

Polallie/Cooper Final Recommendations

July 24, 2014

Hood River Collaborative Stew Crew Objectives/Priorities:

- Protect the integrity of and access to recreational trails and trailheads
- Preserve historic structures
- Protect winter recreation areas
- Protect scenic values
- Restore forests to their natural range of variability in structure, function, and plant communities
- Attain stand densities and structure that are compatible with fire return intervals
- Ensure forests provide high quality fish & wildlife habitat, water, and stream flow
- Restore wildlife habitat (early seral habitats, other)
- Reduce road density, especially where roads are in conflict with other objectives
- Increase economic development opportunities, associated with the National Forest, that are compatible with ecological goals
- Gaps should be identified by taking into consideration ungulate winter range, disease, viewshed, trails, wildlife connectivity, and slope (flatter the better)

Area 1 (Western portion. Includes treatment blocks 1-8, 21, 22)

USFS Purpose & Need Vegetation Management Objectives:

- Reduce levels of hazardous fuels, including surface, ladder, and crown fuels, especially within the portion of the wildland urban interface (WUI) as designated by the Hood River County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP 2006, updated 2013).
- Reduce forest stand density in stands where stocking levels are higher than the historic range.

Proposed Actions:

- Plantation Stand Thinning (less than 80 years):
 1. Thin from below (Leaving the largest trees in the stand).
 2. Minimize skips/gaps for stands under 20 years or as stand health dictates.
 3. Keep gaps ≤ 2 acres in stands 20+ years, except in poor forest health areas where stocking levels are below normal.
 4. Gaps should be sited using the following criteria:
 - Esthetics (place gaps on benches and use irregular shapes to protect viewsheds)
 - Disease (place gaps where diseased timber should be removed)
 - Fire management (place gaps where they can help slow and/or prevent the spread of fire)
 - Habitat connectivity (place gaps where they link open spaces but don't impinge on wildlife travel corridors)
 - Buffers (place gaps away from roads, trails and riparian zones)

5. Retain minor and resilient species for species diversity.
 6. Reduce existing/activity slash to 15 - 25 tons/acre (or based on plant community type) in all treated stands.
 7. Burn slash piles within 5 years for scenic values and fuels reduction.
- Naturally Generated Stands (80+ years):
 1. Thin from below, with skips/gaps. Keep gaps ≤ 2 acres, except in poor forest health areas where stocking levels are below normal.
 2. Gaps should be sited using the following criteria:
 - Esthetics (place gaps on benches and use irregular shapes to protect viewsheds)
 - Disease (place gaps where diseased timber should be removed)
 - Fire management (place gaps where they can help slow and/or prevent the spread of fire)
 - Habitat connectivity (place gaps where they link open spaces but don't impinge on wildlife travel corridors)
 - Buffers (place gaps away from roads, trails and riparian zones)
 3. Maintain/increase species diversity, except areas within the CWPP, where trees species should be to a higher proportion of fire tolerant ponderosa pine, western larch, and Douglas-fir.
 4. Reduce existing/activity slash to 15 - 25 tons/acre in all treated stands.

Area 2 (Treatment blocks 9, 10, 11):

Objectives:

- Reduce levels of hazardous fuels, including surface, ladder, and crown fuels, especially within the portion of the wildland urban interface (WUI) as designated by the Hood River County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) from 2006.
- Reduce forest stand density in stands where stocking levels are higher than the historic range.
- Maintain Forest Plan visual quality objectives along the western portion of Hwy 35.

Proposed Actions:

- Plantation Stand Thinning (less than 80 years):
 1. Thin from below. Consider age of tree, as well as diameter, as criteria for thinning. (e.g., small old trees; "old" character/benefits to wildlife)
 2. Gaps should not exceed 5 acres in Areas 2 and 3. For gaps larger than 2 acres, increase canopy cover to 25%.
 3. Gaps should be sited using the following criteria:
 - Esthetics (place gaps on benches and use irregular shapes to protect viewsheds)
 - Disease (place gaps where diseased timber should be removed)
 - Fire management (place gaps where they can help slow and/or prevent the spread of fire)

