11. Blacks Mountain (no ecological survey, Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station 1976)

Location

This established RNA lies within the Blacks Mountain Experimental Forest on Lassen National Forest, Lassen County. It is approximately 45 miles (72 km) by road NW. of the town Susanville. The RNA consists of five separate compartments within parts of T33N, R7E and R8E MDM (40°40'N., 121°15'W.), USGS Poison Lake, Harrey Mtn., Corders Reservoir, and Straylor Lake 7.5' quads (*fig. 22*). Ecological subsection – Blacks Mountain-Susanville Peak (M261Dd).

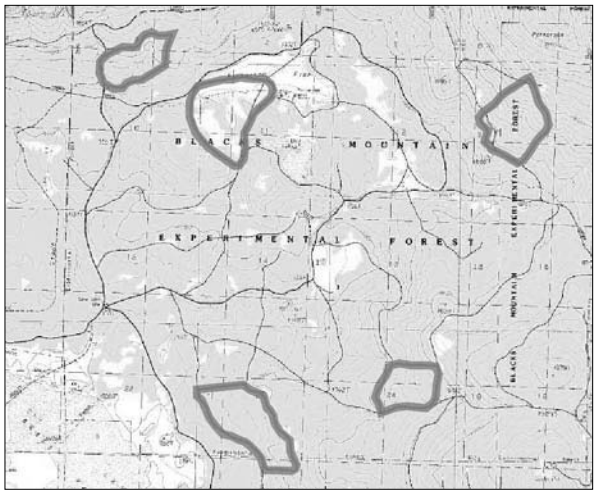

Figure 22—Blacks Mountain RNA

Target Element

Interior Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*)

Distinctive Features

The RNA contains five compartments of virgin ponderosa pine forest (*fig. 23*), which is rather uncommon in NE. California. Ponderosa pine in the region, commonly called the eastside pine, was heavily logged in the late nineteenth century, then in the late 1920s it suffered severe losses to bark beetles. The RNA includes a good range of representation of ponderosa pine forest, from inclusions of small areas of grassland and sagebrush flats with adjacent pure pine, to higher elevations where white fir (*Abies concolor*) and incense-cedar (*Libocedrus decurrens*) are associated commonly with pine.

Physical Characteristics

The RNA covers 521 acres (211 ha) at elevations from 5600 to 6400 ft (1707-1951 m). The surrounding area consists of high plateau at 5600 ft (1707 m), with mountains emerging to about 7000 ft (2133 m). Topography is relatively gentle, with slopes seldom exceeding 20-30 percent. The whole area is uniformly volcanic, the lava is basaltic, much of it vesicular. Soils are often shallow and contain varying amounts of boulders. No live streams exist on the experimental forest. Annual precipitation, principally snow, is 22.55 inches (5738 mm). Summers are dry, except for infrequent thunderstorms. Temperatures range from -15 to 85 °F (-26 to 29 °C).

Association Types

Eastside Ponderosa Pine (84220): Vegetation of the whole RNA is grouped into this type. Most of the RNA contains pure ponderosa pine forest with regenerations of white fir and incense-cedar. One compartment has ponderosa pine forest with openings of grass and sagebrush flats. In small areas of higher elevation, white fir codominates with ponderosa pine. Other trees found in the RNA are Jeffrey pine (*Pinus jeffreyi*) and western juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis*).

The most prominent brush species are greenleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula*), tobacco brush (*Ceanothus velutinus*), squaw carpet (*C. prostratus*), basin sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), currants, gooseberries (*Ribes* spp.), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* sp.), stone-fruits (*Prunus* spp.), and antelope brush (*Purshia tridentata*). Sedges (*Carex* spp.) and bunch grasses, predominantly represented by Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), mountain brome (*Bromus marginatus*), and squirreltail (*Sitanion* spp.), are important components of the cover. The most characteristic forbs are mints (*Monardella* spp.), lupines (*Lupinus* spp.), and mule-ears (*Wyethia mollis*).

Plant Diversity

There are no plants listed in the establishment report except those mentioned above.

Conflicting Impacts

No major conflicts on the land uses of the RNA are observed. The USDA Forest Service Blacks Mountain Ecological Research Project includes four of the five RNA components in its long-term research. Two of the four RNA units have been prescribed burned, and all are fenced to exclude livestock.

Figure 23—Blacks Mountain, view of ponderosa pine, Compartment C4-21. (around 1975)