

WDFW Wildlife Area Management Planning Overview



Clay Sprague, Lands Division Manager

Information is subject to changes
and amendments over time.

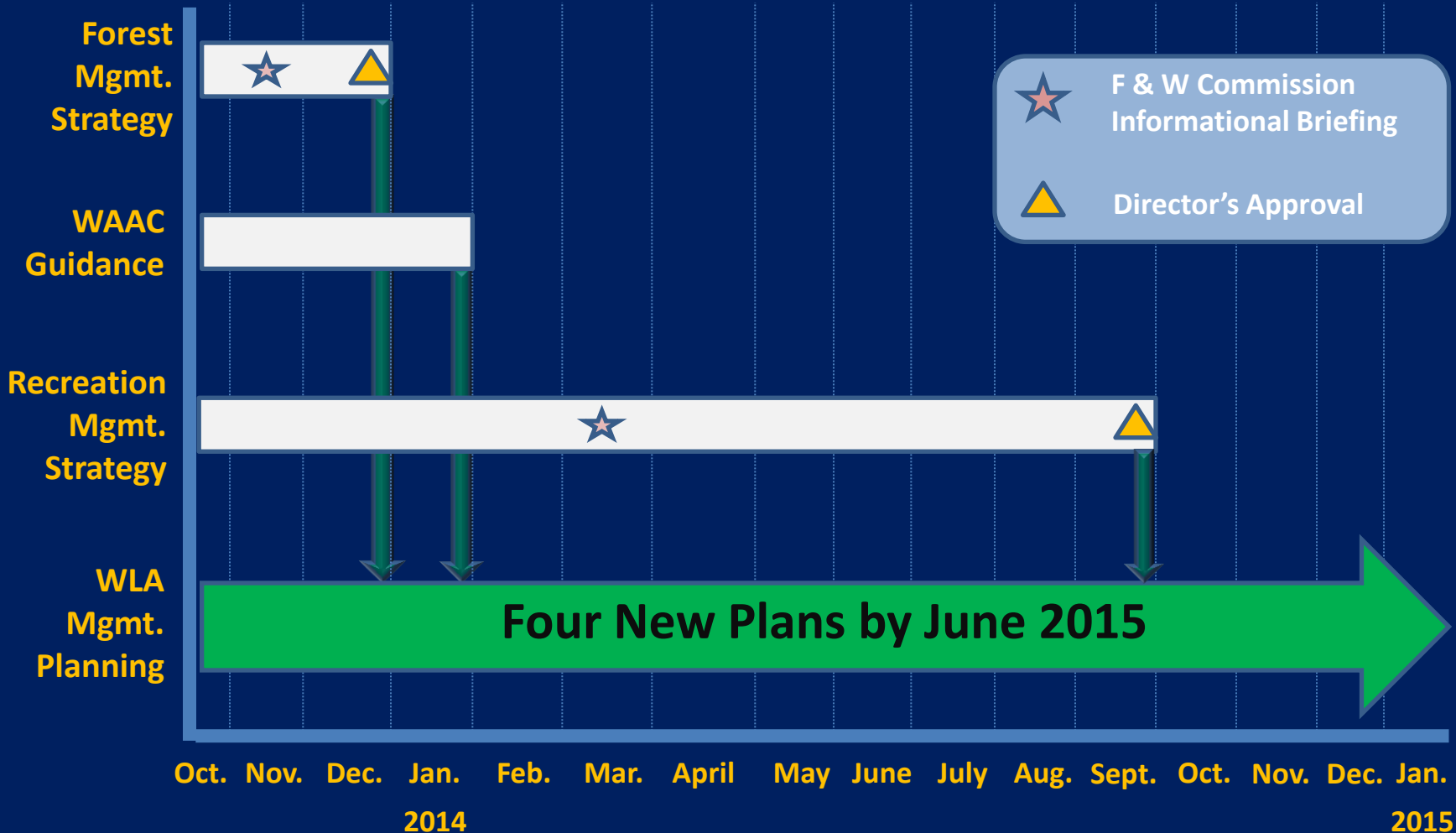
Nov. 8-9, 2013, WDFW
Commission Meeting Presentation

