

Riparian Rule Subcommittee Package #2: Protecting Cold Water and Achieving Desired Future Riparian Conditions

This document outlines the major elements of the prescription package as discussed in Attachment 4.

Stream extent to which prescriptions apply: Small & Medium Salmon, Steelhead, and/or Bull Trout (SSBT) Streams

Geographic Regions to which prescriptions apply: Coast Range, South Coast, Interior, and Western Cascades¹

Final Harvest Prescriptions

Option A – Passive Management (voluntary)

- 50 foot & 70 foot no-cut RMAs for Small & Medium SSBT, respectively
- Up to 50% of required in-unit wildlife trees can be left in a 20 foot wide zone adjacent to RMAs
- Wildlife trees should be well-distributed along the length of the 20 foot zone, or to cover canopy gaps in the RMA

Option B – Variable Retention (Active Management) (regulatory)

- 50 foot & 70 foot RMAs for Small & Medium SSBT, respectively
- Standard target Small: 80 ft.² / 1,000 feet; Active target: 50 ft.² / 1,000 feet
- Standard target Medium: 160 ft.² / 1,000 feet; Active target: 100 ft.² / 1,000 feet
- Targets should be met with trees well-distributed throughout the RMA
- Hardwoods can be counted equal to conifers²
- In-unit wildlife trees used as in the Passive Management prescription (Option A) – voluntary component
- Minimum conifer tree count: Medium – 40 trees; Small – 25 trees (per 1,000 feet, well-distributed)

Alternate Practices

Option C – RMA Thinning (regulatory)

¹ Interior and Western Cascades would keep 50' & 70' RMA widths, but basal area targets and tree counts would be adjusted, as they are under current Small and Medium Type F stream rules.

² Hardwood conversions also kept as an Option

- Encourage early/mid rotation thinning to promote wind-firm trees and understory development
- Use a trees per acre or per 1,000' standard, rather than basal area targets
- Thinning should be done far enough in advance of final harvest (10 or more yrs.) to grow trees past standard basal area targets
- Thinning should result in trees well-distributed throughout the RMA
- Hardwoods treated the same as in Option B

Option D – Testing Prescriptions similar to Regional Forest Practices Committee Options

Test south-sided buffers and one-sided/staggered harvests, similar to the RFPCs:

- South-sided buffer: (Voluntary)
Use prescription Option B Variable Retention (Active Management), but shift half of new basal area on the north bank to the south bank, and retain the other half of the new basal area on the north bank.
- One-sided/staggered harvest: (Voluntary with effectiveness monitoring)
One side of the stream would be harvested to current FPA standards while leaving the second side unharvested for the full RMA width protected (50 and 70 feet for small and medium F streams, respectively). A green-up period of four years would pass to allow riparian vegetation to respond, and then the second side could be harvested according to the current FPA rule language.

In General

- With regards to the Protecting Cold Water standard, the goal for these prescriptions is to reduce the rate of PCW exceedances, not prevent them entirely
- Allow landowner to pick the option that best suits conditions on the ground and his/her silvicultural regime, while encouraging a focus on riparian vigor and desired future condition(s)
- All distances are slope distances, for purposes of measuring RMA widths
- All current rules that apply to Small and Medium Type F streams not mentioned above continue to apply (trees leaning over the channel, etc.)
- According to the 2015 ODF Annual Performance Report, summaries for Key Performance Measures #8a-c (Forest Stream Water Quality), “All streams and rivers on forestlands regulated under the Forest Practices Act receive protection appropriate to the beneficial uses of those water bodies”. The KPM results lend credence to the argument that RipStream findings in the private forest study sites represent a small and temporary post-harvest stream temperature issue, deserving of a moderate fix.

Board Policy Connections

- Prescriptions include options for active management of riparian areas that are focused on the advancement of desired future conditions, as stated in current Board policy and FPA rule
- RMA thinning promotes new habitat and shade sources from the development of understory vegetation, which is reflective of desired future conditions rule language
- Active management prescriptions allow some tree harvest within the RMA, which is a current Board policy goal
- RMA thinning can provide opportunities for in-stream large wood placement, a Board policy goal

Landowner Engagement

Maintaining 50' and 70' RMA widths and separate standards for Small and Medium SSBT streams will reduce the risk of M 49 claims and keep landowners and our Regional Forest Practices Committees in the game...as teammates, rather than adversaries. That will also make voluntary implementation of new prescriptions for some distance upstream of the end of SSBT use more likely.

A robust education and training program will need to be developed for landowners, operators, Regional Forest Practices Committees and Stewardship Foresters to build common understanding about the intent and the letter of the new rules/voluntary measures.