15 Year Accomplishments of the Native Fish HCP

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Plum Creek – Weyerhaeuser Merger

- Two companies merged this past February
- 13 million acres timberland in 20 states
  - 769,000 acres in MT
Native Fish HCP Footprint
NFHCP Goals and Objectives
Conservation Categories

56 Commitments

• Roads
• Riparian Management
• Grazing
• Land Use Planning
• Legacy and Restoration
• Administration
• Adaptive Management
Road Accomplishments

- **Upgraded:** 7,116 miles (1998-2015);
- **Decommissioned:** 210 miles;
- **Treated Hot Spots:** 196
  - Fish Passage (93)
  - Erosion (103)
- **New Construction:** 585 miles (2001-2015)
  - Mostly in period 2001-2006
  - 20 miles in past 5 years
Road Treatment Effectiveness

- 48% Reduction in Road Sediment Delivery to streams;

- Base erosion rates validated for local parent materials;

- Road network modeled to contribute 5-10% above natural background;

- Fines in spawning gravels in treatment streams similar to, or improving, relative to control streams.
Riparian Trends – 500 Permanent Plots

- **Average Diameter**
  - 2001: 11.6 in.
  - 2015: 12.2 in.

- **Relative Density**
  - 2001: 20.5
  - 2015: 21.5

- **Canopy Cover**
  - 2001: 82.2%
  - 2015: 86.2%
Stream Temperature Effectiveness

- 2 Intensive Watersheds;
- 30 Reach-Scale Harvest Studies;
- Buffers highly effective at controlling stream temperature increases.
Implementation Monitoring

- **Annual and 5-Year Reporting**
- **Internal NFHCP Audits (2001-2003)**
- **FWS Monitoring (2002-2010)**
  - 217 riparian timber harvests
  - 60 grazing lease inspections
  - 385 road inspections
- **Montana Forestry BMP Audits**
  - 95 harvest units audited since 2000
Land Use Planning

- **NFHCP facilitated conservation outcomes.**
  - 550,000 acres into public or conservation ownership;
  - 143,000 acres of conservation easements
  - NFHCP transfers to both TNC and Stimson Lumber Co.
  - Riparian protection deed restrictions on 1500 acres of riparian corridor along fish-bearing streams.
Changed Circumstances - Fires

- 22 wildfires since HCP signed
- Changed circumstance plans developed within 30 days.
  - Assess biological impacts and identify restoration needs;
  - Storm-proofing roads, upgrading culverts;
  - Appropriate salvage;
  - Prompt reforestation

- 1-5°C increases in annual maximum stream temperatures.
Riparian Restoration – Upper Thompson River
Conclusions

- NFHCP has been a highly successful partnership between the Service, Weyerhaeuser, FWP, TNC, Univ. Montana, riparian ecologists, and others.

- Habitat conditions improving across the landscape:
  - Road sediment delivery reduction;
  - Stream connectivity;
  - Riparian function;
  - Numerous restoration projects;

- Unanticipated benefit of NFHCP is facilitating funds for permanent conservation;

- Changed circumstance planning effectively mitigated post-fire impacts to native trout.

- Adaptive management and monitoring framework enables structured periodic reviews to ensure HCP is on track.

- Results communicated: over 20 technical presentations and 16 published papers.
Questions?

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