition, with old aspen trees, but little new aspen growth.



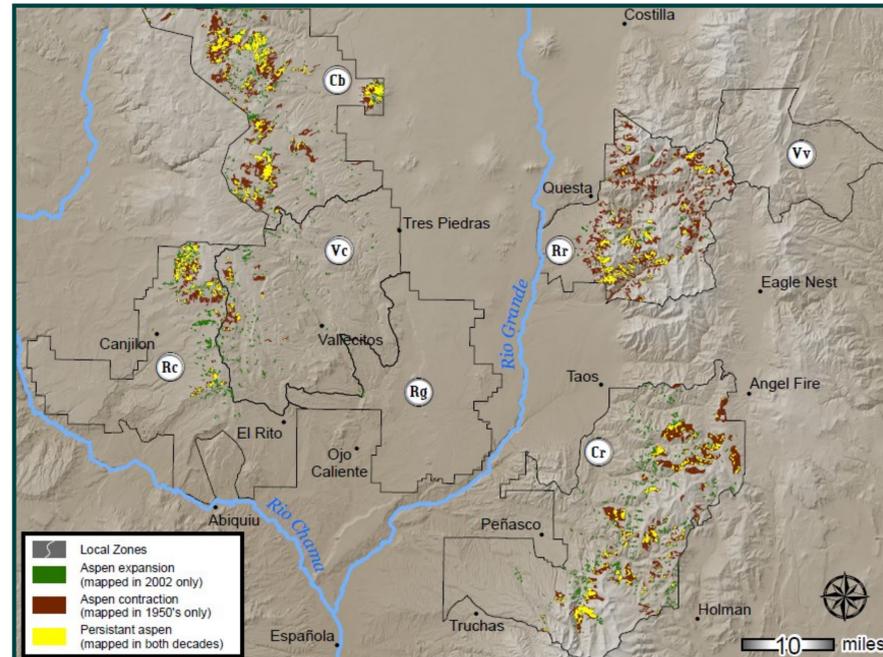
Aspen Mortality

Dead aspen in the Canjilon Lakes campground. Many trees have died in recent years creating a public safety



Western tent caterpillar

Insect and disease decrease aspen vigor and result in tree mortality.



Aspen Loss (1950's-2002)

Many areas have seen decline in aspen extent as trees die and are not replaced, or are overtaken from below by conifers.



Wildlife Habitat

Aspen provides important habitat for many species.



Aspen and fire

Fire that removes forest canopy stimulates aspen sprouting. Many areas have seen decline in aspen extent as trees die and are not replaced, or are overtaken from below by conifers.



Desired Conditions



Fall Colors

Changing leaves in the fall attract hikers and other visitors.



Habitat

Aspen forests provide cool, shaded habitat for many species including birds, elk, and lynx.



Water

Aspen forests retain and produce more water than many other sites.

Management Considerations

Potential Solutions

- 1) There is a need for promoting aspen regeneration through fire and other disturbance and by managing existing stands.
- 2) There is a need for defining desired conditions regarding structure, composition, snags, and downed woody debris, as well as objectives, standards, and guidelines that will promote achievement of those desired conditions, support sustainability, and minimize risks to ecosystem integrity.
- 3) There is a need for limiting and reversing woody species infill (conifers in aspen stands).