



BLUE MOUNTAINS FOREST PLAN REVISION - 2015

Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman
National Forests

Briefing Paper

Timber Topics: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ)?

- ASQ is the maximum amount of volume **potentially available** as part of regularly scheduled timber harvest from **lands suitable** for timber production **per decade**.
- Although it is expressed as an annual figure, it is actually a 10-year cap, within which annual variation is allowed.
- ASQ is primarily influenced by:
 - *Desired Conditions*
 - *Existing Conditions*
 - The number of acres considered suitable for timber production
 - An assumption of “non-declining flow” (not required)
- ASQ is not the same as the total harvested volume. It is not a promise or a goal.
- It is not based on budget; larger budget assumptions do not result in higher ASQ.

What is the Total Sale Program Quantity (TSPQ)?

- Total amount of volume estimated to be harvested under each Alternative. TSPQ is not a promise of, or a limit to, what may be done in the future.
- TSPQ volumes come from:
 - lands *Suitable* for timber production (ASQ)
 - lands *Unsuitable* for timber production but available for timber harvest to meet the Desired Conditions for a particular area (e.g., Riparian Management Areas, Old Forest)
 - Salvage, firewood, post and poles
- TSPQ is influenced by estimated budget.

What is the Historic Range of Variation (HRV) and why has it been used to develop Desired Conditions for the Forest Plan Revision?

- Range of Variation is defined as the variation of ecological characteristics and processes over scales of space and time that are appropriate for a given management application. The fundamental assumption underlying the use of HRV is if historical ranges in stand structures by forest type are maintained on current and future landscapes, then much of the habitat for native flora and fauna should be recreated and maintained. Thus, most species and ecosystem elements should remain viable. (Wiens et al, 2012; Agee, 2003).
- Use of HRV as reference point for Desired Conditions is not an attempt to turn managed landscapes in to wilderness or return to a specific time in the past. Rather, HRV is a lens that helps managers to achieve multiple-use objectives.
- There is broad agreement among managers and scientists that HRV provides essential insights for decision-making. Managing toward HRV has the following benefits:



for the greatest good

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- protecting biodiversity and ensuring species viability,
- recognizing the roles of disturbance,
- widening the options for management, and
- maintaining resilience and ecological integrity.

How many acres are considered suitable for timber harvest in the Alternatives of the draft Environmental Impact Statement?

(See the chart in the Addendum for acreage: “Timber Suitability Classification for Alternatives C, D, and E”)

- **Alternative C** has the fewest suitable acreage for timber production because of a greater number of acres of Preliminary Administratively Recommended Wilderness Area (PARWA), Old Forest, and wider Riparian Management Areas. Alt. C contains additional areas in wildlife corridor management areas that were identified as unsuitable.
- **Alternative D** has the most suitable acreage for timber production, because Riparian Management Areas are narrower and Old Forest is classified as suitable. The effect of this classification would be to increase the ASQ, which is based on the suitable acres.
- **Alternatives B, E, and F** have the same suitable acreage, because they all have the same *Standards, Guidelines*, and similar *Management Areas* that influence Suitability for timber production. Old Forest and Riparian Management Areas are classified as Unsuitable for timber production.

What is the approach to Old Forest management in the 1990 (current) Forest Plans for the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests?

Eastside Screens:

- In 1994, the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region regional forester issued “Interim Direction Establishing Riparian, Ecosystem, and Wildlife Standards for Timber Sales on Eastside Forests” (USDA Forest Service 1995c), commonly referred to as the Eastside Screens. It amended the 1990 Forest Plans by establishing riparian, ecosystem, and wildlife standards for timber sales.
- The Eastside Screens amendment emphasizes:
 - retaining and developing late old forest structures and patch sizes within the Historic Range of Variability;
 - maintaining or developing linkages between old forests;
 - meeting requirements for snags, downed logs, and green tree replacements; and
 - retaining most trees greater than 21 inches in diameter.

Old Growth Management Areas:

- All three 1990 Forest Plans designate Management Areas for old growth.
- Old Growth Management Areas are Unsuitable for timber production, but some Old Growth areas may be harvested for other purposes.
- In the 1990 Forest Plans, many Old Growth Management Areas were designated in areas that did not actually contain old forest characteristics. In addition, some areas have been affected by fire, insects, and disease, resulting in changes to species composition and forest structure. As a result, only between 20-40% of designated Old Growth Management Areas actually contain old forest structural characteristics.

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Proposed Management of Old Forest and Large/Old Trees

In general, unlike the 1990 plans, the Revised Forest Plan recognizes that Old Forest characteristics are dynamic in space and time and should be managed accordingly.

	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Alt. E	Alt. F
Desired Conditions Direct Old Forest Management?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Designated Old Forest Mgmt. Area?	No	YES	No	No	No
Standard or Guidelines on Harvesting > 21" DBH?	YES; Guideline: Retain >21" DBH (with exceptions)	YES; Standard: Retain >21" DBH (no exceptions)	NO	NO	NO
Standard or Guidelines on Harvesting Old Trees?	NO	NO	NO	YES: Guideline: Retain trees with old characteristics	YES: Guideline to retain trees >150 years old

How are Snags (standing dead trees) and Down Wood addressed in the draft Plans?

What are some Standards and Guidelines that could affect post-fire salvage of snags?

- Section 1.14 (Snags and Down Wood, starting on p. 47) in the Proposed Revised Land Management Plan includes the Background, Existing Condition, and Desired Condition regarding Snags and down wood.
- The Desired Condition for snags and down wood is to maintain ecological characteristics within the historic range of variability.
- Examples of Standards and Guidelines that could affect post-fire salvage of snags:

Standard or Guideline	Alt B	Alt C	Alt D	Alt E, F
Harvest no more than 50% of post-fire source habitat (*)	X	Salvage not permitted	No Standards or Guidelines	X
No snag harvesting in areas with fire perimeters less than 100 acres	X	Salvage not permitted	No Standards or Guidelines	X
Harvest no snags greater than 21" and 50% of 12-21" (**)	X	Salvage not permitted	No Standards or Guidelines	X

* Except in the Wildland-Urban Interface

** Except for Danger/Hazard Trees

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Addendum: Timber Suitability Classification for Alternatives C, D, and E

The chart below illustrates acres of land that are either Suitable, Unsuitable, or “Available” for timber harvest within the National Forests under different Alternatives in the draft Environmental Impact Statement. The definitions below are helpful for the purposes of this chart:

- Lands *Suitable* for timber production allow for regularly scheduled harvest of trees for industrial or consumer use.
- *Unsuitable* lands are deemed unsuitable for timber production based on criteria established by the National Forest Management Act (Sec. 6k) and the 1982 Planning Rule (Sec. 219.14). In general, this includes land with less than 10% canopy cover, significant regeneration issues/concerns, and lands withdrawn by law or policy (e.g., Wilderness Areas).
- “Available” lands are lands that are Unsuitable for regularly scheduled timber harvest but allow for the harvest of trees to meet Desired Conditions for a particular area (e.g., Riparian Management Areas)

