

Item #43: Timber Land Suitability

Evaluation Question: What, if any, changes are occurring in acreage identified as suitable for timber harvest?

Resources to be measured: Acres of suitable lands in 2006

Data Sources: Baseline data from 1997 in prior monitoring report

In 1997, it was estimated that 670,670 acres of the Flathead National Forest are in Management Areas identified as suitable for timber production. That is still the current forest estimate.

During project level analysis, and field truthing of planned projects, timber suitability mapping is validated, and sometimes minor adjustments are made. In general, changes are made based on more detailed project mapping and site conditions. For example, some areas mapped as part of the suitable base, but turn out to be too harsh or rocky to support timber growth.

As was described in the 1998 monitoring report, only minor adjustments had been made from the original plan estimates.

Recommended Actions

This item does not appear to be providing meaningful data after 20 years. Changes are minor. Recommend this item be dropped. There is no consolidated catalog or mapping of these field level changes. As an alternative, establish a systematic method of capturing and storing these mapped changes in a forest-level GIS layer.