

**Blue Mountains Forest Partners
Dad's Creek Recommendations
October 25, 2007**

[The potential treatments we have from the Forest Service will be adjusted and revised according to data gathered along the way, including bird surveys, etc. Prescriptions and locations aren't set in stone. Specialists' reports will be complete mid-February so most specialist information will be available by then with the exception of the goshawk surveys and neotropical bird work. Question remains about presence of Columbia spotted frog.]

Commercial thinning, precommercial thinning and understory removal in northwest portion of project area are agreeable.

Riparian areas/ stream restoration

Group recommends looking at more opportunities to do stream and riparian restoration as part of this project. Goals would be to restore water quality (including temperature) and fish habitat. Growing big wood for later structure for streams and supporting or restoring hardwoods should also be considered.

More background/ discussion: Stream along Unit 188 has some good riparian hardwoods, but there are breaks where cattle trails lead to stream that have compromised riparian area/vegetation, so few riparian plants are present. There is also a skid trail leading to the creek. Potential to look at minimizing grazing impacts on the stream.

Convert to seral/ HRS/ regeneration units

Unit 70: Group recommends no treatment and Eric concurs.

More background/ discussion: unit 70 is relatively moist and wet.

Unit 78: Group recommends that FS incorporate pine-dominated/ drier areas of unit 78 for treatment. North and east sides (looking at map north and east, not north and east aspects) of 78 should be included for treatment.

More background/ discussion: borderline of warm dry and moist areas/ transition zone. Unit is at about 5,800 feet in elevation; mixed conifer old growth; lots of wildlife use. Conflict over protecting pileated habitat and creating habitat for whiteheaded woodpeckers was resolved by adhering to the prescription described above.

Unit 120: Group recommends that FS thin up to 15" with a preference for mistletoe removal. Preference to doug fir over grand fir. Consider prescribed fire.

More background/ discussion: west aspect seems more pine dominant. North aspect more mixed conifer/ doug fir dominant. Transition zone; active pileated use; steep slope. P pine stumps – has reverted to doug fir. Area may be a good choice for the creation of more whiteheaded woodpecker habitat because of the historic pines in the stand.

Brown units in southern portion/ lower elevation HUR units

Group recommends that the FS implement these prescriptions/ treatments except where aspect and moisture make a site more naturally mixed conifer. Larch should be retained (understand FS already intends to retain larch). If a good whiteheaded potential site exists, it should be restored to whiteheaded habitat. Group recommends that work be done gradually instead of all at once; enough trees should be left for mortality along the way.

More background/ discussion: some big pockets of grand fir on n and nw slopes and in hollows or flat spots. Heavy pileated use, especially in unit 192; retain cover. Pileated habitat also found abundantly in ridge to the ne of the project area. Some high quality old growth buried in the center of this 192 unit with spindly stuff around it. N and nw units look like they are more naturally doug fir (like unit 220). Unit 264 looks like it has never been logged before and has very little pine in it. It was suggested this unit be dropped but that was consensed on; it's surrounded by clear cuts.

[HUR units are about 5% of the 19% of og multi-strata present in planning area. There is currently no og single strata. The FS proposal aims to defragment areas and leave og where possible while also creating a burn block. FS is trying to connect DOG with habitat to the northeast and treat the area that borders private land.] One view of this proposal is that brown units and pink units are the best habitat so this calls into question the de-fragmentation goal. Another view was to take risks here like Steve Zack encouraged us to do to restore bird habitat like for the whiteheaded woodpecker.

High elevation mixed conifer/ most northern units

Unit 62: Group recommends this unit be dropped.

More background/ discussion: steep slopes in draw, historically fire maintained savanna. Lots of ladder fuels.

Unit 64: Group recommends thinning grand fir thickets.

Unit 66: Group recommends pre-commercial thinning the top of the unit as it is relatively open already and implementing more intensive treatments as the stand transitions to higher densities lower down.

DOG and ROG

Group recommends treatments in the DOG to help restore these stands or keep them going longer. Recommended treatments include light thinning and ladder fuel reduction around large trees. Another example the group supported was taking an 18" grand fir next to a large p pine to make the stand/ old growth more resilient. Group recommends a field trip be taken to sites in the DOG. Prescribed fire should be considered wherever possible.

More background/ discussion:

Unit 210: Good old growth character and diversity. This unit has great cover but it is at risk. There are some big scattered and clumped p pine and a few big doug fir and grand fir.

Choked with medium size grand fir now. Spots in here where it would make sense to thin, spots where it would make sense to thin just around larger trees in the units. Prescriptions could be varied within the unit. Where we can leave places unlogged, great BUT also place a treatment in here if at all possible because otherwise we're going to lose these big trees. This unit is a possibility for the creation of whiteheaded habitat.

Extent of prescribed fire

Group is supportive of prescribed fire and recommends more fires as detailed in the DOG section and other sections in this document. In addition, the group recommends prescribed fire as possible in the white areas on the map between treatment areas in the far west of the project area.

More background/ discussion: the group would like to continue to work with the Forest Service on burn plans as they are developed, particularly as it relates to the choice of spring or fall burns.

Soil compaction

Group recommends preventing impacts where possible instead of mitigating impacts. For example, logging could be done in winter or over slash or with lighter-on-the-land equipment.

More background/ discussion: soil compaction seems like more significant issue in the southern portion of the project area.

Timeline

October 26: Dad's creek comments compiled and delivered to FS (Emily and Alden)

January 17: FS final proposed action and completed scoping

End of January: BMFP final response to FS proposed action

Feb 29: FS completes specialist reports

March 14: BMFP comments on specialists' reports to FS

March 30: BMFP feedback on draft document to FS

Between now and the next meeting, the BMFP would like to help the FS do outreach on a public meeting and also participate in a stream restoration field trip. Group members would also be interested in a trip to unit 210 - Irene will follow up with Eric on potential field trips.