C5 RIPARIAN (FISH AND WILDLIFE)

GOAL

MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE WATER QUALITY, AND PRODUCE A HIGH LEVEL OF POTENTIAL HABITAT CAPABILITY FOR ALL SPECIES OF FISH AND WILDLIFE WITHIN THE DESIGNATED RIPARIAN HABITAT AREAS WHILE PROVIDING FOR A HIGH LEVEL OF HABITAT EFFECTIVENESS FOR BIG GAME.

DESCRIPTION

The management area is applicable to all designated riparian areas associated with Class I, II, and III streams, including adjacent floodplains and wetlands as shown on the management area maps.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION

A near natural setting will predominate adjacent to the stream, with a wide variety of plant communities of various species, sizes, and age classes. In forested riparian zones, a continuous high tree canopy layer will be present and the forest will appear denser than in the surrounding land. Upper and mid-level conifer and hardwood canopy structure and lower shrub level will provide desired levels of stream surface shading, streambank stability, and satisfactory cover for big game.

Evidence of uneven-aged timber harvest will be common, but there will be only minimal impact on riparian vegetation and visual quality. Some small openings may occur feathering outward away from the stream. The more common occurrence will be isolated stumps amidst an uneven-aged forest, resulting from single tree and small group selection practices.

Riparian vegetation will be dense and diverse, contributing shade for water temperature control, stable streambanks and controlled sediment, and complex fish habitat along the banks. Large diameter standing dead and live trees will provide a long-term supply of large woody material for instream fish habitat and channel stability. A variety of other habitats including dead and down tree habitat and satisfactory cover for big game will be found within the riparian area. Forest wildlife species will continue to use riparian habitat areas disproportionately more than any other habitat type. Evidence of streambank trampling from livestock will be less common. Dispersed recreation activities of all types will be abundant and available for a variety of users. Quality riparian management will assist in meeting anadromous and resident fish productivity goals.

MANAGEMENT AREAS STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

RECREATION

A variety of ROS social and physical settings ranging from Roaded Natural to Roaded Modified may occur. Dispersed recreation activities that meet the goal are permitted.

Recreation site modification and facility development levels 1 and 2 are permitted.

Provide for mostly road oriented recreation opportunities and for walk-in or horseback, with some OHV opportunities in isolated areas.

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use is permitted but limited to designated routes.

Trail and related facility development and maintenance are permitted. Manage trails to protect wildlife and fish habitat, and water quality values. Apply Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for OHV trail construction and management.

VISUAL

Management activities may result in a natural appearing (Retention) to a modified (Modification) visual setting. Visual quality should be subordinate to riparian habitat objectives.

CULTURAL

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.

WILDLIFE

Maintain dead tree (snag) habitat at the 100 percent level for all cavity users as described in 'Wildlife Habitats in Managed Forests-Blue Mountains of Oregon and Washington' (Thomas and others 1979). Emphasis will be given to retaining large diameter trees (20 inches d.b.h. or greater).

Retain large dead and down woody material (20 feet or more in length and 12 to 17 inches in diameter at the small end) at the rate of four Class I or Class II logs per acre, as defined by Thomas and others (ibid.). The desired condition is uncharred logs.

Manage riparian areas to produce satisfactory cover. Satisfactory cover consists of tree stands at least 40 feet in height, with a crown closure of 70 percent or more, and two or more canopy layers.

Structural and nonstructural wildlife habitat improvement projects and their maintenance are permitted. Prescribed burning may be utilized to meet the riparian management objectives.

FISH

Anadromous fish habitat (includes stream and associated riparian area) will be managed to produce at least 90 percent of potential smolt habitat capability index (SHCI). The standard should be achieved by meeting the following:

- Riparian vegetation will be managed to promote floodplain, bank, and channel stability, to provide resiliency to disturbance and promote aquatic diversity.
- Where natural conditions permit, streamside vegetation along the entire length of perennial streams will be managed to maintain an average shading of 80 percent of the entire stream surface shaded. Where existing shading is already below this level, retain all vegetation contributing to stream surface shading.
- Lands and trees adjacent to perennial streams will be managed to provide for a continuous, well distributed supply of naturally occurring, large woody material for instream fish and riparian habitat. At a minimum, these lands will include a zone within one tree height of the stream channel but may be extended to upland areas when the additional areas are determined to be critical to the provision of future large wood to downstream fish bearing reaches.
- Streams will be managed to provide pools that are relatively large, frequent, well distributed, and persistent during low flows.
- Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for water temperature and instream flows will be met.
- The sediment budget will fall well within the range and frequency adapted to by indigenous aquatic communities.

