

E2 TIMBER AND BIG GAME

GOAL

MANAGE FOREST LANDS TO EMPHASIZE PRODUCTION OF WOOD FIBER (TIMBER), ENCOURAGE FORAGE PRODUCTION, AND MAINTAIN A MODERATE LEVEL OF BIG GAME AND OTHER WILDLIFE HABITAT.

DESCRIPTION

Applies to all or parts of the Forest area classified as tentatively suitable for timber management and other included acres classified as suitable and transitory range.

The management area applies to about 25 percent of the suitable lands across the Forest on all Districts. The following areas are managed for timber and forage production under Management Area E2 (Locations are shown on management area maps):

- On Pomeroy Ranger District, the general forest area surrounding the north end of Road 40 from the Tucannon River and upper end of North Fork Asotin Creek north to the Forest Boundary;
- the High Ridge-Horseshoe Prairie, the Middle Ridge-Ruckel Junction, and the Griffin Peak-Chase Mountain areas on the Walla Walla Ranger District;
- Generally, an area ranging in a band from Alder Creek on the Heppner Ranger District east to the Forest Boundary; and
- generally, areas range southeasterly between Forest Roads 5412, 5427, astride State Highway 244 and north of Hidaway Creek on the North Fork John Day Ranger District.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION

Management of forests for timber production, domestic livestock, big game, and other wildlife habitat will be apparent. Forests will contain a mosaic of even-aged and uneven-aged stands dispersed in a manner creating patterns of tree cover for big game and openings providing forage. Created openings will range from 1-3 acres up to 40 acres, but will often be 20-30 acres in size. Horizontal and vertical diversity will be apparent; tree species will be diverse, but seral, more pest-free species such as ponderosa pine, western larch, and lodgepole pine will predominate. Accumulated fuels will be generally light, and large destructive fires will seldom occur. Prescribe fire will continue to be an important management tool.

A variety of native and seeded grasses, sedges, forbs, and shrubs will be available for big game, other wildlife, and domestic livestock. Range and timber management practices will result in improved range condition and increased amounts of available forage for both big game and domestic livestock. Dispersed recreation opportunities of all types will be available for a variety of users. However, management of roads will result in a noticeable amount of travel restrictions in some areas.

MANAGEMENT AREAS STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

RECREATION

A Roaded Modified social and physical setting (ROS) may result from meeting the goal. Dispersed recreation activities that meet the goal are permitted.

Recreation site modifications and facility development levels 1 and 2 (see Glossary) are permitted.

Provide the opportunity for road oriented, walk-in, and horseback activities. Motorized access may be limited to designated roads, trails, and areas.

Trail and associated facilities construction, reconstruction, and maintenance are permitted.

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use is permitted on designated roads, trails, and areas where compatible with big game habitat effectiveness, recreation, and other resource objectives.

VISUAL

Manage areas to meet Modification visual quality objective.

Provide for rehabilitation where needed to meet the visual quality objective.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.

WILDLIFE

Elk habitat will be managed to achieve a habitat effectiveness index of no less than 45, including discounts for roads open to motorized vehicular traffic, as described in *Wildlife Habitats in Managed Forests* (Thomas and others 1979). Marginal and satisfactory cover and forage areas will be managed to meet or exceed the habitat effectiveness standard, using processes described in *Habitat Effectiveness Index for Elk on Blue Mountain Winter Ranges* (Thomas and others 1988). The habitat effectiveness standard will be measured on a subwatershed (allocation zone) basis.

A minimum of 10 percent of the area will be managed as satisfactory cover (15 to 20 percent is desired). If this is not attainable because of low natural potential, the highest percentage of satisfactory cover potentially attainable will be created or maintained. A minimum of 30 percent of an area will be managed as total cover.

Stands managed for satisfactory cover will meet the following criteria:

- Be at least 40 feet in height, with a canopy closure of at least 70 percent in mixed conifer/lodgepole pine types, and no less than 50 percent in the ponderosa pine type;
- should be 1,200 to 1,850 feet in width (larger cover areas are preferable) though exceptions may be made by wildlife biologists based on an on-the-ground assessment of the stand(s) value for elk: and
- should generally appear as a multi-layered timber stand.

EXCEPTIONS: Exceptions to the achievement of HEI and cover standards may be made on an individual project basis. Such cases would include situations where past harvesting, large scale insect and disease damage, and/or catastrophic fires have made the possibility of accomplishing the desired future condition (DFC) (long-term potential) marginal within a reasonable period (without applying additional silvicultural treatments such as regeneration harvest, tree planting, release, and other cultural operations).

Where these situations exist, activities may occur that reduce HEI and cover further in the near term only if they are consistent with the ultimate goal of the management area, and if the activities will clearly result in achieving a higher HEI cover condition and desired future condition (DFC) in a shorter period of time than if the area was left untreated.

All such activities will be supported by a documented NEPA analysis and will include a cumulative effects analysis of big game habitat in the project area over time. The analysis will also describe the anticipated improved condition on a subwatershed or management area basis. All exceptions must be recommended by the District Ranger and approved by the Forest Supervisor for implementation.

