

Appendix H

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Tripod Fire Salvage Project

Post-fire Vegetation Recovery Assessment for Livestock Grazing

CHANGES BETWEEN DRAFT EIS AND FINAL EIS

No change

This Appendix documents a rationale that will be used to assess range condition to determine when to allow grazing to occur. This process is not part of this EIS decision but is displayed to help analyze cumulative effects of grazing in the project area. This assessment lists environmental conditions and recovery indicators which are to be used as items to consider when assessing recovery of the burned area. Many of these items interrelate and it is not expected that all will meet simultaneously. This assessment should be used on a site by site basis. It is based largely on two interagency technical references: *Grazing Management Processes and Strategies for Riparian–Wetland Areas* (Wyman, S. et al. 2006) and *Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health* (Pellant, M. et al. 2005). These should be used to facilitate the assessment.

Burned areas need rest from livestock grazing for the following reasons:

- To allow for surviving plants to recover
- To allow desirable plant species to regenerate
- To allow litter to accumulate

The key attributes to monitor:

- Soil/Site Stability (Erosion/Deposition)
- Hydrologic Function (Hydrology)
- Biotic Integrity (Vegetation)

Upland Vegetation Recovery Considerations:

There has been a history of good livestock distribution within the pasture

There is limited livestock access to vegetation recovery areas – consider level of access to high severity burned areas, aspen stands, etc.

The availability of transitory range is increasing

Plant vigor is restored (Carbohydrate reserves are replenished). Indicators: production, foliar cover, standing biomass, abundance, root development

Aspen: regeneration is in balance with site potential with most of the dominant leaders above the browse zone (approximately 1.5 m)

Normal to above normal annual soil moisture for plant vigor and seed germination

Invasive plants are not limiting soil stability or decreasing desirable plant community composition relative to site potential.

Salvage Harvest: Consider the level of vegetation recovery within areas of disturbed soil from harvest activities.

Grass seedlings have been established and no longer need protection
Vegetation composition is in balance with site potential. There is a diverse composition of upland vegetation relative to the pre-fire community – forbs, grasses, and shrubs are present (deep rooted perennials are present).
Seed production is restored. Plant capability to produce seed or vegetative tillers is moderate to completely restored relative to post fire climatic conditions.
There is litter on soil surface to protect against raindrop impact, to detain overland flow, increase infiltration, and buffer against moisture loss. Amount is what is expected for the post fire site potential and weather

Riparian Vegetation Recovery Considerations:

There is limited livestock access to riparian areas (how steep, drift barriers, jing-jang, etc.)
There are functioning upland water developments that help draw cattle away from riparian areas
There has been a history of good livestock distribution within the pasture
Vegetation composition is in balance with site potential. There is a diverse composition of riparian vegetation – forbs, grasses-grasslikes, and shrubs are present.
Invasive plants are not limiting soil stability or decreasing desirable plant community composition relative to site potential.
Species present indicate maintenance of riparian soil moisture characteristics
Streambank vegetation is comprised of those plants or plant communities that have root masses capable of withstanding high streamflow events
Streambanks are armored with rock
Riparian plants exhibit high vigor
There is an adequate source of coarse and /or large woody material (fire killed snags present)