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F&W FORESTRY SERVICES, INC.

# Recommended Practices to Protect Stand-Level Wildlife Habitat Elements

F&W Forestry Services, Inc. provides the following list of practices to assist foresters in protecting significant stand-level wildlife resources such as snags, stumps, mast trees, down woody debris, den trees and nest trees.

- Wildlife trees, including snags, cavity trees and recruitment trees contribute to the ecological health of the forest.
- Down woody material ("coarse woody debris", CWD) is important especially for insects, fungi, small vertebrates, some species of birds, and nutrient recycling.
- In large, final, even aged harvests, retention patches provide growing conditions for plant species that might not survive full sunlight and/or the competition of shade intolerant plants.

Machine exclusion zones, partial cut areas and no cut buffers provide the above services over long time spans. However, where final even-aged harvests become large, the following procedures can support the ecological integrity of these systems.

## WILDLIFE TREES

*All silvicultural systems in operations with wildlife habitat protection or enhancement objectives:*

### Snags

> All dead snags, regardless of silvicultural system, should be left, but only if they do not pose a safety threat to workers. If a dead standing snag needs to be cut for safety reasons, it should be left in place.

### Cavity Trees

> To some degree in partial harvests, but especially in even-aged management harvest greater than 10 acres, live cavity trees should be retained at a rate of 4/acre greater than 12″. Larger cavity trees are more functional than smaller ones. Preference is for trees with voids, holes, etc. and of limited commercial value.

### Down, Dead Woody Debris

> Avoid damage to down woody debris especially logs and stumps greater than 12″. Attempt to leave cull sections of large trees in the woods.

## RETENTION

*Even-aged and two-aged silvicultural systems in operations with wildlife habitat protection or enhancement objectives:*

For even-aged and two-aged final harvests greater than 10 acres, there is ecological value in leaving retention of at least 10 square feet of basal area per acre in healthy trees greater than 6″ evenly distributed across the site. Trees to retain may and should include cavity trees and mast producing species.

OR

For even-aged and two-aged final harvests greater than 10 acres, leave uncut patches (recommendation: no less than ¼ acre on 2.5% of the acreage). The retention patches should be determined early and adequately mapped so that they remain uncut through final harvest. It is best to have retention patches coincide with vernal pools, seeps, rocky outcrops, cliff lines, large snags, or large cavity trees.

*(FSC Regional Standards and regulations in some jurisdictions may require specific levels of retention.)*