



Eastern Idaho Aspen Working Group Group Memory



BACKGROUND

The Eastern Idaho Aspen Working Group met on Friday, August 11, at IDF&G's Upper Snake Regional offices to go on a tour of eastern Idaho aspen communities. The tour began at 8:30 a.m. and concluded at approximately 4:00 p.m. Tour participants included: Denise Adkins (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Dr. Dale Bartos (Forestry Sciences Laboratory), Bob Brammer (Idaho Department of Lands), David Burton (Aspen Delineation Project), Jessica Davis, Gregg Dawson (Idaho State Department of Agriculture), Kari Dingman (Sand Creek Wildlife Management Area), Aren Eddingsaas (Shoshone-Bannock Tribes), Don Edgerton (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Mark Gamblin (Idaho Department of Fish and Game), Scott Gamo (Idaho Department of Fish and Game), Keene Hueftle (South East Idaho Environmental Network), Jennifer Jackson (Idaho Department of Fish and Game), Kim Jackson (Harriman State Park), Mike Jackson, Ron Kay (Idaho State Department of Agriculture), Darwin Jeppeson (Bureau of Land Management), Curtis Keetch (Dubois Ranger District), Joe Lowe (Bureau of Land Management), Wendy Lowe (P2 Solutions), Theresa Mathis (Bureau of Land Management, Kay Merriam, Darryl Meints (Idaho Department of Fish and Game), John O'Neill (Idaho Department of Fish and Game), Dennis Page (Idaho Department of Lands), Rob Mickelsen (Caribou-Targhee National Forest), Jennifer Miller (Idaho Conservation Data Center), Mark Orme (Caribou-Targhee National Forest), and Garth Ross (Oregon Bureau of Land Management). This document summarizes information presented on the tour.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the tour of the Aspen Working Group included the following:

- Examine stands of aspen that have been treated and how they are responding to those treatments
- Look at aspen stands that may be in need of treatment and discuss treatment alternatives.

Pictures from all projects visited during the tour are attached.

THOMAS DRAW PROJECT

The first project visited is called the Thomas Draw Aspen Enhancement. In 2000, a majority of the conifer trees in the project area were removed from the site. No burning was conducted. One portion of the project area was fenced (electric fencing) to keep livestock away; another portion was not fenced. The most recent stocking survey showed 3500+ trees per acre. (See attached pictures.)

BEACON BASIN PROJECT

The second project visited is called the Beacon Basin Broadcast Burn. In 2002, a majority of the conifer trees in the project area were removed from the site. Slash was left scattered across the units. A broadcast burn was conducted in early spring in 2004, while the soils were still very moist. The area was partially fenced with electric fencing to exclude livestock. The most recent stocking survey showed 2500+ trees per acre. (See attached pictures.)

PLEASANT VALLEY PROJECT

The third project visited is called the Pleasant Valley project. The other three projects visited on the tour were on USDA Forest Service land; this project was on land owned by the Idaho Department of Lands. Dennis Page explained that the Idaho Department of Lands require that all lands be managed to generate revenues for the state. This particular project was a mechanical thinning project that was conducted to generate revenues for the state. It also resulted in aspen regeneration as a bonus. No exclusion of livestock had occurred. (See attached pictures.)

BROOKS CANYON PROJECT

The fourth (final) project visited is called the Brooks Canyon Aspen Enhancement. This project is planned for the future. The total project area is approximately 4400 acres in size. Plans call for the removal of conifer trees in an area of approximately 800 acres. A broadcast burn would be conducted the following spring. The Forest Service would enter into a stewardship contract to result in treatment of the aspen in the rest of the project area. (See attached pictures.)

CONCLUSIONS

Visiting aspen experts, Dr. Dale Bartos and David Burton were impressed with the success of aspen regeneration projects visited over the course of the tour. In closing discussions, it was noted that all completed projects that the Working Group visited had resulted in aspen regeneration. While mechanical timber removal resulted in aspen regeneration, both fencing and prescriptive burning resulted in even more notable regeneration. Management/policy decisions must consider the costs of treatment options against budgetary considerations and expected public reactions along with project size and other site-specific considerations.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Wendy Lowe will prepare and distribute a group memory of the August 11, 2006 tour.