

Suitability for Timber Production and Timber Harvest

The Lolo National Forest is beginning land management plan revision in accordance with the 2012 Planning Rule. Plans must address timber production and harvest. Timber harvest is the removal of trees for wood fiber use and other multiple-use purposes. Timber production is the purposeful growing, tending, harvesting, and regeneration of regulated crops of trees for industrial or consumer use.

3. Timber harvest for purposes other than timber production;
4. Limitations on timber harvest; and,
5. Land management guidance (forest vegetation management practices and harvest levels). The practices must be based on the fiscal capability of the planning unit and are not a commitment to take an action.



Figure 1. Cut logs are stacked in piles called "decks" to prepare for transportation out of the forest.

Suitability for timber production

To identify suitability for timber production, a 2-step approach is prescribed:

1. Identify lands that are not suited based on legal and technical factors. This includes lands that have been legally withdrawn, non-forest land, land where harvest would cause irreversible damage, and land where restocking cannot be assured. Remaining lands may be suited for timber production.
2. From the lands that may be suited, identify the lands that are suited for timber production based on compatibility with desired conditions and objectives.

Why does timber harvest occur on National Forest System lands?

Harvest of timber on National Forest System lands occurs for many reasons, including, but not limited to: ecosystem restoration, community protection and hazardous fuels reduction, habitat improvement, and economic sustainability.

How does a revised plan address timber production and harvest?

There are five primary requirements that land management plans must address:

1. Identification of lands as not suited and suited for timber production;
2. Timber harvest for purposes of timber production;

Can timber harvest occur on lands unsuitable for timber production?

Yes. Plan components guiding timber harvest will be developed for both lands that are suitable and unsuitable for timber production. On unsuitable lands, plan components may only allow harvest to occur to protect multiple-use values other than timber production and for salvage, sanitation, public health, or safety. On unsuitable lands, plan components must establish the permissible reasons for timber harvest for purposes other than timber production.