

MGT AREA 9 -- HIGH ELEVATION GRASSLAND

A VISION

This is a healthy and stable environment with high grass production.

This looks into the future, although some of it may be happening now. It is stated in the "present tense" as if it is already that way. This gives a feel of where we are heading. It paints a general picture with a broad brush.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION

- The grasslands are maintained.
- There is quality habitat for the elk, bighorn sheep and ptarmigan.
- Willow is in the ptarmigan range and has a height of at least 0.5 meter.

This table snaps a more detailed picture of what this management area will look like in the future. Since much depends on natural cycles, which need time, these conditions may take many years to achieve. Some of it may be in this condition now.

DESCRIPTION

The major portion of the mountain grassland type was created by fires in the late 1800's and early 1900's. The area is most commonly found in association with spruce - true fir and spruce - Douglas-fir coniferous vegetative types. It is fairly safe to assume that most of the area would revert to coniferous vegetation without man's continued influence.

This area consists of a wide variety of species of grasses and forbs in varying stages of plant succession. Sizes of individual meadows vary from less than one-eighth acre to over 500 acres. The vegetation makeup varies according to successional state.

The amount of time required for succession to conifers depends on size of meadow, distance to conifer seed source, severity of burn, condition of soil, and man's activities.

This area supports the bulk of the Carson's domestic livestock grazing program. It is also extremely important to game and nongame species of wildlife. The meadows varying size provide the vegetation diversity required by many of the wildlife species found on the Carson. This diversity is also required for the scenic values associated with this area.

Reduction in size, through natural vegetative succession or artificial reforestation projects, will ultimately reduce the amount of forage produced for wildlife and domestic livestock.

The size of the area and importance to grazing, wildlife, water production, visual quality, recreation, and potential wood fiber production make the mountain meadow and alpine one of the most important management areas on the Carson.

Topography of the higher alpine areas is steep at the lower elevations, giving way to broad, rounded summits and ridges. The terrain is characterized by rock escarpments, deposits of stone and boulder glacial till, rockslides, rockstreams and alpine turf soils. Overstory vegetation consists of a few dwarfed

D. Management Area Prescriptions

Engelmann spruce, and bristlecone pine at the lower elevations. Ground cover includes alpine sedges, forbs and grasses where there is adequate soil. A short growing season and heavy snowfall characterizes the alpine heights. This is one of the highest water producing areas in the state.

Historically, alpine areas have been summer domestic sheep range and much of it has been severely damaged. It is also summer range for deer, elk and bighorn sheep. Other wildlife found here include the yellow-belly marmot and pika. Blue grouse are common in the lower elevations. Southern white-tailed ptarmigan occur in several areas.

Standards and Guidelines

This section contains the standards and guidelines against which activities and uses are to be compared. It focuses on and provides more details about the "Desire Future Conditions." In some cases, it gives the long term 'where and when.' The Forest Plan Implementation Schedule is the tool used for all short-term planning and scheduling. The Implementation Schedule provides the operational perspective [making the commitment -- asking for the dollars and scheduling what year it will be done in.] The tactical perspective [the execution] is the actual implementation on the ground. This is done after we get the funding. It is also documented as accomplishments in the Forest Plan Implementation Schedule.

RANGE...

- On allotments designated for level D to E management, maintain grassland acreage to present levels. Stop woody species encroachment. Reseed areas where herbaceous ground cover prior to treatment is less than or equal to 30%. Treatment Method: Burn: When fire will not threaten adjacent timber stands, herbaceous fuel is adequate to carry fire to kill at least 60% of species to be eradicated (herbaceous fuel is at least 600 lbs./acre), when encroaching trees are at most 4 feet tall and tree distribution is even. Herbicides: When conditions are not suitable for burning and encroaching trees are less than or equal to 4 feet tall. Handcut: When encroaching trees are at most 50/acre and at most 8 feet tall. Other: Encourage public to cut Christmas trees and remove wildlings.
- Replacement of structural improvements will be planned in a 20-35 year cycle and will take priority over new structures if needed for prescribed management intensity.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE USE... Close areas to off-road vehicles except snowmobiles when the size of the individual area makes it feasible.

INSECTS AND DISEASES... Insect and disease outbreaks will be managed using the concepts of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which is a systematic decision making process and resultant actions developed after considering the pest - host systems and resource management objectives. Management may include "no action" to a combination of biological, chemical and other preventative and remedial measures. Special consideration in method of control will be given around waters, highways and populations centers.

TIMBER...

The following standards and guidelines apply to patches and stringers included within the Management Area:

- Stands may be treated, and sawtimber and products may be harvested to meet specific Management Area objectives. Volume does not contribute to the Forest Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ).

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- Salvage timber when compatible with Management Area objectives or when needed to prevent or reduce insect and disease conditions within the Management Area or adjacent Management Areas.
- Prepare and Administer permits for non-convertible products when compatible with Management Area objectives.
- Prepare and Administer sale permits or free-use permits for dead and down firewood.

WILDLIFE... Timber inclusions will be managed for snag retention, wildlife cover, escape routes and general habitat diversity.

ROADS... Control road system impacts, as per forest-wide guidelines.

D. Management Area Prescriptions

YOUR NOTES...