WDFW Wildlife Area Management Planning Overview

New WLA Planning Process with emphasis on :

- Forest Management
- Public Outreach and Participation
- Public Use and Recreation

WDFW Wildlife Area Management Planning Overview



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WDFW Wildlife Areas Forest Management Strategy



Richard Tveten, Restoration Ecologist
Wildlife Program

Preview

Describe

- Forests
- Management Issues
- Past/Present Management
- Draft Forest Management Plan
 - Desired Future Conditions
 - Recommended Approaches

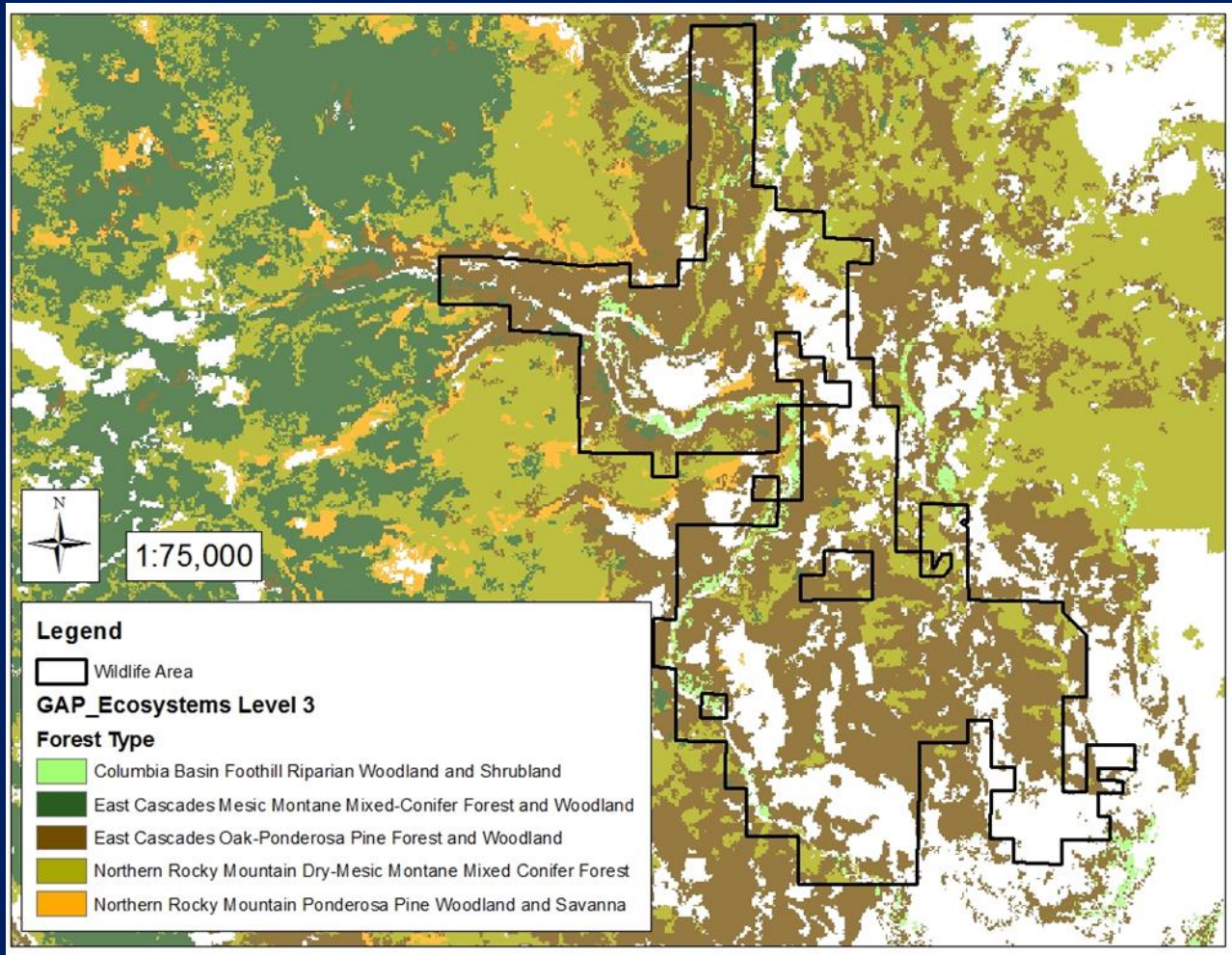
Inventory – Essential for Strategic Management