- Habitat connectivity (place gaps where they link open spaces but don't impinge on wildlife travel corridors)
 - Buffers (place gaps away from roads, trails and riparian zones)
 - Winter range (gaps are needed in documented winter range in Areas 2 and 3)
3. Maintain/increase species diversity, except areas within the CWPP, where trees species should be to a higher proportion of fire tolerant ponderosa pine, western larch, and Douglas-fir.
 4. Reduce existing/activity slash to 10 – 25 tons/acre in moist plant communities and 7-10 tons/acre in dry plant communities in all treated stands.
 5. Consider no entry in the stands south of Polallie Creek.
 6. Where possible, maintain higher canopy cover around trails. Lightest touch within 50' of trail, lighter touch within 100' of trails in order to protect viewshed and maintain soil moisture levels that help preserve trails.
- Naturally Generated Stands (80+ years):
 1. Thin from below. Consider age of tree, as well as diameter, as criteria for thinning. (e.g., small old trees; "old" character/benefits to wildlife)
 2. Gaps should not exceed 5 acres in Areas 2 and 3. For gaps greater than 2 acres, increase canopy cover to 25%.
 3. Gaps should be sited using the following criteria:
 - Esthetics (place gaps on benches and use irregular shapes to protect viewsheds)
 - Disease (place gaps where diseased timber should be removed)
 - Fire management (place gaps where they can help slow and/or prevent the spread of fire)
 - Habitat connectivity (place gaps where they link open spaces but don't impinge on wildlife travel corridors)
 - Buffers (place gaps away from roads, trails and riparian zones)
 - Winter range (gaps are needed in documented winter range in Areas 2 and 3)
 4. Maintain/increase species diversity, except areas within the CWPP, where trees species should be to a higher proportion of fire tolerant, such as ponderosa pine, western larch, and Douglas-fir.
 5. Maintain root rot resistant species.
 6. Reduce existing/activity slash to 10 – 25 tons/acre in moist plant communities and 7-10 tons/acre in dry plant communities in all treated stands.
 7. Where possible, maintain higher canopy cover around trails. Lightest touch within 50' of trail, lighter touch within 100' of trails in order to protect viewshed and maintain soil moisture levels that help preserve trails.
 8. Minimize disturbance of riparian areas.
 9. Maintain species that are a minor component of the stand.
 10. Replant desirable tree species in understocked areas after treatment.

Concerns/lack of consensus on Area 2:

Oregon Wild and BARK: would like to see no logging in Treatment blocks 9 & 10. Oregon Wild has developed a wilderness proposal which includes land in treatment blocks 9 and 10.

Bruce: From landscape perspective, adding lands to Wilderness Area would prevent vegetation management.

Fred (Crystal Springs Water District): Their district is concerned that lack of treatment might lead to catastrophic wildfire within Crystal Springs zone of influence.

Jim Denton expressed concern about the potential for catastrophic fire in blocks 9 and 10, fire suppression having created a dog hair forest of thousands of trees per acre in this area.

Area 3 (East of Hwy. 35):

Proposed Actions:

- Young Stand Thinning (12-25 year old plantations):
 1. Thin from below (Leaving the largest trees in the stand).
 2. Gaps should not exceed 5 acres in Areas 2 and 3. For gaps greater than 2 acres, increase canopy cover to 25%.
 3. Gaps should be sited using the following criteria:
 - Esthetics (place gaps on benches and use irregular shapes to protect viewsheds)
 - Disease (place gaps where diseased timber should be removed)
 - Fire management (place gaps where they can help slow and/or prevent the spread of fire)
 - Habitat connectivity (place gaps where they link open spaces but don't impinge on wildlife travel corridors)
 - Buffers (place gaps away from roads, trails and riparian zones)
 - Winter range (gaps are needed in documented winter range in Areas 2 and 3)
 4. Retain minor species, except for grand fir.
 5. Lop/scatter slash, except pile/burn slash within 50 feet of roads.
- Plantation Stand Thinning (35 - 80 year old stands):
 1. Thin from below. Consider age of tree, as well as diameter, as criteria for thinning. (e.g., small old trees; "old" character/benefits to wildlife)
 2. Maintain sufficient species diversity to allow for mortality of older pines.
 3. Leave higher proportion of fire tolerant species, such as ponderosa pine, western larch, and Douglas-fir.
 4. Follow up treatment with fire at 15-20 year intervals.
 5. Reduce existing/activity slash to 7-10 tons/acre.
 6. Where possible, maintain higher canopy cover around trails. Very light touch within 100' of trails in order to protect viewshed and maintain soil moisture levels that help preserve trails. (44 Trails Group would like completely undisturbed trail corridor 100' either side.)
 7. Minimize crossings of recreational trails.

