Camp Lick Project Final Environmental Assessment (FEA)

Appendix G – Riparian Restoration Development Process

Blue Mountain Ranger District
Malheur National Forest

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Background

The Camp Lick Project has had ongoing collaboration and public involvement concerning the development of treatments, beginning with field trips in 2014. In addition to work specifically for the Camp Lick Project, the Forest Service has been working with the Blue Mountains Forest Partners (BMFP), permittees, prominent scientists focused in riparian ecology, and other interested organizations and individuals to discuss riparian restoration since 2013. Riparian science workshops were hosted in John Day in 2013 and 2016 to share best available science and conduct monitoring field trips of past project areas where riparian restoration had been planned and implemented. BMFP also conducted a field trip in 2015 to simulate what treatments would look like by flagging trees in riparian areas. Blue Mountain Ranger District staff have participated in several field trips with other individuals and organizations to discuss and assess the success of past restoration activities, and have actively worked with the BMFP riparian sub-committee and other interested organizations to inform the development of riparian zones of agreement for BMFP.

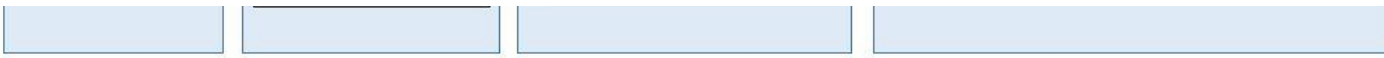

Figure 1 and Figure 2) were developed to show the conceptual process used to determine departure from desired conditions and highlight potential areas for riparian restoration. These figures provide a guide on how an Aquatic Staff member might consider where beaver habitat restoration, riparian planting, or thinning activities may be appropriate and which areas may not need active restoration. The process trees are not intended to provide a decision on where restoration would take place, or what kind of restoration would be implemented, but rather they represent one tool that can be used in the identification and development of riparian restoration activities. The process trees are intended to help identify priority areas for additional evaluation.

These diagrams provide a framework for evaluating the processes and functions of riparian areas on the landscape and stream reach level, which are represented by valley confinement and stream slope within the process trees. Best available science, professional judgement, and ongoing collaboration with individuals and organizations led to a prioritization of moderate gradient locations with unconfined or moderately confined valleys for potential restoration activities. These characteristics best represent areas that may have been impacted by past management activities and could be departed from desired conditions.

In addition to the riparian process and function indicators evaluated through the use of the landscape and reach process trees, riparian areas were evaluated on the ground and considerations such as NetMap analysis, instream wood loading, stand information, professional judgement, best available science, slope, and presence of roads were used in developing the proposed locations for riparian restoration. NetMap analysis used steelhead intrinsic potential, shade impacts, and erosion potential as the three surrogates for ecologically important reaches.

