



File Code: 1920/2400/2600/5100

Date: February 25, 2005
February 25, 2005

Route To: (Resource Specialists)

Subject: Clarification of Targhee and Caribou RFP Created Opening Definitions

To: District Rangers, Branch Chiefs

During implementation of both the Targhee and Caribou Revised Forest Plans (RFP), there have been numerous questions regarding the definition of the term “created opening”. The following explanation clarifies the intent of the direction in both RFP’s.

The overarching goal of both RFP’s is to move the landscapes towards historic ecosystem processes and patterns and maintain them to be dynamic, sustainable, and resilient. Both plans emphasize restoring and maintaining vegetative communities within their historic range of variability and allowing processes such as fire to play their natural role. In the past several years, the Forest has emphasized aspen restoration treatments and wildland fire use to meet these goals.

While developing the Wildland Fire Use Guidebooks and designing aspen restoration projects, forest managers have raised questions regarding how or if the “created opening” definitions apply to these type projects. **The intent of both plans was that created opening limits only apply where commercial timber harvest is done using even-aged silvicultural methods.** The aim of prescribed and wildland fire use is not to remove commercial timber. The maximum created opening size guidelines in the RFP do not apply to prescribed or wildland fire areas. The intent of the direction in both RFP’s is that acres in nonstocked and seedling stages following natural or prescribed fire would be considered when calculating the amount of created openings in a given area, as required in Targhee RFP Management Prescriptions 5.1.4 and 5.4. The size-class structure resulting from the fire also applies towards the size-class distribution guideline for goshawks in both RFP’s.

In addition, there has been some confusion regarding the inclusion of fire in the definition of created openings in the Targhee RFP. In order to be consistent with the intent, the definition in the glossary of the Targhee RFP (RFP G-9) should read:

“Created Opening – An opening in the forest cover (nonstocked and seedling stages) created by the application of even-aged silvicultural practices (clearcuts, seed cuts of a shelterwood, or group selection). Acres in nonstocked and seedling stages following natural or prescribed fire in forested vegetation would also be considered when calculating the amount of created openings in a given area but fire is not subject to created opening size limitations.”



This is not a decision, it is clarification of the original intent of the direction in the RFP's based on project analyses. Thus, this is not subject to further analysis or administrative review. Please insure that all employees involved in planning vegetation management projects are aware of this clarification. If you or your staff have any further questions, please contact Cheryl Probert, Forest Planner, at (208) 557-5821.

/s/ Jerry B. Reese
JERRY B. REESE
Forest Supervisor

cc: Regional Office, P-A-L