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

RANGE

Intensive range management, including superior grazing systems, such as periodic rest, will be practiced to protect and improve riparian vegetation and anadromous fish and wildlife habitats. Periods of extended rest may be utilized in some situations where it is necessary to allow re-establishment of desired shrub communities.

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

Range management techniques that control livestock distribution and timing of use will be used to meet riparian habitat goals. Range improvements that maintain or enhance riparian habitat goals will be permitted. Improvements should be located to encourage livestock use away from the riparian areas. Grazing systems utilizing riparian pastures may be required to maintain water quality and protect riparian vegetation. Riparian corridor fencing should be considered on a limited basis for special applications.

TIMBER

Timber will be managed on a scheduled basis.

EXCEPTION: All C5 riparian areas in the headwaters of the Tucannon River system will not have scheduled timber harvest.

A range of silvicultural practices and intensities, including both even-aged and uneven-aged management, is permitted when compatible with water quality and anadromous fish and wildlife habitat objectives. Uneven-aged management strategies are emphasized. Single tree selection is the preferred management tool within 50 feet of the stream channel.

The selected silvicultural systems applied to timber stands within suitable forest lands will be based on a site specific examination and analysis, and will be designed to achieve management goals. Harvest practices may include group or individual tree selection, salvage, removal, and commercial thinnings, as well as clearcutting, shelterwood, and seed tree. Other cultural practices may be used including natural and artificial regeneration, planting genetic stock when available, release, precommercial thinning, and insect, disease, and animal damage protection or control.

Created openings adjacent to live streams may be permitted, provided the stream surface shading, large woody material, and water quality requirements for fisheries are met. If natural shading is below the 80 percent level, meet the Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for riparian/fish habitat (Class III streams).

Created openings should generally be 1 acre or smaller, but no larger than 2 acres in size. No more than 6 percent of the entire riparian area within a subwatershed will be in created openings (trees less than 10 feet in height) at any time.

All yarding or skidding systems are acceptable. Constraints may be placed on yarding and skidding systems on a site-specific basis to protect riparian vegetation and habitat, and to preclude damage to soil and water resources. Meet tree falling and logging Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines in riparian/fish habitat (Class III streams).

Discourage cutting of dead and down material for fuelwood within riparian area.

Mechanical site preparation or aerial application of fertilizer is not permitted.

WATER

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.

SOIL

Within 250 feet of all streams and wet areas associated with streams, limit the mineral soil exposed by ground-disturbing activities to 10 percent of the project area.

MINERALS AND ENERGY

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines while protecting fish habitat investments.

LANDS

Meet Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for riparian/fish habitat, lands and land uses.

TRANSPORTATION

Construction, reconstruction, and the maintenance of roads will be permitted when consistent with the riparian management goals. New roads should be located outside the riparian area (except for crossings) unless alternatives are determined to have higher adverse impacts to resources.

Water quality and fisheries habitat problems caused by roads will be corrected.

FIRE

The appropriate wildfire suppression response should emphasize control and/or contain strategies.

Wildfire suppression efforts should utilize low-impact methods. Use of heavy equipment may require restoration and/or mitigation to maintain riparian values.

FUELS

Fuels management activities will be designed and executed to maintain or enhance the anadromous fish and wildlife habitat within the constraints of 10 percent exposed mineral soils and 80 percent stream surface shading.

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, as depicted in the Photo Series for Quantifying Forest Residues (Technical Report PNW 52, 1976) (USDA Forest Service 1976b):

3-PP4-PC 4-PP-1-TH 1 -PP&ASSOC-4-PC 2-LP3-PC

Prescribed fire may be used, consistent with riparian objectives.

PESTS

Use integrated pest management (IPM) principles and strategies in managing insects and disease 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.

Consistent with resource objectives, protect forest stands (habitats) by practicing prevention activities. Emphasis will be on the prevention of stand and fuels conditions that favor pests increases above epidemic levels.

The use of pesticides must not conflict with riparian/wildlife management objectives.