Stewardship Area 9

Size: 17.5 acres

Overview

This stewardship area is predominantly a 60-70 year old conifer stand of mostly western red cedar. A very limited logging entry in the past removed a few of the largest trees giving space to enable trees near openings to grow more rapidly than others. Thus, this area has a higher percentage of larger diameter cedar trees than the stand to the south in Stewardship Area 11, which hasn't had any tree removal and is more uniformly, tightly spaced. The small openings scattered in the tree canopy also allows enough light to support brushy vegetation and young red alder. This increases diversity for wildlife. The trail through this unit is an old logging railroad grade, which is wide, nearly level and wheelchair accessible. There is an abandoned farm road along the south boundary of this area and north boundary of area 11, which has revegetated through natural succession to mostly brush and alder during the past 15-20 years.

Vegetation

The majority (approximately 85%) of this area is a conifer stand dominated by good quality western red cedar, that are approximately 60-70 years old, with a range in DBH of 6-28 inches. Dominant and co-dominant trees have a DBH greater than 10 inches, and average 20

inches. They are tightly spaced at approximately 12 feet apart. There are a few scattered larger western red cedar, Douglas-fir and western hemlock trees that are 70-90 years old. The western red cedar and Douglas-fir have a DBH of 30-40 inches and are good quality; the western hemlocks have a DBH of 14-28 inches and are fair quality. There are also several 70-90 year old big leaf maples with DBH of 20-24 inches, and a few scattered 60-70 year old red alder with a DBH of 14-20 inches. These trees are generally poor to fair quality, and the red alder is starting to break apart. Spacing of all trees in this stand is irregular, but averages 8 to 10 feet. In areas of densest canopy and shade, understory is nearly absent with only scattered sword fern. In areas with more light there are increased densities of sword fern, as well as salmonberry, elderberry, and stinging nettle. There are a few holly trees scattered throughout.

Stewardship Area 9: Typical conifer stands

A small percentage (approximately 15%) of this area is predominantly young red alder and brush located in the scattered small holes in the conifer canopy. These holes were created by logging and blow down of trees. The alder naturally reseeded in varying densities, following the creation of openings, and is generally 18 years old and younger with a DBH of 2-6 inches. Spacing is somewhat irregular, but averages approximately 5 feet; larger trees (>4" DBH) are spaced approximately 10 feet apart. Many of the alder are not growing vigorously because they receive filtered sunlight. Understory is mostly dense salmonberry, stinging nettle, elderberry and sword fern. There is also some invasion of Himalayan blackberry in areas.

There are numerous (>10/acre) relict, old-growth stumps and downed logs, and some scattered more recent blow-down trees in this area.

Wildlife

Allowing natural succession to occur in this stand will result in the eventual climax community of primarily a closed canopy coniferous forest. There should continue to be a few small openings created, though, as trees die and fall. These small openings would be stocked as they are at present with mostly red alder and brush, adding a degree of diversity. The ecosystem benefits for wildlife provided by such a stand can be described as follows. Wildlife species such as Douglas squirrels, red crossbills, and bald eagles will use the upper coniferous forest canopy. As alder, maple, and suppressed and shorter lived conifer trees die, they create snags for use by insects, woodpeckers and cavity nesting birds. These trees will subsequently fall, along with an occasional blowdown of a healthy tree, adding to habitat on the forest floor, which is used by over 100 wildlife species. The early successional vegetation in the small openings would be used by wildlife species such as songbirds and butterflies that feed on berries, fruits, nuts and nectar. Forest canopy and brushy species provide essential cover for many species. Areas of open understory create travel corridors for larger mammals. Large older trees create roosting areas for bats. For a listing of wildlife species in this area see Appendix I.

Objectives/Alternatives

- Natural succession will be allowed to occur in this long lived cedar stand. This will result in the eventual climax community of primarily a closed canopy coniferous forest. Dominant western red cedar trees will continue to grow which should result in magnificent specimens. There should continue to be a few small, scattered openings created as trees die and fall to offset some of the crown closure. This will maintain a percentage of early successional and understory plant species by allowing sunlight to reach the ground surface in areas.
- This area is functioning as a diverse wildlife habitat area. The vegetation provides breeding, foraging, refuge and nesting habitat for a variety of wildlife species. The stand will eventually be a haven for wildlife species which are primarily canopy dwellers and species that depend on decomposing downed wood. There should continue to be some brush and browse for other species, though.
  Retain all downed wood and snags, unless they pose a safety hazard.
- Control invasive vegetation along existing trails as necessary to keep them open. Remove holly trees as it occurs.

Field Observation Notes

1. Cedar groves with little vegetation underneath
2. Relict, old-growth stumps and logs
3. A 100 year old Douglas-fir tree along trail with a 40 inch DBH
4. Wood pecker holes in large western red cedar east of trail with trail on old railroad grade