

THE News Note



SUMMARY OF WILDLIFE TREE AND DOWNED LOG RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

The Oregon Department of Forestry administers Forest Practices Act provisions that require retaining standing trees and downed logs for wildlife in certain types of harvest areas. This summary alerts forest landowners and operators so they can comply with requirements and avoid citations and fines. This brief summary provides only the general nature of the rule requirements. Details of the requirements should be obtained from careful reading of the applicable sections of the statute. (Forest Practices Act, ORS 527.675, revised 1996) Forestry Department offices can supply copies.

Retaining snags and live trees in harvested areas provides important habitat for many wildlife species, especially cavity nesting birds. Some birds hollow out cavities for their nests (such as woodpeckers) and some birds use the abandoned cavities (such as swallows). These birds are important components of Oregon's forests and help control populations of tree-damaging insects.

Downed logs provide habitat essential to small mammals that spread seeds and beneficial fungi that contribute to growing a new forest. Such logs also help to maintain soil moisture and return nutrients to the soil.

Forest operators are required by the Forest Practices Act to retain two snags or green trees and two downed logs or trees per acre in certain harvest units that total more than 25 acres in size. If the planned harvest unit, combined with any adjacent prior harvest unit on the same ownership, is less than 25 acres, leaving wildlife trees, snags, or logs is not mandatory. However, voluntary retention of wildlife trees, snags, and logs is always encouraged to benefit forest productivity and wildlife habitat.

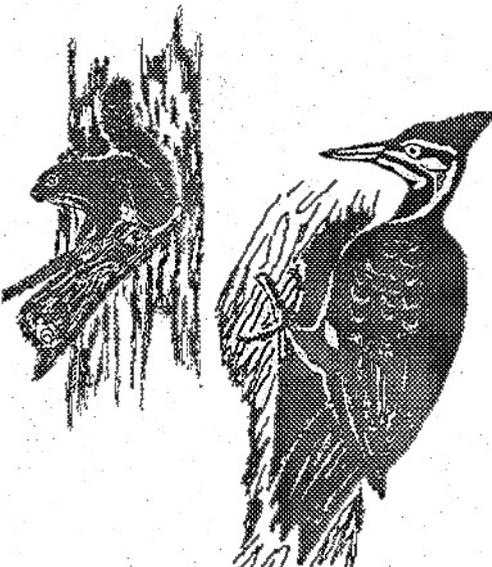
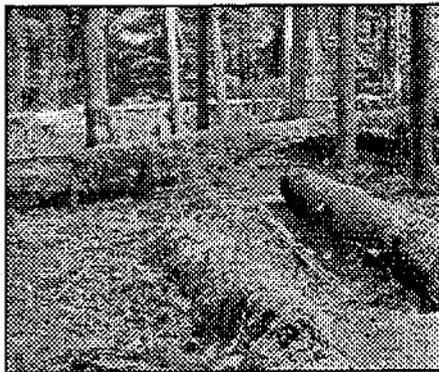
The total basal area per acre of trees, 11 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) and larger, remaining after harvest determines if wildlife tree and downed log retention is required. Basal area means the area of a cross section of a tree or group of trees at breast height, expressed in square feet. Like the reforestation rules, this basal area threshold varies by site productivity. The thresholds for each site class are lower for wildlife trees, snags, and downed logs than for reforestation. That means harvested areas may require either wildlife trees and logs, or reforestation, or both, depending on how many trees are left on the site and their size.

Site productivity can be measured directly or determined from soil surveys available from the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. Other sources are the USDA Forest Service plant association guides, Oregon Department of Revenue western Oregon site class maps, or professional consulting foresters.

The snags or green trees



Snags and logs are important wildlife habitats



Snag residents contribute to forest productivity

The bottom line is that if fewer than the following number (or basal area) of trees per acre remain on the site, wildlife trees, snags, and downed logs are required.

TREE STOCKING LEVELS BELOW WHICH WILDLIFE TREES, SNAGS, AND LOGS ARE REQUIRED

Site Productivity Cubic Foot Site Class	Trees 11 inches DBH, or	Basal Area of Trees Larger than 11 inches DBH
Site Class 1, 2, and 3	50 trees per acre, or	33 square feet of basal area per acre
Site Class 4 and 5	30 trees per acre, or	20 square feet of basal area per acre
Site Class 6	15 trees per acre, or	10 square feet of basal area per acre

retained must be at least 30 feet tall and at least 11 inches DBH.

Each downed log must be at least 6 feet long and contain a total volume of at least 10 cubic feet. Logs containing 20 cubic feet or more count as 2 logs. A 6 foot log that is 17 inches in diameter on the small end contains 10 cubic feet.

At least half of the green trees, snags, and downed logs left on the

site must be conifers.

The retained trees, snags, and downed logs may be clustered or distributed across the harvested area. The department may require up to 25 percent of the wildlife trees to be retained near fish bearing or domestic use streams within the harvest unit. The location and species of retained trees and logs

may be modified upon approval of the Department of Forestry. Modifications may be allowed for: 1) substituting hardwood species for conifer species when managing for hardwoods; 2) substituting additional materials in one unit for those required in another.

For additional details regarding wildlife trees, snags, and logs, refer to the following publications available through the Department of Forestry:

- "Forest Practices Act Changes: Update." March 1, 1996 (Contains ORS 527.675)
- "Managing Small Woodlands for Cavity Nesting Birds." Woodland Fish and Wildlife Project. World Forestry Center, October 1991.
- "Oregon Guidelines for Selecting Reserve Trees." Oregon-OSHA, et.al., 1995.

The Forest Practices Forester at the local Oregon Department of Forestry office can answer detailed questions about wildlife trees, snags, and downed logs.