Available forage will be allocated on an approximately equal basis between big game and domestic livestock.

Dead and down tree habitat will be managed to provide or maintain 60 percent of the potential population level for all primary cavity excavators, and maintained for other cavity users.

Structural and nonstructural improvement, development, and maintenance for wildlife are permitted.

Management activities will not create barriers to impede movement of big game animals.

An average of one unburned slash pile for every 2 acres should be retained for wildlife cover on even-aged regeneration harvest units.

Manage to maintain or establish a high level of vegetative diversity at a minimum level of 10 percent in each of the following five seral stages:

Grass/Forb	Young Sawtimber
Shrub/Seedling	Mature/Overmature
Pole/Sapling	

FISH

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines. Fish habitat improvement projects and their maintenance are permitted.

RANGE

Manage range and livestock at Range Management Strategies C and D with improved management systems. The full range of development and maintenance of structural and nonstructural improvements is permitted.

Seeding of forage species is permitted where tree establishment and growth are not restricted. Prescribed burning may be practiced to improve range forage conditions and trend.

Permit increased domestic livestock and big game grazing to capture forage increases on transitory range.

TIMBER

Timber will be managed on a scheduled basis. All timber management practices and intensities will be permitted. Even-aged silviculture will be the most commonly used silvicultural system in the mixed conifer, associated species, and lodgepole pine plant communities. Uneven-aged management would be the preferred silvicultural system in ponderosa pine and mixed pine-Douglas-fir plant communities. Uneven-aged management may also be used where necessary to meet management goals.

The following practices may be employed:

1. Site preparation - by chemical, mechanical, biological, or manual means, or prescribed fire;
2. tree improvement - improved growing stock, genetic evaluation plantations, and seed production and seed orchard sites;
3. reforestation - natural or artificial;
4. protection of growing stock from animals, insects, and disease;
5. release and weeding;
6. precommercial thinning;
7. fertilization/pruning - may be permitted on a case-by-case basis;
8. commercial thinning;
9. salvage of mortality as needed and

10. final harvest - including even-aged management practices of shelterwood, seed trees, and clearcut, or uneven-aged management practices of individual tree and group selection.

All types of logging systems are permitted in order to meet resource objectives.

Maintain a blend of tree species with a preference for ponderosa pine, western larch, Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine across the Forest. Shade tolerant species such as grand/white fir, Engelmann spruce, and sub-alpine fir should be maintained as a minor stand component. Vegetative diversity should be enhanced or maintained.

Fuelwood and other miscellaneous forest products should be available for public use.

WATER AND SOIL

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.

MINERALS AND ENERGY

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.

LANDS

Land Classification Group III (available for land adjustment) is applicable. Meet other Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for lands and land uses.

TRANSPORTATION

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for roads.

Roads may be closed to motorized use in order to meet big game habitat objectives, meet recreation and other resource objectives, and/or reduce maintenance costs.

FIRE

For all wildfires in the management area, all suppression strategies (appropriate responses) may be used. Suppression practices will be designed to protect investments in managed tree stands and prevent losses of large acreages to wildfire.

Wildfire prevention activities should be emphasized.

FUELS

Fuels should not exceed an average of 9 tons per acre in the 0 to 3-inch size class and an average residue depth of 6 inches.

Desired fuel loadings are depicted by the following (Technical Reports PNW 51, 52):

Treatment/Working Class	Ponderosa Pine	Mixed Conifer	Lodgepole Pine
Precommercial Thinning	1-PP-1-TH 4-PP-1-TH	3-DF-1-TH 4-DF-1-TH	1-PP-1-TH
Clearcut	1-PP-4-CC	2-DF-4-CC 3-DF-4-CC	1-LP-3-LL
Shelterwood	3-PP-4-PC	1-DF-4-PC 3-DF-4-PC	--
Commercial Thinning/Removals	2-PP-4-PC	2-DF-3-PC	2-LP-3-PC
Selection	2-PP-4-PC 4-PP-1-TH	5-PP&ASSOC-4-PC	2-LP-3-PC

All methods of fuel treatment are appropriate. Utilization of wood residues should be encouraged in order to reduce fuel loadings. When treatment is needed to meet resource objectives, prescribed fire is preferred in fire-dependent ecosystems. In ecosystems where fire is not a useful tool, direct fuel treatments methods should be used in reducing fuel accumulations to meet resource management objectives.

Prescribed fire may be used to accomplish a variety of timber and forage production objectives. Care will be used when using prescribed fire due to high resource values and risk of escape fire.

PESTS

Use integrated pest management (IPM) principles and strategies in managing insects and diseases to meet management objectives. Monitoring and detection of pest conditions and populations will be done so that corrective treatments consistent with resource objectives can be prescribed at the earliest opportunity. Protect growing stock consistent with the level of investment by practicing high intensity prevention activities.

Emphasis will be on the prevention of stand and fuels conditions that favor pest increases above epidemic levels. Aggressively suppress insects and diseases using the most cost-effective suppression strategies when outbreaks threaten resource management objectives. Use a variety of methods in meeting protection and suppression requirements.