Basic Inventory – 200,000 acres with 22 ecological systems

- 7 systems (74% of acres) - require frequent fire
- 10 systems (15% of acres) - infrequent fire
- 5 systems (11% of acres) – riparian

Detailed inventories developed for priority areas

Example - Forest Type Map



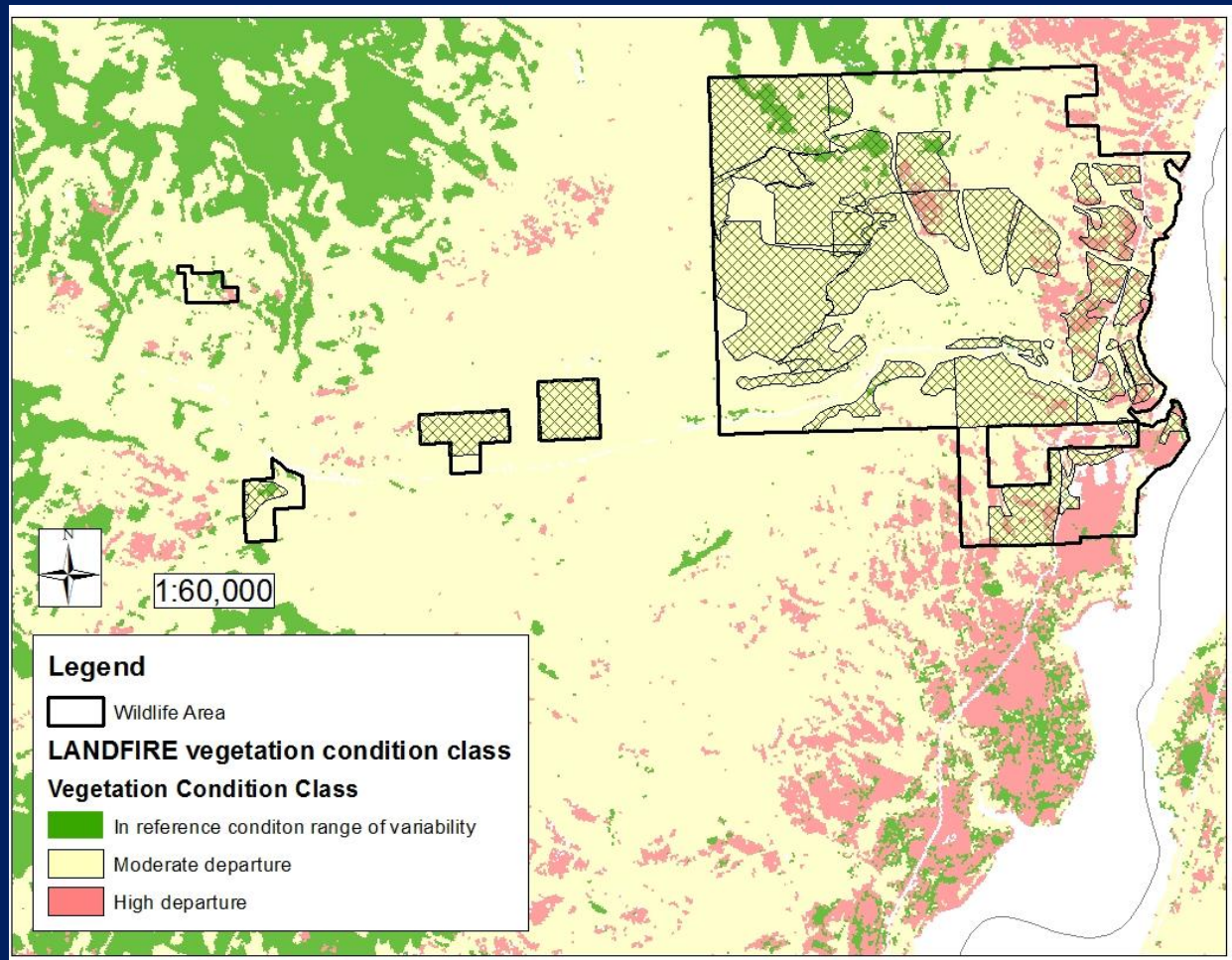
Why Actively Manage Forests?

