

Vegetation Management at Recreation Residences

Several cabin owners have inquired about how the new permit changes the way in which we deal with management of vegetation. This includes hazard trees, brush, dead and down material, etc. The language in the actual permit has changed very little. Trees, shrubs and grasses **cannot** be treated or removed without authorization. Authorization for vegetation treatment can be granted by the District Ranger. The Naches Ranger District has developed local policy to deal with certain types of vegetation. For example, dead material falls under our hazard tree guidelines – dead or hanging limbs and dead trees or shrubs less than 20 feet tall can be removed without specific approval.

Since the last 20 year permit was issued many environmental laws as well as our Forest Land Management Plan have changed. What has changed in your permit package is the addition of Conservation Measures that have been included as Appendix A in your operating plans. “Conservation Measures” are actions identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries in the consultation process with the Forest Service to reduce the effect of proposed projects on plants, animals and fish protected under the Endangered Species Act. Within the Conservation Measure documents, vegetation removal is specifically prohibited “except as required under the fire prevention requirements for the recreation residence”. At this point, requests to remove any type of vegetation will go through a process similar to hazard tree requests. Since each cabin location is unique, these requests will be handled on a case by case basis. Over time we hope to be able to develop guidelines that will help streamline this process.

This is a change for us as well as for you cabin owners. If you have questions or concerns about a particular activity it is always best to call us before you take action.