

Changing resources require intensive management—Continued from page 1

timber on 322,000 acres of commercial forest. While the area and volume increased by about half, about 1.9 billion board feet had been cut and removed during that period.

The increase in the volume of standing timber is primarily due to the reduction of losses and the increases in growth in the forest. The Warm Springs forest can continue to provide income and employment, as well as other benefits, forever.

Changes in log size

Past management of the timber resources has increased the volume of timber but it has also changed the appearance of the forest. One result of that change, as on all forests in the Pacific Northwest, has been smaller trees. The Bureau now requires timber purchasers, WSFPI in this case, to pay for all the sound material in trees down to a six-inch top. Small logs come not only from small trees, they also come from large ones. Most trees, whether they are five feet in diameter at the ground or 12 inches, will have a six-inch top.

Between 1940 and 1949, the average 16-foot long log that came out of the woods on the reservation had a diameter of 20 inches at the small end. By 1980, that average log had a diameter of only 14 inches at the small end. Forestry forecasts that the average 16-foot log will be only nine-and-one-half inches in diameter at the small end during the period from 1990 to 1999. In fact, so many small logs are coming out of the woods that it has become a major problem to WSFPI, as the accompanying story explains.

New forest planning effort

In 1987, the Tribal Council adopted resolution #7410. This action recognized concerns of tribal members that more effort was needed to protect and improve the quality and quantity of water, the number of deer, elk and fish, and the amount of cultural food plants and other resources. In Resolution #7410 the Council directed that the next forest management plan be based on a joint analysis of all natural resources within the forest area of the reservation by the Branch of Forestry and the Department of Natural Resources with input from the Culture and Heritage Department.

That resolution, together with a recent BIA policy for the development of integrated resource management plans on all reservations, has led to the present planning effort.



Called the Integrated Resource Management Plan, or IRMP, the plan will be based on the present condition and needs for improvement of all natural resources within each major watershed on the reservation, including the McQuinn Strip. The integrated resource planning team is divided into working groups, each with a chairperson. Each group is responsible for collecting and analyzing data for a particular forest resource.

The working groups and chairpersons are: Culture and Heritage, Dan Mattson; Fish, Mark Fritsch; Range and Soils, Ross Racine; Recreation and Rural Housing, Dale Parker; Timber, Dale Sarkkinen; Water, Deepak Sehgal; and Wildlife, Terry Luther.

By analyzing the information by watershed—all the land draining into the stream—instead of for the reservation as a whole, better information will be available than has been used in the past. More effective prescriptions for managing all resources will be possible. More flexibility can be used in identifying areas within the forest where priority needs to be placed on production of specific resources.

According to Bill Donaghu, BIA Forest manager, the final recommendation on the annual available timber harvest will be made jointly by all of the technicians, based on what needs to be done to achieve a desired production of all resources in the forest.

Concerns have been expressed that the needs of WSFPI determine the annual cut. Donaghu said, "The calculation of the annual cut is based on our professional assessment of resource information. The annual cut is not determined on the basis of how much timber the mill needs."

Bob Macy, WSFPI General Manager, agrees. "The BIA, as trustee, and the Tribal Council, tell us how much timber we can cut. Our job is to process that volume as efficiently as we can."

During development of the plan, the team will hold a series of public meetings. In the first, planned for next fall, the team will share information they have gathered with the tribal public. In the spring of 1990, the team will again meet with tribal members to get their input on alternatives the team has proposed for managing the resources.

The final report and recommendations are due to the Tribal Council and the Superintendent before the end of 1990. A series of stories in Spilyay will keep tribal members up to date on the progress of the planning and on the planning process itself.

What will the forest look like?

What the forest will look like in coming years is of concern to many tribal members. The term "tree farm" has often been used to describe the forest of the future. If "tree farm" means that the land owner (the Tribes) manages the land to get the most desirable mix of various crops (timber, water, fish, wildlife, grazing, food plants), then it is a good term to use. The Warm Springs forest of the future, however, will not look like a tree farm that has row upon row of even-sized trees, like Christmas trees. The forest of the future will look different in different places and at different times.

For example, streamside protection areas will be maintained to improve and protect the stability of channels and the quality and quantity of water that is produced. Fish are primarily dependent on these factors. Protection of streamside does not necessarily mean no log-

ging. More often it means those areas will be logged less frequently, removing less of the existing volumes.

The forest will look different in those areas that need to be managed to provide thermal cover for deer and elk. Thermal cover, which provides protection from extreme temperatures, ideally is found in timber that is at least 40 feet tall with some shorter trees mixed in. As the larger trees mature and are cut, other areas will be designated to provide this important element of big game habitat.

Timber production will receive priority on other areas. Some of those may be suitable for growing certain sizes and quality of trees to be used for products that have a higher value.

Additional diversity will be provided in the Conditional Use Areas set aside by the Tribal Council where natural biological processes will continue with little or no interference by man. Examples of these are the Mt. Jefferson area and the High Lakes recreation areas.

Through careful attention to the desires of tribal members, the Integrated Resource Management Plan can provide the benefits from the forest that are valued by most tribal members.



Spilyay Tymoo

Staff Members

MANAGING EDITOR..... Sid Miller
 ASSISTANT EDITOR..... Donna Behrend
 PHOTO SPECIALIST/WRITER..... Marsha Shewczyk
 REPORTER/PHOTOGRAPHER INTERN..... Saphronia Coochise
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Spilyay Tymoo, PO Box 870, Warm Springs, Oregon 97761

PHONE:

(503)553-1644 or (503)553-1161, extensions 274, 285, 321 or 286

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Looking to the future

Small-log mill gains approval—Cont. from page 1

Construction and operational financing is expected to be via WSFPI reserves and up to \$11 million in loans to WSFPI from a commercial bank. Low interest, tax-free loans are being sought. Profits from the new facility are expected to pay for the facility in less than seven years.

Total employment at the mill is not expected to be affected by these changes. Some shifting of workers from the existing stud mill and large-log mill to the new facility, however, will be necessary. It is expected that harvesting the increasing supply of small timber will require more employment in the

woods. Smith has indicated that it may be possible to produce additional revenue and employment by further remanufacturing lumber from the new mill facility.

State-of-the-art equipment will be used in the new facility. Initial sawing of logs will be done with an "end-dogging log feed" system. This system will use video scanning and computer analysis to position both the log and band mills to obtain maximum lumber and value recovery from each log. Computer-assisted equipment will then trim boards to width and length and automatically sort the lumber.

The mill will still be labor inten-

sive through the use of machine operators to saw material with defects that cannot be detected by computers. Manual labor will also be used to handle complex lumber sorts required by the wide variety of high-value products.

There are four major reasons that the mill task force recommended the modifications to the mill. First, the existing mill is losing money because it is not able to process the current supply of small logs efficiently. Secondly, the new facility will provide a good financial return with a relatively low

investment. Thirdly, the production capacity of the new facility will be well suited to the current Warm Springs timber supply. It could also operate economically if there were moderate upward or downward revisions in the log supply.

Finally, this mill has the flexibility to produce a wide variety of high-value products in both domestic and export sizes. This provides the ability to shift production with market opportunities and to add remanufacturing facilities which could produce additional revenue and employment.