

Item #44: Harvest Unit Size

Evaluation Question: What is the trend in average size of harvest areas?

Resources to be measured:

- Average size of clearcut and seed tree harvest units from 1998 - 2006
- Trend in size of all harvest units
- Trend in number of units exceeding 40 acres

Data Sources: FACTS queries

The graph below displays average of all harvest units, by year. While there is certainly some up and down, the average unit size for the period from 1998 to 2008 is not significantly different than in prior monitoring periods. Larger unit size in 2005-2008 reflect fire salvage units, and larger thinning units.

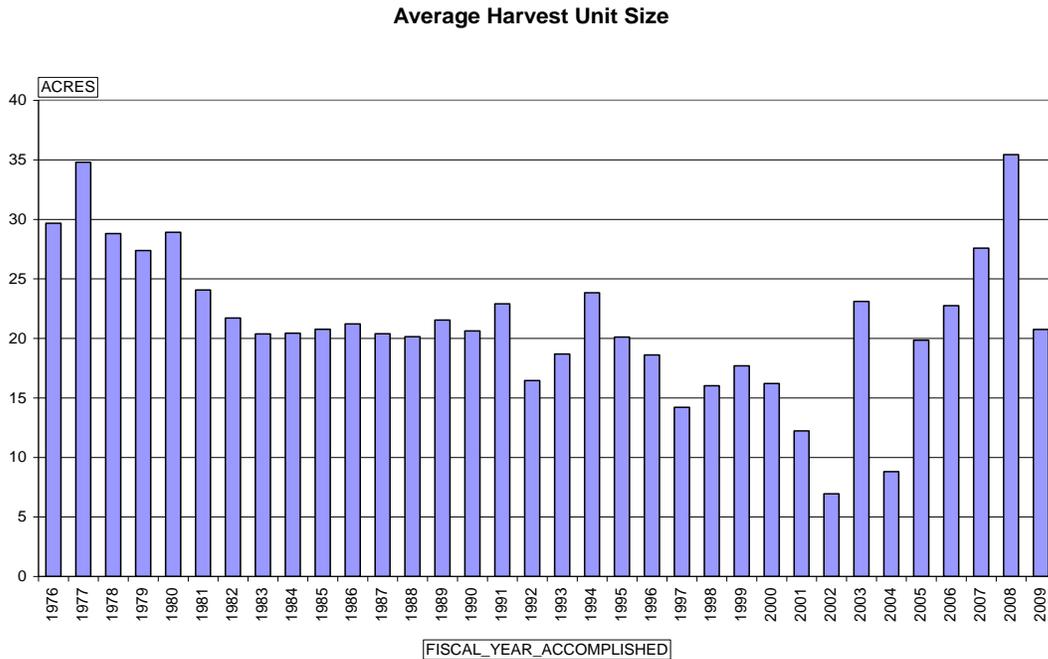


Figure 1: Average Harvest Size Unit from 1976 to 2009

Prior monitoring reports have looked specifically at clearcut and seed tree unit sizes.

Table 44-1. Average Unit Size of Clearcut and Seed Tree Unit, Flathead NF

Fiscal Year	Clear Cut Units Average Acreage	Seed Tree Units Average Acreage	All Harvest Units Average Acreage
FY 1976-85	18.3	21.3	25.3
FY1986-91	17.3	19.6	20.9
FY1992-97	16.5	27.0	17.7
FY1998-2008	15.5	20.2	17.6

This monitoring item was established to look at trends in harvest unit size. Northern Region Guide directs that openings created by even-aged management normally be less than 40 acres in size. While individual units have exceeded 40 acres in the monitoring period, the average is well within this guideline.

In the period since 1976, 12% of all harvest units have exceeded 40 acres. During this monitoring period from 1998 to 2008, 10% of all harvest units have exceeded 40 acres. For each project which includes larger regeneration units, a written analysis is prepared to demonstrate why these larger units are consistent with the project purpose and need and Forest Plan direction. This justification is submitted to the Regional Office for approval prior to proceeding with these larger regeneration units.

No significant trends or issues are found for this monitoring item.

Recommended Actions: Continue to monitor