

C1 DEDICATED OLD GROWTH

GOAL

PROVIDE AND PROTECT SUFFICIENT SUITABLE HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE SPECIES DEPENDENT UPON MATURE AND/OR OVERMATURE FOREST STANDS, AND PROMOTE A DIVERSITY OF VEGETATIVE CONDITIONS FOR SUCH SPECIES.

DESCRIPTION

Designated mature and old growth forest stands will be located and retained to distribute suitable habitat throughout the Forest for wildlife species dependent upon this habitat type. Forest stands will meet ecological, biological, size and distribution criteria as suitable old growth for survival and reproduction of indicator species. The Forests management indicator species for this habitat group include the pileated woodpecker, pine marten, and northern three-toed woodpecker. Other important dependent species include northern goshawk, Vaux's swift, Townsend warbler, brown creeper, and a variety of cavity users. If an insufficient supply of mature and old growth forest stands is available, stands capable of meeting old growth criteria will be identified and retained as old growth.

The management area applies to the system of dedicated old growth habitat units distributed across the Forest to meet requirements for Forest indicator species. All Districts include a few additional dedicated units to improve overall old growth distribution. Locations of dedicated units are shown on management area and old growth resource maps.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION

Old growth areas will be characterized by stands of naturally appearing overmature trees. Stands of mature trees may be included in the old growth category to provide a better distribution of this habitat type throughout the Forest. Trees in these stands are relatively large (with many trees greater than 21 inches d.b.h.), past the point of rapid growth, and some have visible evidence of decay and decline including mycorrhizal fungi and other microorganisms. Other typical characteristics include a multi-layered, deep canopy with trees of two or more age classes and an abundance of both standing dead and down wood material. Stands will be dispersed in quantities and sizes which meet the needs of dependent wildlife species.

The mature and old growth stands will contribute towards the Forest diversity and aesthetic values. Management activities will normally be excluded within designated units except to enhance or perpetuate old growth forest habitat conditions. Management emphasis will be on supporting sustainability of old growth/mature tree habitat characteristics and components. Vehicle use is also normally restricted, but will occur on designated routes (roads and trails) to access other parts of the Forest.

MANAGEMENT AREAS STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

RECREATION

Dispersed recreational opportunities and settings will range from Primitive to Roded Natural (ROS Users Guide). Recreational opportunities will be consistent with the maintenance of old growth habitat characteristics.

No developed recreational facilities are permitted.

Access will be mostly for walk-in or horseback opportunities on roads closed to motorized use, with some open road opportunities.

Motorized vehicle use will be restricted to only those designated routes (roads and trails) necessary to cross the area and/or provide for activities occurring in adjacent management areas.

VISUAL

Management will result in a natural appearing (Retention) landscape. Visual quality will be subordinate to old growth habitat goals.

CULTURAL

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.

WILDLIFE

In addition to size and distribution criteria described in the Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines, designated old growth habitat units will include the following items:

Twelve to fifteen live trees per acre greater than 21 inches d.b.h. (6 inches d.b.h. in lodgepole pine stands).

A minimum average of 225 hard snags 12 inches d.b.h., per 100 acres, in mixed conifer and ponderosa pine stands (15 of these hard snags will be greater than 20 inches d.b.h.); and an average of 180 hard snags, greater than 10 inches d.b.h., per 100 acres, in lodgepole pine stands. Dead and down tree levels will include an appropriate number of the larger diameter classes (12-inch and 20-inch d.b.h. trees) to provide habitat at 100 percent of the potential population level. At least 50 percent of these snags will be 15 feet tall or taller, with the remainder at least 6 feet high.

A minimum of two to four down logs at various stages of decomposition per acre in muted conifer and lodgepole pine stands, and at least one to two logs per acre in ponderosa pine stands. The logs should be at least 6 inches in diameter at the large end for lodgepole pine, 17 inches in diameter at the large end for ponderosa pine and mixed conifer, and 20 feet or more in length.

Two or more canopy levels. A single canopy level is acceptable in lodgepole pine stands.

At least 55 percent crown closure with emphasis on stands with 70 percent or more crown canopy closure.

Evidence of moderate to high levels of decadence.

A low level of human disturbance with few if any open roads within the stand.

Maintain snags to provide 100 percent of the potential population level within the designated old growth habitat areas. Maintain a minimum of two hard snags, greater than 10 inches d.b.h., per acre, on an additional 300 acres immediately adjacent to the designated old growth units as feeding habitat for pileated woodpeckers.

Snags and dead and down tree habitat will be created in designated old growth units and adjacent feeding areas that are deficient in these habitat components. Practices may include girdling, topping, or felling of live trees.

In the event of catastrophic loss of existing designated old growth habitats causing a drop below the minimum distribution requirements, replacement units in the most advanced successional stage available will be selected in close proximity to the original location.

Structural and nonstructural habitat improvements (including prescribed burning) and their maintenance may be utilized, but only to maintain or enhance old growth habitat characteristics.

FISH

All fish habitat improvement, development, and maintenance projects are permitted within the constraints of retaining or enhancing old growth habitat characteristics.

Use of mechanical equipment for fish habitat improvement projects is permitted although no roads or permanent trails may be constructed for access.

RANGE

Moderate levels of livestock grazing are permitted; however, forage in general will be limited to that which is normally present under densely forested canopies. Bedding by domestic sheep in dedicated old growth units will not normally be permitted.

Maintain existing range improvement structures. Additional structural improvements are generally not permitted.

TIMBER

Timber management and harvest activities will not be scheduled or permitted.

Fuelwood cutting, salvage harvest, or the removal of any dead or down material will not be permitted, unless the unit(s) is lost as a result of catastrophic conditions.

WATER AND SOIL

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines

MINERALS AND ENERGY

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.

LANDS

Exchange of land involving existing old growth may occur where the quality, size, and spacing requirements of dedicated old growth units are met.

Issuance of any permits or licenses that may adversely impact dedicated old growth units will be discouraged.

TRANSPORTATION

Roads and trails are permitted but will be limited to the number and miles necessary to meet surrounding area objectives, while minimizing impacts to wildlife in the old growth units.

Activities may include construction and reconstruction of new roads and trails, and operation and maintenance of open roads and trails. Where feasible and practical, road construction within designated old growth units should be avoided.

Most roads (and areas) in dedicated old growth units should be closed; restrict motorized vehicle use to designated open roads and trails.

FIRE

For moderate to high intensity wildfires, the appropriate suppression response should emphasize control strategies.

Low impact suppression methods should be favored. Use of mechanical equipment to suppress wildfires is acceptable within the objective of minimizing the impact of the suppression effort on the old growth values.

FUELS

Natural fuel treatments are permitted to maintain or enhance old growth habitat characteristics or reduce the potential for a high number of and/or severely burned acres.

Natural fuels should not exceed an average of about 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 Natural Forest Residues (Technical Report PNW 105) (USDA Forest Service 1980):

2-PP&ASSOC-4 3-LP-3 2-MC-3 6-PP-4

Prescribed burning is the preferred method of fuel treatment.

PESTS

Monitor the levels and activities of pests normally associated with old growth ecosystems. Effects of endemic levels will be accepted as naturally occurring phenomena. No special management practices will be utilized to control losses from insects or diseases at endemic levels.

Suppress or control pests when outbreaks reach epidemic levels and threaten catastrophic loss of dedicated old growth resources or other resources on adjacent lands. Favor biological treatment methods or prescribed burning. IPM methods will not conflict with wildlife objectives.