



# GIFFORD PINCHOT TASK FORCE

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## Timber Sale Monitoring Guide

### What is Timber Sale Monitoring?

Timber Sale Monitoring involves looking for characteristics in and around the proposed sale area such as old growth forest, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and streams. It entails reporting inconsistencies between what the agency claims in their documents and what you actually find in the field. In addition, observations can be critical for fixing problems in Forest Service timber sales.

Timber Sale Monitoring is a hike in the forest, observing what you see, taking photos and notes, and enjoying yourself! If you like to hike and be outdoors, this is a great way to contribute to forest protection.

### Why Monitor?

We have read and monitored many Forest Service timber sales and when we monitor, we often find information that is not included in the sale plan or that is inconsistent with the sale plan. Monitoring will show you the true characteristics of the area and it is also a motivating and inspiring way to visit the forest you are working to protect. The Forest Service is currently in a transition period away from planning clear-cut old growth timber sales and towards thinning in young planning stands. We are generally supportive of thinning in these young plantation stands because it can help create structural diversity, encourage multiple tree species, establish standing dead trees and downed logs (important habitat for many forest dwellers), and return scattered light to the forest floor. These activities go a long way toward restoring the health of our forest and river ecosystems.

### Getting Started

Study your maps carefully. Get to know the general area and the area's characteristics. Often, the characteristics near the sale area are just as important as the characteristics within the sale area. For example, let's say you learn from monitoring that the surrounding area has been completely clear-cut; you might then conclude there is no nearby area for old-growth dependent species to migrate to in order to survive.

The unit maps (provided by the Forest Service with the timber sale documents to show cutting unit boundaries and what type of logging will take place there) will show you all the details you need for monitoring; the units that are planned for logging, roads and often riparian areas. Start with a general view of the area to help you determine which units to focus on first. We generally prioritize units that might have special characteristics: riparian areas (water), mature or ancient forest, steep or unstable slopes and trails, units with temporary road construction, and other unique habitats like big leaf maple groves, talus slopes, etc. Document what you see. Take good notes and photographs.

## Equipment List

### Maps

- Local national forest map – available at the GPNF headquarters in Vancouver or at the Forest Service District offices in Randle, Amboy, and Trout Lake, or on loan from the GP Task Force.
- Specific timber sale maps, as discussed above – from the Forest Service or from the GP Task Force.
- District maps – these maps are more detailed than the map of the entire GPNF. In fact, if you are only going to buy one map, a district map is better than the full forest map. It shows more details on roads and landscape features so you will better oriented to the forest.

### Field Guides

- Tree and Plant, preferable Northwest specific. *The key book is Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast: Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, and Alaska* by Jim Pojar et al.
- Mushroom guide – the large volume of the *Audubon Society Field Guide to Mushrooms of N. America* is a good start, but *Mushrooms Demystified* is better.
- Wildlife Guide – ones showing prints are most useful. Recommended is *Peterson Field Guide to Animal Tracks: Third Edition* by Olaus J. Murie.
- Bird Guide-Audubon recommends Ken Kaufman's *Field Guide to Birds of North America*. Also, a great bird identification website is the Patuxent Bird Identification InfoCenter, <http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/infocenter.html>
- Invasive Plant Species Guide. The GP Task Force has developed one specific for the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and is available on our website under the watershed restoration page. Also, you may check out *Selected Noxious Weeds of Washington State* or *Weed Handbook* from the GP Task Force.

### Equipment

- Camera
- Binoculars
- Mountain Bike
- Pen and Paper
- Tape Measure (DBH tape preferably, measures diameter at breast height of trees)
- Flagging tape (to flag an area you want to return to, flagging will help you identify the area easier)
- Compass and/or GPS.

The GP Task Force has many of these items for loan as well

Note: You must be comfortable with bushwacking. Monitoring is definitely an off-trail adventure. If you are not experienced at off-trail hiking, map reading and route finding, be careful when you first start out. If you start by looking at sales that are already marked, you can always walk the boundaries of sales, thereby walking in complete circles; or you can follow creeks or ridgeline in some cases. Also, be aware of hunting season and dress appropriately.

**Have Fun!!**