
Section 3: Social Agreements for Aspen



This section provides an example zones of agreement (ZOA) document for aspen that can be used as a “straw-man” by a collaborative groups as they explore their own areas of agreement, as described earlier in this document (see [Introduction: How to Use this Document](#)). You may choose to engage your group in discussing which aspects of this template they agree with and which they don't.

Example Zones of Agreement

1. Priority Habitat

Aspen stands are a priority for restoration, as they are biodiversity hotspots and provide critical habitat to wildlife. Aspen supports more birds, plants, and wildlife diversity than any of Oregon's eastside conifer forests.

2. Habitat Complexity

Aspen stands that have a complex overstory, midstory, and understory are more productive and support more wildlife and food webs. Stands that are missing one or more of those story components should be prioritized for restoration.

3. Habitat Transition

The area around the aspen stand should be treated to provide shrubs, aspen sprouts, and open habitat that is important for wildlife, livestock, and aspen persistence.

4. Conifer Encroachment and Retention

Conifers that encroach the stand can outcompete the aspen trees and sprouts, so should be removed. Leaving some conifers can increase wildlife habitat and diversity.

5. Over Browsing and Grazing

Chronic browsing or grazing from wild ungulates and livestock can suppress aspen sprouts and remove the mid story and future overstory. When needed, fencing, deterrents, and alternate grazing patterns should be used.

6. Mapping and Placement on the Landscape

Aspen stands in project areas should be mapped so restoration can be prioritized, spatially analyzed for connectivity, and condition of a stand can be put into context of status of nearby stands (which ones are persisting versus which ones are decadent).

7. Aspen Expansion

Oregon has lost up to 80% of its aspen cover. Most stands have been diminished in size and many have been lost all together. Expansion of aspen stands should be the priority and approach rather than preserving existing trees and acreage.

8. Resistance and Resilience

Aspen are more resistant to drought and stressors and more resilient to fire and disturbance when they are restored to multi-storied stands with open areas around them.

9. Genetic Diversity and Seeds

Current aspen stands expand through cloning and root sprouting, limiting diversity. Aspen seeds can provide new genetics on the landscape if seedlings can persist.