

5251 - TIMBER PRODUCTION CAPABILITY CLASSIFICATION

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Subject

5251 - TIMBER PRODUCTION CAPABILITY CLASSIFICATION

1. Explanation of Material Transmitted: This is a new Manual which explains Timber Production Capability Classification. This material has never before been released in Manual Format and is designed to assist Technicians and Managers responsible for the Timber Production Classification Process.
2. Reports Required: None.
3. Material Superseded: None.
4. Filing Instructions: File as directed below:

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None

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.01 Purpose. The purpose of this Manual Section is to describe timber production classification and the capability classification process.

.02 Objectives. The objective of this intensive inventory is to provide managers with in-place information concerning the forest land for which they are responsible. More specifically, this inventory is designed to identify timber growing sites and classify their productive capability, and to provide management recommendations for the capability classes to be used in the development of resource management plans, timber management plans, allowable cut plans, and short-range forest development and timber harvest plans.

.03 Authority. (See Manual Section 5000)

.04 Responsibility.

A. The Director. (See Manual Section 5000)

B. The State Director. Interprets Headquarters Office policy for statewide applications; augments procedural guidance through issuance of Instruction Memoranda, Manuals and Handbooks; ensures compliance with Bureau policies. Responsible for training District Personnel and administration, review, and analysis of the intensive inventories to insure consistency of procedures and standards between Districts.

C. The District Manager. Executes the forest management planning program and ensures that the forest ecosystem is managed within the context of current Bureau policies. Directs the intensive inventories. Responsible for all classification decisions made as a result of intensive inventories and for updating and maintenance of intensive forest inventory data and records.

D. The Area Manager. Has the responsibility of accepting or rejecting the inventory crew's capability classification and recommending management classification. The Area Manager makes the final classification decision.

.05 References. (See Manual Section 5000)

.06 Policy. To classify the forest land, and to define and delineate relative suitability or non-suitability for the production of timber on a sustained-yield basis. Partitioning is site specific based upon physical and biological characteristics and not economic or multiple-use consideration.

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.1 Timber Production Classification. The initial phase of the intensive inventory makes an in-place, basic classification of lands within the Sustained Yield Area. It is not intended to make decisions on other conflicting resources uses. The task is to determine which Lands are suited or not suited for sustained yield timber production.

.11 Capability Classifications. All BLM Lands within each Sustained Yield Unit shall be organized using the Capability Classifications listed below:

- A. Nonforest Lands. Areas within the forest zone that are not capable of maintaining at least 10 percent stocking of forest trees (native woody plants that regularly attain a height of 20 feet or more), and those lands which have been converted to nontimber uses. Examples are rock outcrops, roads, and urban areas. These lands are automatically excluded from the timber production base.
- B. Forest Lands. Lands which are now, or are capable of being, at least 10 percent stocked by forest trees and are not currently developed for nonforest use.
- C. Commercial Forest Lands. All forest lands that are capable yielding at least 20 cubic feet of wood per acre per year of commercial tree species.
- D. Woodland. Land producing trees that are not typically utilized as saw timber products and sold in units other than board feet. Woodlands are those forest lands which are not included in the commercial forest land allowable cut base. These lands can include both commercial forest lands and noncommercial forest lands. Woodland includes lands formerly defined as noncommercial forest lands, and those lands that cannot be reforested within 15 years (now Category I and II lands).
- E. Fragile Areas. Sites whose timber growing potential is easily reduced. As an example, the loss of timber growing potential resulting from soil erosion and mass wasting. These lands can be classified nonsuitable Forest Land or suitable Forest Lands if fragility can be mitigated.
- F. Category I. Sites can be reforested within 5 years.
- G. Category II. Sites that can be reforested between 6 and 15 years.

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- H. Suitable Commercial Forest Lands. Commercial forest lands determined to be capable of sustaining long-term timber production.
- I. Nonsuitable Commercial Forest Lands. Those lands incapable of sustained long-term timber production (fragile nature or inability to adequately reforest) under existing harvest or reforestation technology. Nonsuitable forest lands were classified as withdrawn under earlier Timber Production Capability Classification (TPCC) guidelines. These lands would now be transferred to the woodland category.

.12 Classification Process. The general procedures to be followed in making a timber production capability classification are outlined in this section. Detailed procedures for making specific classifications are prepared by individual State Offices.

A. Technical Recommendations. These are initial recommendations organizing lands using the classifications listed in section .11 of this Manual. The purpose is to determine whether forest lands are capable of producing timber on a sustained-yield basis and suitable for planned timber management. The development of these recommendations are the responsibility of the District staff specialist in forestry who is also responsible for ensuring quality control and coordination from each of the several specialists important to these recommendations.

1. Pre-field Work. The objective is to accumulate existing data and information, including, but not limited to, soil maps, aerial photos, topography maps, existing TPCC information, habitat type data, type maps, etc. Final product format must be developed to ensure maximum utility of information for management purposes.
2. Field Work
 - a. Basic Unit. The basic classification unit is an area of land and not the timber stand. TPCC is based upon the sites capability to produce wood fiber, and not on the vegetation currently occupying the site, e.g., several stands may be contained within a single TPCC classification or conversely.
 - b. In circumstances where small inclusions of one classification occur within another, classification should be based upon the dominant site characteristics. Minimum unit size will be 10 acres, except in those situations where isolated islands of commercial forest land require an exception.

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- c. Timber Production Capability Classes and Symbols. Illustration 1 displays those map symbols and definitions which are standard and relate only to permanent physical characteristics inherent to the site. States may make additions to these symbols to reflect specific situations. Districts must confirm and coordinate additions with their State Data Processing Center to ensure uniformity.

B. Office Work.

- 1. Documentation. Upon completion of all Field work, information must be clearly displayed on maps or overlays with all acreage figures checked against the master title plant.
 - a. In narrative form, document all Technical recommendations. This should include a discussion of those factors which support the recommendation, such as Fragile Site Factors (i.e., slope gradient, soil, and ground water), and Reforestation Factors (i.e., moisture and frost). The final classification recommendation must be approved by the Resources Area Manager.
- 2. Management Decisions.
 - a. Timber Production Base. The Timber Production Base used to compute allowable cut levels is an outgrowth of decisions made in the foregoing process and land-use decisions made in the planning System. The Timber Production Base is not a fixed quantity. Improved technology, information, or changing public needs could cause modification of the Timber Production Base at any time.
 - b. Responsibility. See Section .04 of the Manual.

- .13 Supplements. Each State is to prepare supplemental guidance to this Manual, including Appendices.

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Map Symbols

- 1. Nonforest.....NF
- 2. Woodland.....WL
 - A. Woodland less than 20 cu. ft/Ac/yr.....LSWL*
(Formerly Low Site)
 - B. Woodland Fragile Gradient.....FGWL*
 - C. Woodland more than 15 years regeneration.....RWL*
- 3. Fragile
 - A. Slope gradient.....FG
 - B. Soils.....FS
 - C. Ground Water.....FW
- 4. Category I
 - A. No Interfering Conditions.....IN
 - B. Inadequate Moisture.....IM
 - C. Frost.....IF
- 5. Category II
 - A. No Interfering Condition.....2N
 - B. Inadequate Moisture.....2M
 - C. Frost.....2F

Category I or II sites that are classified as fragile and are nonsuitable are represented by four symbols such as: FGIM for Fragile Gradient Category I with inadequate moisture. Nonsuitable lands are classified as WL with the appropriate reason indicated.

*These symbols represent nonsuitable sites further classified as Woodland.