

6.5 Appendix E. Ecologically Important Lowland Conifers (EILC): Stand Designation Process

6.5A - EILC Background

As directed by policy each SFRMP process is required to identify EILC. The objective of this designation is to withhold from treatment for the 10 years of SFRMP implementation, adequate amounts of EILC across the subsections, so that the best representations can eventually be evaluated.

Subsection Planning Teams are directed to prepare criteria to define EILC, identify cover types in their subsections which reflect EILC characteristics and determine an adequate acreage for each EILC cover type sufficient to conserve the characteristics of the EILC.

Ecologically important lowland conifers are defined as stands of black spruce, tamarack, and cedar, including stagnant lowland conifers that are examples of high quality native plant communities (NPCs) that are representative of lowland conifer NPCs found in the subsections. The designated EILC stands will be reserved from treatment during the 10-year planning period.

EILC are reserved from treatment, for the period of time covered by the subsection plan, based on the ecologically important habitat or natural community type they represent. These reserved stands should be reviewed for continued protection at the beginning of the next cycle of subsection planning based on the Old Growth Guidelines or other guidelines in place at that future date.

6.5B - EILC Designation Process

An EILC SFRMP work group convened to prepare a draft of the EILC designation. The EILC work group prepared background information, draft datasets, designation criteria and applied the EILC designation criteria to the appropriate cover types to identify specific EILC stands as policy directed. Area staff were also consulted for suggestions for EILC designation. The draft EILC designation was presented and approved by the AP SFRMP Planning Team. The AP SFRMP Planning Team adopted the following as presented by the EILC Work Group.

The total acreage of stands designated EILC is a function of:

- EILC percentage goal for the subsections; and,
- EILC Stand Designation Criteria

The suggested EILC percentage goal was determined to be 8% based on the total acres of old growth goal within the subsection, divided by the total acres of all old growth types within the subsection working boundary. The derived percentage was then doubled to produce the suggested EILC percentage goal as outlined in the instructions given by the DNR SFRMP Guidebook IV. This 8% goal was used by the AP EILC work group as a starting point in their selection of potential EILC stands. The following criteria were used to determine a starting point for EILC selection. Final selections were made by the team based on this. It is important to note that although the final EILC percentage was higher than the goal, the team determined that the uniqueness and relative rarity (<7000 acres) of lowland conifer NPCs in the subsection warranted additional EILC selection.

6.5C - Aspen Parklands EILC Stand Designation Criteria

Includes at least one of the following for lowland conifer stands:

- at least 100 years old;
- identified as biologically important due to natural heritage element occurrence points;
- compliment existing old growth or EILC candidate stands;
- stands large enough to maintain ecological function over time;
- partially or wholly within MCBS areas of high or outstanding biodiversity significance (HCVF candidate areas); and/or,
- compliment AP patch management goals and/or AP ERF stands

Table F.1 details the EILC acres selected for the AP Subsection.

Table 6.5. EILC Acres Selected by Cover Type.

Cover type	Black Spruce Lowland SI<40	Black Spruce Lowland SI>= 40	Tamarack SI<40	Tamarack SI>= 40	White Cedar	Total
Acres by cover type	315.3	0	821.9	450.8	70.6	1658.6
Percentage of cover type	27.17%	0%	46.76%	22.59%	32.88%	29.28%