8. Gaps should not exceed 5 acres in Areas 2 and 3. For gaps greater than 2 acres, increase canopy cover to 25%.
 9. Gaps should be sited using the following criteria:
 - Esthetics (place gaps on benches and use irregular shapes to protect viewsheds)
 - Disease (place gaps where diseased timber should be removed)
 - Fire management (place gaps where they can help slow and/or prevent the spread of fire)
 - Habitat connectivity (place gaps where they link open spaces but don't impinge on wildlife travel corridors)
 - Buffers (place gaps away from roads, trails and riparian zones)
 - Winter range (gaps are needed in documented winter range in Areas 2 and 3)
- Naturally Generated Stands (80+ years):
 1. Thin from below. Protect/favor large and/or old trees (e.g., small old trees; "old" character/benefits to wildlife).
 2. Steep slopes/open older stands: remove smaller diameter trees, especially Douglas and grand fir, by hand; pile & burn. Leave some small diameter pines, preferable in open sites.
 3. Utilize jackpot burning where appropriate.
 4. Gaps should not exceed 5 acres in Areas 2 and 3. For gaps greater than 2 acres, increase canopy cover to 25%.
 5. Gaps should be sited using the following criteria:
 - Esthetics (place gaps on benches and use irregular shapes to protect viewsheds)
 - Disease (place gaps where diseased timber should be removed)
 - Fire management (place gaps where they can help slow and/or prevent the spread of fire)
 - Habitat connectivity (place gaps where they link open spaces but don't impinge on wildlife travel corridors)
 - Buffers (place gaps away from roads, trails and riparian zones)
 - Winter range (gaps are needed in documented winter range in Areas 2 and 3)
 6. Maintain sufficient species diversity to allow for mortality of older pines.
 7. Leave higher proportion of fire tolerant species, such as ponderosa pine, western larch, and Douglas-fir.
 8. Follow up treatment with fire at 15-20 year intervals.
 9. Protect pre-existing old-growth tree groups.
 10. For steeper ground: yard tops attached.
 11. Leave existing $\geq 20''$ diameter material on ground when possible.
 12. Minimize scenic impacts to Hwy. 35 and trails.
 13. Maintain root rot resistant species.
 14. Reduce existing/activity slash to 7-10 tons/acre.

15. Where possible, maintain higher canopy cover around trails. Very light touch within 100' of trails in order to protect viewshed and maintain soil moisture levels that help preserve trails. (44 Trails Group would like completely undisturbed trail corridor 100' either side.)
16. Minimize crossings of recreational trails.
17. Minimize disturbance of riparian areas.
18. Where appropriate, maintain species that are a minor component of the stand.
19. Replant desirable tree species in understocked areas after treatment.

Compiler's note: These recommendations were developed over the course of two meetings held on July 7 and July 24, 2014. As recalled, attendees at those meetings were:

July 7: Anne Saxby (HRSWCD), Cindy Thieman (HRWG), Rick Ragan (HRSWCD), Bruce Holmson (resident), Erik Fernandez (Oregon Wild), Mike Moore (ODFW), Rick Larson (Rocky Mtn. EF), Nate Ulrich (Mt. Adams Stewards and HRC), Polly Wood (HRVRC), Megan Saunders (HRWG), Michael Krochta (BARK), Arthur Babitz (44 Trails), Carol Kading (resident), Larry Kading (resident), Paul Gundlach (44 Trails), Joe McColloch (44 Trails), Jim Thornton (USFS), Whitney Olsker (USFS), Janeen Tervo (USFS), Sam Grimm (USFS), John Dodd (USFS), Stephanie McKinney (USFS), Kim Valentine (USFS), Claire Pitner (USFS)

July 24: Anne Saxby, Mike Moore, Jon Paul Anderson (WKO), Rick Larson, Bruce Holmson, Nate Ulrich, Erik Fernandez, Rick Ragan, Bridget Callahan (Oregon Wild), Fred Schatz (Crystal Springs WD), Leanne Hogie (resident), Larry Martin (HRVRC), Paul Gundlach, Jim Denton (resident), Cindy Thieman, Polly Wood, Janeen Tervo, Jim Thornton, Sam Grimm, John Dodd, Stephanie McKinney, Claire Pitner, Casey Gatz (USFS), Mark Kreiter (USFS)