Projects needed to counter the widespread effects of fire exclusion and past timber management which have

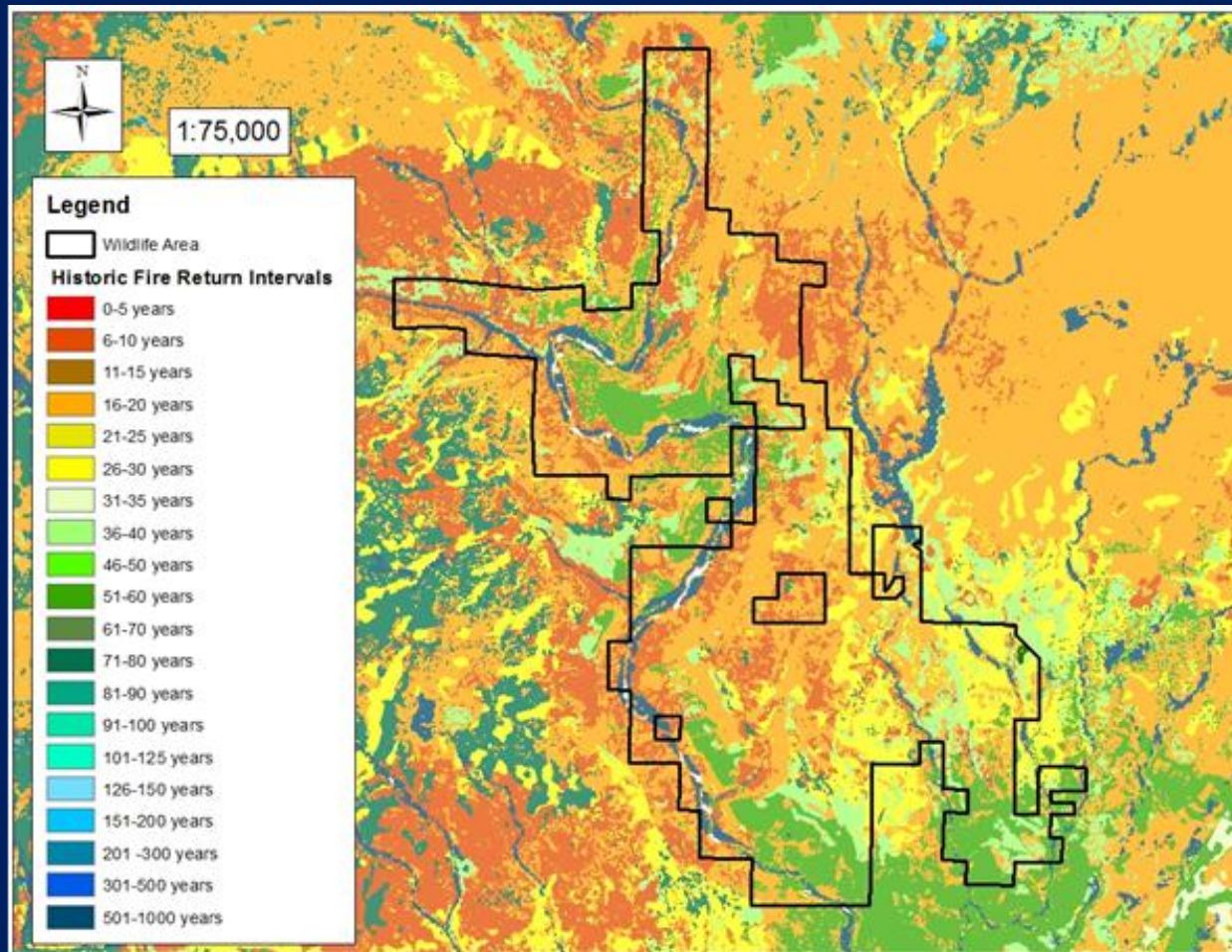
- Degraded ecological integrity
- Harmed priority species
- Increased risks (Wildfire and insects)