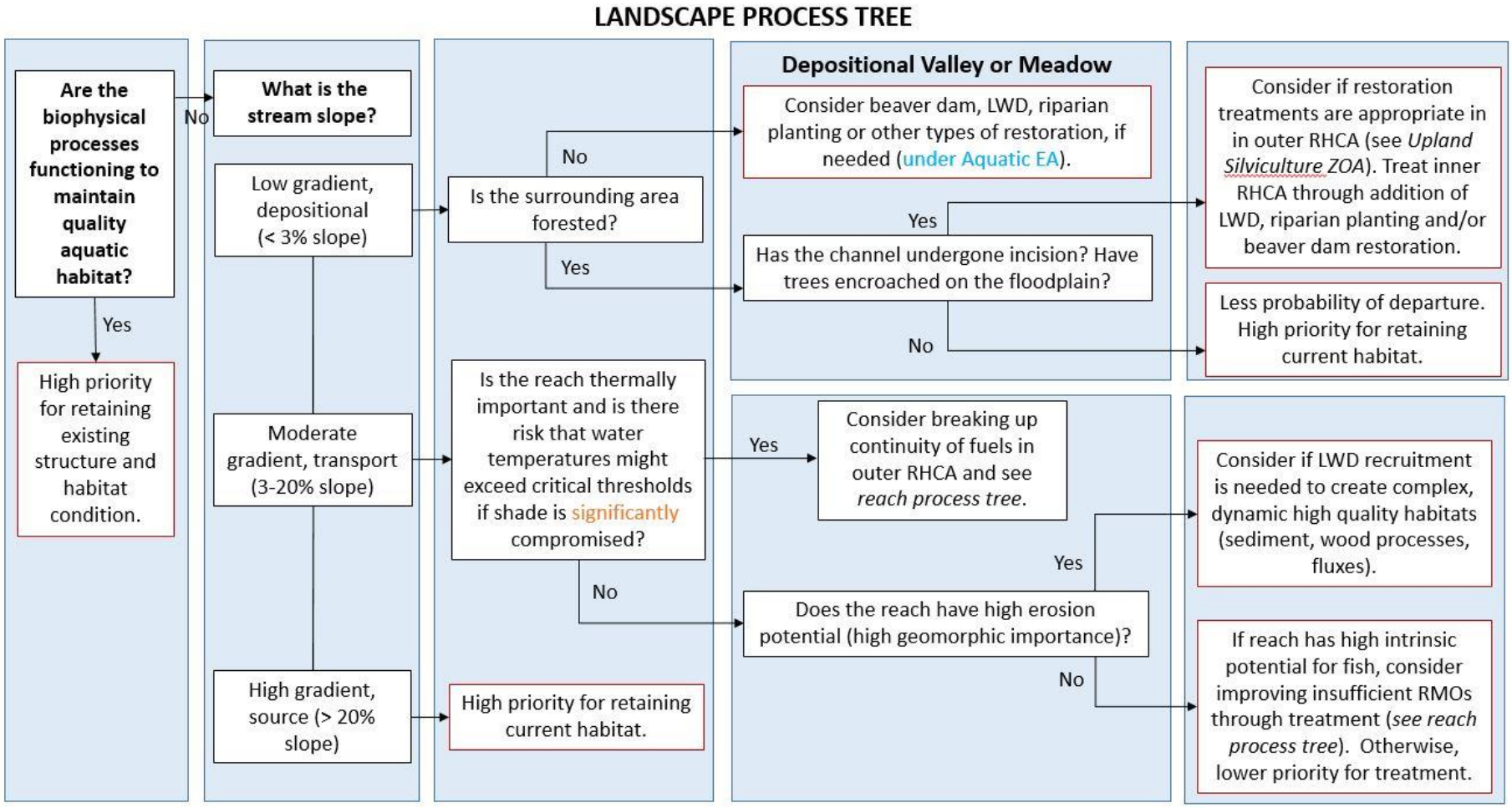

Figure 1. The landscape process tree provides a framework for evaluating departure from desired conditions based on landscape characteristics. The landscape process tree is not intended to provide a decision, but rather it is communication tool to help illustrate how priority areas were identified for additional evaluation and to provide potential restoration activities for consideration.

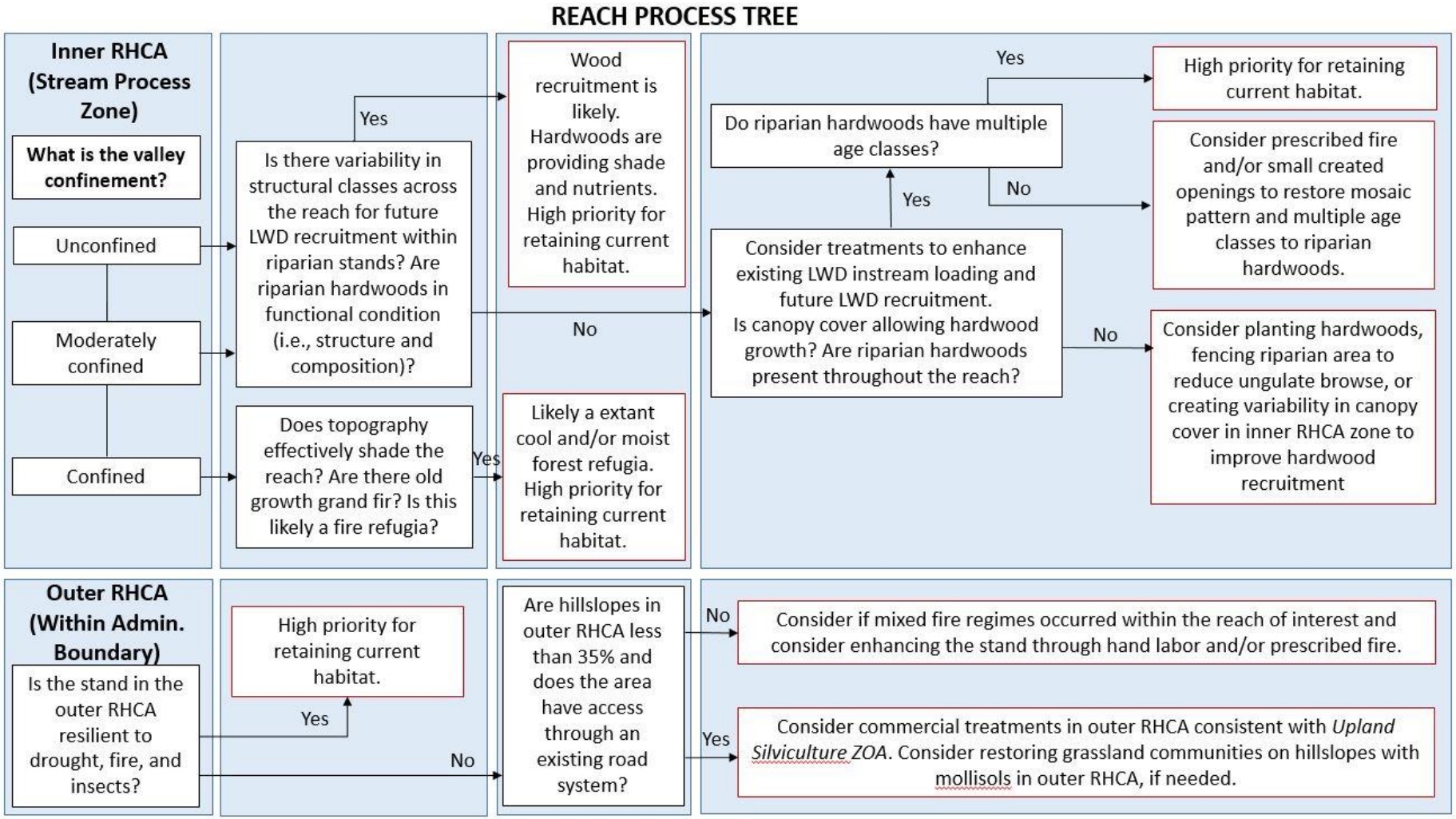

Figure 2. The reach process tree provides a framework for the initial evaluation of departure from desired conditions based on stream reach characteristics. The reach process tree is not intended to provide a decision, but it is a communication tool to illustrate how priority areas were identified for additional evaluation and to provide potential restoration activities for consideration.