

Quarterly Progress Report July-September 2013

Project Name: Riparian Hardwood Conversion Study
Project Status: Draft report in SAG review
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Sponsoring SAG: Riparian Scientific Advisory Group (RSAG)

Background

The purpose of the Riparian Hardwood Conversion Project is to gather information on the techniques, tools, treatments, and economics for harvesting hardwood dominated riparian areas along Type F waters in western Washington and establishing free-to-grow conifers that are on a trajectory to dominate the converted area. The Riparian Hardwood Conversion Project is a series of case studies at eight sites. Each site consists of landowner-designed and -implemented site-specific harvests of hardwood trees in riparian buffers along the Type F waters. In each case, harvest was followed by replanting of conifers. Data about tree regeneration and residual stand condition were collected at each site. Information was gathered for this project using a series of field sampling surveys that provide data to describe pre- and post-harvest stand conditions, track conifer regeneration quantities and growth response, and monitor buffer integrity post-harvest. Information about techniques, tools, and economics is facilitated through a series of landowner questionnaires and interviews to document their silvicultural strategies and the costs and benefits associated with each conversion.

RSAG has proposed to revisit all eight sites in 2016 for a final 10-year assessment of regeneration status (survival rates by species, heights, and brush competition). These revisits are in response to concerns that four-year post-harvest stocking data are not adequate to reliably determine the likely future stocking levels at these sites. Results and analysis of data from these 2016 visits will be incorporated as addenda to the final case studies and summary report.

Current Status

- Harvest has occurred at all 8 sites, and 4 years post-harvest monitoring of regeneration is complete,
- The case study report – “Hardwood Conversion Study, PSC 02-108, Final Draft Case Study Reports” – have been completed,
- RSAG has completed review of an initial draft report identifying a number of substantive issues in the discussion, implication and recommendation sections. The authors are revising the document to address reviewer comments,
- It is anticipated that the revised report will be submitted to RSAG for further review in late October or early November 2013. Depending on the completion date of the various report sections, RSAG may choose to review the discussion, implication and recommendation sections of the document prior to completion of the full document, and
- The question remains if a follow-up 10-year assessment should occur in 2016.