

**TIMBER HARVEST PLAN REVIEWS
1992 Progress Report
Submitted by: Randy Klein
Redwood National Park, Geology Branch**

Introduction

A program to review landuse practices (primarily timber harvesting) upstream of Redwood National Park was initiated in 1976. A detailed history of the legislative and management activities was documented in last year's (1991) progress report. This report provides an update of the past year's activities and describes future plans for reviewing timber harvest plans (THP's), interacting with regulatory agencies regarding forest practices on private lands affecting the park, and incorporation of THP information into the park's GIS system.

Results to Date

Timber harvest plan reviews

Table 1 summarizes THP's submitted within the Redwood Creek watershed and RNP involvement since 1978. Data from FY91 is included. Temporal trends in the number of acres submitted for THP's annually are apparent in Figure 1. Generally, THP submissions were low from 1981-86 both within the PPZ and upstream compared to the late 1970's and late 1980's. This variability probably reflects two factors: a depressed market for forest products associated with economic recessions, and restrictions imposed by changes in the state Forest Practice Rules. More stringent restrictions enacted recently are undoubtedly a major factor in reduced THP submissions in 1990-91. Because some of these rules were enjoined in March, 1992, a resurgence in submission of THP's for Redwood Creek is soon expected. Differences between acreages submitted and acreages inspected by RNP reflect both the rate of harvest as well as a reduction in the Park's legal and administrative authority to attend PHI's (pre-harvest inspections) which occurred in 1983.

Figure 2 shows the cumulative increase in THP submissions from 1978-91. In that period, over 30,000 acres of land (or about 30% of the area) in the watershed upstream of the Park fell within approved THP boundaries. This is a large percentage considering that many of the individuals involved in the 1978 expansion efforts assumed that there would be little timber harvest in the near future in Redwood Creek. Concurrently, the proportion of land which has received the benefit of NPS review has diminished from about 80% to about 50% of the total THP acreage for the period (Figure 2).

For THP's submitted in FY91, comments were only made for those on which RNP representation was allowed on the PHI. No comments

TABLE 1. Summary of annual Redwood National Park timber harvest reviews conducted on lands upstream the National Park.¹

	<u>1978²</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Plans Submitted	22	40	27	12	15	27	14	14	23	18	32	36	17	13	310
Park Protection Zone (PPZ)	13	26	14	4	11	15	4	7	13	3	7	7	4	2	130
Upper Basin	9	14	13	8	4	12	10	7	10	15	25	29	13	10	179
Total Acreage	2213	2759	3510	977	750	2777	1619	1534	2877	2496	3506	3360	1900	2009	32287
Plans Inspected by NPS (PPZ/Upper Basin)	12/2	25/5	14/5	4/4	11/3	15/3	4/1	7/0	12/1	3/2	7/3	7/1	4/2	2/1	127/33
Acreage Inspected by NPS	1365	2292	3084	625	630	1614	335	563	1624	637	963	860	653	991	16236

¹ By fiscal year, October through September

² Does not include 24 timber harvesting plans covering 837 acres located on private lands in the 1978 expansion area which were field inspected but never harvested.

Figure 1. Timber Harvest Plans in Redwood Creek
Upstream of Redwood National Park
Annual Acreages for 1978-1991.

