

F4 WALLA WALLA RIVER WATERSHED

GOAL

PROVIDE HIGH QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF WATER AND ELK HABITAT EFFECTIVENESS WHILE SUSTAINING OR ENHANCING OTHER RESOURCE VALUES. MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES WILL NOT SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGE THE LEVEL OF WATER DISCHARGE FROM THE NATIONAL FOREST DURING THE MAY 1 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30 PERIOD.

DESCRIPTION

The management area applies to all National Forest land within the north and south forks of the Walla Walla watershed-except for the Target Meadows area on the south edge of the watershed and areas between both the Skyline Road (64) and the Tiger Canyon Road (65), and the watershed boundary. Aside from some forest management activities in the northwest portion of the area, most of the area is a natural appearing environment and is undeveloped.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION

The headwaters of the north and south forks of the Walla Walla River will remain as large, natural appearing, primarily undeveloped area. The area will continue to provide high quantities of quality water, undisturbed big game and other wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities featuring closeness to nature and self-reliance. Some additional logging and timber management will be evident only in areas where past harvest has occurred.

Riparian areas will be in a natural state. Surface runoff in streams will be of high quality and show no reduction in average annual yield or low flows. On the average, spring snowmelt peaks will not change significantly in magnitude. Quality big game habitat will be maintained and, in some cases, improved through prescribed fire, thereby helping to achieve big game management and Forest recreation goals. Forage will be abundant and improved through management.

Recreationists will be able to enjoy a variety of challenging off-highway vehicle (OHV) and other dispersed opportunities on trails, drive ways, or closed roads. Opportunities to enjoy hiking, camping, hunting, and other recreational activities in a natural setting will be available. Existing wheel tracks and primitive roads will become OHV trails. Emphasis will be on providing a quality hunting experience in an undisturbed environment. Road closures and other management techniques will result in a noticeable amount of travel restrictions across the area.

MANAGEMENT AREAS STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

RECREATION

Manage dispersed recreation for Semi-primitive Motorized physical and social settings (SPM - ROS Users Guide) on the area by maintaining opportunities to get away from others and experience feelings of remoteness. A Roaded Modified physical and social setting may result from meeting the goal on a small part of the developed area.

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

Access will be primarily for remote off-highway vehicle (OHV), and walk-in or horseback opportunities on the undeveloped and parts of the developed areas, and for a small amount of motorized opportunities on the developed areas.

Trail and associated facility construction, reconstruction and maintenance are permitted, as long as consistent with overall area objectives.

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use is permitted on roads, trails, and areas. Use may be limited to designated roads, trails, and areas to meet water quality and quantity, habitat effectiveness, and recreation objectives.

VISUAL

Management activities will result in a range of visual quality objectives primarily Retention (R) and Partial Retention (PR) to some Modification (M).

Provide for rehabilitation needed to meet visual quality objectives where visual standards have not been met.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.

WILDLIFE

Areas with Timber Management

Elk habitat will be managed to achieve a habitat effectiveness index of no less than 60, including discounts for roads open to motorized vehicular traffic, as described in Wildlife Habitats in Managed forests (Thomas and others 1979). Marginal cover, satisfactory cover, and forage areas will be managed to meet size and spacing criteria as described in Habitat Effectiveness Index for Elk Habitat on Blue Mountain Winter Ranges (Thomas and others 1988).

A minimum of 10 percent of the winter range and 15 percent of the summer range area will be managed as satisfactory cover (20 percent is desirable on each area). 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 the areas 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 all forest types except that canopy closure will be no less than 50 percent on winter range ponderosa pine types;
- cover on summer ranges 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;
- width of cover on winter ranges should be 600-1,200 feet. Exceptions may be made according to Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines;
- on winter ranges, stands should be at least 10 acres in size (larger cover areas are preferred). Exceptions may be made, as shown above: and
- Satisfactory cover should generally appear as a multi-layered timber stand.

Marginal cover will be no less than 10 feet in height, with a canopy closure of at least 40 percent, and 600 to 1,200 feet wide. Exceptions may be made by wildlife biologists based on an on-the-ground assessment of the stand(s) value for elk.

All cover areas will be managed to provide sufficient vegetation to obscure 90 percent of a standing elk at a distance of 200 feet or less.

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

All Areas

Habitat effectiveness index of 60 and cover standards apply to all other areas within the management area.

Big game forage improvement projects such as seedling, browse planting, and fertilization may be used. Structural improvements may be used to protect these investments. Prescribed burning may be practiced in order to maintain or enhance rangeland forage conditions.

Available forage will be allocated to meet big game management objectives. Available excess forage may be allocated to domestic livestock. Manage to maintain or establish a high level of vegetative diversity.

Emphasis should be placed on retaining and/or protecting big game key use areas and habitats such as migrational corridors, calving/fawning areas, wallows, springs, seeps, and bogs.

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

Dead and down tree habitat will be managed to provide or maintain 80 percent of the potential population level for all primary cavity excavators, and maintained for other cavity users.

FISH

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for riparian/fish habitat.

Fish habitat enhancement, restoration, and maintenance practices (projects) may be used to increase smolt habitat capability.

RIPARIAN

For all Class I, II, and III streams and associated riparian areas within the management area, anadromous fish habitat will be managed to produce at least 90 percent of potential smolt habitat index (SCHI) by meeting standards for Fish shown in Management Area C5.

RANGE

Domestic livestock grazing is permitted at Range Management Strategy C. All available range and livestock management practices may be used where consistent with the primary management goal of maintaining or enhancing water quality and quantity and big game and other species' habitats.

