

Biodiversity

Goal: Forest productivity is to be maintained in all harvest areas. Monitor the restocking of all lands that have received a regeneration harvest and determine if restocking has occurred within five years of final harvest.

Objective: Areas not adequately restocked with desirable tree cover within a five-year time frame are to be identified and action taken to see that failed areas are reforested. Changes in silvicultural practices may be necessary in these areas.

Background: Obtaining regeneration that meets the stocking guidelines and certification standards identified in the Silvicultural Practices Handbook (FSH 2409.17) is rarely a problem on stands receiving a regeneration harvest on the Tongass National Forest. Unpublished research and field observations indicate there are specific site conditions and opportunities that may indicate a need for artificial regeneration (this is usually planting and only rarely artificial seeding). Some situations to be particularly aware of are as follows:

- alluvial sites;
- cutover, open canopy, or sparsely stocked sites with an established ground cover of dense vegetation such as salmonberry, devils club, or grass;
- sites lacking a satisfactory seed source within approximately 660 feet from the center of the cutting unit;
- sites with lower productivity that presently have a plurality of cedar and in which there is a desire to retain a cedar component in the stand;
- stand compositions where change is needed, such as stands planned for harvest or already harvested where the adjacent seed source contains a high incidence of fluted hemlock;
- artificial regeneration is rarely needed and is prescribed on less than 5 percent of the harvested acres; and
- stands needing reforestation for other considerations, such as visually sensitive areas in which immediate regeneration through artificial reforestation would lessen the visual impact; or using genetically improved stock to increase the genetic makeup of the treated stand.

Biodiversity Question 1: Are harvested forested lands restocked within five years following harvest?

Annual Monitoring process:

All harvested lands are examined following treatment. Artificially seeded or planted areas are examined one and three years after treatment. Examination occurs three growing seasons after treatment in areas where it is anticipated that natural regeneration

will be adequate. Stands are certified as stocked if the third growing season survey indicates that the areas meet stocking standards. Artificial regeneration is prescribed if the third-year survey indicates that natural regeneration is highly unlikely. A R10 certified silviculturist recommends Regeneration Certification for every unit harvested that meets or exceeds the Stocking Guidelines in the Silvicultural Practices Handbook - FSH 2409.17. Certification records are reported annually through the District Ranger to the Forest Supervisor. Certification records are kept in stand files at the Ranger Districts and in the Forest Service Activity Tracking System (FACTS), an electronic database.

During FY 2009, 1,309 acres were examined to determine the condition of the regeneration in harvested areas. All 1,309 acres were certified as stocked. Based on FACTS data, timber harvest that occurred in FY 2004-2006 was evaluated, and is displayed in Table TM-1. In Fiscal Year 2004, 527 acres were harvested on the Yakutat Ranger District, as a part of the Situk Blowdown re-offer Timber Sale. An additional 1,354 acres were harvested the following year on the same timber sale. Since Yakutat Ranger District is remote and logistically expensive, regeneration surveys were deferred to Fiscal Year 2010 in order to minimize costs and logistical difficulties. All lands harvested prior to FY 2004 have been certified as re-stocked. With the exception of 527 acres in Yakutat which are scheduled to be evaluated this year, all acres harvested in FY 2004 have also been certified as re-stocked. No regeneration issues are anticipated and these acres will be reported next Fiscal Year (2010).

Monitoring Results: 2004 Harvests

All stands harvested in 2004, with the exception of the 527 acres harvested on Yakutat Ranger District, were certified as restocked in FY2009 or an earlier fiscal year. The remaining acres are scheduled to be certified this FY2010.

Tongass National Forest Ranger District	Final Harvest Reported in FY 2004	Adequately Stocked Acres	% Adequately Stocked Acres	Acres Not Adequately Stocked	% Not Adequately Stocked
Petersburg RD	124	124	100	0	0
Wrangell RD	41	41	100	0	0
Hoonah RD	30	30	100	0	0
Yakutat RD	527	To be examined FY2010			
Craig RD	7	7	100	0	0
Ketchikan-Misty RD	214	214	100	0	0
Thorne Bay RD	793	793	100	0	0
Total	1736	*1209	100	0	0

Table 1. Status of Reforestation After Final Harvest FY 2004

Evaluation of Results:

The results show that 100 percent of surveyed forestland that was harvested in 2004 was adequately restocked within five years. The additional 527 harvested acres not surveyed are expected to be certified as successfully regenerated in the next Fiscal Year.