



Science

and the Northwest Forest Plan

Knowledge Gained Over A Decade

Conference Objectives

- Develop awareness & understanding of science information from the Northwest Forest Plan monitoring programs
- Describe advances in the state of knowledge over the last decade
- Begin to explore policy and management implications.

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- In some respects the monitoring results challenge the NWFP
- The primary threats to listed species have changed.



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- Too early to tell...
 - Early into a long-term plan
 - Not an excuse to avoid potential change
 - Not an excuse to fail to explore and learn potential options to meet objectives



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Mule

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ECOLOGICAL OUTCOMES

- Many ecological outcomes anticipated from the NWFP are trending in the desired direction



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Older Forests

- Increases to older forests in the decade exceed losses due to:
 - Old forest harvest
 - Old forest burned



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- Many residual threats to older forests are not under the direct control of Federal land managers.
 - Lingering effects of prior harvest
 - Climate change
 - West Nile virus
 - Barred owls.



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- Need for active management
 - Especially in dry fire prone areas
 - Role for active management in restoration inside and outside LSRs
 - Accelerate the rate of fuels treatments and restoration - especially in fire prone areas
 - Same treatment inside and outside the LSRs - does that allocation make sense in the fire prone ecosystems?
 - Invasive weeds



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ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

- Expectation to adapt the Plan and learn through experimentation - precaution trumped adaptation and learning.
- Is change desired?



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- Does uncertainty or lack of knowledge cripple us from taking action now?
 - Taking no action is a risky alternative
 - We know more about the NWFP area than any other forest in the world
 - Moving ahead with action is supported by science now



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- Can the federal institutions respond to the dynamic environment? When change is needed:
 - Does it take 3 years to amend a plan?
 - Does it take millions of dollars to accomplish?



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AQUATIC SYSTEMS

- Misunderstanding of relationships among scales in the aquatic conservation strategy have resulted in limited management flexibility at the site level.
- For example, dynamic nature of aquatic systems - objectives everywhere all the time

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- The future of NWFP monitoring
 - Are the benefits from monitoring commensurate with the costs?
 - What level of monitoring investment balances the benefits and the costs in light of all the priorities facing the agencies?



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SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

- The NWFP fell short of providing
 - “predictable and sustainable level of timber”
 - “new economic opportunities for year-round, high-wage, high-skill jobs.”



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- Sustainability - balancing social, economic, and ecological
 - Are the LSRs to be considered wilderness areas once stands reach 80 years?
 - Is it the appropriate balance to have 80 to 90 percent of the federal lands in reserves?



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- The threats of 2005 to ecological systems on federal lands are not the same as those that inspired the NWFP in 1994
- Action vs. no-action
- Slow activity vs. restoration
- No recovery plan - what does success look like



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