Identifying Off-Base Land

Date: August, 1999

Application: All forest ecosystems managed under the direction of the Forest Resources Division, except for recreation sites, Natural Area Preserves, and Natural Resources Conservation Areas.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this procedure is to define a process to determine how specific lands should be designated AS off base. Generally, DNR manages land in either an "on-base" or "off-base" status. Off-base lands are defined as those lands that are precluded from timber management because of their sensitivity to disturbance or to protect a higher ecological or social value (see PR 14-004-020 for information regarding permissible management activities on off-base land). On-base lands are defined as those lands that are managed to produce some timber volume over time. Only the on-base lands are used to model the sustainable harvest volume.

Off-base designations are not permanent. Land can be moved into, and out of, the off-base category as the regulatory constraints change, as additional information becomes available, and as management objectives and techniques are further developed over time. However, changes to land designations will impact the sustainable harvest volume targets and should be made only after informed/careful consideration and with the proper approval.

The department designates forest land as off-base for the following reasons:

- Marginal productivity — an area that can not economically produce merchantable trees within 60 years of a harvest (westside) or within 80 years of a harvest (eastside).

- Public sensitivity — as determined by the deputy supervisor for state lands.

- Economic feasibility — operating costs of a timber harvest would be higher than the expected revenue.

- Harvest deferral — areas that have been designated as Old Growth Research Areas or Gene Pool Reserve (see Forest Resource Plan (FRP) Policy 14 and Policy 15) , and those areas deferred from harvest by the Board of Natural Resources (BNR).

The department also designates land as off-base when:

- harvesting is expected to result in a high risk to private property or public resources,
- stands in Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) planning units are identified as being on unstable slopes,
- areas managed under the HCP (i.e., nest patches) have harvest restrictions for species protection,
- areas are designated as Natural Area Preserves or Natural Resources Conservation Areas, or
- areas are restricted from harvest by the legal requirements of the Forest Practices Act.

Action

(1) Evaluate lands for marginal productivity (i.e., economic return and site productivity). Lands that should be considered for off-base designation are those:

(a) that are expected to produce less than 40 cubic feet per acre, per year over a rotation-length period (currently 60 years for the westside and 80 years for the eastside) as off-base due to low productivity. This translates to a final harvest yield of approximately 10,000 board feet per acre.

(b) where harvest would result in the probability of high risk to private property or public resources.

- Identify all areas in Watershed Administrative Units (WAUs) where watershed analysis indicates that a harvest would result in a high risk to private property or public resources, unless mitigated by prescription.
- Identify areas of known resource risk that can't be mitigated in WAUs where watershed analysis has not been completed.

(c) that are already identified as deferred from harvest. These deferral areas include:

- areas identified as gene pool. These areas will be deferred indefinitely.

- all west-side Old-growth Research Areas will be deferred for 15 years. However, the deferrals may be modified by the HCP.

- areas constrained by the HCP,

- spotted owl nest patches in the west-side HCP planning units, excluding the OESF Planning Unit,

- unstable slopes (see PR 14-004-050) in the west-side HCP planning units, excluding the Olympic Experimental State Forest, and

- areas in all the west-side HCP planning units where harvest has been deferred to protect specific wildlife habitat types (PR 14-004-170 through PR 14-004-390).

- areas deferred due to local agreements (i.e., neighbors, tribes, and local organizations), or state and local government agencies. The deputy supervisor for state lands is responsible for all local site-specific agreements. Landscape-level agreements must be reviewed and approved by executive management.

- any area where harvest restrictions preclude sustainable timber harvest production (i.e., regulatory restrictions).

(d) that are identified by the deputy supervisor for state lands as socially/politically sensitive areas.

(e) that are not economically feasible to harvest.

i. Locate areas where the expense of a timber harvest would exceed the value of either the present or future timber, resulting in a negative sale value.

A. If an expected negative sale value is due to the condition of the stand (i.e., defective trees, low value hardwoods, poor stocking), the harvest may proceed. If the timber is harvested, the area will remain on-base, classified as stand rehabilitation. Funds for pre-sales

and negative stumpage will be provided by the program desiring the harvest.

B. If an expected negative sale value is not due to biological conditions, the area is a strong candidate for off-base designation.

(2) Submit a list of all areas identified in Step 1 to the region manager for approval. (The region manager must approve all off-base land designations.)

(3) Record the locations of all areas approved for off-base designation in DNR's Geographic Information System (GIS) data base.

- Identify the reason for designating an area as off-base by entering the appropriate code in the GIS land use coverage. All off-base stands shall be at least five acres in size.

(4) Review procedure PR 14-004-020 (Addressing Timber Management Issues on Off-base Land).

(5) Obtain approval from the Forest Resources Division Manager to re-designate off-base land as on-base land.

APPROVED BY: Michael Perez-Gibson, Manager

Forest Resources Division

August, 1999