



April 5, 2015

Blue Mountains Restoration Strategy Team Lead
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Ms. Shlisky:

The National Wild Turkey Federation support the efforts of the USDA Forest Service to accelerate the pace and scale of forest restoration in Blue Mountains of Oregon and Washington. We accept that these actions will result in healthier, more resilient forests less susceptible to stand-replacement wildfire and disease. Active forest management is the preferred tool to reach desired stand conditions while providing economic opportunities, commodities, and protecting cultural, socioeconomic, and wildlife resource values in and around the forest. A large-scale EIS is important in facilitating the accelerated pace and scale of restoration in the Blue Mountains.

Wild turkeys are an abundant and important resource in the Blue Mountains for consumptive users and the economic benefit they bring to local communities during the spring and fall hunting seasons. A recent estimate from ODFW found 12,896 spring turkey hunters spent \$15,436,512 in the state in 2014. The Blue Mountains is one of the most productive wild turkey hunting areas with excellent access to public land. Please consider the following Best Management Practices to promote and maintain wild turkey habitat when designing vegetation management plans:

1. Preservation of potential roost trees based on these observed characteristics
 - Wild turkeys prefer to roost on Northeast to Southeast facing slopes
 - Roost in areas that have been commercially thinned areas more when compared to pre-commercially thinned areas
 - Roost in areas with no timber harvest or no harvest > 5 years prior
 - 5-13 trees/roost site is preferred
 - Prefer to roost on upper 1/3 of slope or on ridge top
 - Prefer roost trees on slopes of 20-30%
 - Roost sites have greater basal area, lower tree densities, and trees with larger dbh
 - 37cm dbh preferred, but will roost in trees as small as 25cm dbh
 - Roost trees have horizontal limbs averaging 12.6m from the ground
 - Winter roosts typically have more trees for more birds
 - Roost trees often have horizontal branches spaced at 2-3' intervals
2. Ponderosa pine stand management for wild turkeys
 - A good prescription for timber harvest/management would be > 21m²/ha basal area, 25-35cm average dbh (9"-14"), dispersed in upper 1/3 of slopes and scattered across management unit

- Open to mid-canopy is typical of mature stands and often correlates with increased pine seeds
- 10%-25% of forest should be in openings with escape cover 300' from edge
- 30% slopes or greater are preferred for roosting and nesting
- On >30% slopes, maintain 60% or greater overstory, and no more than 10% timber harvest at one time
- Lop and scatter is preferred to slash piling
- Uneven aged stands are preferred to even aged stands
- Prescription should protect deciduous trees and shrubs at all times
- Manage for 2-6 roost sites/mi²
- Ponderosa Pine Management = 20% openings, 25% of stand at >100ft²/ac basal area, 20% of stand at 80-100 ft²/ac basal area, 35% of stand 50-80 ft²/ac basal area
- Manage for roost sites rather than roost trees
- Buffer 132' feet around known roost trees
- Try to establish new roost trees with timber management prescription

References

M. A. Rumble. 1992. Roosting habitat of Merriam's turkeys in the Black Hills, South Dakota. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 56: 750-759.

Hoffman et. al. 1993. Management Guidelines for Merriam's Wild Turkeys. *Colorado Division of Wildlife* 18: 1-24pp.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



/s/ Mikal Moore

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