



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Resource Use in Plan Revision

Questions & Answers

April 17, 2024

1) Question about forest biodiversity: Cedar is important for salmon. How much cedar grows back in recovering (i.e. clearcut) forests?

Natural regeneration is very abundant on the Tongass. Any time we harvest, we get about the same composition of tree species back that were there before the harvest. Cedar on the Tongass is a little different than cedar in British Columbia, because it prefers openings (it is shade intolerant). We actually prescribe clear-cut harvest when we want to grow cedar in some areas. We will also go in to harvested areas after about 15-20 years and remove the competing trees through pre-commercial thinning. We'll thin the trees down to about 200 trees per acre, which is approximately the tree density in old growth stands. When we complete that thinning, we prefer cedar over the other species, to encourage even more cedar in our young-growth stands.

1b) I do not see that in the data when I look at second growth stands. They are often devoid of cedar. So, what I just heard does not seem to be true on the ground. Can you explain this disparity?

Many of the young-growth stands that you see, particularly in valley bottoms and lower slopes, were harvested in the 50s, 60s and 70s. Those stands were originally spruce, which was the focus of logging in those decades. Those areas did not have much cedar before logging, and therefore cedar is generally not found in those stands. Later logging, particularly after the passing of the Tongass Timber Reform Act in 1991, which required harvesting across productivity classes, and as the roading and harvest moved upslope in the 80s and 90s, more cedar was harvested. If you look at our stands that were cut 20-30 years ago, you will see cedar regeneration.

For more information or to sign up for our email distribution list, please refer to the Tongass Revision Website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tongass/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd1105492>