Identifying and Protecting Riparian Management Zones in the Olympic Experimental State Forest Planning Unit

Cancels: This procedure replaces interim procedure PR 14-004-160 (issued August, 1999). The direction remains basically the same, however, the guidance for wetland areas has been removed and can now be found in PR 14-004-110. Implement this procedure immediately.

Date: May 2000

Application: All riparian areas located within the Olympic Experimental State Forest Planning Unit.

DISCUSSION

The objective of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) riparian strategy in the Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF) planning unit is to protect, maintain, and restore habitat capable of supporting viable populations of salmonid species and other non-listed and candidate species dependent on in-stream and riparian environments. This is accomplished by providing special protective measures in and near riparian areas for mass wasting and windthrow based on a watershed-wide perspective.

Within the OESF, HCP conservation strategies and forest management activities are integrated by landscape planning. Landscape planning for all 11 OESF landscapes will take several years. Prior to completion of OESF landscape planning, a 12-step watershed assessment will be performed. In lieu of the 12-step process and with the approval of the state lands assistant, an assessment of physical and biological conditions may be obtained by completing a regulatory watershed analysis (WFPB 1994) or using results from a watershed analysis previously completed for the area.

This OESF riparian procedure includes an abbreviated 12-step process that provides an integration of methods for riparian function conservation as identified in the HCP. This process will be utilized to safeguard riparian zones, salmon habitat, and other aquatic resources while a more comprehensive 12-step assessment process is developed as part of OESF implementation planning. The complete 12-step process will include comprehensive direction for assessments, procedures, documentation and monitoring of forest management and research activities in and near riparian buffers, wind buffers, unstable slopes, 100-year flood plains, and rain-on-snow zones located in Type 3 sub-basins within the OESF. A Type 3 sub-basin is defined as the smallest sub-basin unit containing a Type 3 stream segment.

Initial riparian conservation can occur before a landscape plan is completed. Step 3 below has six physical and biological assessments that serve as background data for

proposal, evaluation, and selection of stand-level prescriptions, subsequent operations, and future monitoring within a Type 3 sub-basin.

Complete the following 12-step process, or alternately with the approval of the state lands assistant, a regulatory watershed analysis, prior to initiating any timber or non-timber management activity or research project that involves stand manipulation.

Action

(1) Complete the 12-Step Process for all proposed management activities and research projects that include regeneration harvest or commercial thinning harvest activities. Complete only Step 7 of the 12-Step Process for all other proposed timber and non-timber management activities or research projects.

(a) Step 1 – Map the location of the proposed management activity or research project, and the Type 3 sub-basin boundary. Record the data the Planning and Tracking System (P&T).

(b) Step 2 – Review the HCP conservation objectives established for riparian areas within the OESF watersheds.

(c) Step 3 – Perform all six assessments in the Type 3 sub-basin for all proposed management activities and research projects that include a regeneration harvest. Perform only Assessment 4 if the proposed management activity or research project includes a commercial thinning harvest.

i. Assessment 1 – Mass Wasting. Follow the procedures for a Level 1 Assessment as directed in the Mass Wasting module within the Washington Forest Practices Board Manual: Standard Methodology for Conducting Watershed Analysis, version 4.0.

ii. Assessment 2 – Road Network. Follow the procedures for a Level 1 Assessment for road sediment analysis as directed in the Soil Erosion module within the Washington Forest Practices Board Manual: Standard Methodology for Conducting Watershed Analysis, version 4.0.

iii. Assessment 3 – Hydrology and Rain-on-snow Assessment. Follow the procedures for a Level 1 Assessment as directed in the Hydrologic Change module within the Washington Forest Practices Board Manual: Standard Methodology for Conducting Watershed Analysis, version 4.0.

iv. Assessment 4 – Riparian. Follow the procedures for a Level 1 Assessment as directed in the Riparian Function module within the Washington Forest Practices Board Manual: Standard Methodology for Conducting Watershed Analysis, version 4.0.

v. Assessment 5 – Stream Channel Condition. Follow the procedures for a Level 1 Assessment as directed in the Channel Health module within the Hoh Tribe – DNR Forest Agreement, which was signed by both parties on May 11, 1993.

vi. Assessment 6 – Fish Use and Habitat Location. Map the location(s) of fish usage. Obtain assistance from local Timber Fish and Wildlife organization, tribes, and other sources if necessary. Include barriers to passage, spawning areas, side channel habitat areas that are in need of restoration, and enhancement activities. When practicable, conduct this assessment concurrently with the Stream Channel Condition assessment.

(d) Step 4 –Evaluate the watershed condition.

i. Evaluate the degree to which watershed conditions meet the needs for maintaining viable riparian and aquatic processes and functions by referring to the objectives of the riparian conservation strategy, buffer width recommendations, and Table IV.10 of the Habitat Conservation Plan.

ii. Retain original documentation of watershed conditions in the region office indefinitely for future use. Forward copies to the Lands and Resources division.

(e) Step 5 – Riparian buffer design.

i. Use the objectives from Step 2 (action step (1) (b)) and the results of the evaluation in Step 4 to design and map riparian buffers for the Type 3 sub-basin.

ii. Retain the resulting hard copy map in the region office as documentation that the riparian design was based on HCP objectives and conditions.

(f) Make a determination on whether to proceed.

i. Design the site-specific management activity or research project to complement Type 3 sub-basin objectives and buffer design.

ii. Consider whether the project conflicts with the long-term riparian or aquatic function of the Type 3 sub-basin.

- Redesign and re-evaluate the project, or postpone the project if there is a conflict.

- Proceed to Step 7 (action Step (1) (g)if there is no conflict.

(g) Step 7 – Develop and record silvicultural prescriptions.

i. For general DNR management activities:

- Develop site-specific stand management or manipulative prescriptions.

- Document prescriptions in the Planning and Tracking (P&T) system.

ii. Ensure that site-specific stand management prescriptions and documentation procedures will

be developed as part of the research design for research-based projects.

(h) Step 8 – Road planning in the Type 3 sub-basin.

i. Develop a plan that demonstrates efforts to minimize drainage and stream sedimentation over the Type 3 sub-basin. The plan should include:

- proposed road locations,
- planned road closures,
- plan for road decommissioning and/or betterment,
- fish blockages, and
- drainage pattern changes resulting from past activities.

(i) Step 9 – Develop an RMZ management plan based on the work that was done in steps 1 through 8 of the 12-step process and submit the plan to the state lands assistant for review. This will ensure that the management plan for the RMZ is consistent with the long-term (landscape-level) management planned for the area.

(j) Step 10 – Review on-the-ground prescriptions.

i. Examine and document management activity operations and outcomes by using technical specialists or a team of reviewers designated by the region manager.

ii. Develop research activity monitoring of both operations and outcomes as part of full OESF implementation planning.

(k) Step 11 – Develop riparian conservation objectives monitoring as part of overall HCP monitoring planning.

(l) Step 12 – Manage additional management activities or research proposals in the same type 3 sub-basin.

i. Use the information gathered in Steps 3 through 5 (action steps (1) (c) through (1) (d).

ii. Repeat Steps 6 through 11 (action steps (1) (f) through (1) (k).

APPROVED BY: Rick Cooper, Manager

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