

Portneuf Project

Wildlife

Alternative 1 – No Action

Wildlife species are generally associated with specific habitats. As those habitats occur in different locations within the project area the kinds and numbers of wildlife species found utilizing them is fairly predictable. Under natural conditions there is a slow change in habitats through vegetation succession. A large-scale fire would cause a sudden change in the vegetation communities to an early seral stage of vegetation. The variety of wildlife using recently burned vegetation tends to be an assemblage of grassland species suited to a structurally simple habitat. A different mix of wildlife will be attracted to the differing habitats as they change. Without the proposed action, the vegetation succession will trend toward the climax vegetation for the soil type with which it is associated. The wildlife found in this habitat would be typical for that vegetation type. All the vegetation types scheduled for treatment are common in the area and the majority of wildlife is also typically common for the area. There are no known gray wolves, bald eagles or Canada lynx living in the project area and none would be expected to be located there on a permanent basis since the habitats are marginal for those species.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action Alternative

As with Alternative 1, the wildlife species affected by the proposed project will differ among the various habitat types being treated. Of the 27,000 acres in the project area, only about 3875 acres or 15% is scheduled for treatment over the ten year project life. The number of acres scheduled for treatment in any one given year is within the range of expected disturbance in these vegetation types. The magnitude of the disturbance will not seriously affect the number of any species expected in those habitat types.

Cumulative effects of Alternative 2

Cumulative effects of the treatments are difficult to estimate. Treatment areas will be small with none scheduled to be greater than 278 acres. The habitat types scheduled for treatment are common habitat types and none are in short supply in the project area. The overall effect of the treatments would be to create a seral type within a large habitat block which would attract some different animals than were there originally. As the vegetation matures, the animals that moved in right after the treatment would, in part, be replaced by different animals. In some cases, by the time the tenth year of treatments starts, the vegetation that was treated in the first year is approaching what it was originally and again supports the original complement of animals.