



Management for Traditional Objectives

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The Idaho Forest Stewardship program encompasses a wide range of landowner goals and objectives. Landowner management goals are as varied as Idaho is diverse. The Idaho Forest Stewardship Program is designed to help each landowner meet their personal management goals.

Traditionally, many landowners have managed their resources for increased timber productivity. Active management can increase the production of timber products by increasing tree growth and reducing the losses due to insects, disease, fire, and wildlife damage. The opportunity to increase other forest resources without significantly increasing costs or reducing timber productivity is sometimes overlooked.

An intensive forest management plan might include a commercial thinning every ten to fifteen years. The trees chosen for removal should be selected on individual tree factors rather than largest size only. Trees which are dead and dying, insect infested, diseased, deformed, or overcrowded should be cut. Thinning produces income for the landowner, but retains a viable crop of trees for harvest again in ten to fifteen years.

Occasional snags can be left on the site for cavity nesting birds and small mammals. Snags do not compete with the remaining crop trees for sunlight or nutrients, but they do provide nesting spots for some wildlife species. Thinning will provide increased sunlight to the forest floor. This encourages tree seedlings, brush, shrubs, and forage used by domestic livestock and wildlife.

Forests, like financial investments, find strength in diversity. Management for one species is a highly risky investment. If an insect or disease attacks a single species forest, you may lose a large portion of your trees. If, however, you manage for many different species, a specific disease or insect will have a hard time destroying your investment. You have also braced your "investment portfolio" against log market changes. The diversity that benefits timber production also provides diverse habitats for a variety of wildlife species and increases forest health and beauty.

Many landowners are surprised at how fast their trees grow after a thinning on their property. Actually the amount of usable ground has increased. New forest roads are made and old ones are opened up. Skid trails become new hiking trails. The forest appears more spacious and viewable. Wildlife becomes abundant and more visible due to the openness of the forest.

By recognizing other benefits of active forest management, the production oriented forest landowner can also enjoy the benefits of a healthy managed forest: wildlife, recreation, and natural beauty.

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