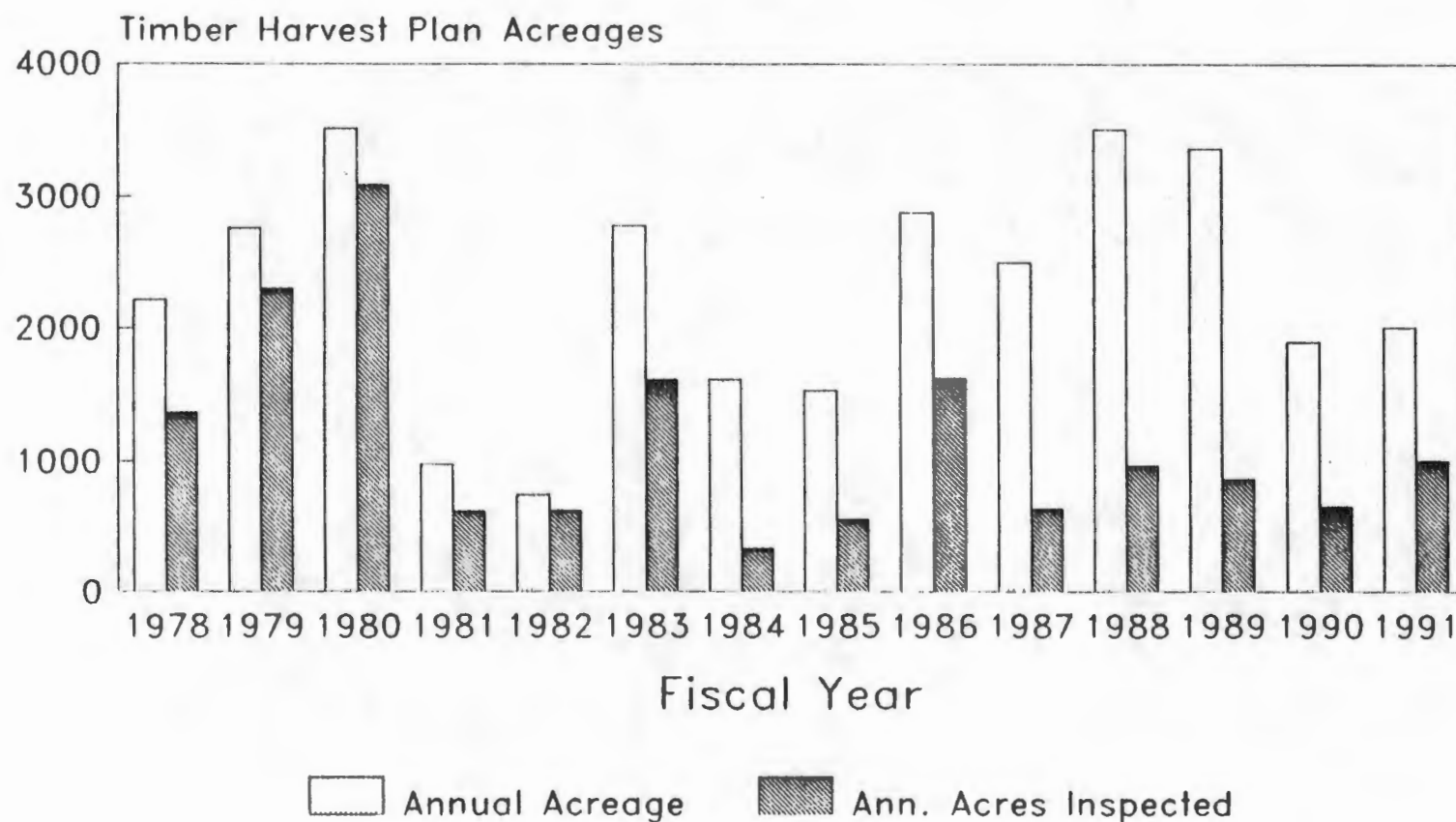
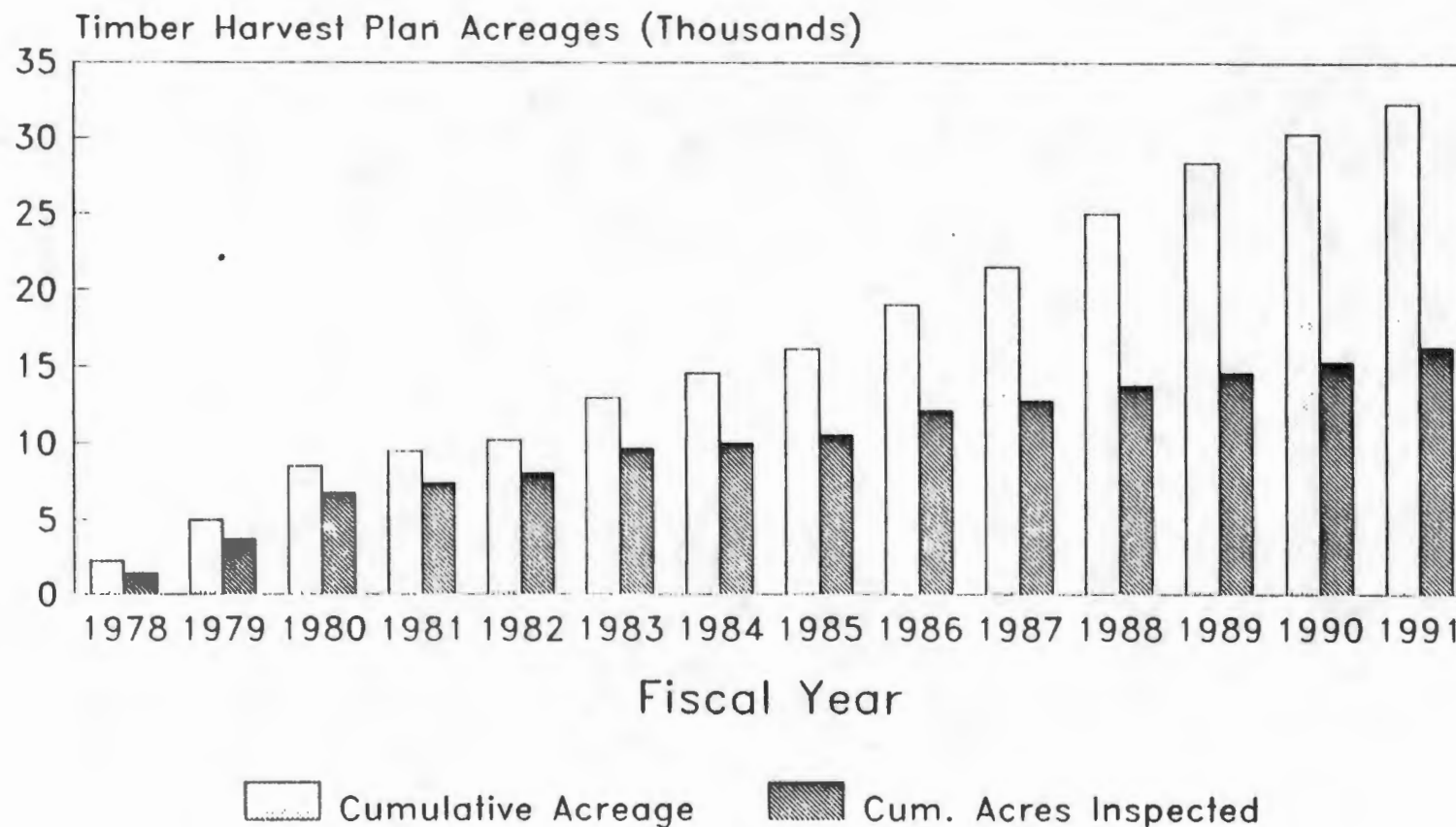