Salvage projects support management activities and local economies.

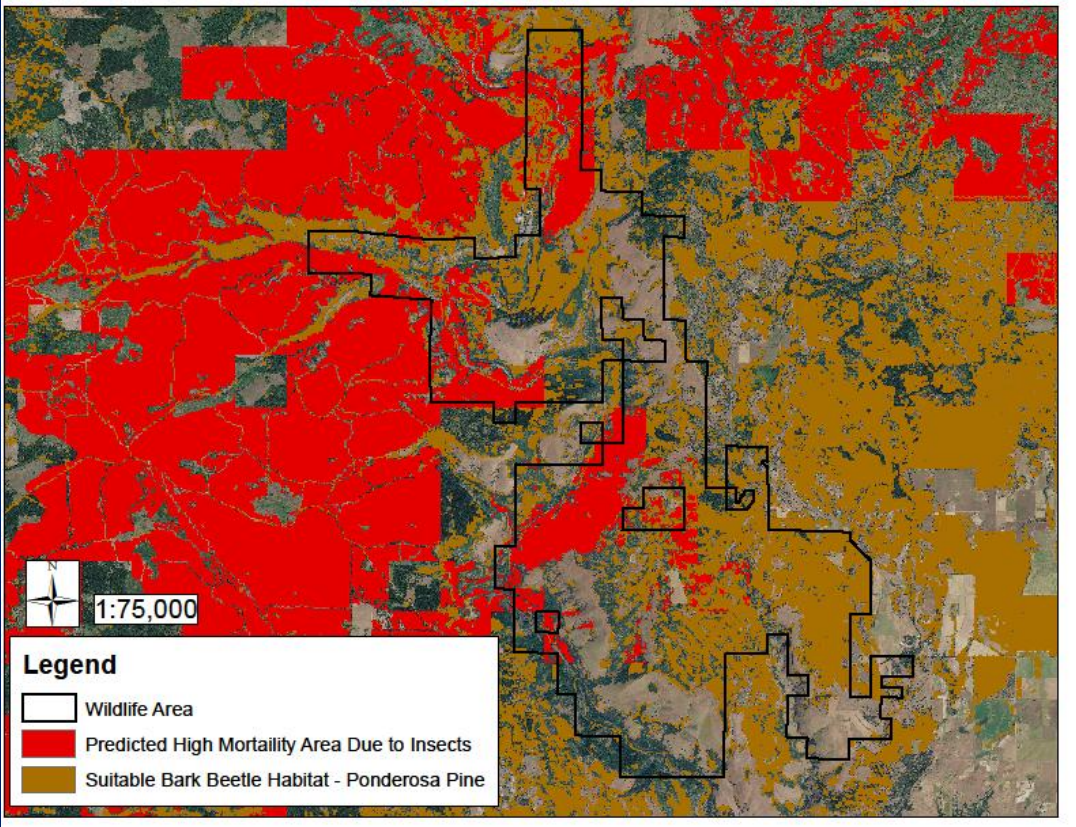
Example – Condition Class Map



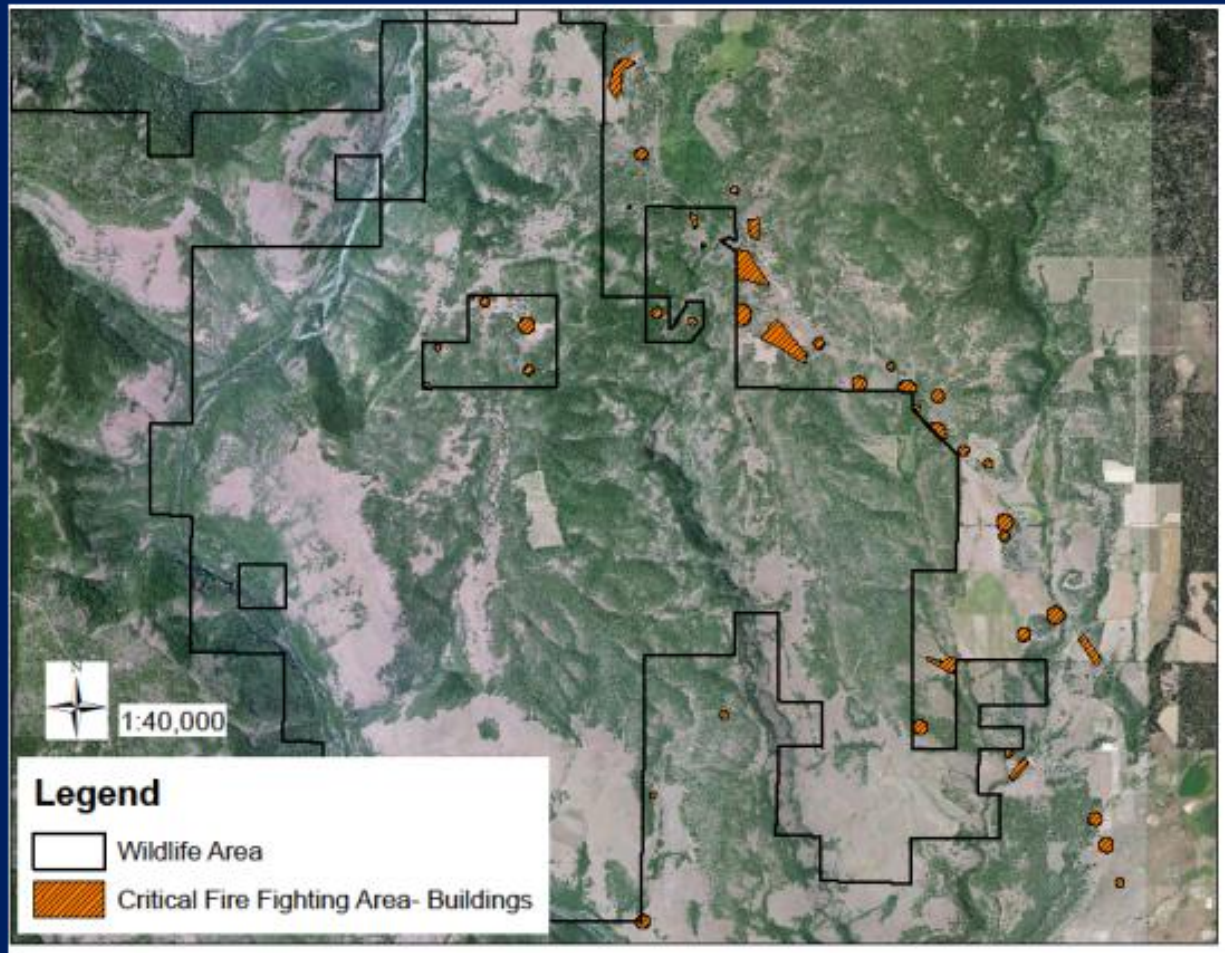
Example – Historic Fire Regime Map



Prolonged Fire Exclusion Impacts



Example – Fire Risk Map



Fire in Dry Forests: Thinned vs. Not



Colockum Tarps Fire. komonews.com



Prescribed fire following restoration thinning: Sinlahekin Wildlife Area

Past/Present Management Levels

2000-2012

–Treat 950 acres/year (<0.5%)

1962-1999

-Average 141 acres/year.