Meet the forage utilization standards for riparian and upland areas, as found in the Range portion of Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.

Structural range improvements are permitted to the extent they are compatible with the management goal.

TIMBER

Within the north and south forks, Walla Walla River drainages, timber will be managed on a scheduled basis only on designated lands, as mapped. The area encompasses a total of 34,950 acres, of which 3,382 acres are suitable for timber management.

Where timber is managed on a scheduled basis, all timber management practices and intensities consistent with achieving the primary management goals will be permitted. The selected silvicultural system applied to timber stands within the suitable forest lands will be based on a site-specific examination and analysis, and will be designed to meet management goals. Harvest practices may include clearcutting, shelterwood, salvage, removal, and commercial thinning, as well as group or individual tree selection. Other cultural practices may be used including natural and artificial regeneration, planting genetic stock when available, precommercial thinning, release, and insect, disease, and animal damage protection.

Harvest of trees adjacent to existing harvested units will be scheduled only under the following conditions; no further harvest may occur until the conditions (items 1 and 2, below) are met:

1. Big game habitat, water quality and yield, and visual resource objectives can be met; and
2. units are determined to be established by using criteria in No. 1 (by acceptable stocking and appropriate species) and free to grow.

If catastrophic conditions occur, salvage may be employed where consistent with meeting water quality, quantity, and elk habitat objectives.

Timber harvest will not be scheduled or allowed in riparian areas of Class I, II, and III streams.

Logging and road building may be done with conventional practices. All yarding and skidding systems may be used, if within the ground-disturbing criteria (see Soil).

Fuelwood cutting may be permitted consistent with established goals and wildlife criteria.

WATER

In addition to meeting Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines, the following water resource management measures shall be conducted:

1. Provide for: (a) Protection of riparian areas, (b) retention of snowpack, and (c) minimal loss of soil productivity and transport of eroded materials to surface waters. Created openings will generally be less than 10 acres in size. Shape, location, and orientation of harvest units (created openings) will be designed to increase snow redistribution into created openings, reduce evapo-transpiration losses, and provide maximum shading of induced snowpacks and adjacent tree boles.
2. Monitor water quality, quantity, and timing of yields.
3. Coordinate all resource activities to maintain or enhance existing water yields for irrigation during the period of May 1 to September 30.

SOIL

Limit ground-disturbing activities within 250 feet horizontal distance of all streams, and wet areas associated with streams, to no more than 10 percent of exposed mineral soil per unit or project area.

Meet all other Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for soils.

MINERALS AND ENERGY

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.

LANDS

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.

TRANSPORTATION

Site-specific examinations and analysis will be conducted to determine the needs for additional roads or reconstruction. If additional or rebuilt roads are needed, they will meet the following standards and guidelines.

- All roads built into these areas for the purpose of timber harvest are to be built to minimize soil disturbance and adverse effects on water, fish, and wildlife populations. No construction will be permitted within 500 feet horizontal distance of Class I and II streams except at needed crossings.
- Roads shall be constructed and maintained at the minimum widths necessary to safely accommodate logging trucks and yarding equipment.

- Maintain standards of alignment and grade that will allow roads to follow, as nearly as possible, the contours of the land. Utilize a minimum of excavation and earth movement to accomplish the construction.

Roads will be maintained and shall be treated to minimize soil erosion. Erosion control measures to be taken might include, but need not be limited to:

1. Revegetation of the roadbed with herbaceous species,
2. Outsloping,
3. Crossditching,
4. Covering with logging slash, and
5. Hand maintenance of the drainage structures.

All existing and future roads will be closed at the conclusion of project activities except for:

1. Yellow Jacket Road No. 6500040,
2. Table Springs Road No. 6512000, and
3. Road No. 6500294 to Trail No. 3225.

Suitable measures shall be taken to assure revegetation and continued closure to motorized vehicle use, unless needed in emergency situations for the protection of life or property. During closure periods, measures shall be taken to ensure that motorized vehicles cannot enter onto or travel upon these roads.

FIRE

The appropriate wildfire suppression response should emphasize control and/or contain strategies for moderate to high intensity fires.

Low impact suppression methods should be used; rehabilitation and other measures may be used to mitigate wildfire and suppression impacts in conflict with water and soil objectives.

FUELS

Where timber is harvested and managed, fuels should not exceed an average of 12 tons per acre in the 0 to 3-inch size class and an average residue depth of 6 inches, as depicted in the Photo Series for Quantifying Forest Residues (Technical Report PNW 52) (USDA Forest Service 1976b):

Even-aged Management	3-PP-4-PC	4-PP-1-TH	1-PP&ASSOC+PC	2-LP3-PC
Uneven-aged Management	2-PP-4-PC	2-LP3-PC	4-PP-1-TH	5-PP&ASSOC-4-PC

All methods of fuel treatment are appropriate; hand treatment methods are preferred in riparian areas.

All types of prescribed fire may be used where consistent with meeting water quality goals.

PESTS

Use integrated pest management (IPM) principles and strategies to manage insects and diseases in meeting management area 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.

1. Protect forest stands (habitat) where consistent with resource objectives by practicing prevention activities. Emphasis will be on the prevention of stand and fuels conditions that favor pests increases above epidemic levels.
2. Suppress pests using cost efficient strategies when outbreaks threaten dispersed recreation, water and/or wildlife habitat objectives or resources in adjacent areas. Favor biological methods when available.
3. The use of pesticides will not conflict with water and habitat objectives.