

Capacity and Capability of Mills in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Impact Zone

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In this report, "capacity" refers to the total volume of timber (excluding pulpwood) that existing mills could utilize annually, and "capability" refers to the volume of trees of a certain size class that existing mills can efficiently process annually. Volumes of timber reported as harvested or processed include timber used to produce manufactured wood products (e.g., lumber, veneer, plywood, posts, utility poles, log homes, and log furniture). The roundwood pulpwood and industrial fuelwood components of the harvest are dealt with in a separate report covering Region One.

Virtually all of the Idaho Panhandle National Forest non-reserved timberland is in five Idaho counties: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai, and Shoshone. Less than 6 percent of the recent (2001) timber harvested in this area currently comes from the Idaho Panhandle National Forest. Most (99 percent) of the timber harvested from these counties was from green (live) trees. The species composition of the harvested volume in this five-county area was: Douglas-fir about 26 percent, true firs 22 percent, western hemlock 16 percent, and western larch 12 percent. Western redcedar accounted for 11 percent, while western white pine, ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, and Engelmann spruce combined accounted for the remaining 13 percent. Sawmills and veneer/plywood manufacturers received about 95 percent of the volume harvested from these counties. Other products, including cedar products, house logs, posts, utility poles, and log furniture accounted for the remaining timber harvest volume.

The Idaho Panhandle National Forest identified a 5-county area as the "Idaho Panhandle National Forest Impact Zone". The counties comprising the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Impact Zone are Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai, and Shoshone counties in Idaho. Within the 5-county Idaho Panhandle National Forest Impact Zone there are 41 timber-processing facilities currently operating: 18 sawmills, 8 log home manufacturers, 5 cedar products manufacturers, 4 post and small pole plants, 3 veneer and plywood facilities, 2 utility pole plants, and one log furniture manufacturer.

As of September 1, 2005, capacity to process timber in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Impact Zone is 210,047 thousand cubic feet (MCF), with 74 percent of capacity being

used. Mills in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Impact Zone are currently using about 155,857 MCF of timber annually (Table 1). Slightly less than 92 percent (142,835 MCF) of the volume processed in the Impact Zone is composed of trees with diameter at breast height (dbh) \geq 10". Nearly 8 percent (12,430 MCF) of the volume processed comes from trees 7.0 - 9.9" dbh, while less than 1 percent (592 MCF) of processed volume comes from trees $<$ 7" dbh.

Table 1. Annual Volume of Timber Processed by Tree Size Class (Excluding Pulpwood) for the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Impact Zone

| Thousand Cubic Feet of Timber | | Thousand Board Feet Scribner of Timber | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--|-------------|
| Tree dbh | Volume Used | Tree dbh | Volume Used |
| <7 in | 592 | <7 in | 592 |
| 7-9.9 in | 12,430 | 7-9.9 in | 47,731 |
| 10+ in | 142,835 | 10+ in | 580,409 |
| Total | 155,857 | Total | 628,732 |

About 81 percent (170,085 MCF) of existing capacity in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Impact Zone is not capable of efficiently utilizing trees $<$ 10" dbh (Table 2). Slightly less than 40,000 MCF of timber-processing capacity is capable of utilizing trees $<$ 10" dbh, and nearly all of this is in the 7 - 9.9" dbh class.

Table 2. Annual Total Capacity and Capability* to Process Trees by Size Class (Excluding Pulpwood) for the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Impact Zone

| Thousand Cubic Feet of Timber | | Thousand Board Feet Scribner of Timber | |
|-------------------------------|------------|--|------------|
| Tree dbh | Capability | Tree dbh | Capability |
| <7 in | 840 | <7 in | 840 |
| 7-9.9 in | 39,122 | 7-9.9 in | 150,229 |
| 10+ in | 170,085 | 10+ in | 696,267 |
| Total Capacity | 210,047 | Total Capacity | 847,336 |

* Note: Capability in $<$ 7 and 7-9.9 in. classes is maximum volume capable of being used efficiently; capability in 10+ in. class is portion of total capacity NOT capable of efficiently using trees with dbh $<$ 10 in.

A substantial amount of the capacity capable of utilizing smaller diameter trees is being used to process larger trees or going unused. About 70 percent of capacity in the $<$ 7" dbh category is currently utilized to process trees $<$ 7" dbh, but just 32 percent of capacity in the 7 - 9.9" dbh category is being used to process trees 7 - 9.9" dbh. More than 14,000 MCF of capacity capable of using trees 7 - 9.9" dbh are used annually to process trees \geq 10" dbh.