Proactive treatment levels (thinning and/or prescribed fire) should be much higher if we are going to manage for historic ranges of variability and address risks.

Management Direction for Fire Dependent Conifer Forests

This is mostly what we need to do.



Currently 3% - should be 70%

Management Direction for Infrequently Burned Conifer Forests

Limited to date



Management Direction for Oak Woodlands

Small acreage but priority habitat



Management Direction for Aspen Woodlands

Small acreage but priority habitat



Project Example: Methow



Project Example: Sinlahekin



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Why Create a Strategy?

- We must be strategic when addressing forest management needs.
- Help secure forest management funding.
- Better enact agency mission and policy (5309).

WDFW preserves, protects and perpetuates its forests as fish and wildlife habitat, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.

Plan Outline

- Values and priorities
- Inventory
 - Forest types
 - Existing conditions
- Vision (desired future conditions)
 - Ecological
 - Social/economic (per conservation initiative)
- Management strategy
- Project procedures/methods

Collaborators/Resources

Internal

- Wildlife (Lands, Science & Diversity) and Habitat
- Headquarters and regional staff

External

- DNR
 - Natural Heritage Program
 - Forest health and inventory staff
- Okanogan/Wenatchee National Forest
- LANDFIRE (USDA/BLM)
- The Nature Conservancy

Desired Future Conditions

Largely reflect historic range of variability

- High ecological integrity
- Benefit priority species
- Resilient and adaptable
 - Wildfire
 - Insects
 - Climate change

General Forest Management Approaches

Forest condition	Management approach
High integrity or good trajectories	Protect trees and let them grow
Natural processes (usually fire) altered or eliminated	Active management – periodic thinning and/or prescribed fire.
Acquired plantations lack structure and are on poor trajectories	Active management – usually one time thinning
Disturbances create an abundance of dying/dead trees and safety or environmental hazards	Conduct salvage operations

Defining Suitable Management Areas

Filters

- Where can projects improve habitat and reduce risks?
- Where are projects allowed?
- Where is management technically feasible (access, steepness)?

Note: Economic and social support are considered later when deciding to move forward with projects because they fluctuate over time, sometimes independently of forest management needs.

Management Needs Estimate

About 100,000 acres could benefit from projects to improve ecological integrity and manage risks.

- Fire dependent conifer forests of Eastern Washington
 - Backlog: 60,000-80,000 acres could immediately benefit from thinning.
 - Maintenance: 3,000-6,000 acres/year in perpetuity.
- About 6,000 acres of oak woodlands, prairie edges and aspen woodlands require periodic treatment to counter fire exclusion-enabled conifer invasion.
- About 2,000-4,000 acres of plantations could benefit from a one-time entry (Not urgent).

A Master Needs List Will Be Maintained

Work will be completed consistent with

- ecological and risk management priorities
- public support
- economic viability (self funding or subsidized)
- staffing resources

Master list will be used to track

- urgent needs
- work completed compared to needs

Typical High Priority Areas

Projects (mostly in Eastern Washington dry forests) which can yield large

- Improvements in ecological integrity
- Benefits to priority species
- Reduction in risks of
 - Severe wildfires, especially in the Wildlands Urban Interface
 - Severe insect attacks, especially in forest health hazard warning areas.



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Moving Forward

- Complete SEPA
- Finalize statewide strategy
- Attain director approval
- Strategically complete/maintain detailed inventories on wildlife areas (ongoing).
- Finalize wildlife area-specific plans as part of plan updates (2014-2016).
- Create/Maintain master needs list reflecting inventories, wildlife area-specific plans, major disturbances and work completed (ongoing).
- Implementation
- Partnering with adjacent land owners