

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/20/2021 8:00:00 AM

First name: Andrew

Last name: Thoms

Organization: Sitka Conservation Society

Title: Executive Director

Comments: Ted, Ben, and Gordon:

I'm hoping that there is a strategy for cuts on timber LUDS/YG landscapes that creates more heterogeneity across the landscape to ensure habitat for deer and wildlife as we begin going in for 2nd harvests on these landscapes. I know that there has been a lot of talk about it and that the silvicultural staff and teams have been working a bit closer with the wildlife staff on strategies. I'm not sure how productive that work has been. I know that the danger on the silvicultural side is that they get into places where they are "hurry-up and go because this-or-that buyer needs timber" and then they get pressure from unnamed-AFA-contractors or AFA board members or Senator Murkowski's office and good intentions and strategies are left behind. These were the issues outlined in the timber audit last year and I'm not sure if that is the current situation[hellip] hopefully Ben and Ted and the team have the staff and the resources to look at these sales across the landscape and are starting to think and plan on longer time-horizons that just meeting immediate buyer demands[hellip] I know that there has been a lot of time and resources into the YG inventory, stand classification, and long-term stand dynamics of where volume will be produced. I do not think that has quite translated yet into a longer term strategy, but I could be wrong. I know we had plans for doing that in the next phase of the challenge cost share, but that is unfunded right now.

I'm CCing Todd Brinkman on this email who has been doing some research on that topic of heterogeneity across the landscape and a couple of his researchers who are working on this topic on a couple landscapes on the Tongass (POW and Hoonah I think). Also Bonnie Bennetsen who is lead in the wildlife program. I'm also including some of their work specific to YG strategies for wildlife (mostly on non timber LUDs) and the deer-forest infographic Todd and his colleagues developed.

Ben and Ted: The attached document is listed as "exhibit 3" and is the YG management guidelines for stands with a wildlife management objective. Do you have an exhibit 1 or exhibit 2 that outlines the young growth management guidelines for landscapes with the wildlife management considerations? I believe that the sales that Gordon is referring to are being done under an EA so I'm sure that some work has already been done on these topics that you are leaning on?

If that work hasn't been done, please let me know what resources you all need to get it done so that we can try to advocate to get you those resources to work on this topic.

Thank you,

Andrew Thoms