North Tobacco Root Mountains and Foothills (224,989 acres)



Figure 8. North Tobacco Root Mountains and Foothills Focus Area

The rugged peaks of the Tobacco Root Mountains, with their abundant high mountain lakes and small running stream systems, overlook this area. These mountains have seen extensive historical mining activity that has resulted in numerous roads. The foothills provide important elk and mule deer winter range and are dominated by sagebrush/grassland that has seen conversion from the spraying and burning of sagebrush. Along the Jefferson River there are productive cottonwood riparian habitats that support an abundance of wildlife species including whitetailed deer and recently introduced Merriam's turkeys. The valley bottom is home to extensive agricultural production of cattle and alfalfa and little or no grain production.

Landscape Characteristics

This subsection consists of complex faulted mountains and foothills that formed in gneiss, volcanic, and a variety of sedimentary bedrock. Elevations range from 4,200 to 8,000 feet. Drainage density is high. Mean annual precipitation ranges from 10 to 25 inches, with about 35 percent falling as snow. The soil temperature and moisture regimes are frigid (cryic at higher elevations) and aridic ustic. The primary natural disturbance is fire. Another important natural biotic disturbance is beaver activity in riparian areas. Land use is predominantly livestock grazing and timber harvest. The breakdown for land stewardship in the North Tobacco Root Mountains and Foothills area is as follows:

U.S. Federal Agencies: 32,309 acres, or 14.4% of total area, which include:

BLM: 17,544 acres, or 7.8% of total area USFS: 14,765 acres, or 6.6% of total area State Agencies: 20,695 acres, or 9.2% of total area

Private: 171,985 acres, or 76.4% of total area

Associated Habitats

Habitat	Habitat Tian	Davida va of Avan
Habitat	Habitat Tier	Percentage of Area
Wetland and Riparian	Ī	2.11
Agricultural Lands - Dry	Ш	3.29
Limber Pine	III	3.36
Agricultural Lands - Irrigated	III	3.83
Douglas Fir	II	5.01
Mixed Xeric Forest	III	7.42
Very Low Cover Grasslands	1	8.24
Sagebrush	I	11.88
Low/Moderate Cover Grasslands	I	50.44

Note: A total of 95.59% of the North Tobacco Root Mountains and Foothills area is represented; 4.41% is made up of a combination of other habitat types.

Associated Species of Greatest Conservation Need (Tier I Species)

There are a total of 244 terrestrial vertebrate species that are found within the North Tobacco Root Mountains and Foothills Focus Area. Tier I species are listed below. All associations can be found in Table 14.

Amphibians: Western Toad

Birds: Flammulated Owl and Bald Eagle

Mammals: Townsend's Big-eared Bat, Grizzly Bear, and Canada Lynx

Conservation Concerns & Strategies

Conservation Concerns	Conservation Strategies	
Habitat loss, degradation, and	Support strategic conservation	
fragmentation, especially as a result of	easements/protection by conservation	
population growth/development	organizations or public agencies by	
	providing advice and technical	
	assistance	
	Promote and further develop county	
	ordinances that help manage and plan	
	for development	
	Support state/federal tax incentives	
	that discourage habitat fragmentation	

	Identify and prioritize key wildlife linkage areas, and work with other state and federal agencies, conservation groups, and landowners to restore wildlife connectivity
Invasive or exotic plant species	Participate in partnerships to develop and implement weed control strategies
Range or forest management practices	Support government and private conservation activities that encourage and support sustainable land management practices (example; rest and rotation schedules)
Streamside residential development	Develop statewide riparian best management principles

References

The Nature Conservancy. 2000. Middle Rockies-Blue Mountains Ecoregional Conservation Plan. Prepared by the Middle Rockies-Blue Mountains Planning Team. 58 pp + appendices.