

Summary of Discussions on Riparian Rules Analysis – NW/SW RFPC (September and December meetings)

Discussion on Geo-regions:

- The Siskiyou region should not be included for lack of data and indeterminate need and needs more monitoring.
- It make sense to apply to the four geo-regions: North Coast, South Coast, Southern Oregon and Interior Cascades.
- The knowledge base needs to be increased research for the east side and that monitoring could include the Siskiyou region.
- The data came from two geo-regions and applying the rule would make sense to equate the data to similar regions.
- The outcome we need is to meet the PCW standard (temperature) on SSB streams; shade affects temperature. How does the geo-region affect vegetation?
- The geology, and soil and hydrology differences would also have a high impact.
- ODF geo-regions are based upon EPA Ecoregions.

To what stream extent should the prescriptions apply?

Discussion on stream extent:

- Additional stream/fish surveys will be very expensive, so not practicable.
- Approximate the extent to where the SSB are present and then determine how far up the stream it applies.
- Focus on minimum impact to landowners.
- Discussion on using the historical or current ODF&W layers.
- The standard involves a sub-set of fish streams to which the PCW criterion applies, those that have salmon, steelhead, or bull trout (SSB). The concept of Point of Maximum Impact (POMI) is where one measures the increase.
- The second part of the policy question is how far upstream do we have to go to not have an impact downstream and how should we treat non-SSB tributaries, to SSB streams.
- There was discussion of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife maps of current and historic distribution of salmon, steelhead, or bull trout. The current distribution is presence within the last five breeding seasons. The historic includes areas that may currently have human-made barriers. There is a large difference between the SSB streams and ODF's fish streams. The SSB layer does not include cutthroat trout.

Decision #1 – which streams should this apply (12/5/14 mtg)

Committee motion to consider only the streams with current SSBT presence.

What technical data are we using?

- 1) Matching this to the PCW language**
- 2) Matching this to the ODFW SSBT GIS layers - current habitat only**

What constitutes a whole and complete prescription?

Discussion:

- Easy to implement in the field. Simple would be a no-cut option.
- Complexity provides for greater flexibility. But adds to State and private cost.
- Needs to be defensible.
- Stay within current measurable rules, basal calculations.
- Use of tree counts, slope distance, basal area in order to get the most value from the lands.
- If fish presence is an unknown, do you treat it as a Fish stream? If so how far upstream does it apply?
- An alternative practice option would be if a landowner could determine fish species, but this would not be practicable.
- We can have both complex and simple rules; they are not mutually exclusive.
- Keep it close to what we have now. Discussion regarding the working definition of Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP) on average and across the landscape when using Best Management Practices (BMP) whether it would create a measurable difference.

Summary of initial discussion on this topic Categories of prescriptions:

As complexity adds to State and Private costs, simplicity is favored (no-cut), but options for alternative prescriptions can give the landowners flexibility in applying the rule to maximize their value.

Overarching principle: Prescriptions need to be easily to understand and easy to layout on the ground – not complicated. Prescriptions needs to be financially viable.

No- Cut Prescription discussion

One approach would be to have a single fixed-width that would apply to all units, so that on average across the landscape, harvest would meet the PCW. There could be a fixed-width buffer rule that would vary the required width based on basal area of existing stand. Can a fixed-width buffer be implemented based upon basal area?

- Prefer slope distance in determining no-cut versus horizontal
- Include hardwoods in basal area.
- Keep 1000' approach for basal area.
- Fixed width buffer based upon basal area.
- Using an average width across the landscape.
- For a fixed width No-cut it would be an average or some type of minimum distance from the high water mark and kept over the entire length.
- Decrease diameter to 6" and above for basal calculations on conifers and hardwoods.
- 250' on tree count which is intended to ensure even distribution.
- Fixed width buffer based on basal area if inside the default width.

Summary of initial discussions on this topic:

- Change the 1000' to a rate per distance.
- A fixed-width buffer would be defined as an average width with some minimum distance.
- Decrease diameter to 6" and above for basal calculations on conifers and hardwoods.
- Utilize tree counts for small F-type streams just as we do for Medium and Large F-Type Streams.

Variable Retention Discussion:

What we have in place now is a variable retention; the number of trees and where to leave them is applied. Is there something that needs to be fixed under variable retention? Many consider this a 'thinning' prescription but it is more a No-cut that is accommodated on the ground to conditions, we may want to look at making it truly variable.

Summary of initial discussions on this topic: The consensus was that the current variable retention rule works, so keep the approach the same, but change the basal area and tree counts. Discussion of preferences above apply:

- Prefer slope distance in determining no-cut versus horizontal
- Include hardwoods in basal area.
- Keep 1000' approach for basal area.
- Decrease diameter to 6" and above for basal calculations on conifers and hardwoods.
- Use 250' on tree count to ensure even distribution of trees in buffer.
- Fixed width buffer based on basal area if inside the default width.

Shade-based Alternative Prescription Discussion:

- In looking at Rip Stream sites in terms of where the PCW was exceeded the most, post-harvest sites that met the PCW had 85%+ shade and sites that failed had less than 70% shade.
- A shade model could be developed to inform shade effect.

- Add more monitoring to measure temperature and shade in random average harvest sites to provide more understanding of how temperature responds to treatments.
- Basal area is a surrogate for provided shade.

Plan for Alternative Practice Discussion:

There was a discussion of the difference between an “alternate prescription” and a “plan for alternate practice”. Peter Daugherty indicated that he thought the Board’s intent was to develop some alternatives that would allow flexibility for landowners. The Board wanted to have more specificity than just referring to the plan for alternate practice rule, because the plan for alternate practice is not used very much because of difficulty developing and approving. He suggested that the particular term was less important than developing ideas.

Discussion:

Should develop the shade-based alternative discussed above

- Can you incorporate time into this method, by allowing time for understory vegetation to develop and provide shade post-harvest?
- Shade component has to be met with trees, not just understory vegetation to meet the recruitment need for large woody debris.
- Meet current basal targets with a shade overlay.
- Heavy understory might over-estimate shade.
- Use of an Angular Canopy Dens-O-Meter to measure pre- and post-shading, included as an Alternate Plan?
- Consider an Alternate Prescription for aspect or effective shade.

Other Discussion:

- Should develop a monitoring program to that would evaluate random sites to figure out how well we are doing in practice as we implement the rules.
- The rule process needs to address how the rule considers wildlife trees in prescriptions. Want to know how they are counted and how would they interact with a new prescription.
- On small streams leave so many conifers 6” dbh over a uniform distance across the stream reach on SSBT streams. Currently small streams have no requirement to leave conifers. Smaller trees are more blowdown resistant.