

Appendix 3

2003 ASPEN SURVEYS

Bill Long, Wildlife Technician, Lewis and Clark National Forest
Gary Hanvey, Wildlife Biologist, White Sulphur Springs and Belt Creek Ranger Districts

Approximately 202-acres of quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) areas were characterized by a sampling scheme developed by J. Fredericks, former Wildlife Biologist, Kings Hill Ranger District. Using Arcview themes (B1000 and R1400) provided by Eldon Rash, the Rangeland Manager in the Lewis & Clark S.O., I located general areas to sample in the Indian Creek and Moose Creek drainages. I further defined the search for aspen by simply scouting-out areas with 1999 aerial photos that suggested the presence of aspen in the canopy. Since most aspen patches are not delineated as distinct "stands" in the TSMRS and since most are relatively small in size (0.5-5 acres), I modified Frederick's sampling procedure by non-randomly locating sample plots within aspen patches to assure the belt transects would fall within the perimeter of an aspen patch and not open ground. One important note on recording Overstory Age: this is not a precise value due to the presence of heartrot or core samples that were mangled and unreadable, so my data reflects the minimum age I could ascertain. Additional aspen areas I intended to scout if I had time were in the Cabin and Pole Creek drainages of Sheep Creek, an area west of Moose Pass in Section 22, small patches west of Highway 89 between Crawford Creek and Slaughterhouse Gulch and near the head of Blanding Gulch. I suspect these last three drainages may have examples of non-cattle grazed aspen due to their remote locations, but this is merely speculation. Eldon Rash's coverage themes B1000 and R1400 also show many more acres of *Populus*, primarily in the Sheep Creek drainages, that may be suitable for surveying. The following is a summary of the locations of plots and some qualitative notes pertinent to the sampled parameters. Refer to the data forms for specific tree tallies, ground coverages, etc. The easiest way to locate these sampled areas is to use the accompanying area maps along with the UTM's with the GPS datum set to NAD27Central.

Stand A 34-acres 3-plots lower Moose Creek

This stand was prescribe-burned in 2001 resulting high conifer mortality. Surviving aspen are over 90-years old with a 5-20% canopy closure based on ocular estimates. Has a wet area of sedge meadow with reduced seedling stocking. Currently being grazed by ~24 cows.

Stand B 6-acres 1-plot lower Moose Creek

Not currently grazed and no evidence of grazing during the past few years. Over 80-years old with 65% canopy closure based on ocular estimate.

Stand C 4-acres 1-plot lower Moose Creek

Not currently grazed and no evidence of grazing during the past few years. Over 70-years old with a 40% canopy closure.

Stand D 76-acres 4-plots along 6416 road

This stand is being treated with a seasonal electric fence enclosure however ~24 cows breached the fence and lightly grazed the interior for approximately 5-weeks during July and August. Over 100-years old with canopy closures between 25 and 60% and declining as mature trees succumb to old-age and decay.

Stand E 55-acres 4-plots Indian Creek

Currently being grazed. Ages between 60 and 90-years. Canopy closures typically between 50 and 65%. Plot 1 seedlings appear heavily grazed. Plot 3 has a canopy closure of 5% and particularly high die-off of 1-3-foot tall seedlings.

Stand F 6-acres 1-plot 1-mile west of Stand E

Currently grazed. Over 50-years old with canopy closure of 30%. Canopy appears healthy and vigorous.

Wolsey Creek Plots access off 6412 road

Stand G is in an 11-acre aspen patch with 1 plot. Recently grazed though not certain about this season. Over 80-years old aspen. PICO codominate with aspen in the canopy with PICO accounting for 60% of the canopy and about 90-years old and an overall canopy closure of 30%.

Stand H is in a 10-acre aspen patch with 1 plot. Located at a meadow edge receiving heavy cow grazing. Aspen age is over 100-years. PICO make up 50% of the canopy and they aged at between 100 and 115-years old.