

# Special Inventory and Monitoring Projects for FY 2013

## Ashland Forest Resiliency Project Monitoring – Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District

### MONITORING ITEM: *EFFECTIVE GROUND COVER*

**GOAL(S), MONITORING QUESTION(S):** Implementation monitoring assesses whether treatments were implemented according to design, including appropriate mitigation measures and management constraints. AFR stakeholders elevated the importance of securing baseline data to inform the Project design and, if gathered in the future, to document changes resulting from the treatment for future reference and how these changes compare to planned changes. The following questions form the basis for the implementation monitoring basic to the Project:

1. Were treatments implemented according to design criteria, including appropriate mitigation measures and management constraints, outlined in the plans for the Project and the subsequent decision?
2. Were fire hazard reduction treatments implemented according to the schedule outlined in the decision document?
3. Did the treatments meet or exceed key land use plan *standards and guidelines* for direct effects?
4. Did the resultant vegetation and fuels conform to conditions intended in the plans for the Project?

Question 1 and 3 are particularly relevant to effective ground cover and are the focus for this monitoring.

### FINDINGS and EVALUATION:

Skidder-yarded commercial harvest units were targeted for implementation monitoring of effective ground cover in FY2013, as well as one helicopter commercial harvest unit. Baseline, pre-project implementation data had been collected on four units in 2012, and post-implementation effective ground cover monitoring was targeted for these units. Also the pre- and post-harvest monitoring was collected on two new units (including the helicopter unit, 67E).

#### Effective Ground Cover (EGC)

Effective ground cover data was collected in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy, utilizing the Soil Cover Protocol in *Roadside revegetation: An integrated approach to establishing native plants* (Steinfeld et al., 2008) and the Cover Monitoring Assistant Program. More information about methods can found in the detailed monitoring reports located in the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest Soils Program Files.

**Table 1. Effective ground cover summary of 2012 & 2013 monitoring results.**

Previously reported 2012 results are shaded.

AFR Unit (acres)	Yarding System	Pre-Implementation mean EGC	Post-Implementation mean EGC	Most limiting Erosion Hazard Class in Unit	Minimum EGC required per ROD & LRMP
281 (73 ac.)	Skidder	98%	To Be Determined	Moderate	>60%
282 (16 ac.)	Skidder	99%	97%	Moderate	>60%
283 (5 ac.)	Skidder	99%	98%	Moderate	>60%
67F (26 ac.)	Skidder	99%	97%	Moderate	>60%
67E (54 ac.)	Helicopter	98%	97%	Severe/V.Severe	>70%
65 (68 ac.)	Skidder	97%	94%	Moderate	>60%

All units prior to skidder-yarding and helicopter activities, and post-implementation monitoring, show effective ground cover standards and guidelines were met, and are well within the requirements for both

the Record of Decision for the AFR Project, and the Rogue River National Forest LRMP (as amended by the NWFP). Utilizing slash over bare soils is showing to be effective at protecting the soil surface from rain splash soil particle displacement and sheet wash erosion, as well as effectively preventing rill erosion.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Complete post-implementation effective ground cover monitoring data analysis on AFR Unit 281. Continue with monitoring of new units as implementation of the AFR Project progresses.