Figure 2. Timber Harvest Plans in Redwood Creek
Upstream of Redwood National Park
Cumulative Acreages for 1978-1991



were made on those plans for which we were denied access by the landowner. Typically, comments and suggestions based solely on inspection of aerial photographs and the plan document, in lieu of attending the PHI, were not well received by CDF because they lacked site-specific mitigation measures which can be best developed after field inspection of the area.

Other work to modify timber harvest practices

Technical studies performed by the Redwood National Park Geology Branch have identified shortcomings in the current State FPR's. Recommendations from these studies are routinely requested by NPS for incorporation into THP's reviewed by NPS staff. Further, they have been presented to CDF as recommendations for changes to the FPR's for road construction practices in California. Road construction practices in some National Forests have also been modified in response to the RNP study results. A study which examines the widespread practice of road abandonment and effects this practice has on increased erosion rates on timber lands is in progress. This study is needed to help convince the State that landowners should be required to maintain forest roads for periods much longer than the present requirement of three years after timber harvest.

GIS

A list was compiled which identifies which USGS quadrangle map covers each THP area submitted in the Redwood Creek watershed. Many of the base maps for areas covering the watershed were prepared for digitizing by drawing THP boundaries.

Preliminary Conclusions

The threats to downstream park resources resulting from continued road construction and harvesting of timber upstream from the park are as real now as they were when the park was expanded in 1978. Unfortunately, much of the information on these threats as well as the resources which are threatened, was collected a decade or more ago. It is imperative that current information be collected to update our knowledge of resources within the watershed so that accurate assessments can be made of the potential effects of each THP submitted. NPS comments on THP's will not be as strong as they could be until this happens.

There are early indications that the longstanding attitudes held by landowners within Redwood Creek towards RNP are changing. This may result in NPS participation on more PHI's and incorporation of more NPS recommendations into THP's. While this is encouraging, efforts to pursue other means to protect downstream park resources (eg., renewal of the NPS agreement with CDF to attend all PHI's in the watershed, sensitive watershed status, coordination with RWQCB, etc.) must also be pursued to ensure that threats will be minimized.

Plans for Future Work

Efforts to gain access to PHI's for THP's in the upper basin will continue. These efforts will focus primarily on convincing landowners that NPS representatives are interested in finding creative ways to harvest timber without causing excessive damage to resources. Each THP submitted for areas in the PPZ will be reviewed. Selected THP's for which access to the PHI is denied will receive comments in spite of the lack of site specific review. RNP review will be coordinated with another state agency, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). This agency has regulatory authority (secondary to CDF) for approval of THP's and has expressed an interest in promoting the recommendations of NPS staff.

A database will be assembled from existing information sources on the location and relative importance of resources which could be threatened by the effects of timber harvest within the Redwood Creek watershed. This database will be used to identify valuable resources at risk on a site specific basis for each THP reviewed by NPS. To date, site specific downstream resources have not been emphasized on THP reviews, however, identification of these resources may strengthen NPS recommendations considerably, especially on THP's for which we are denied access to the PHI. A functioning GIS will greatly facilitate identification of threatened resources as well as prediction of potential effects.

Research into the procedures as well as the implications of designating the Redwood Creek watershed as "sensitive" (a status defined by CDF which would require special protections from timber harvest effects) will be undertaken. Information on this will be presented to RNP administration to help decide whether or not to pursue this action.